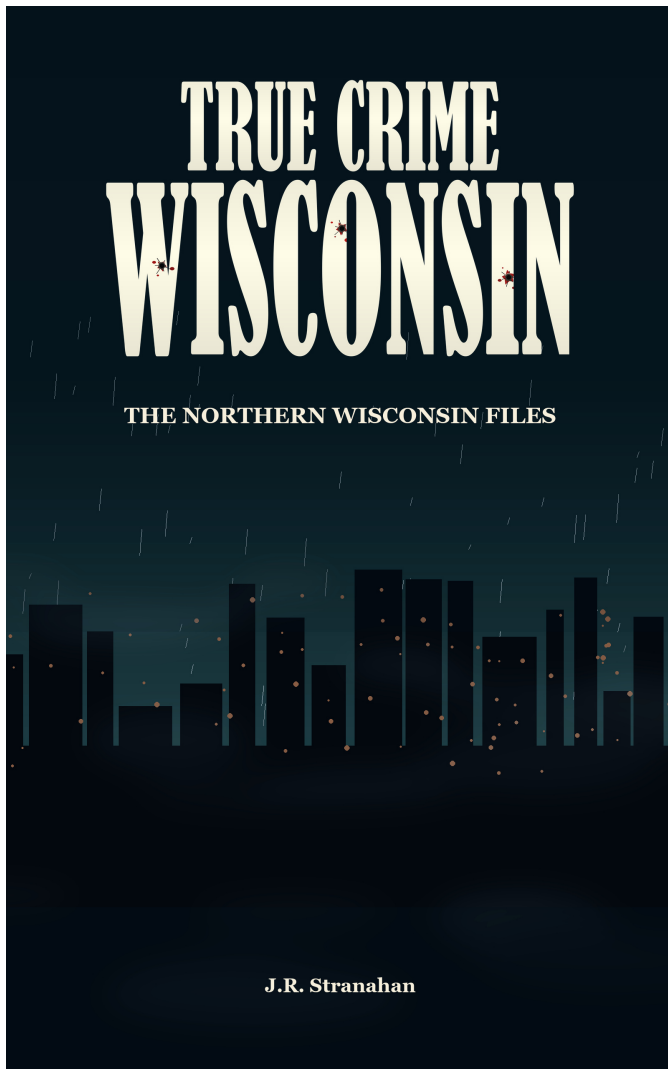




True Crime Wisconsin: The Northern Wisconsin Files

J.R. Stranahan

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The Sawyer County Hunter Murders

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File 1: The Sawyer County Hunter Murders

Place and period: Sawyer County, 2004-2005

Present legal status: Chai Soua Vang was convicted of six counts of first-degree intentional homicide and three counts of attempted first-degree intentional homicide and received six consecutive life sentences plus additional terms.

This file belongs first to Al Laski, Mark Roidt, Dennis Drew, Robert Crotteau, Joey Crotteau, Allan Laski, wounded survivors, and their families. The public record is necessarily organized around investigation and adjudication, but a criminal case is not the measure of a life. The account uses the available record to describe what happened and how institutions responded, while avoiding invented biography where sources are silent.

The human scale

A confrontation occurred during deer season on private land in Sawyer County. That fact is the fixed point for this portion of The Sawyer County Hunter Murders. The account keeps the people harmed, the routines interrupted, and the community consequences in view. In Sawyer County, later retellings sometimes collapse the investigation and the judgment into one continuous story. The public record does not. It preserves the order in which information appeared and the forum in which it was tested. The present legal posture is stated separately: Chai Soua Vang was convicted of six counts of first-degree intentional homicide and three counts of attempted first-degree intentional homicide and received six consecutive life sentences plus additional terms.

For Al Laski, Mark Roidt, Dennis Drew, Robert Crotteau, Joey Crotteau, Allan Laski, wounded survivors, and their families, the procedural

vocabulary cannot be allowed to eclipse consequence. Six hunters were killed and others were wounded. The detail belongs here because it changes the chronology, not because it supplies atmosphere. The account keeps the people harmed, the routines interrupted, and the community consequences in view. Keeping that boundary visible lets the reader understand both the institutional response and the loss that made the response necessary.

The 2004-2005 record from Sawyer County contains a point that resists shorthand: Vang left the scene and was arrested after another hunter assisted officers. The present legal posture is equally specific: Chai Soua Vang was convicted of six counts of first-degree intentional homicide and three counts of attempted first-degree intentional homicide and received six consecutive life sentences plus additional terms. The account keeps the people harmed, the routines interrupted, and the community consequences in view. One proposition may be established while a neighboring proposition remains disputed. Treating them separately is not hesitation; it is accurate reporting.

A headline can make this episode appear settled in a sentence. The underlying record is narrower. The trial examined physical evidence, survivor testimony, and competing accounts of the confrontation. From there, the inquiry moves through source, timing, corroboration, and legal consequence. The account keeps the people harmed, the routines interrupted, and the community consequences in view. None of those steps authorizes invented dialogue or a claim about what Al Laski, Mark Roidt, Dennis Drew, Robert Crotteau, Joey Crotteau, Allan Laski, wounded survivors, and their families privately thought.

