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## Cunanan manhunt ends in suicide and mystery

### Suspect in slaying of Versace died after escape cut off

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Los Angeles Times

MIAMI BEACH, Fla. — Trapped on a moored houseboat by his own notoriety, Andrew Cunanan committed suicide with the same handgun he allegedly used in a nationwide murder

rampage, Miami Beach police said yesterday.

Cunanan's body was pulled from a houseboat early yesterday morning after a police siege that began Wednesday afternoon, ending a manhunt but leaving open a mystery about the motives of a suspect who became America's most wanted man.

Authorities noted that the 27-year-old Cunanan, wanted in the murders of five men, including fashion designer Gianni Versace, died within a few miles of where Versace was gunned down last week.

Paul Philip, FBI agent in charge of the Miami field office, credited a massive police dragnet for keeping the fugitive in the area. "He managed to get 40 blocks — that's the best he could do in all this time," Philip said. "I think that's pretty good."

Police said they are keeping the homicide investigation open because so many questions remain, including where Cunanan stayed in the days after the Versace killing, and what relationship, if any, Cunanan had with the owner of the houseboat, German club owner Torsten Reineck,



Cunanan

and Health Club in Las Vegas.  
The magnitude of questions left

who is wanted on fraud and tax evasion charges in Germany.

The FBI said agents interviewed Reineck in Las Vegas yesterday, and then released him. Reineck, 49, owns a gay club, the Apollo Spa

open by Cunanan's suicide was underscored by the lack of a suicide note. "To date there is no suicide note or other correspondence that would reflect on why he committed these crimes he is accused of," said Richard Barreto, the police chief of Miami Beach.

But there is an inescapable bottom line. "All across the nation, our citizens can stand down and breathe a sigh of relief," Barreto said. "The

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# Escape cut off, Cunanan died in desperation

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reign of terror brought upon us by Andrew Cunanan is over."

Cunanan was on the run from four killings in three states before he allegedly shot Versace July 15 as the fashion designer walked up the steps of his South Miami Beach mansion.

In Minnesota, Cunanan was charged in the death of a former lover, David Madson, and was suspected of killing Jeffrey Trail, a friend. He also was charged in the deaths of Lee Miglin, a wealthy Chicago developer, and William Reese, a New Jersey cemetery caretaker. Those four killings occurred in April and May.

**CUNANAN MADE** the FBI's most-wanted list on June 12, but it was the murder of Versace that prompted a massive nationwide manhunt. The search involved "almost 1,000 agents" in the FBI alone, which William Esposito, deputy director of the FBI, equated with the intensity of the hunt for the Unabomber.

At a Washington press conference, Esposito said that Cunanan, apparently nervous and agitated, contacted "an associate" within 48 hours of the Versace slaying. They discussed who on the East Coast might have passports.

"He was trying to reach out to these individuals for the purpose of obtaining false identification, especially . . . a passport, so that he could flee the country," Esposito said.

Cunanan was an average-looking man known for his ability to blend in with his surroundings, but in recent days "I think he was a desperate person, in a situation where it would be very, very difficult for him to move about," Barreto said.

Ironically, the man whose image was seen around the world left a corpse that could not be identified by its face. An autopsy performed by the Dade County Medical Examiner said Cunanan committed suicide by shooting himself through the mouth.

**THE GUN WAS FOUND** with the body, which was identified by matching a thumb print taken from Cunanan's California driver's license.

Investigators said Cunanan shot himself with a 10mm semiautomatic produced by Smith & Wesson. Cunanan's weapon had earlier been identified as a .40-caliber handgun.

Law enforcement officials confirmed yesterday that the 10mm

weapon was stolen from Trail's Minneapolis apartment, and was later used in at least two other slayings, including that of Versace.

Reports from San Diego suggested that Cunanan may have learned he was infected with the AIDS virus before setting off on a series of murders. Authorities were awaiting additional autopsy results to determine if Cunanan carried the virus.

Although both Versace and Cunanan were homosexuals, there is no firm evidence they knew each other or ever met.

"The Versace family is relieved and grateful to those who helped resolve the terrible murder of Gianni Versace and the other victims," the family said in a statement.

And although U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno yesterday lauded the work of law enforcement agents, and thanked the thousands of citizens who had called with possible sightings of Cunanan, the manhunt seemed to end because of blind luck.

A caretaker checking Reineck's shuttered houseboat about 4 p.m. Wednesday found a door ajar and noticed something inside had been moved. As the caretaker retreated, he told police, he heard a gunshot.

**WITHIN MINUTES**, dozens of flak-jacketed SWAT team officers swarmed around the boat. Traffic was blocked for hours, as news helicopters circled overhead.

After lobbing several canisters of tear gas into the houseboat, officers rushed into the residence about 8 p.m. They found a body on a bed on the second floor. It would be early yesterday before they could confirm that it was Cunanan.

Barreto said there was no sign of forced entry into the houseboat where Cunanan died.

Cunanan's last known residence was the Normandy Plaza Hotel, a 1930s-era hotel in a somewhat seedy section of Collins Avenue near 71st Street. He registered there in May under an alias.

Cunanan skipped out of the Normandy quietly early July 12 before manager Miriam Hernandez came in to work. Cunanan put the key on the dresser, left the door open and apparently walked out the rear of the hotel toward the beach.

He owed one day's rent — \$35.73, including tax.

Information for this story also was gathered by The Washington Post and The Associated Press.

## FIVE SLAYINGS LINKED TO CUNANAN

**MINNEAPOLIS**, April 29: Police discover the bludgeoned body of Jeffrey Trail rolled in a carpet in the apartment of architect David Madson. Trail, 28, and Cunanan knew each other in San Diego, where Trail was stationed in the Navy. Trail moved to Minneapolis and worked for a gas company.

**RUSH CITY**, Minn., May 3: Madson's body is found by fishermen at a lake north of Minneapolis. Madson, 33, had been shot three times. Police said Madson and Cunanan were once lovers but Madson ended the relationship because he considered Cunanan "shady."

**CHICAGO**, May 4: The body of millionaire real-estate developer Lee Miglin, 72, is found stabbed in the garage of his townhouse. Police find Madson's red Jeep Cherokee near Miglin's home. Miglin's green 1994 Lexus is missing.

**PENNSVILLE**, N.J., May 9: Cemetery caretaker William Reese, 45, is found shot to death in an office at Finn's Point National Cemetery. Miglin's Lexus is found; Reese's 1995 red pickup truck is missing.

**MIAMI BEACH**, July 15: Fashion designer Gianni Versace, 50, is shot twice in the back of the head outside his oceanfront villa. Reese's pickup truck is found in a city garage.