



Massachusetts Domestic Violence Homicide Narratives
January 1, 2015 – December 31, 2015

January 5, 2015: Yahaira Hernandez, 30, of Springfield was found dead in a running car. Officers say she appeared to be sleeping but upon closer inspection, they discovered she had been fatally shot. Police say this was an apparent act of domestic violence. The perpetrator Pedro Vasquez, 40 was charged with murder in connection to the killing. He was also charged with discharging a firearm within 500 feet of a dwelling, possession of a firearm in the commission of a felony, and carrying a loaded firearm.

February 5, 2015: Lisa Trubnikova, 31, of Bourne was fatally shot by Adrian Loya, a fellow Coastguard coworker. Loya had been obsessed with Trubnikova for years, according to family members, starting when they were stationed in Kodiak, Alaska together. While there is no indication that Trubnikova and Loya were ever intimately involved, his obsession reportedly intensified after Trubnikova and her wife Anna got married. Loya rented a motel room near the Trubnikova's home in Bourne and allegedly planted fake bombs as well as set a car on fire to deter the police while he invaded the Trubnikova's home with two firearms. When police arrived, he also shot at Officer Jared MacDonald. Lisa was killed while her wife Anna and Jared both suffered from serious injuries.

February 11, 2015: Kathryn Mauke, 17, of Springfield was stabbed to death by her ex-boyfriend. When officers arrived at her home, she had sustained multiple stab wounds. They provided her with first aid until medical personnel arrived, at which point she was pronounced dead. There was no sign of forced entry into the home. Detectives working on the case brought in Mauke's ex-boyfriend, Nickolas T. Lacrosse, 20, for questioning. After being questioned, he was charged with the murder.

February 15, 2015: Omar Mendez, 39, of Lawrence was fatally stabbed at his apartment on Haverhill Street by his once live-in boyfriend, Miguel Rivera, 50. The two had recently broken up but Rivera did not want the relationship to end. Police had to break down the door in response to a 9-1-1 stabbing call to get in. Mendez was pronounced dead at the scene and found Rivera with self-inflicted wounds. The prosecutors laid out evidence that Rivera stabbed Mendez 13 times after arguing with Mendez about a call he received from another man. On June 23, 2016, Rivera was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole after a jury found him guilty of first degree murder.

March 11, 2015: Salina Merritt, 29, of Springfield was fatally stabbed allegedly by Erick Buchanon, 46. During the incident, Buchanon also stabbed two other people, including his girlfriend; both survived the attack. Merritt had one daughter and two sons.

March 18, 2015: Michelle Batista, 31, of Framingham was fatally shot by her boyfriend, Allen Murphy, 27, who then committed suicide. The two were found in their apartment. Batista's

mother had not been able to contact her daughter and called for a well-being check. Neighbors said they would hear the two constantly fighting almost every night for the past few months.

March 27, 2015: Donna Buonanduci, 45, of Peabody divorced her husband Joseph Buonanduci in February. According to relatives, Joseph became very angry with the way assets were split up. After talking to more relatives, press discovered that Joseph was no longer allowed to drive due to his alcoholism and recent suicide attempts. When Donna dropped by Joseph's home with their dog and to pick up some clean sheets for their 17 year-old son, Joseph allegedly beat her using a hammer and a bat. Their son and his maternal grandfather called the police on Friday night after he had not heard from his mother and father and saw blood on the floor.

May 5, 2015: Monique Van Zandt, 25, of Springfield was allegedly fatally stabbed multiple times by her boyfriend Van Dorsey Jr., 27. A court psychiatrist testified that Dorsey was a regular PCP user and was under the influence on the night of the incident. Dorsey claims to hold no memory of the incident. Court records show that another woman had a request for a restraining order against Dorsey but was rejected. This woman wrote in her affidavit of their violent relationship over the last several years.

