



# Two men charged with murder in fatal shootings that rocked Whistler Village

HOMICIDE INVESTIGATORS CONFIRM DEATHS OF MENINDER DHALIWAL AND SATINDERA GILL LINKED TO GANG CONFLICT

BY MEGAN LALONDE

**ANDY CLARK** was sitting in front of Whistler Village's Carleton Lodge waiting to meet a friend for an afternoon hike on Sunday, July 24 when he heard the first shots ring out.

"I didn't know what it was at the start," he said. "I just heard, like, eight loud bangs, and then people started screaming and running. So I just absolutely legged it to the Westin—I ran as fast as I could."

The Vancouver resident and former Whistler local didn't even take the time to grab his bag or phone before fleeing towards the hotel's front desk and informing staff about the gunshots.

Clark soon found himself in an elevator descending towards the underground parking garage alongside a father, son and another couple offering space in their car and a ride away from the chaos.

The group of five hopped in and headed north, stopping at Nicklaus North Golf Course. "We chilled out there for like an hour, because we didn't know what was going on. We just wanted to be out of the village," said Clark.

"I thought it was a mass shooting," he added. "I thought someone was walking around the stroll, knocking people off ... because it was eight shots, it wasn't like 'bang, bang.'"

**SCENE OF THE CRIME** A paramedic on the scene of a fatal double shooting in Whistler Village on Sunday, July 24.

PHOTO BY BRADEN DUPUIS

The gunfire Clark heard was instead intended for a specific target.

Two Surrey men are facing murder charges after Meninder Dhaliwal and Satindera Gill were gunned down in front of the Sundial Hotel on July 24 in what investigators confirmed was a targeted hit linked to ongoing Lower Mainland gang conflict.

Whistler RCMP responded to reports of shots fired at the Sundial Hotel at 12:19 p.m., where they discovered one man dead at the scene and another who succumbed to his injuries a short time later at the Whistler Health Care Centre. Investigators say both victims were known to police.

A vehicle found burning on Ptarmigan Place in Blueberry early Sunday afternoon is also believed to be associated to the crime.

Investigators worked quickly to collect evidence, enabling police to locate and arrest five suspects on the Sea to Sky Highway in Squamish less than an hour after the shooting.

B.C.'s Integrated Homicide Investigation Team (IHIT) confirmed Monday that first-degree murder charges had been laid against Gursimran Sahota, 24, and Tanvir Khakh, 20, on July 25. Both will be held in police custody until their next appearance in North Vancouver provincial court, scheduled for Aug. 4.

In a release, IHIT said investigators are still working to determine the extent of three other suspects' involvement.

IHIT has taken the lead on the investigation and is working closely with the Sea to Sky RCMP, the RCMP Integrated Forensic Identification Services, the BC Coroners Service and B.C.'s gang unit, the Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit

(CFSEU-BC), as the probe continues.

## RMOW ISSUED WHISTLER ALERT TO CALM PUBLIC, CLARIFY THERE WAS NO ACTIVE THREAT

By the time Clark returned to the village about an hour after the shooting, "everything just seemed normal" aside from a few closed businesses, empty chairlifts and a string of police caution tape blocking off the entrance to Sundial Crescent, he said.

His phone was still sitting with his bag where he'd left them in Mountain Square, and the Upper Village Farmers' Market was full of visitors and vendors. Clark ended up catching a ride back to the city with the father and son he met in the elevator, who dropped him off on their way home to Seattle.

"I feel like if you weren't there in the moment and didn't hear the gunshots, you'd just be like, 'Oh, we know it was a gang shooting, we're out of harm's way,'" he said. "But I feel like everyone that was there would have just [ran] out of the village and never come back."

RCMP arrived onsite "within 30 seconds of the 911 call," said Resort Municipality of Whistler (RMOW) CAO Ginny Cullen, while paid-on-call Whistler Fire Rescue Service volunteers attended to the victims and responded to reports of a car set ablaze in Blueberry.

Cullen said RMOW staff received confirmation of the shooting from RCMP at 12:45 p.m. Sunday. "At the time, [police] said it was a static situation," she explained.

Rumours of an active shooter in the village were enough to prompt the municipality to

issue a public notification shortly after 2 p.m., after consulting the RCMP.

"We could see through assessing the situation that there were many people who believed there was an active threat to the public, so we could see that we could be of assistance to the RCMP by using the Whistler Alert system and getting a message out," said Cullen.

Locals can voluntarily subscribe to the municipality's Whistler Alert system to receive short messages with emergency information about threats to public health, safety and property. "We would be using it more in situations like flood or wildfire risk where we may need to be managing an evacuation," explained Cullen, underscoring that only those signed up for the system will receive alerts.

In the event of an active shooter or imminent threat to public safety, the RMOW would not issue a Whistler Alert. It would instead be the RCMP's responsibility to trigger the province-wide emergency alert system as police in Langley did early the following morning, July 25, when a gunman opened fire on homeless people in that community over several hours.

Sunday's notification was sent out "to calm the public and clarify there was no active or ongoing threat," the RMOW explained in a statement Monday. "The alert requested those within the Village Centre to stay away from the delineated area where a police investigation was underway, but otherwise continue on with the day."

