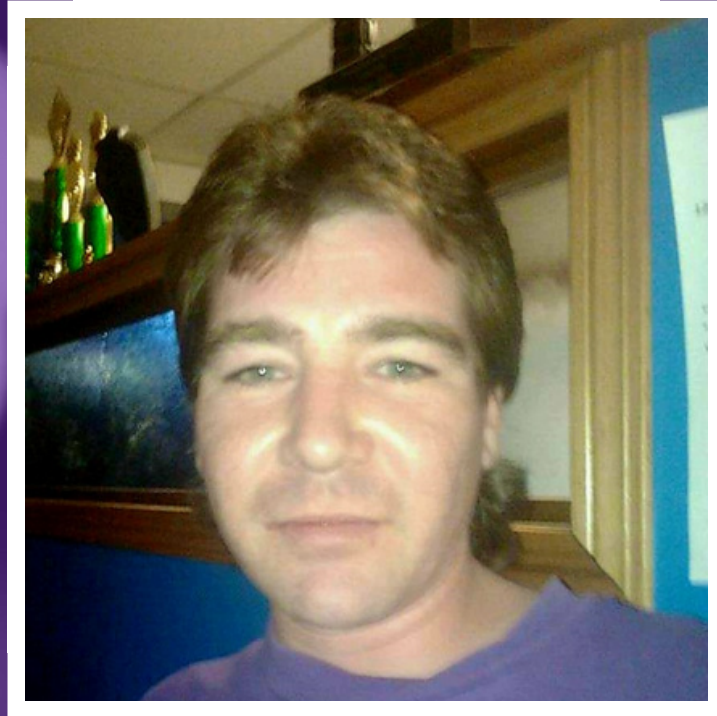




VIOLENCE FREE  
MINNESOTA

# WE REMEMBER JAMES CRAIG KOUTSKY



## THE COALITION TO END RELATIONSHIP ABUSE REMEMBERS JAMES CRAIG KOUTSKY MINNESOTA'S 38TH CONFIRMED VICTIM OF INTIMATE PARTNER HOMICIDE IN 2023

James Craig Koutsky, 47, was shot and killed in Deer River in the early morning hours of June 9. Nigel Blackburn, 33, is charged with second-degree murder. James was with Nigel Blackburn, and a woman who identified herself as previously being in a relationship with Blackburn. The woman also stated that James and Blackburn both had romantic interests in her. The three had dinner on the night of June 8, before James and the woman fell asleep on the couch in her living room. James was awoken by an angry Blackburn who told James to move from the couch. The two men began to argue, and Blackburn eventually pulled out a firearm and shot James. James tried to walk upstairs after the first shot while Blackburn continued to fire. The preliminary medical examination results revealed James was shot five to six times. The woman revealed to police that Blackburn purchased the firearm the same week he killed James, but authorities were unable to locate the firearm. Later on the night of June 9, police were called to Blackburn's Wright County home on a report that he was having a mental health episode. While officers initially cleared the scene, they were called hours later, on the morning of June 10, on reports that Blackburn was holding a kitchen knife and making suicidal statements. He was later transported to a mental health facility in Fargo, North Dakota. Blackburn's wife told officers he had bipolar disorder and schizophrenia.