

POLICE STING TURNS DEADLY ROUTINE VICE STOP ERUPTS IN BULLETS

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Police say they will never know why a 21-year-old Detroit man trying to pick up a an officer posing as a prostitute reacted so violently after being stopped for the misdemeanor offense.

The man shot and killed one Detroit police officer and severely wounded another Friday afternoon in a gun battle that erupted on the city's east side after officers attempted to question the man and a companion for soliciting.

The gunman was killed. His companion was questioned and released.

"The rationale that would cause an individual to shoot two uniformed police officers does not meet in any way the crime that was being committed," said Inspector William Rice, chief of homicide. "His logic probably died with him."

It was the second time in two months that cries of "officer down!" ripped across police radios and brought shaken police brass to stand outside hospital emergency rooms and announce that a cop had died.

The killing came over an incident that would probably have resulted in a ticket and small fine, police said.

The two suspects were in a pickup truck and had allegedly solicited sex from a female undercover officer working a prostitution decoy detail near Chene and Hendrie, just south of the Ford Freeway.

The slain officer is Richard Scalf, 26. Scalf marked his third anniversary with the department two months ago.

Scalf was hit in the back. The bullet entered through a gap in his bulletproof vest.

His partner was Diaz Graves, 30, a four-year member of the department. Graves, who also was wearing a protective vest, was hit three times -- in the head, chest and abdomen -- but is expected to live. Of the three bullets, the one that went through Graves' head could cause the most serious complications, doctors told Police Chief Benny Napoleon.

The dead gunman was identified as **Darryl Paul Gates**, 21. He was killed, officials said, by officers backing up Graves and Scalf.

The driver of the truck was taken to police headquarters for questioning, then released. Police did not name him. "There's no reason to hold this man," Rice said Friday night. "He didn't do anything -- not in connection with the officers being shot."

Police said the second man did not know why **Gates** acted the way he did. Rice said **Gates** had only traffic violations on his record. The driver told police he picked up **Gates** and the two simply decided to go look for a prostitute.

Napoleon said that shortly after 1 p.m. a vice crew and the female decoy officer began operating near the GM Poletown Plant.

Police said the area was at times thick with prostitutes and the department was responding to complaints.

The decoy was solicited by two men in the truck, Napoleon said, and she signaled Scalf and Graves to move in.

Scalf and Graves, both wearing boldly marked police jumpsuits and driving a marked police car, identified themselves as officers and ordered the men out of the truck.

The driver got out, but the other man struggled with officers, broke free and ran. The man suddenly wheeled about, pulled a gun and started firing, Napoleon said.

Three shots struck Graves, one shot hit Scalf.

Deputy Chief Daniel McKane said: "The officers were just out here doing their job and then we have this senseless tragedy."

"For the life of me I can't understand why this man would resort to shooting at the police officers," Napoleon, struggling for composure, said outside the emergency room at Receiving Hospital.

"This just doesn't make sense."

As Napoleon spoke, police chaplains gathered inside the hospital.

Mayor Dennis Archer, in a statement, said he was "shocked and deeply saddened."

"There was no reason for these shootings to have occurred," Archer said. "When officers are killed or wounded in the line of duty, in a situation such as this, it makes their daily courage and sacrifice all the more apparent."

Napoleon met with Scalf's mother.

"This is the toughest thing I have to do," Napoleon said.

After initial reports that Graves might lose the struggle for life, he rallied by late afternoon.

Gates, the gunman, had three relatively minor contacts with police before Friday, Napoleon said.

"We can't figure this one out," he said. "We wanted to know what kind of person was this.... It wasn't as if he was Al Capone."

Napoleon said that soliciting a prostitute is a misdemeanor usually punishable by a fine. Similar police stops take place many times every day and end uneventfully, he said.

"They were looking at a fine -- that's probably the extent of the punishment he would have received," Napoleon said.

Mike Hergenroeder, 50, a Mt. Clemens truck driver, was having a beer and talking bowling at the New Elk Bar on Chene when "all of a sudden it sounded like firecrackers going off."