Still, some local businesses opted to keep their doors shut Sunday. After initially placing its lifts on standby at 12:47 p.m.,



Whistler Blackcomb announced it would stay closed for the remainder of the day “out of respect” for its guests, staff and others impacted by the shooting.

Said Whistler Mayor Jack Crompton on Tuesday, “I was just extremely impressed with how quickly our organization, the RCMP and business owners snapped into action, [and feel] a sense of gratitude to live in a community where people take care of each other.”

**GANGSTER SHOT DEAD SUNDAY PREVIOUSLY CALLED OUT FOR POSING PUBLIC SAFETY RISK**

Veteran *Vancouver Sun* crime reporter Kim Bolan was first to identify one of the victims of Sunday’s shooting as Dhaliwal, a prominent member of the Lower Mainland-based Brothers Keepers gang.

On May 17, 2021, the Vancouver Police Department (VPD) named Dhaliwal and his brother Barinder as two of six high-ranking gangsters posing “a significant risk” to public safety.

“Our police intelligence leads us to believe that the individuals we have identified today may be targeted by rival gang members,” said VPD Chief Const. Adam Palmer at the time. “My greatest concern right now, related to the ongoing gang violence, is that an innocent bystander will be hurt or killed during a shooting targeting a gangster.”

Dhaliwal and fellow Brothers Keepers gangster Jaskeert Kalkat were suspects in the killing of Karman Grewal, a member of the rival United Nations (UN) gang who was shot dead outside YVR’s departures terminal on Mother’s Day in May 2021. Grewal’s murder—which remains unsolved—took place less than a month after Dhaliwal’s older brother Harb was slain in front of a Coal Harbour restaurant by a hitman on April 17, 2021. Kalkat was gunned down in a Burnaby parking lot on May 13, 2021, four days after Grewal’s death.

The spree of tit-for-tat killings last spring marked an escalation of the gang wars waged in B.C. since the Brothers Keepers first surfaced on the scene in 2017.

The violence cooled down when some gangsters left the province after being identified by police, explained Bolan, “but unfortunately people are back in town.”

Chris Irwin, who Bolan identified as a UN associate, was found dead in Burnaby earlier this month after surviving two recent attempts on his life.

“I don’t really understand why someone like Meninder, who knows he’s targeted, is up partying at Whistler and putting other people at risk,” Bolan said.

People like Dhaliwal’s friend Gill, for example, who was killed alongside the gangster on July 24. A hockey player who worked for a family concrete business and was reportedly in Whistler celebrating his birthday, Gill “was not directly involved in gangland,” said Bolan. “He knows people, obviously, because he was there, but he would not have been the target. He’s now dead and his family is now grieving.”

With gangsters often switching allegiances, the ongoing conflict isn’t as

simple as one gang conspiring against the other, explained Bolan, but “in this particular case, the suspects who have now been charged do have a direct link to the United Nations, and we know that Meninder Dhaliwal had a direct link to the Brothers Keepers.”

Sahota, the 24-year-old accused of murder following Sunday’s shooting, was previously convicted for a string of drugstore robberies committed alongside Grewal in 2019. Khakh does not have any prior charges or convictions.

Dhaliwal’s eldest brother Barinder, known as “Shrek,” has also been a prominent figure in B.C.’s gang underworld for well over a decade, Bolan explained. “He is the last remaining Dhaliwal brother, and we’re hearing he’s pretty devastated and pledging to take revenge, unfortunately,” she told *Pique*.

Bolan said the timing and location of Sunday’s brazen midday hit was likely due to opportunity rather than the desire to make a statement.

“I think people can be reassured that [this kind of gang violence] is not likely to happen [in Whistler] again for some time.”

**SHOOTINGS EXCEEDINGLY RARE IN WHISTLER**

Shootings and other forms of public violence—gang-related or otherwise—remain exceedingly rare in the resort. Exceptions are the fatal stabbings of 26-year-old Henry Stanley Garcia Molina in 2021 and 19-year-old Luka Gordic in 2015, as well as the death of 26-year-old Michael George Boutros in March 2007.

Shane Robert Richard, who was acting as a bodyguard for a known drug dealer and gang associate at the time, was convicted in 2009 of second-degree murder after RCMP officers witnessed him shoot Boutros in front of a village nightclub.

Even still, RMOW officials previously expressed concern that ongoing gang violence would bleed into Whistler, as Sea to Sky North Zone commander Sgt. Sascha Banks told *Pique* last September.

Mounties were in discussion with the municipality and Gibbons Hospitality Group last year to implement an inadmissible patron and bar watch program aimed at keeping known gang members out of resort establishments.

COVID delayed the program’s introduction in 2021, said Sea to Sky Officer-in-Charge Insp. Robert Dykstra in an email, adding that local partners have been “very supportive” of the concept. The challenge, however, is ensuring there is an officer specifically dedicated to the program and not doing it off their side of their desk.

“We are working on trying to find a way to make this program work here in Whistler,” Dykstra added.

In September, Banks also noted that gang members have long been known to visit Whistler as tourists.

Their presence in the community hadn’t necessarily led to an uptick in crimes reported to police, Banks said, “but are there things going on that we may not be aware of? Or are there risks to the public that we just can’t do something about? I would say 100 per cent.”

- With files from Brandon Barrett ■

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