



## Domestic Violence Homicides in Massachusetts

January 1, 2019 to Present *(as of December 9, 2019)*

### Domestic Violence Homicide Victim Deaths

**January 5, 2019: Karina Nieves, 24,** and Nelson Cardona, 26 **of Northampton** died in their apartment from gunshot wounds. Investigators are ruling the deaths a murder-suicide. They believe that Cardona shot Nieves before killing himself. The couple had been together for a long time and had three children who are now with family. Nieves worked at a nearby McDonalds and was described as sweet and quiet by her coworkers. She had confided in co-workers that Cardona was abusing her at home, and he often showed up at her workplace to harass her. The couple had recently moved to the U.S. from Puerto Rico after a hurricane. Nieves is survived by family in the U.S. and Puerto Rico, but no further information about the couples' family was released.

**January 13, 2019: Alexis Avery, 20, of Westfield,** was found by police and pronounced dead from multiple stab wounds. Blake Scanlon, 23, of Westfield is suspected of murdering his girlfriend, and faces several charges including murder, assault and battery on a family or household member, and assault and battery with a dangerous weapon. Scanlon was found nearby with self-inflicted wounds and transported to a nearby hospital. Avery had a restraining order two years prior and lifted it when she decided to move in with Scanlon. The couple had a 5-month old daughter. Avery is survived by her parents, sister, great grandparents, and several aunts, uncles, and cousins.

**March 13, 2019: Justine Wilbur, 41, her husband, Luke Karpinski, 41, and their three children, of Sheffield,** were found dead in their home after a fire was extinguished. Berkshire District Attorney, Andrea Harrington stated the deaths are being investigated as murder-suicides. Wilbur was found in a separate room than the rest of the family. Firefighters and investigators believe Karpinski started the fire as he first killed his wife, then children, before lighting the fire that killed him. Two propane tanks were found on the upper floor of the home. Justine Wilbur is survived by her parents, sister, and many friends. She was known as a hardworking and dedicated mother and attorney at Hoffman Warnick. Luke Karpinski was a patent examiner for the U.S. Department of Commerce. He is survived by his father, extended family, and friends.

**April 23, 2019: Debra Blasko, 57, of Northborough,** and her husband Thomas M. Blasko, 57, died in an apparent murder-suicide in their home. According to police reports, there was a "domestic dispute" before Mr. Blasko shot his wife and then himself. The couple has five children, and the two youngest twin teenagers were at home at the time of the shooting. Police responded to a 911 call around 10PM and

pronounced Mr. Blasko dead at the scene. Mrs. Blasko was transported to the local hospital where she was pronounced dead. She ran a state licensed child care facility in their home since 2001.

**May 3, 2019: Telma Bras, 43, of Stoughton,** was stabbed to death by her husband Ilton Rodrigues, 48, in their home. Police responded to a call from a relative who had heard from the older child, age 17, who was at home at the time with the younger sibling, age 7. Rodrigues also left a message for his brother saying he planned to kill himself after having killed his wife. When police arrived they needed to force entry into the apartment and reported that Rodrigues had an "obvious injury consistent with a suicide attempt." The District Attorney said there was no known history of domestic violence. Rodrigues was indicted for murder and remains held without bail.

**May 20, 2019: Alexander Urtula, 22, of Boston** jumped to his death after being psychologically and physically abused by his girlfriend Inyoung You, 21. Both Urtula and You were Boston College students and had been in an 18-month relationship. Originally from New Jersey, Urtula was to graduate the morning of his suicide. On October 18th, You was indicted by a grand jury on a charge of involuntary manslaughter based on evidence gathered from 75,000 text messages revealing months of abuse and explicit encouragement for Urtula to commit suicide, despite being aware of his struggle with depression. You was present at the garage where the suicide took place. The Suffolk County District Attorney sought her extradition and You returned from her native South Korea to face charges.

**May 30, 2019: Shen Cai, 49, of Lexington,** was found unresponsive inside of an SUV on the side of a road after midnight by her friends. When police arrived, Cai was pronounced dead at the scene. The cause of her death was determined to be mechanical asphyxiation, and on June 5, her husband Hongyan Sun, 50, was arrested and charged with her murder. Cai and Sun were in the process of going through a divorce, and Cai had expressed to friends and her attorney that there was a history of verbal abuse and controlling behavior, as well as one prior instance of physical violence. Cai also expressed to friends that she feared for her safety. The investigation process revealed that Cai and Sun had a physical altercation at their home on May 28, 2019 and it is suggested that after the struggle Cai's body was staged and left in her vehicle.

