

NEIGHBORS TAKE SHOOT-OUT IN STRIDE

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To Harvell Hodge, the shoot-out that killed one suspected felon, critically injured another and led to at least 15 arrests Saturday and Sunday was hardly worth noticing.

"It's just an everyday occurrence around here," he said Sunday. "It's like garage sales in the suburbs. If I don't hear sirens or police helicopters at night, then I get up and look and say, 'Something's going on that's not normal.' "

Hodge's home, at Livernois and Elmhurst, is less than 50 feet from the corner where 16 detectives assembled early Saturday to comb the asphalt for spent shell casings and other evidence.

It's a neighborhood where people double-bolt their storm doors, bar their windows and hesitate to acknowledge that they even noticed the dramatic end of the gang police code-named "Home Invaders."

According to police, gang members invaded 100 homes throughout the city in the past five months, robbing, raping and brandishing weapons. An inside tip allowed police to monitor the gang as it broke into a home late Friday night. The officers swooped in to make arrests. They were still rounding up suspects Sunday, with court appearances expected today or Tuesday.

Harold Riggins slept through it all. "I heard the helicopter, but I didn't get up to look," Riggins said Sunday afternoon as he buffed his purple Mustang around the corner from the scene. "I hope they get some more."

His neighbor Tawanna Moss had a similar reaction. She said she heard the sirens, looked out her window and saw a man lying in the driveway across the street. "I just got real scared, got into bed and made myself go to sleep," the 26-year-old mother said as her two small children clung to her legs. "I really don't come out of my house much, day or night. I try to stay out of trouble. But sometimes it comes to you."

Linda Campbell, a social worker who lives in the neighborhood, said: "I feel bad for children who see this kind of thing happen."

About five months ago, detectives in the interagency Violent Crimes Task Force began tracking the burglary gang. They code-named it "Home Invaders," because a state law replaced the term "breaking and entering" with "home invasion," Lt. Dennis Richardson of the task force said Sunday.

Although drug dealers weren't the only ones hit, the gang tried to target homes where illegal drugs were sold.

Often, members would pose as police conducting a drug raid. They would smash the door down and yell "Police!" as they moved in to steal money, drugs and jewelry. Gang members also committed at least six rapes during the break-ins, said Richardson.

An inside informant told police last week about two robberies planned for Friday night. Officers staked out the first site, on the east side near Holcomb and Gratiot, and watched the robbery take place. Police then trailed the robbers across town to a home at Collingwood and Lawton.

"We were hopeful we wouldn't end up with a big shoot-out," said Richardson. "We were trying to get a scenario where we could effect an arrest without violence."

About 11:30 p.m. Friday, the gang struck again. This time, they forced their way into the home of an elderly woman. The six men stole money, clothing and stereo equipment and loaded it into a van.

Members of the task force, with two Detroit police squad cars supporting them, stopped the van at Collingwood and Linwood. But the van smashed into an ambulance used by police as a surveillance post and fled north on Linwood.

Passengers in the van shot at police and threw guns onto the street. Obie Carter III, one of the gang's suspected leaders, jumped out of the van and returned fire. He was killed in the shootout.

Another suspect, **Derrick Funderburg**, 21, was hit by several times. He was listed in critical condition Sunday at Detroit Receiving Hospital.

Richardson said gang members will be charged with armed robbery, criminal sexual assault and violating firearms laws.

On Sunday's unseasonably warm afternoon, Campbell pushed a stroller carrying her 1-year-old son, Anthony, by the spot where one suspect lay bleeding the night before. "It's a tragedy," she said, "but in a way it's not something that really shocks me."

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