Location matters in this file. Sawyer County determined which agencies, courts, and communities carried the case, while 2004-2005 marks the span over which the public learned it. The jury returned separate verdicts for each killed and wounded person. The account keeps the people harmed, the routines interrupted, and the community consequences in view. The result is a chronology with identifiable custodians rather than a collection of free-floating claims.

This part of the account begins with a modest question: what did the cited source actually establish? Its answer is plain: A confrontation occurred during deer season on private land in Sawyer County. The answer does not automatically prove motive, identity, or every charge in the case. The account keeps the people harmed, the routines interrupted, and the community consequences in view. The remaining status is stated without embellishment: Chai Soua Vang was convicted of six counts of first-degree intentional homicide and three counts of attempted first-degree intentional homicide and received six consecutive life sentences plus additional terms.

The case file gives different kinds of information different weight. Six hunters were killed and others were wounded. A contemporaneous observation, a laboratory result, a charging allegation, and an appellate finding do not perform the same job. The account keeps the people harmed, the routines interrupted, and the community consequences in view. Describing those jobs plainly is especially important when the story concerns Al Laski, Mark Roidt, Dennis Drew, Robert Crotteau, Joey Crotteau, Allan Laski, wounded survivors, and their families.

The first account

By the time The Sawyer County Hunter Murders reached public memory, sequence had become easy to lose. The trial examined physical evidence, survivor testimony, and competing accounts of the confrontation. Restoring sequence shows what investigators knew, what prosecutors alleged, what the defense contested, and what a court or jury ultimately resolved. What witnesses reported at the time remains separate from what investigators later inferred. An older headline cannot replace the current status: Chai Soua Vang was convicted of six counts of first-degree intentional homicide and three counts of attempted first-degree intentional homicide and received six consecutive life sentences plus additional terms.

There is no need to enlarge the evidence to make this file serious. The jury returned separate verdicts for each killed and wounded person. That

proposition is consequential on its own. What witnesses reported at the time remains separate from what investigators later inferred. The account therefore avoids borrowing certainty from unrelated defendants, other jurisdictions, or later cases that happen to resemble events in Sawyer County.

The public record speaks most reliably when attribution travels with the claim. Here is the supported proposition: A confrontation occurred during deer season on private land in Sawyer County. The source may recount an allegation, summarize trial proof, or state a judgment, and the language must match that function. What witnesses reported at the time remains separate from what investigators later inferred. That practice protects the accuracy of the case and the dignity of Al Laski, Mark Roidt, Dennis Drew, Robert Crotteau, Joey Crotteau, Allan Laski, wounded survivors, and their families at the same time.

At this stage of the file, absence is also information. The available materials establish this much: Six hunters were killed and others were wounded. They do not establish every rumor that accumulated during 2004-2005. What witnesses reported at the time remains separate from what investigators later inferred. Refusing to bridge those gaps with speculation keeps the unresolved portions visible instead of disguising them as narrative momentum.

Consider the detail in its proper scale: Vang left the scene and was arrested after another hunter assisted officers. It is neither disposable nor self-executing. Its force depends on where it sits among the other records from Sawyer County. What witnesses reported at the time remains separate from what investigators later inferred. A measured account can explain that relationship without turning legal caution into a repetitive disclaimer.

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Building a chronology

The most useful context is the context that changes interpretation. Six hunters were killed and others were wounded. In the Sawyer County record, that detail helps explain why a particular investigative or legal step followed. Dates and sequence preserve the difference between early uncertainty and later knowledge. General crime lore would add volume but not understanding, so it is left outside the account.

The end of a proceeding is not always the end of a case's public life. Vang left the scene and was arrested after another hunter assisted officers. Families, institutions, and communities continued to live with the result after 2004-2005. Dates and sequence preserve the difference between early uncertainty and later knowledge. The legal status is reported in its own terms: Chai Soua Vang was convicted of six counts of first-degree intentional homicide and three counts of attempted first-degree intentional homicide and received six consecutive life sentences plus additional terms. It does not imply that every question or

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Physical evidence

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Witness evidence

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Digital and documentary trails

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Charging choices

By the time The Sawyer County Hunter Murders reached public memory, sequence had become easy to lose. The trial examined physical evidence, survivor testimony, and competing accounts of the confrontation. Restoring sequence shows what investigators knew, what prosecutors alleged, what the defense contested, and what a court or jury ultimately resolved. An indictment states allegations, while a plea or verdict resolves only the counts and defendants actually adjudicated. An older headline cannot replace the current status: Chai Soua Vang was convicted of six counts of first-degree intentional homicide and three counts of attempted first-degree intentional homicide and received six consecutive life sentences plus additional terms.

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The courtroom

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Appeal and review

A headline can make this episode appear settled in a sentence. The underlying record is narrower. The jury returned separate verdicts for each killed and wounded person. From there, the inquiry moves through source, timing, corroboration, and legal consequence. Appellate review addresses claimed legal error on a fixed record rather than conducting a second trial. None of those steps authorizes invented dialogue or a claim about what Al Laski, Mark Roidt, Dennis Drew, Robert Crotteau, Joey Crotteau, Allan Laski, wounded survivors, and their families privately thought.

