Ex-Boyfriend Kills Woman at Work



She did everything she could to keep him from finding her, but in the end her best wasn’t good enough. A Seattle woman who lived in fear of her ex-boyfriend was fatally shot at her University of Washington workplace, before her killer turned his gun on himself.

Rebecca Griego, a 26-year-old researcher at the university, had moved to a new apartment and changed her telephone number in an effort to elude Jonathan Rowan, 41. She also emailed Rowan’s photograph to co-workers, asking them to watch out for him. Other tactics used by Griego included working from home at times and riding a bicycle to work via different routes. She also obtained a restraining order against Rowan, but police were not able to serve it because they could not find him. The papers were on her desk when she was murdered.

Weeks before killing her, Rowan contacted Griego at work by telephone and made death threats. In early April 2007, he showed up at her workplace and fatally shot Griego before turning the gun on himself.

Colleagues described Griego as being “everyman’s daughter” and praised her loyalty and dedication.

Griego and Rowan had dated and also lived together several years, until a few months ago. She told others he was an alcoholic who had verbally and physically abused her on more than one occasion. He had also threatened to harm Griego and her sister, and their dogs.

The University of Washington Police Department is reviewing the case to see if things could have been handled differently. Think about how you would handle similar threats against one of your employees. Do you have a workplace violence response policy in place? Do all workers know what to do if someone exhibits threatening or violent behavior?

If not, cases such as this one should provide some compelling motivation for protecting employees against all types of hazards – including workplace violence.