May 17, 2015: Christine Giordano, 45, of Wakefield was stabbed to death in an apartment complex where her estranged husband, Daniel Burns, 42, had been living with a relative. Giordano had apparently come to the apartment in an effort to reconcile. Burns had restraining orders against him, though none were taken out by Giordano. Giordano was stabbed multiple times to the torso; shortly after, Burns stabbed himself before leaping to his death from the apartment window.

June 16, 2015: Cherry Young, 55, of Peabody was stabbed in the heart by her long-time live-in boyfriend Brandon Hoar, 59. Hoar claims he had been trying to protect Young's 5 year-old granddaughter from Young, who suffers from bipolar disorder. He tried punching her in the face and chest, then slashing at her with a knife. He alleged that none of those things stopped her, so he stabbed her in the chest.

July 14, 2015: Matilde Gabin, 33, of Lawrence, was shot to death in her driveway by her estranged husband, Nelson Delarosa, 65, who then committed suicide. Delarosa faced assault charges against Gabin dating back to 2006 and as recently as December 2014. On June 12, 2015, Gabin filed for divorce and was seeking custody and child support; a previous petition for divorce in 2009 had been withdrawn. On the day of the murder, the couple was in court regarding a restraining order granted on June 23 that was requested by Delarosa. The district court judge ordered them to stay apart, finding "both parties present a danger to each other." They had been married for twelve years and had a 10-year-old son. Gabin had another child who is 19.

September 2, 2015: Kate Church, 31, of Georgetown, was found dead in her home after police responded to a wellness check requested by her father. The week prior, her husband Matthew Church, 33, was arrested and held on bail on charges of assault and battery on a family member. He claimed that she had been drinking and fell and hit her chin. The police arrested Church after their investigation found no evidence of drinking but did detect signs of physical violence. She refused medical treatment despite being told of possible internal injuries. Murder charges are pending the autopsy report.

November 8, 2015: Donna Cucinotta, 55, of Lynn, was found dead in her apartment after police responded to a wellness check. Police found the body of Cucinotta in her Lynn apartment and said her boyfriend, James Woodbury, was also in the apartment watching TV. Woodbury had been arrested seven times since 2012, and charged with domestic abuse against Cucinotta. Authorities say that Woodbury had told another woman that he had hurt his girlfriend, that woman subsequently told police.

November 21, 2015: Edith Black-Scherer, 45, of Beverly passed away from injuries sustained in attack by her husband, Axel Scherer, 45. On November 16th, Axel turned himself into police, alleging he “killed his wife;” he was charged with assault with intent to murder, strangulation, and assault and battery on a family or household member. Officers arrived at the family home to find Ms. Scherer unconscious, with a pillow over her head and string around her neck. Ms. Scherer was rushed to the hospital and remained in critical condition until her passing. Scherer’s charges were upgraded to first degree murder. The couple, who were in the process of divorcing, has two children.

November 28, 2015: Jennifer Best, 30, of West Springfield was stabbed to death by an acquaintance, Christen Longley. Longley, who was charged with murder and assault and battery with a dangerous weapon, had a past relationship with Best’s current boyfriend. Two days before the stabbing, Longley wrote a note to her ex-boyfriend of 15 years stating “Sorry I had to do this. But I knew you were gone for good. She took my life so I take hers.” Best is survived by her husband and two young sons, ages 7 and 9.

December 7, 2015: Anthony Sinclair, 28, of Dorchester was found dead in his apartment after sustaining multiple stab wounds to his chest. Valerie Cirilo-Perez, the victim’s girlfriend, was charged after admissions she allegedly made to police that she committed the stabbing as an act of self-defense. Cirilo-Perez was pursuing an associate’s degree in business at Bunker Hill Community College, and was looked highly of by her colleagues and mentors. Sinclair’s death marks the tragic end to a trouble filled relationship, well documented through arguments heard by neighbors and Cirilo-Perez’s social media posts.

