

## **Violence at stores frays nerves - Detroit leaders set out to end fatal confrontations**

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**SOUTHFIELD** -- A suburban attorney, a state lawmaker and a Detroit minister came together Monday to stop fatal confrontations between citizens and **store** security guards.

Since June, three people have died in struggles with security guards **at** a Detroit Rite Aid drugstore, a Dearborn Lord & Taylor and a Royal Oak Township Kroger. A fourth person was hit over the head with a baton by another Detroit Rite Aid guard last month but survived. That guard is charged with assault.

"This is the second known incident in the last month of Rite Aid brutalizing a customer they suspected of shoplifting ... someone in the corporate board room of Rite Aid has decided merchandise is worth more than the life of their customers," said attorney Geoffrey Fieger, who filed a \$1-billion lawsuit against the **store** on behalf of Michael Jackson, husband of Alwanda Gail Person-Jackson.

Rite Aid officials declined comment until they review the suit.

Person-Jackson, 36, died after a scuffle with a security guard and **store** workers Friday. She had walked out with \$200 in unpaid merchandise and was pulled back into the **store**, tied up with an extension cord and sat on, Fieger said.

An autopsy to determine her cause of death is pending toxicology tests, which could take several weeks. On Feb. 21, Gail Hardy, 47, said she was punched in the face and knocked unconscious when she used a pair of nail clippers **at** a Rite Aid, replaced them on a shelf and walked out, ignoring a guard's orders to stop.

On Feb. 8 Travis Shelton, 36, died after apparently trying to steal \$130 in meat from a Kroger **store** in Royal Oak Township. An autopsy showed Shelton, a drug user with numerous health problems, died of asphyxia by compression after a guard sat on his back legs.

A security guard is awaiting trial for involuntary manslaughter for the June 22 death of Frederick Finley outside a Lord & Taylor **store**.

On Monday, the Rev. Horace Sheffield, III, a Detroit minister, announced upcoming prayer vigils and a protest rally, and called on a moratorium by retailers against apprehending or attempting to apprehend suspected or accused shoplifters until Michigan sets a training standard for guards. State Rep. Hansen Clarke is sponsoring legislation for mandatory training.

Caption: Fieger Sheffield

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