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7 SECTIONS

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PERIODICALS POSTAGE PAID IN NASHVILLE, TN

"This is probably one of the worst days in the history of Springfield."

— Police Chief Mike Wilhoit

3 men dead, 1 critical after bloody morning

Deadly day in Springfield

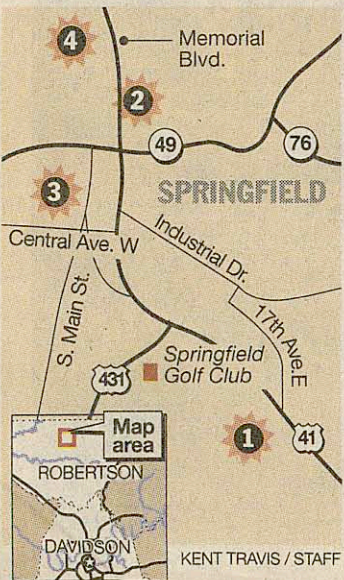
Here's a synopsis of deadly events in Springfield yesterday, which left three men dead and a fourth man critically wounded:

Compiled from interviews with witnesses and Springfield police

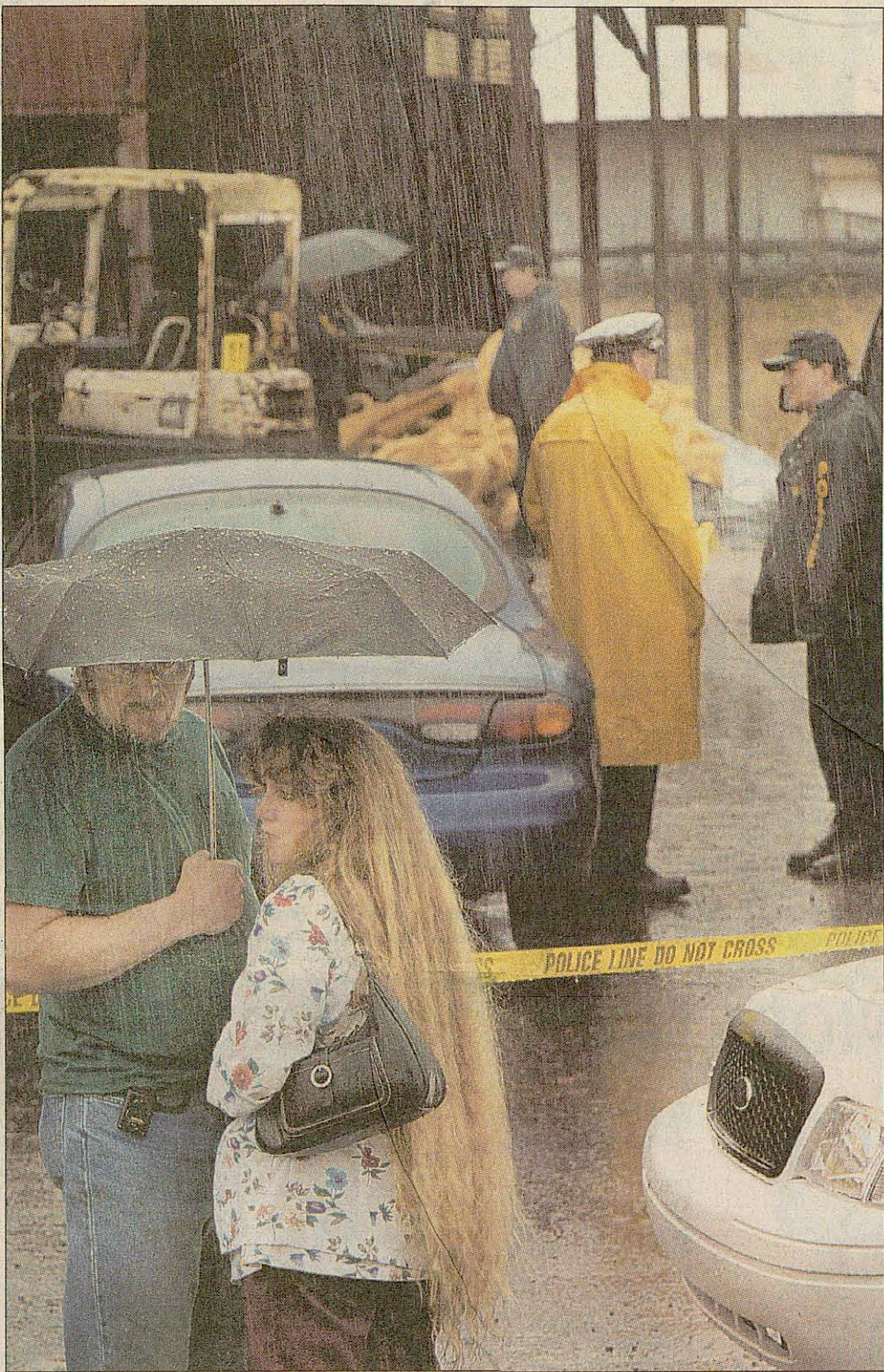
1 10:26 a.m.: Police receive a call that Steve Head, 56, owner of the Springfield Golf Club, is found dead at his home at 2901 Bluebird Drive. An acquaintance discovered the body.

