

THE FACTS ABOUT INDIVIDUALS WHO JUMP FROM BRIDGES IN SPOKANE COUNTY

SPOKANE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE

**“FACTS ARE STUBBORN
THINGS.”**

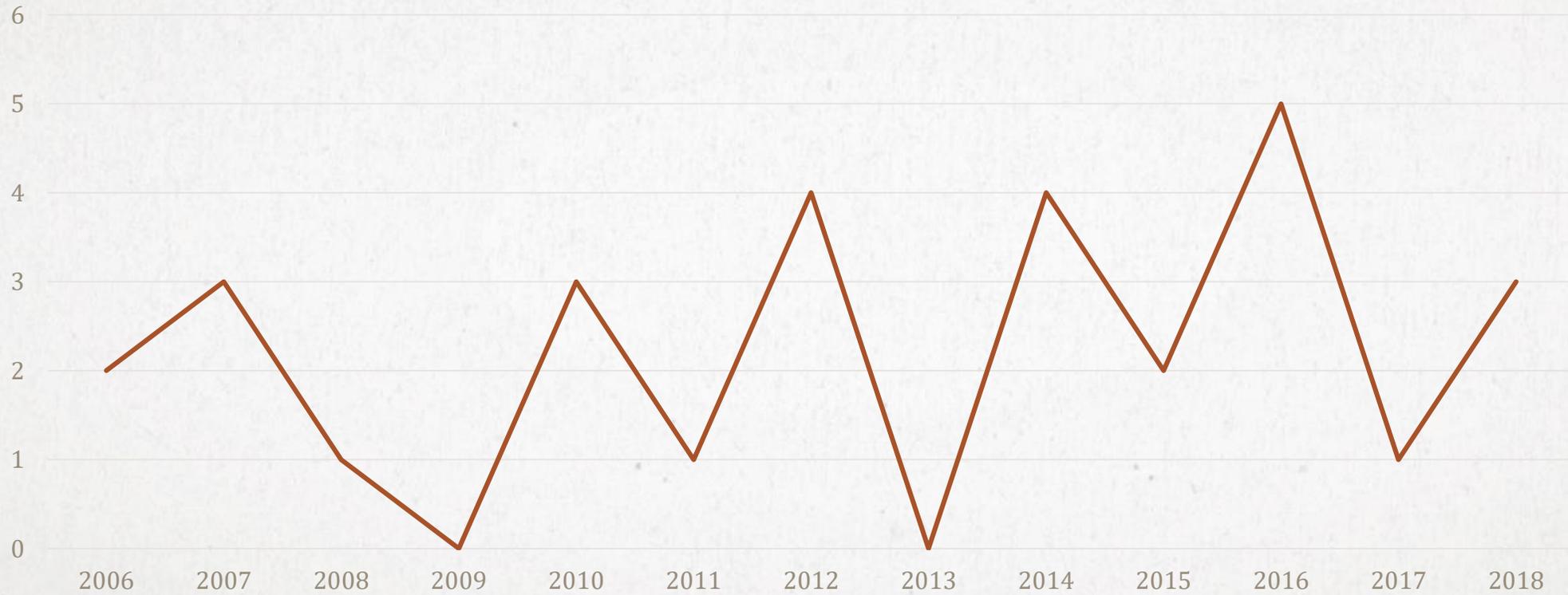
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NOT A UNIQUE PROBLEM TO SPOKANE, THERE IS NO “CONSPIRACY”

- Golden Gate Bridge, San Francisco: 20 jumpers per year
 - Aurora Bridge, Seattle: 3.9 jumpers per year
 - Charleston Harbor Bridges, South Carolina: 6 jumpers per year
 - Spokane bridges: 2.4 jumpers per year
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BRIDGE JUMPERS/YEAR SPOKANE COUNTY

Chart Title



AVERAGE OF 2.4/YEAR, BUT RANGE OF 0-5 PER YEAR

- When suicides are reported in the media, “suicide contagion” can occur, 1-5% of suicides occur as a result of such copycat behavior
 - In 2014, when Robin Williams died, suicides increased by 10% in the months after his death, and there was a sharp increase in hanging deaths (his method of suicide)
 - Media reports of jumpers from Spokane Bridges should be paired with information about suicide prevention
 - Suicide prevention information is posted on the Medical Examiner web page
 - Suicide contagion seems to result in years with clusters of suicides by bridge jumping in Spokane County
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IN 10 YEARS IN SPOKANE, 29 DEATHS FROM JUMPING WITH MANNER OF DEATH “SUICIDE”

- 12 jumped from varying bridges and struck the ground, shore, or water less than 6 inches deep
 - The remaining 17 struck water of the Spokane River, the 17 bodies were all recovered in the Spokane River
 - Of the 17 who struck water, thirteen (13) were either witnessed or recorded on videotape
 - 9/13 that were witnessed and landed in the water of the Spokane River jumped from the Monroe Street Bridge. (The others jumped from other bridges.)
 - 4/17 were not witnessed or video-recorded, but there were compelling reasons to ascribe the manner of death to “suicide”.
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OF THE 12 VIDEOTAPED OR WITNESSED INDIVIDUALS WHO JUMPED FROM A BRIDGE INTO THE SPOKANE RIVER