He said he heard 15 to 25 gunshots, went outside and saw two men -- the officers -- sprawled on the ground, bleeding. Nearby, he said, an undercover female officer was screaming "Oh, my God! Oh, my God!"

Another female officer, he said, was urging one of the downed officers to "hang on! hang on! hang on!"

Teresa Moza, a bartender at the New Elk, said she heard a series of pops and then a woman screaming "Two cops down! Two cops down!"

A uniformed officer said he pulled one of the shot officers into his scout car and raced to Receiving Hospital.

"He raised his head and fell down," said the officer, who declined to identify himself. "I did everything I could do ...God help his family."

The intensity of the brief fight was underscored by about 20 shell casings that littered the streets.

Marked and unmarked police cars flooded the scene as word of the shooting flashed across the department's radios.

Detectives, uniformed officers and evidence technicians filled the area, gathering evidence and interviewing potential witnesses.

Nearly 100 people stood outside the yellow police tape at Chene and Hendrie about an hour after the shooting stopped.

Angela Holmes, 34, who lives a half block away, said she was reading in her kitchen when four or five shots rang out in rapid succession. When she ventured onto the street a few minutes later, the intersection was swarming with gawkers and police cars.

She said the neighborhood is plagued by drugs and prostitution.

"You can't even stand at a bus stop without people thinking you're a whore," she said.

The shooting comes two months after Detroit Police Officer Shawn Bandy was killed and other officers wounded when kidnap gang suspects opened fire on two police cars. Scalf is the 207th officer to be killed in the city's history.

Napoleon said that between 1975 and 1983 the police department had no officers killed in the line of duty.

"I was hoping my tenure as police chief would be one of those periods."

Staff writers Jeffrey Ghannam, Jeff Gerritt, Alex Roth, Tracy Van Moorlehem and Bill McGraw contributed to this report.

THE OFFICERS

RICHARD SCALF, 26, dead. A three-year member of the department. He was shot in the back. He was wearing a bulletproof vest.

DIAZ GRAVES, 30, wounded. A four-year member of the department. He was shot three times. He is expected to survive.

THE GUNMAN

DARRYL PAUL GATES, 21, dead. Named by police as the man who shot the officers. Police say he was killed by officers backing up Scalf and Graves. The driver of the pickup truck was released after being questioned. Police did not identify him.

Caption: Photo **GABRIEL B. TAIT**/Detroit Free Press Photo **ERIC SEALS**/Detroit Free Press Drawing **AARON HIGHTOWER**, **MOSES HARRIS** and **MARTY WESTMAN** Detroit Free Press

"This just doesn't make sense," Police Chief Benny Napoleon said at the emergency room. Detroit police officers mark the spot where a gun was found on Hendrie near Chene where two cops were shot, one fatally, after a routine stop of a truck whose occupants were suspected of soliciting sex.

Angela Holmes, 34, of Detroit cries on the corner of Chene and Hendrie in Detroit, where two police officers were shot, one fatally, during a prostitution sting Friday.
Two members of the Detroit Police Department collect bullets found on the sidewalk near the site of Friday's shoot-out.

What happened

Two officers and one suspect are shot, around 1:20 p.m. Here is the police description of the incident.

1 Truck comes to stop near undercover female officer. occupant allegedly propositions her for sex. She declines, signals for help.

2 Marked police car pulls up behind truck. Officers exit their car and identify themselves.

3 Truck driver cooperates but passenger struggles with officers, then breaks free, grabs gun from waist and shoots one of the officers. Suspect flees.

4 Officers from unmarked cars open fire. Suspect shoots other officer from marked car. Suspect runs a few steps, collapses.

Memo: SEE ALSO STATE EDITION, PAGE 1A;

CORRECTION RAN FEBRUARY 9, 1999

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Correction: On Saturday's front page, a map with coverage of the shooting of two Detroit police officers should have shown that Mt. Elliott extends north of I-94.

Index Terms: POLICE ; SHOOTING ; DEATH ; SUSPECT ; MULTIPLE ; RICHARD SCALF ; DIAZ ; GRAVES ; DARRYL PAUL GATES

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