

Houston Chronicle (TX)

April 7, 2005

Edition: 3 STAR

Section: B

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Robberies Houston Shootings Deaths

Pawnshop heist ends in bloody shootout

20 rounds fired; one robber killed, another wounded

Author: PEGGY O'HARE, MIKE GLENN; Staff

Article Text:

An estimated 20 rounds were fired inside a southeast Houston pawnshop Wednesday during a shootout among armed robbers, an off-duty Brookside Village police officer and the store manager, investigators said.

When it ended, one of the robbers was dead, and another who was thought to be wounded fled with his accomplices, police said. Neither the officer nor store manager was seriously hurt, nor were the bystanders crouched on the ground, despite the shell casings, broken glass and blood littering the inside of the Magnolia Pawn Shop at 1000 Evergreen near Lawndale.

The store manager, described by police as "the hero of the day," fired the first shot in the volley of gunfire, likely saving the life of Brookside Village police officer Greg Hernandez, investigators said. Eight people in addition to the robbers and the officer were inside the store at the time.

"It's amazing no one else inside the store was injured, with so many rounds being fired," said Houston Police Department homicide investigator C.P. "Abbey" Abbondandolo. "This was a very violent scene."

"These are guys who did their homework to some degree," he said.

Most of the shootout was caught on surveillance video, police said.

Wednesday night, police and search dogs were still searching for three men. Officers were also canvassing local hospitals, looking for the wounded gunman.

The scene unfolded about 2 p.m. when three armed robbers went into the pawnshop, police said.

Detectives said two of the men were carrying assault weapons, thought to be SKS AK-47 model rifles with extended ammunition clips, while a third was carrying a semi-automatic pistol.

The gunmen confronted the off-duty police officer, who was standing behind the counter and forced several witnesses to the ground.

The manager walked in during the attempted heist and became involved in a shootout, Abbondandolo said. The officer then also opened fire, he said.

As the gunmen retreated, they continued shooting at the off-duty officer, who kept chasing them, investigators said. One suspect collapsed and died inside the pawnshop, while the others escaped in a white Chevrolet Blazer.

That vehicle was dumped a block away. Police found a large amount of blood inside.

Detectives said two other vehicles were waiting at the spot where the robbers dumped the car. One was apparently used to block access by outsiders to the exchange point while the other helped ferry the suspects.

"These guys obviously planned some of this and put some thought into that end of it,"

Abbondandolo said.

The dead man's identity was not immediately available.

Memo:

Mike Glenn contributed to this report.

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Houston Chronicle (TX)

April 8, 2005

Edition: 2 STAR

Section: B

Page: 07

ID still sought for man killed in robbery bid

Author: PEGGY O'HARE; Staff

Article Text:

Authorities have not yet identified a gunman shot to death Wednesday during an attempted robbery at a southeast Houston pawn shop.

The man, thought to be in his late teens or early 20s, was hit by an off-duty Brookside Village police officer during a shootout inside the store.

That officer, G. Hernandez, was not hurt.

Investigators ask anyone with information to call the Houston Police Homicide Division at 713-308-3600 or Crime Stoppers at 713-222-TIPS.

Memo:

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Houston Chronicle (TX)

April 8, 2005

Edition: 3 STAR

Section: B

Page: 04

Customer killed in heist attempt

Author: Staff

Article Text:

A customer at a southeast Houston gameroom died at the hospital Thursday night after he was shot during an attempted robbery.

The shooting happened about 8:30 p.m. at Winner's World, 5060 Griggs. Police said two armed robbers tried to force their way into the business, but customers and employees barred the door. One of the robbers fired, striking a customer who was inside the gameroom.

The victim was taken to Ben Taub General Hospital, where he died. The robbers fled on foot.

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