

# Florida suspect probed in unsolved killings of East Coast homosexuals

By Brian Reilly  
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Area homicide investigators are reviewing unsolved murders of homosexuals after a Northern Virginia man was identified as a suspect in at least three such killings in Florida and Georgia, authorities said yesterday.

Gary Ray Bowles, who has lived at various times over the past 15 years in Arlington and Alexandria, is charged with murders in Nassau County, Fla., and Savannah, Ga., and is the top suspect in a Daytona Beach murder, an FBI official said yesterday.

The FBI has alerted police departments up and down the East Coast to be on the lookout for Mr. Bowles, 32, a sometime construction worker and securities firm employee who has been known by several aliases. He has recently stayed in homes in Daytona Beach and Jacksonville, officials said.

Mr. Bowles is suspected in the murders of homosexual men found dead in their homes after leaving a bar with another man.

"There appear to be a number of unsolved homicides that different law enforcement agencies are looking at," said George Wisnovsky, a spokesman for the FBI office in Jacksonville.

Police in the District and Fairfax, Montgomery and Prince George's counties said they are reviewing open cases, but so far have made no links to Mr. Bowles.

The Washington Blade, a gay weekly newspaper, has reported that 25 Washington-area homosexuals have been killed in their homes since Jan. 1, 1989, and that police have made arrests in only 10 of the slayings.

In each of the local cases, the Blade reported, police had no motives for the attacks and found no signs of forced entry to the homes, leading them to believe the victims knew who attacked them.

"The fact that we've had so many murders and so many are unsolved, many people are becoming more careful," said Tom Donegan, co-chairman of Gays and Lesbians Opposing Violence.

The group has passed out fliers warning of the murders and encouraging homosexual men to check with friends or bartenders before going home with anyone they do not know.

Capt. William "Lou" Hennessy, commander of the D.C. homicide branch, said police have no reason at this time to believe Mr. Bowles has killed anyone here, but they are re-examining similar cases just in case.

Capt. Hennessy said three

known homosexuals were slain in the District this year. Arrests have been made in all the cases except the May 9 stabbing of a man in his Northwest home.

Prince George's County police said they are looking into the murders of two homosexuals, including a May 17 shooting in Landover.

But those killings occurred very near the time that police in Florida and Georgia believe Mr. Bowles committed murders in their states. He is wanted for a May 5 Nassau County killing and a May 19 slaying in Savannah.

The Daytona Beach killing in which he is a suspect occurred March 25. The Orlando Sentinel reported that Daytona Beach police began looking for Mr. Bowles after John Hardy Roberts, 59, was found in a pool of blood in the living room of his

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beachside home, killed by a blow to the back of the head.

Mr. Bowles was described as a roommate of Mr. Roberts'.

Mr. Bowles is described as 5 feet 9 inches tall, weighing about 150 pounds, with brown hair and hazel eyes, tattoos on his left wrist and upper left arm and scars on his face and left hand.

He has gone by at least eight aliases, often using similar last names such as Boles or Bolez. He also has been known to use different birthdates and Social Security numbers, sources said.

Police could not say when or where he lived in this area, but he was here at least as long ago as the early 1980s and again in 1984 and 1987, according to court records.

Mr. Bowles was released from jail Jan. 5, 1984, after serving less than two years of a three-year conviction in Virginia for aggravated sexual battery, sources said.

On March 2, 1984, he was arrested in the District for disorderly conduct and marijuana possession. And in 1987, he was arrested in Northern Virginia for drunken driving.

The outcome of those charges could not be learned last night.