2 10:30 a.m.: Paul Long, 49, owner of Long's Car Care and Long's Auto Sales at the corner of Fifth Avenue and Memorial Boulevard, is found shot in a sales office. He was severely injured and taken to Vanderbilt University Medical Center where he was in critical condition last night.

3 11:21 a.m.: Donnie Wilks, 43, a pipe fitter, is found at 12th Avenue and Cheatham Street. Roy Webb, 70, discovered the body at the Colonial Tobacco Co. warehouse.



4 1:20 p.m.: Jerry Lam, 43, owner of Lam's Auto Sales, is found dead at the former Nasco Inc. warehouse inside a green truck with a personalized license plate that read WILKS. Police had been looking for the vehicle earlier in the day.



Randy and Tina Ellis stand outside the crime scene where their relative Donnie Wilks was found dead behind a tobacco warehouse at the corner of 12th Avenue and Cheatham Street.

Victims were well known to many in Springfield



Donnie Wilks, 43, was found shot to death at a Springfield warehouse.



Steve Head, 56, owner of the Springfield Golf Club, was found dead in his home.

Inside

► In this quiet town, few were left untouched by yesterday's string of shootings. **On 2A**

By KELLI SAMANTHA HEWETT
Staff Writer

By PATRICIA LYNCH KIMBRO
and DEBORAH HIGHLAND
of Middle Tennessee Community Newspapers

SPRINGFIELD — The truck screeched out of Steve Head's Bluebird Drive driveway and slammed on the brakes a few yards away in front of F.S. Jones' house. The driver was frantic. "He said, 'Call 911, Mr. Head has been shot in the head,'" said Jones, who had been standing at her glass door. "I didn't see anything, I didn't hear anything," said an amazed Jones, who didn't recognize the driver.

In the next three hours, three more Springfield businessmen would be shot — leaving three dead and a fourth clinging to life after one of the worst series of crimes in the area.

Police didn't have much to say about the details. They focused mostly of their remarks on the devastation.

"This is probably one of the worst days in the history of Springfield," Police Chief Mike Wilhoit said in a news conference yesterday afternoon.

Officials offered no word on a suspect or suspects, but authorities said yesterday they were treating the shootings of the well-known men as separate crimes.

For most of the day, police and Tennessee Bureau of Investigation agents scrambled from one scene to another, roping off each and talking to witnesses. The shooting victims were:

• Steve Head, 56, co-owner of Springfield Golf Club and a former pro golfer,

► Please see **SHOOTINGS, 2A**

Police say 3 of the men shot had been linked to gambling

By MICHELLE E. SHAW
Staff Writer

If there was a common thread that ran through the lives of Paul Long, Steven Head and Jerry Lam, it was that police say they suspected all three had ties to gambling.

