

DEADLY SHOOTOUT ROCKS THE HEIGHTS

## 1 DEAD, 3 INJURED IN SHOOTOUT AT PULASKI AVE. AND MERCER

Two Groups Exchanged Gunfire Near The Corner Store; Witnesses Heard Young Woman Screaming

BY TRACY ROYCE

PULASKI HEIGHTS — One man was killed and three others were injured Friday night after an apparent attempted robbery outside The Corner Store erupted into gunfire, leaving one of The Heights' busiest intersections sealed off for nearly eight hours as investigators searched for evidence.

The shooting occurred shortly after 9:00 p.m. near the intersection of Mercer Avenue and Pulaski Avenue, where employees were unloading a scheduled delivery behind the neighborhood grocery when several armed men approached, according to investigators.

Responding officers arrived within minutes after dispatchers received multiple 911 calls reporting gunfire. One victim was pronounced dead at the scene. Three others were transported to Pulaski Medical Center, where they remain in serious but stable condition.

Authorities have not released the identities of those involved pending notification of family members.

Detectives from the Pulaski Heights Police Department's Major Crimes Division spent much of Saturday processing the crime scene, photographing shell casings, collecting surveillance footage from nearby businesses and interviewing witnesses.

Police believe the suspects fled on foot before escaping in a waiting vehicle. Investigators say several delivery packages were taken during the robbery before the gunmen disappeared.

Yellow police tape surrounded the block Saturday morning as detectives worked methodically between parked vehicles, storefronts and sidewalks documenting evidence.

"We're following every lead available," Lt. Marcus Holloway said during a Saturday afternoon press briefing. "At this stage, we're asking anyone who witnessed the incident or observed suspicious activity before or after the shooting to contact investigators immediately."

Witnesses described a chaotic scene that unfolded in less than a minute.

"It sounded like somebody dropped a dumpster," said one woman who lives less than a block from the intersection. "Then the shooting just kept going. Everybody



Police Investigate the scene outside The Corner Store at Pulaski Ave. and Mercer late Friday night.

PHOTO BY MAY LEE

started screaming and running."

Another witness told investigators he saw two masked men carrying several cardboard cartons before jumping into a dark-colored sedan moments after the gunfire stopped.

"I heard tires squealing before I even looked outside," another resident said. "By the time I got to my window, they were gone."

Store owner Daniel Malone arrived at the scene early Saturday morning after being notified of the shooting.

"This business has served families in Pulaski Heights for years," Malone said while standing outside the taped-off entrance. "We came here to stock shelves for the weekend, not to become part of a crime scene."

Malone declined to discuss exactly what merchandise was taken, citing the ongoing police investigation, but confirmed that several delivery packages remain unaccounted for.

"We're cooperating fully with investigators," he said. "Whatever was taken can be replaced. The people responsible will eventually have to answer for what they've done."

Employees inside the store during the shooting described diving for cover as bullets struck the building's exterior.

"I was helping unload inventory when everything started," employee Chris Thompson said briefly before returning inside the business Saturday morning. "Everybody hit the floor. By the time it stopped, it was over."

Police said there is currently no evidence suggesting employees of The Corner Store fired weapons during the incident.

The motive behind the robbery remains under investigation, though detectives believe the business was specifically targeted.

Mayor Richard Minks called the attack "another painful reminder of the challenges facing our neighborhoods" and pledged additional resources to assist investigators.

The shooting marked the second homicide investigated by the Major Crimes Division this month and renewed concerns among residents who say violent crime has become increasingly visible along several commercial corridors in The Heights. Police officials, however, said there is no indication the public faces an ongoing threat and urged residents to avoid speculation while detectives continue following leads.

Anyone with information regarding Friday night's shooting is encouraged to contact Crime Watch at 1-800-55-CRIME (1-800-552-7463). Callers may remain anonymous.

CITY NEWS

### BRYCE ANNOUNCES RUN FOR MAYOR

"It's Time for a New Direction."

By Linda Foster

PULASKI HEIGHTS — City Councilman Kevin Bryce continues his campaign for mayor. Bryce announced his run last November promising to reduce violent crime, strengthen neighborhood businesses and invest in youth programs across the city.

Speaking before supporters on the steps of City Hall, Bryce called for "a new direction" for Pulaski Heights, pledging to increase police resources while expanding job opportunities and community investment in neighborhoods hit hardest by crime.

Bryce, 42, has represented the city's East Ward for nearly six years and is widely regarded as one of City Hall's most recognizable public figures. Supporters credit him with securing funding for neighborhood revitalization projects and after-school initiatives, while critics argue progress has been uneven in communities most affected by crime and economic decline.

The mayoral election is scheduled for November, with Bryce expected to begin a citywide cam-

Full Story on A6

PULASKI'S OWN

### SIMONE VALE SEWS THE HEIGHTS INTO HIGH FASHION



By Kamron Kyle

PULASKI HEIGHTS — Simone Vale has spent years building a reputation as one of Pulaski Heights' most recognizable fashion designers. Now the 25-year-old is taking her first major step onto the national stage after being selected as the newest stylist for rising rap artist Ace Kane.

Known for her custom airbrushed denim, oversized leather jackets and one-of-a-kind streetwear, Vale says her designs are inspired by the neighborhood she still proudly calls home. "Everything I make starts in Pulaski," she said. "That's never going to change."

Vale will also headline this year's Redmon Summer Classic, which tips off Saturday, July 13th, marking the unofficial start of summer.

Full story on D4