

Man kills ex-girlfriend, himself

By [Robert Zullo](#)

City Editor

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PIERRE PART — A 51-year-old man killed himself after gunning down his ex-girlfriend Tuesday morning at the Pierre Part restaurant where she worked, police said.

A restaurant patron who exchanged shots with the killer was wounded.

Paul French, 114 Derrick St. Lot B, walked into Landry's Seafood restaurant on La. 70 about 10:30 a.m. and opened fire, killing 42-year-old waitress Michelle Borer, 134 Mary Ann St. Lot A, Assumption Parish Sheriff Mike Waguespack said.

The couple had a history of domestic violence, authorities said, and he was under court order to stay away from her.

A customer, who restaurant owners and neighbors identified as Robert Nagin of Pierre Part, shot French in the chest and was himself shot in the abdomen, police said. Five employees, including Borer, were inside the restaurant when French started firing, the owners said, though no other injuries were reported.

Borer, a mother of three adult children, was shot multiple times and killed near the restaurant's back door as she tried to escape, police said.

French shot himself in the head in an adjacent backyard after he was wounded by Nagin, who was legally carrying a concealed pistol, Waguespack said.

Nagin was taken to Thibodaux Regional Medical Center and was in stable condition Tuesday night, authorities said. No charges will be filed against Nagin, Waguespack said.

Nagin, a single retiree who moved to Pierre Part seeking a tranquil spot by the bayou, eats lunch at the restaurant daily, friends said.

"He went there every morning to sit and visit with the people who worked there," said Christine Justilian, 41. She said Nagin is in his early 60s and frequently cuts grass for neighbors who can't manage for themselves.

"It didn't surprise me that he stepped in," she said. "It's really sad that everything happened."

The shooting came 11 days after French was released from jail on a \$5,000 bond. He was arrested May 4 on a warrant issued after he violated a protective order obtained by Borer, Pierre Part Justice of the Peace Bridget Landry said.

Borer documented several voicemails and text messages left by French in violation of the order, Landry said. French also called Borer's phone while she was in Landry's office, the justice of the peace said.

French was released from the Assumption Parish jail May 6 and ordered to stay away from Borer, Waguespack said.



As a crime-scene unit and detectives finished their work at Landry's Tuesday afternoon, stunned coworkers and owners said Borer was a well-liked fixture at the family restaurant, where she'd worked for about eight years.

"She was a wonderful lady. She kept everybody smiling," said restaurant manager Ashley Landry, 28. "I'm so hurt right now. ... She was part of our family."

Many were worried by French's behavior, which included incessant phone calls and frequent visits to the restaurant.

"He always said he would kill her," said a distraught Ceola Landry, who owns the restaurant with her husband, Buddy, son Keith and other relatives.

French was convicted of cocaine possession in 2006 and was on probation at the time of his death, court records show.

Borer's coworkers and a relative said French worked for Settoon Construction in Belle River, a business that includes fabrication, barge-and-equipment rental and other oilfield services. A message left with the company's answering service was not immediately returned.

Ashley Landry said she and her husband were friendly with Borer and French until the couple split nearly a year ago.

"He did not want to let her leave," Landry said. "I didn't think he was going to do this."

The day she died, Borer talked nonstop about her daughter getting her GED, Landry said, adding that whatever money Borer had went to her children.

"She was one of the best," Landry said. "She didn't deserve that."

Renee Collingwood, Borer's former coworker and one-time neighbor, said Borer and French were together about eight years.

"This man was a lunatic," she said. "She went through a nightmare with this man."

Reached by phone Tuesday night, French's son in Gonzales refused to speak with a reporter.

Borer's son, 22-year-old Stephen Murphy of White Castle, said he was crawfishing when got the call that his mother had been killed. Sitting dazed outside her trailer Tuesday afternoon, Murphy said French continuously threatened his mother, showed up frequently to bang on the door of her trailer and had abused her in the past.

Murphy blamed authorities for letting French out of jail.

"Why let somebody like that on the street?" he said.

Waguespack said authorities did what they could to protect Borer, noting that deputies arrested him for violating the protective order.

"It's a very tragic end to a situation that obviously was an escalation of domestic violence," Waguespack said. "We made an arrest on a phone call made to her. ... He was given a bond by the judge, and this is the end result. ...It's definitely frustrating."

As he stood outside the restaurant his family has owned for nearly 40 years, Buddy Landry looked at the spray-paint left by investigators to mark spots where blood spilled onto the concrete. Things like this happen in other towns, not Pierre Part, he said.

“How can you stop something like that?” he said. “He pulled up and walked in and started shooting.”

Staff Writer Eric Heisig contributed to this report. Robert Zullo can be reached at 448-7614 or robert.zullo@houmatoday.com.

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