Nashville police say Head, 56, was "a person of interest" — a person with whom law-enforcement officials spoke in connection with a criminal case

but was never charged with a crime — in a sports-betting investigation in 2001.

"His name did pop up four or five years ago," Metro Police Sgt. Rob Forrest said. "No charges were filed against him, but he was ... a person of interest, that's a good way to put it."

From that investigation, Ewing Burgess Shearon of Nashville, now 68, was charged in federal court with having an

illegal gambling business and other charges. He was sentenced to 12 months in a community correctional facility on Feb. 6, 2002, according to federal court records. He was released about a year ago, and he could not be reached for comment yesterday.

Head and Lam, 43, were shot to death yesterday in Spring-

► Please see **GAMBLING, 2A**

COURTS



Martha Stewart leaves Manhattan Federal Court after guilty verdicts in her federal stock fraud trial in New York yesterday.

Stewart guilty, likely to serve

She's high in recent

A cast of thousands was involved in producing this. I was the line editor on it, working under City Editor Ricky Young.

By DAVID HO
Cox News Service

NEW YORK — Martha Stewart was found guilty yesterday of lying to federal investigators about a timely and profitable stock sale, a verdict that probably means prison time for the domestic arts queen and a setback for the media empire she built to promote "good things."

The charges of conspiracy, obstruction of justice and two counts of making false statements carry a combined maximum sentence of 20 years. But under federal guidelines, Stewart probably faces less than two years behind bars.

She will remain free until a June 17 sentencing hearing.

► Please see **STEWART, 14A**

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Police will need OK to pursue under new rule

Chase to be monitored closely

By IAN DEMSKY
and SHEILA BURKE
Staff Writers

Metro police officers will no longer be able to participate in pursuits without explicit permission from their supervisors, Chief Ronal Serpas announced yesterday.

The supervisor must continue giving authorization as the conditions of the pursuit change, which Serpas thinks might be unique to the Metro police-pursuit policy.

Starting Monday, if a suspect flees and an officer wants to give chase, the officer will have to radio a supervisor immediately with details. The supervisor must then decide whether the pursuit is allowable.

► Please see **CHASE, 13A**

Deadly pursuit within rules

A pursuit that ended in the death of a fugitive in downtown Nashville fell within the Metro police's guidelines, a Metro police report released yesterday found. **On 13A**



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INSIDE TODAY

Revolution in cancer treatment

Two revolutionary new drugs are in hospital pharmacies this week, a tangible sign that years of research into targeted approaches to fighting cancer are finally paying off. **On 6A**

AT&T overcharges thousands

Thousands of Tennessee residents might have been overcharged on recent phone bills because of an admitted AT&T "billing error." **On 1E**



What moon landing?

Nashville filmmaker Bart Sibrel thinks the moon landings were a gigantic Cold War hoax. *Astronauts Gone Wild* documents his relentless pursuit of the Apollo astronauts, each of whom he ambushes with a challenge to swear on a Bible, "on penalty of eternal damnation," that he walked on the moon. **On 1D**

TODAY'S WEATHER



▲ 58 ▼ 41
Five-day forecast on 8B

www.tennessean.com

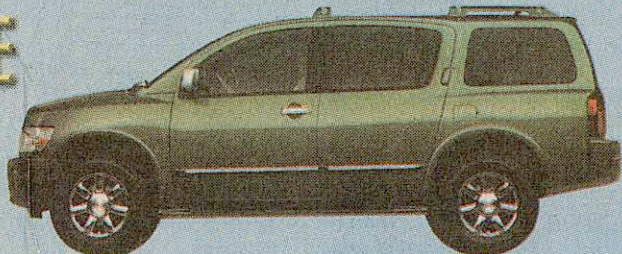


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QX56

Dramatic, deadly events disrupt small-town norm

Springfield folk listen for news, trade rumors

By **CLAUDETTE RILEY**
Staff Writer

SPRINGFIELD — In this quiet town, few were left untouched by yesterday's string of shootings.

Many who weren't close friends with the four local businessmen knew them either by name or had been to their businesses.