**June 1, 2019: Cleucilene Alves da Silva, 41, of Worcester,** was stabbed to death by her former male partner Antonio Lucas, 40, in her home. Worcester police responded to a call that evening reporting a stabbing. Antonio Lucas was detained by officers as he tried to leave the scene. Upon arrival, officers found Alves da Silva suffering from stab wounds, and she was pronounced dead at the scene. Lucas was arrested and charged with murder. He was held without bail. Alves da Silva, who moved to the United States from Brazil 14 years ago, was identified by her son Lucas Silva.

*\*June 22, 2019: Brandi Berg, 37, of Riverside, Rhode Island, was shot and killed in North Attleboro, Massachusetts, by Steven Fregolle, 32. Berg and Fregolle had previously worked together at a car dealership. Fregolle had expressed romantic interest in Berg, who turned him down. According to prosecutors, Fregolle became "obsessed" with Berg, contacting her friends and family about her whereabouts. Fregolle confronted Berg in the Fashion Crossing Plaza mall parking lot, demanding to know about her current relationship. He approached Berg's car and fired multiple shots through her windshield. Berg was taken to Rhode Island Hospital and pronounced dead shortly after arrival. Fregolle fled the scene, with a warrant soon issued for his arrest. The following day, Fregolle was found in Charlestown, Rhode Island, dead of a self-inflicted gunshot.*

**July 3, 2019: Amanda Dabrowski, 31, of Webster**, was stabbed to death by her ex-boyfriend Carlos Asencio, 28, while Amanda was attending a book club meeting at O’Connors Restaurant & Bar in Worcester. As Dabrowski left the restroom, Asencio stabbed her approximately 15-20 times, holding knives in both hands. Four men ran to restrain him, while a woman in the restaurant identified herself as a paramedic and helped Dabrowski until emergency responders arrived. Dabrowski was rushed to emergency surgery and pronounced dead at 11:42 p.m. After meeting at work, Dabrowski and Asencio dated for three months until Dabrowski ended the relationship in April, angering Asencio. A few days later, Dabrowski fought off a masked attacker in a home invasion; an arrest warrant was issued for Asencio, who crossed into Canada and flew to Mexico. Asencio is being held without bail.

**July 4, 2019: Biquang He, 55, of Dorchester**, died a few days after suffering a stab wound to his neck from his wife Huixian Liu, 46, after a disagreement that took place in Quincy. The couple had allegedly been running an illegal gambling operation out of their basement, which had been shut down by police officers two days prior. On the 4th, He and Liu argued about the decision to let city inspectors and police into the basement to examine the gambling machines, as they had no search warrant. This argument led to a physical altercation where Liu stabbed He; the couple’s daughter was home at the time and witnessed the fight. Liu was arraigned on a charge of armed assault with intent to murder and is being held without bail.

**August 11, 2019: Dora Chaves, 38, of Boston**, was stabbed to death by her husband, Vladir B. Chaves, 43 in their home. He has pled not guilty to the murder charges, despite initial reports that he told police to arrest him when they arrived at the scene. The couple has four children between the ages of 6 and 20 from their blended family. Dora was originally from Lisbon, Portugal. She had contacted the police asking for assistance in removing him from their apartment the day before. She did not report a crime at that time. He left but returned the next day and the two went into a bedroom to talk before witnesses heard screaming and reported seeing Vladir leave the room with blood on his hands.

**September 15, 2019: Jennifer Kalicki, 39, of Tewksbury**, was found dead after her current boyfriend, Eric Griffin, 40, notified police that she was unresponsive. While media reports described bruising and cuts, confirmation of the cause of death has not yet been released. Griffin was charged with one count of assault and battery on a family or household member, and the District Attorney indicated that charges may be updated based on investigation. Police reported that Kalicki, a human resource professional, had contacted Griffin’s sister via text the prior day expressing concern about his behavior and her safety and asking for help.

**September 15, 2019: Heng Seng Tan, of Lowell**, was killed by Hoeup Honn, 38, after attacking his girlfriend who lived in the same building. Tan was found by police with “obvious signs of facial injury” after responding to a call that a woman had been kidnapped and harmed. Later identified as Honn’s ex-girlfriend, she described being raped repeatedly by him before managing to escape. Tan had recently moved in to the apartment building; he is remembered as a loving grandfather and caring member of the Cambodian community. Hoeup Honn, 38, was initially arrested on charges of kidnapping, aggravated rape, and assault and battery causing bodily injuries. He described strangling Tan and putting a blanket over him after he was dead. A dangerousness hearing and prosecutors expect charges to be elevated to murder. Before breaking into her home, he damaged her car. Honn and the domestic violence victim

dated for three years and broke up in December 2018. Back in February 2019, a warrant had been issued for a domestic violence against Honn.

