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Victim's Brother-in-Law Charged in Fatal Shooting – Woman Killed at Family's Eatery

By Kenneth A. Gailliard, The Sun News

The man authorities say gunned down the manager of a small, family-owned restaurant Sunday was the woman's brother-in-law, Myrtle Beach police said.

Police charged Chukrallah Aliah Yaghi, 38, of Surfside Beach, with murder.

He is accused of killing Miray Saad, 40, in the parking lot of Brant's Restaurant Ice Cream, 406 Third Ave. S. Police have not given a motive for the slaying.

Saad is the 12th homicide victim in Horry County this year, including vehicular homicides, according the county coroner's office.

Five homicides were reported in Horry County between Jan. 1 and May 8, 2004.

Saad also became the fourth fatal victim of domestic violence in about a month in Horry and Georgetown counties.

"Women are more likely to victimized by someone they know while men are more likely to be killed by people they don't know," said Christina Walsh, communication director for the National Center for Domestic and Sexual Violence in Texas.

She also said that when weapons are available in domestic-violence incidents, the likelihood for injury is greater.

"The mere presence of a weapon increases the likelihood of injury or death," she said.

On April 8, Georgetown County sheriff's deputies found Laura Ling dead and a teenage girl injured and sexually assaulted in her home in Murrells Inlet. Police have charged Ling's former boyfriend Stephen Stanko in that incident. Stanko also is charged in the death of a Conway man.

Horry County police found the bodies of Diane and Charles Parker on April 12 in their home in Nixonville. Charged in those deaths are Bambi Bennett and her boyfriend Richard Gagnon. Bennett is Diane Parker's daughter and Charles Parker's stepdaughter.

On Sunday, witnesses reported hearing Saad and Yaghi shouting outside Brant's just before shots rang out.

A Myrtle Beach police investigator was among those who heard shots, police said. The officer rushed to the restaurant, where he found Saad on the ground and Yaghi still at the scene.

Police said several people identified Yaghi as the shooter and he raised his hands and began yelling "I did it; I did it." He then was arrested.

Saad's neighbors described her as a quiet, polite and friendly mother of two young boys.

She lived off Kings Highway in the Pine Lakes Townhomes community.

"You can't imagine anything like this happening to them," said Charlie Lafferty, Saad's neighbor. "They are very nice people. They always seemed to do things together as a family."

Saad's family and their restaurant are well-known by some annual visitors to the beach.

Harley Drew and his wife frequently have visited Myrtle Beach since 1965 and said they have eaten at Brant's once a day on each of their visits.

They arrived in Myrtle Beach for a week visit Monday and went to Brant's only to find it closed.

Someone in the parking lot told them about the shooting, Drew said.

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