- The time from witnessed jump to discovery of the body ranged from immediate to 20 days. Most were found within hours
 - 2 jumped after dark, both were found the next day
 - Two were found close to the bridge. 10 were found from 40 to 6000 yards from the bridge
 - There was poor correlation between river flow volume (in cubic feet/second) and both time to body discovery, and distance of body travel
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NO CONSPIRACY HERE EITHER

- Time to discovery of bodies in the Spokane River is dependent on currents, eddies, river debris such as logs, and needing daylight
 - Body discovery is unpredictable because of currents, eddies, and the random chance of being trapped by things such as logs, and rocks for unpredictable periods of time
 - Unlike bodies in stagnant water, such as lakes, bodies don't necessarily submerge then "refloat" to the surface
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IT IS A COMMON MISCONCEPTION THAT INDIVIDUALS WHO JUMP FROM BRIDGES AND LAND IN WATER HAVE NO INJURIES

- Impact velocity from Golden Gate Bridge: up to 87 miles per hour (bridge height from rail to water is 260-261 feet depending on tide)
- Impact velocity from the Aurora Bridge in Seattle: 70 miles per hour (bridge height 164 feet)
- Impact velocity from the Monroe Street Bridge: 63 miles per hour (bridge height from floor to water 135 feet)
- Impact velocity from various bridges in Charleston Harbor varies from 68-74 miles per hour (Bridge heights from 155 to 186 feet)
- Impact velocity from the Brooklyn Bridge is 62-69 miles per hour (depending on jump from bridge deck or bridge cable above 134 to 160 feet)
- **Note: if the estimated “drag” of the human body is added to these calculations the impact velocity declines by 5-10 miles per hour. Thus scientific papers often record the velocity of Golden Gate Bridge jumpers as 74-75 mph on impact.**

MONROE STREET BRIDGE

- Using calculations to estimate the drag of the body (caused by the shape of the human body traveling through air), the impact velocity at the water surface become approximately 57.2 miles per hour.
- It takes approximately 1 ½ seconds to reach the water after jumping from the Monroe Street Bridge deck

STUDIES SHOW THAT THE HUMAN BODY IN FREE FALL LANDS HORIZONTALLY

THIS MEANS THAT THE VELOCITY OF IMPACT IS DISSIPATED RAPIDLY ON LANDING, AS IN A FLAT IMPACT

SO JUMPING FROM BRIDGES CAUSES HIGH VELOCITY, HORIZONTAL IMPACTS IN MOST HUMANS

- It is a fallacy to believe that these individuals should have no injuries, because they land in water
 - Studies of people who jump from bridges such as the Golden Gate Bridge, show that they usually have injuries
 - As expected, these injuries are the type you would get from landing horizontally at high velocity
 - Water is “hard”
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GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE JUMPER INJURIES

- 87% have significant injuries to the chest organs
 - 84% have significant injuries to the organs of the abdomen
 - Up to 14% have fractures of the arms or legs
 - Far fewer have head injuries
 - 77% have multiple traumatic injuries
 - These injuries are consistent with horizontal impacts

 - (reference: Journal of Trauma, see last page)
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INJURIES IN BRIDGE JUMPERS INTO WATER IN CHARLESTON HARBOR

- At least 63% had trauma to the chest, or abdomen
 - About 30% had face or head trauma
 - 15-18% had fractures of arms or legs
 - 56% had multiple locations of trauma
 - 67% drowned
 - Rib fractures are noted to be a common hallmark of bridge jumpers, with velocities over 63 mph
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- (Reference: Forensic Science International, see last page)
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BRIDGE JUMPERS INTO WATER OF THE SPOKANE RIVER DIE OF DROWNING, INJURIES, HYPOTHERMIA, AND COMBINATIONS OF THESE

- 13/13 witnessed or videotaped jumpers had injuries
- 8/12 (67%) had rib fractures (consistent with the expected horizontal impact)
- Excluding those who jumped from other bridges 7/9 (78%) of those who jumped from the Monroe Street Bridge into water had rib fractures. Most had other significant injuries

LOSS OF CLOTHING

- Loss of clothing is common among those who jump from bridges into water
 - Loss of clothing is the result of the force of landing, and turbulence of the water
 - In some of the witnessed jumps, witnesses noted clothing floating to the surface of the water, before seeing the jumper resurface in the water
 - 6/12 had loss of clothing (shirts or pants). 2 others had extensively torn pants, one who lost clothing from the upper body had pants at the ankles. One individual had loss of all clothing.
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**THE TRUTH DOES NOT
CHANGE ACCORDING TO
OUR ABILITY TO STOMACH
IT.**

FLANNERY O'CONNOR

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