**October 3, 2019: Jennifer Vazquez-Rivera, 34, of Worcester,** was found in her apartment with multiple stab wounds after police responded to a call. Her former boyfriend, Thomas Bergstrom, 36, was charged with assault and battery with a dangerous weapon in connection with the stabbing. According to court records, police put out a warrant for Bergstrom based on a witness who reported hearing Vazquez-Rivera scream and seeing a male holding a knife leave the building. Bergstrom is also facing charges in an unrelated case pulling a knife on a woman and threatening to kill her before sexually assaulting her. Vazquez-Rivera was described by friends as a loving mother and friend. They also reported that they had shared concerns about Bergstrom and she may have been trying to leave him.

**October 7, 2019: Deirdre Zaccardi, 40, along with her three children Alexis, 11; Nathaniel and Kathryn, 9, of Abington,** were found shot to death by police after responding to a call. According to the prosecutors, Deirdre's husband Joseph Zaccardi, 43, shot his wife and children before killing himself. Deirdre worked for nearly twenty years at EMI Strategic Marketing and was an active volunteer in the community. Her children were students of the local public school system.

**October 18, 2019: Jason Swedberg, 40, of Worcester,** was found suffering from stab wounds to his torso and later succumbed to the injuries. His girlfriend, Jennifer Algarin, 32, was arrested on charges of assault and battery with a dangerous weapon causing serious bodily injury. Several years ago, Algarin faces charges of domestic assault and battery and was placed on probation for one year. She was again arrested in May of 2019 but those charges were dropped. Her family has raised questions regarding mental health issues that Algarin has been suffering.

**October 20, 2019: Mary Fairbairn, 57, of Groton,** was found dead inside her home. Her husband, Gregory Fairbairn, 62, called the police to report that she was unresponsive. He was arrested and reportedly told police he admitted to stabbing his wife. According to media accounts, the police report Fairbairn told police he had been diagnosed with bipolar disorder and hadn't taken his medicine in five months. He was initially charged with assault and battery with a dangerous weapon and later with one charge of murder. He was held without bail pending a preliminary evaluation to determine competency to withstand trial.

**October 21, 2019: Jamee Ammons-Maddrey, 27, of Framingham,** was found stabbed to death in her home. Her boyfriend Christopher McKoy, 25, was charged with murder and assault and battery with a dangerous weapon causing seriously bodily injury in connection with the death. Police arrived after receiving a request for wellness check. McKoy was arrested Monday in Boston for trying to remove a GPS monitoring device he was wearing from a separate case in Suffolk County and is expected to be arraigned on Tuesday in regards to Ammons-Maddrey's death.

**October 22, 2019: Name not yet released:** A 41-year-old man was found dead by police after responding to a 911 call in Lowell. It appears that after attacking a 33-year-old woman with a knife in their home, he stabbed himself to death. Details forthcoming.

**November 3, 2019: Shanike Roldan, 34 of Springfield,** was shot to death by Anthony Potito, 51. Potito accused her of lying about his paternity of two of her children and of infecting him with a sexually

transmitted disease. Potito chased her through city streets and alley ways before fatally shooting her, according to witnesses. Potito is charged with murder, carrying a firearm without a license and discharging a firearm within 500 feet of a dwelling, among other offenses.

**November 15, 2019:** The name has not yet been released of the man killed by police who responded to an active domestic violence situation in Westborough. According to initial reports, the man was attempting to kill his wife when police arrived. More details are not yet available.

**December 1, 2019:** Charli Cook, 44, of North Adams succumbed to injuries she suffered on July 11 in an attack by her husband Michael Cook. Charli had been hospitalized for the past few months. Michael had been kept in jail under the dangerous statute and faced charges of assault to murder, assault and battery by means of a dangerous weapon, assault and battery on a household member, and armed assault with intent to murder. The District Attorney will seek to upgrade the charges to murder. Michael Cook has two decades of arrest records including a dozen restraining order violations, and he served time in state prison after pleading guilty to child rape charges in 2011.

*\*Note regarding June 22 homicide: While both the homicide perpetrator and victim resided in Rhode Island, we included the narrative for this homicide because it took place in Massachusetts.*