

Press-Enterprise, The (Riverside, CA)

June 9, 2004

Edition: SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY; HEMET NEWS; CORONA-NORCO; MORENO VALLEY
; RIVERSIDE

Section: LOCAL

Page: B01

Topics:

Index Terms:

CRIME

MURDER

KIDNAPPING

CHILDREN

A 3-YEAR-OLD GIRL IS SAFE AFTER HER FATHER KILLED HER MOTHER // Standoff ends in death // MEAD VALLEY: Deputies fatally shoot a man who stabbed his wife and kidnapped his child.

Author: NATHAN MAX, ELENA ARNOLD AND GAIL WESSON; THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

Article Text:

MEAD VALLEY

A 3-year-old girl lost both parents Tuesday when an ongoing case of domestic violence ended with her father fatally stabbing her mother and then being shot to death by police after a long standoff.

Police killed Gilberto Alicea, 30, after he barricaded himself inside his Mead Valley home with his daughter, Zelia, for almost nine hours. The girl was unharmed.

Officials said Alicea kidnapped the girl from her San Bernardino area home after stabbing his estranged wife, Toni Alicea, 25.

"They've had problems in the past. She's had restraining orders against him," said Kristine Higginbotham, 30, Toni Alicea's sister. "My sister didn't deserve this."

Gilberto Alicea broke a window about 3:30 a.m. and entered a home in the 5900 block of Blythe Avenue, in an unincorporated area within San Bernardino, where his daughter and estranged wife lived with relatives, said San Bernardino County sheriff's Sgt. Bobby Dean.

Alicea stabbed his wife with a knife, grabbed Zelia and fled to a home in the 23000 block of Norrisgrove Drive in Mead Valley, where he lived with his parents, Dean said.

A Riverside County sheriff's deputy saw Alicea's car entering the garage at the home, said Sgt. Shelley Kennedy-Smith. A short time later, a woman came out of the house and said that Alicea was inside.

A hostage negotiator spoke with Alicea and tried to persuade him to surrender, Kennedy-Smith said.

About 12:30 p.m., members of the Riverside County Special Enforcement Bureau rushed into the garage, shooting Alicea. He was taken to Riverside County Regional Medical Center, where he died a short time later.

Kennedy-Smith said the decision to enter the home was made after hours of talks had failed to end the conflict.

"We have a little child's life at stake," she said.

She said she did not know whether Gilberto Alicea was armed.

Higginbotham said her sister, a varsity softball and basketball player in high school, was a happy-go-lucky girl who loved to joke around.

"She was planning on going into the military after high school, but then she met Gilberto,"

Higginbotham said. "That changed everything."

Higginbotham said the couple knew each other about two months before they were married in 1999.

"She ran off to Vegas with him and got married and didn't even tell anybody," she said.

Genevieve Ibarra-Delatore, Toni's aunt, said Gilberto loved Zelia, but tried to keep her and his wife from seeing their family.

"He's a control freak," said Ibarra-Delatore, 39. "If he doesn't have things his way, he's going to get it someday, somehow."

Court records show that Gilberto Alicea was charged with misdemeanor spousal battery in April 2002.

In February 2003, Toni Alicea filed for divorce and requested a restraining order against her husband, records show.

In court documents, she cited numerous occasions in which she said Gilberto hit her, verbally abused her and threatened to kill her if she told anyone what had happened.

Gilberto Alicea was ordered to leave the couple's Riverside home and stay at least 100 yards from his wife and child.

About the same time, Gilberto Alicea was charged with a felony: dissuading a witness - his wife - with corporal injury, records show.

He pleaded guilty in March 2003 to the felony and a judge ordered him to serve 365 days in jail.

He was ordered to complete a counseling program and a 52-week domestic-violence program.

He was scheduled to complete the program this fall.

Toni Alicea asked that the restraining order be removed last September, writing on the petition that she wanted her husband to be a part of their daughter's life.

She still wanted a divorce, though, said relatives. They said that may have been what drove Alicea to kill his wife.

"She wanted to separate from him and do her own thing," said Higginbotham.

However, Mark Fountain said he cannot imagine what led his brother-in-law to kill his wife.

"I guess he had a lot of things going on in his head that you just don't know for it to come to a thing like this."

Caption:

VALERIE BERTA/THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE / (1) Riverside County Special Enforcement Bureau officers come out of a house in Mead Valley, where a 3-year-old girl was taken hostage by her father after he killed her mother in San Bernardino. [B

M] (2) A member of the Riverside County Special Enforcement Bureau carries Zelia Raquel Alicea, 3, out of her grandparents' Mead Valley home.

PHOTOS

Memo:

PHOTO (1) RAN B;M ONLY

Copyright (c) 2004 The Press-Enterprise Co.