



Domestic Violence Homicides in Massachusetts

January 1, 2019 to Present (*as of July 10, 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, dies 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 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 Darbrowski, 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 Darbrowski 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 Darbrowski until emergency responders arrived. Darbrowski was rushed to emergency surgery and pronounced dead at 11:42 p.m. After meeting at work, Darbrowski and Asencio dated for three months until Darbrowski ended the relationship in April, angering Asencio. A few days

later, Darbrowski 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.

**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..*