December 10, 2015: Halena Irene Gill, 37, of Pittsfield died after being strangled in the apartment she shared with her husband, Timothy Gill. Timothy Gill was found unconscious in a car accident, and after police failed to contact Halena for 24 hours, they went into her home where the 37 year-old’s body was found. Following an investigation, Gill allegedly admitted to killing his wife after a violent dispute. Gill was arraigned and pled not guilty to the murder charge.

Domestic Violence Perpetrator Deaths

February 14, 2015: Thomas E. Colburn III (S), 51, of Hopkinton died of an apparently self-inflicted gunshot wound after a handgun battle with Christian Nealon, 48. Colburn approached Nealon and Colburn’s wife in the back parking lot of the Holiday Inn Express in Milford. Eventually Nealon and the woman retreated into the hotel where they called for help, and Colburn was found in his car, suffering from a self-inflicted wound. Both men were taken to Milford Hospital, where Colburn was declared dead. Nealon was released after being treated. No charges have been brought. Colburn and his wife were married but separated.

February 17, 2015: Douglas Sparks (D), 30, of Tewksbury was fatally shot by police after a knife incident with two employees outside the Salter School. The two employees, one of whom Sparks had previously dated, had driven to work together at the school when an argument ensued with Sparks. Sparks slashed their tires and broke a window before stabbing both employees. He dragged the female employee in the parking lot before fleeing. The victims were stabbed in the hands and arms; they survived the wounds. Sparks did not comply with police orders and brandished what appeared to be a handgun, prompting the officers to shoot. It was later discovered to be a pellet gun.

March 27, 2015: Neil J. Seifert (D), 46, of Charlton was fatally shot by police officers after he had fired a gun towards them. Seifert had faced prosecution for domestic violence involving his on and off again girlfriend of the past nine years after punching, kicking, and pouring a bottle of vodka on her. The girlfriend objected to the stay-away order, writing ‘I don’t want to see him get arrested because of this.’ Another woman, the mother of his two children, had placed restraining orders against him after he had threatened to kill her. On the night of his death, Seifert went around to his loved ones’ houses, kissed his sons goodbye and reportedly said “he was done, signing out,” according to an anonymous relative. He then allegedly went to his girlfriends’ house and assaulted her. He fled in her car to his own home, broke into a case containing a shot gun, and attempted to return to his girlfriend’s house after struggling for the gun with his stepfather. His stepfather then called the police. Seifert and the police met outside his girlfriend’s house. He was shot after having fired two shots at the officers. “He wasn’t going back there to shoot [his girlfriend]. He was probably going to shoot himself,” said the anonymous relative.

June 11, 2015: Cedric Taylor, 37, of Leominster was released from the Worcester County House of Correction after he had been awaiting trial on a domestic assault and battery charge against his girlfriend, Stephanie Cruz, 28, who did not show up in court. The next morning, Cruz called 9-1-1 to turn herself in for stabbing Taylor in the stomach the previous night.

November 21, 2015: Kevin J. Murray, 48, of Norton was found dead from an apparent gunshot wound at a home in Norton. Norton police were called to a home for a report of a man trying to open a safe containing a handgun and screaming women, Murray’s girlfriend. Responding officers were shot at through a first floor window as they approached the home, officers returned fire. With a robot designed for the MA Police Bomb Squad, police were able to enter the home where they found Murray dead. An autopsy later determined Murray’s death a suicide.

December 6, 2015: Brandon Leonardo, 24, of Swansea died from self-inflicted gunshot wounds after allegedly firing a rifle inside his ex-girlfriend’s house during a domestic disturbance. Leonardo, an ex-Marine, went to a Swansea home and threatened his ex-girlfriend. Leonardo was outside the property when two men at the home intervened. Leonardo took out a handgun and fired a round off aimed above their heads. Leonardo fled to his home and indicated he was “going to get into a firefight with police”, multiple authorities responded to the scene. After police heard gunshots, they found Leonardo dead in his home.