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The 2004-2005 record from Sawyer County contains a point that resists shorthand: The trial examined physical evidence, survivor testimony, and competing accounts of the confrontation. The present legal posture is equally specific: Chai Soua Vang was convicted of six counts of first-degree intentional homicide and three counts of attempted first-degree intentional homicide and received six consecutive life sentences plus additional terms. Police, prosecutors, defense counsel, courts, laboratories, journalists, and families occupy different roles in the record. One proposition may be established while a neighboring proposition remains disputed. Treating them separately is not hesitation; it is accurate reporting.

A headline can make this episode appear settled in a sentence. The underlying record is narrower. The jury returned separate verdicts for each killed and wounded person. From there, the inquiry moves through source, timing, corroboration, and legal consequence. Police, prosecutors, defense counsel, courts, laboratories, journalists, and families occupy different roles in the record. None of those steps authorizes invented dialogue or a claim about what Al Laski, Mark Roidt, Dennis Drew, Robert Crotteau, Joey Crotteau, Allan Laski, wounded survivors, and their families privately thought.

Location matters in this file. Sawyer County determined which agencies, courts, and communities carried the case, while 2004-2005 marks the span over which the public learned it. A confrontation occurred during deer season on private land in Sawyer County. Police, prosecutors, defense counsel, courts, laboratories, journalists, and families occupy different roles in the record. The result is a chronology with identifiable custodians rather than a collection of free-floating claims.

After the judgment

This part of the account begins with a modest question: what did the cited source actually establish? Its answer is plain: The trial examined physical evidence, survivor testimony, and competing accounts of the confrontation. The answer does not automatically prove motive, identity, or every charge in the case. Later sentencing, review, release, dismissal, or continued investigation can alter legal posture without altering the underlying loss. The remaining status is stated without embellishment: Chai Soua Vang was convicted of six counts of first-degree intentional homicide and three counts of attempted first-degree intentional homicide and received six consecutive life sentences plus additional terms.

The case file gives different kinds of information different weight. The jury returned separate verdicts for each killed and wounded person. A contemporaneous observation, a laboratory result, a charging allegation, and an appellate finding do not perform the same job. Later sentencing, review, release, dismissal, or continued investigation can alter legal posture without altering the underlying loss. Describing those jobs plainly is especially important when the story concerns Al Laski, Mark Roidt, Dennis Drew, Robert Crotteau, Joey Crotteau, Allan Laski, wounded survivors, and their families.

By the time The Sawyer County Hunter Murders reached public memory, sequence had become easy to lose. A confrontation occurred during deer season on private land in Sawyer County. Restoring sequence shows what investigators knew, what prosecutors alleged, what the defense contested, and what a court or jury ultimately resolved. Later sentencing, review, release, dismissal, or continued investigation can alter legal posture without altering the underlying loss. An older headline cannot replace the current status: Chai Soua Vang was convicted of six counts of first-degree intentional homicide and three counts of attempted first-degree intentional homicide and received six consecutive life sentences plus additional terms.

There is no need to enlarge the evidence to make this file serious. Six hunters were killed and others were wounded. That proposition is consequential on its own. Later sentencing, review, release, dismissal, or continued investigation can alter legal posture without altering the underlying loss. The account therefore avoids borrowing certainty from unrelated defendants, other jurisdictions, or later cases that happen to resemble events in Sawyer County.

The public record speaks most reliably when attribution travels with the claim. Here is the supported proposition: Vang left the scene and was arrested after another hunter assisted officers. The source may recount an allegation, summarize trial proof, or state a judgment, and the language must match that function. Later sentencing, review, release, dismissal, or continued investigation can alter legal posture without altering the underlying loss. That practice protects the accuracy of the case and the dignity of Al Laski, Mark Roidt, Dennis Drew, Robert Crotteau, Joey Crotteau, Allan Laski, wounded survivors, and their families at the same time.

At this stage of the file, absence is also information. The available materials establish this much: The trial examined physical evidence, survivor testimony, and competing accounts of the confrontation. They do not establish every rumor that accumulated during 2004-2005. Later sentencing, review, release, dismissal, or continued investigation can alter legal posture without altering the underlying loss. Refusing to bridge those gaps with speculation keeps the unresolved portions visible instead of disguising them as narrative momentum.

Status at manuscript lock

The controlling status for this account is: Chai Soua Vang was convicted of six counts of first-degree intentional homicide and three counts of attempted first-degree intentional homicide and received six consecutive life sentences plus additional terms. That sentence is deliberately narrower than a television summary. It does not merge co-defendants, convert accusations into findings, or imply that an appeal erased a human death. Later proceedings may change the legal posture, but they should not be projected backward onto the record described here.

Sources from the edition

The Sawyer County Hunter Murders

- Wisconsin Supreme Court opinions:

<https://www.wicourts.gov/opinions/sopinion.htm>

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