

Tragic tale of suicide unfolds after car crash on 101

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Shortly before Marlon Gordillo Sical sped down the Ventura Freeway and apparently shot himself, he sent a text message to one of his best friends, Stacy Blanco, who was sitting next to the hospital bed of his dead girlfriend.

"If you can just tell ma parents goodbye ... stacy take care of ma baby OK," he wrote.

It was 7:44 Sunday morning. By 8:15 a.m., a passer-by called the California Highway Patrol to report a white sedan - Sical's - that had flipped over on the 101 near Van Nuys Boulevard in Sherman Oaks.

When officers arrived, they found Sical, a student at California State University, Northridge, in the driver's seat clinging to life. His car had drifted into the soundwall, then veered across all eastbound lanes and rolled over.

Though police said Monday they still are investigating the case as a possible homicide, friends and Los Angeles County coroner's officials said it appears Sical shot himself after learning of his girlfriend's suicide hours earlier.

The Sunday crash shut down the eastbound 101 for six hours as police investigated whether it was a road rage shooting, which would have been the latest in a string on Southland freeways over the past few weeks, including one on the 101 near Studio City on March 1 that left a Sylmar man dead.

About two hours before police found him, Sical had said goodbye to his high school sweetheart and mother of his son, Virginia "Vicky" Castillo, after she died at a local hospital,

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Blanco said. She had tried to kill herself hours earlier. She was 19. He was 20.

They had recently moved into a small apartment together off Normandie Avenue southwest of downtown, friends and family said. It was a

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Police officers and investigators gather around a vehicle that... (Andy Holzman/Staff Photographer)

modest home with a crumbling parking lot and a wrought-iron security gate. But it was theirs, a place where they could raise their 4-month-old son, Jayden, and Sical could study for his business classes.

The two had gotten tattoos of their son's name the week before, he on his forearm and she on her back. They planned to finish the tattoos with the boy's footprint on his arm and a handprint on her back.

But Friday night, after an evening at the movies, they fought, Blanco and other friends said. It's unclear what caused the spat, but on Saturday Castillo sent another friend a text message that pleaded for him to come pick up Jayden.

When he entered her apartment, he found her breathing but saw she had tried to kill herself. He called 911.

She officially died of a heart attack at 5:48 a.m. Sunday, relatives said.

Blanco was Castillo's best friend and the one who received Sical's text message. The moment she got it, she feared something had gone terribly wrong. Friends and family fanned out to find him.

"He didn't look good when he left (the hospital)," she said.

He had spent the whole night with Castillo, and he and her family thought she would survive. After she died, Sical disappeared.

"He is not like that," Blanco said. "He doesn't run from things. But he didn't wait for any of us."

Looking back, she said, there was never any indication Castillo was depressed. They talked every day, and Castillo was so enamored with her son that she would shower and dress him sometimes three times a day just to see him in a new outfit.

"She seemed so happy with her baby. She was ready for her new life," Blanco said, pulling out a high school homecoming picture of the couple.

The photo shows them hugging, she smirking in her red dress and black heels, he looking seriously at the camera.

Blanco attended Manuel Arts High School with the two and watched their love bloom. She said they were planning to take their family portrait soon.

"It's horrible," she said. "They were stressed out and couldn't handle their new lives."

Castillo's mother, Patricia Martinez, said her daughter felt pressured to find work.

"She was always worried about getting a job," Martinez said, adding that Castillo never mentioned deeper problems. "She loved (Marlon) so much."

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