"This is one of the biggest things that has ever happened here," said Randy Scott, an off-duty Robertson County sheriff's deputy. "You have drive-bys but nothing like this — not during the day."

The sirens started whining through the streets of the Robertson County town at 10:30 a.m. yesterday, and they didn't stop for three hours.

Scott said he hopes the incidents don't rob the town of 14,300 residents of its friendliness.

"It's a good community. Everybody knows everybody," he said. "I like being able to go down the road and people say, 'Hey, Officer Scott.'"

But the day's events were all anybody could talk about: Three local businessmen were found dead — and another critically wounded — in different places throughout town.

"My phone rang off the wall for a while," said Terry Woodard, whose T&J hardware store is just down the road from Long's Auto

Sales, where the second victim was found. "Everybody in (my) family has called, and people (were) just wondering what was going on."

Some callers had tidbits of news. Others shared their fears or added fuel to the rampant rumor mill.

"Until people get it all figured out, you're going to hear everything," said Woodard, who kept the TV news on all day. "We all watch too much CSI. Everybody has become a crime investigator."

But with local law enforcement staying tight-lipped, some imaginations were working overtime.

Schools and some businesses went into lockdown for security. And workers at some gas stations and banks were on edge, worried that they could be the next victims in what appeared to be a crime

"Until people get it all figured out, you're going to hear everything. We all watch too much CSI. Everybody has become a crime investigator."

— Terry Woodard, T&J hardware store

spree.

Friends and customers who stopped by Sharon Cook's flower shop speculated about everything from a mob hit to a recent card game between the men that went bad.

"In a town like this, rumors fly. You hear all kinds of conflicting things," said Cook, who owns Browning & Smith Floral & Gift Shoppe on Memorial Boulevard. There was also a lot of head-scratching about how the four

men might have known each other.

"We're all operating under the assumption that something's up. I mean, all these people at once?" Cook said.

"There has definitely got to be some connection."

Others said the men were friendly with each other but didn't seem close.

"They were all friends, but they didn't really run together," said Philip Darrow, 42, who knew all

four men. "It was just an every-now-and-again, occasional thing."

Darrow said he wasn't surprised by speculation about a card game.

"I've heard about people gambling — high stakes — but nothing like this happened," said Darrow, who wouldn't venture a guess about where the card games take place. "It's always hidden."

Woodard said he hopes more facts come out soon because many of his friends and neighbors don't want to believe such crimes can happen in their city.

"Everybody acts like they're in shock, but I'm not," he said. "No one is immune. It happens everywhere. It just doesn't happen as often here." ■

Claudette Riley can be reached at criley@tennessean.com or 726-5944.



PHOTOS BY GEORGE WALKER IV / STAFF

THREE CRIME SCENES

Head's home — Home of Steve Head, who was found dead there at 2901 Bluebird Drive in Springfield. Neighbor F.S. Jones, who was told to call 911 by a driver leaving Head's house, said he hadn't seen or heard anything unusual before then.

Shootings: More homicides in a day than in all 2003

FROM PAGE 1A

found dead at his home, 2901 Bluebird Drive.

• Paul Long, 49, car dealer and repair shop owner, shot at Long's Auto Sales, 410 Memorial Blvd. He remained in critical condition at Vanderbilt University Medical Center last night.



LONG

warehouse at 12th Avenue and Cheatham Street.

• Jerry Lam, 43, owner of Lam's Auto Sales, found shot and killed in the parking lot of the former Nasco Inc. consumer textile plant, near First Avenue West and North Oak Street.

Lam was lying in the seat of a green truck with the license plate WILKS. Earlier, authorities had been on the lookout for a suspect in a similar truck with such a personalized plate.

Last year, Springfield had two homicides. Yesterday, there were three.

"I think it would be unusual for any big city, let alone a small one," Wilhoit said.

The shootings' eerie effects rippled across town throughout the day.

Springfield Golf Club, which Head bought in August, was locked down for part of the day. Several area schools also were locked down, parents of schoolchildren said.

After Long was shot, employees from the Dixie Maid cafe next door were stunned to find out what had happened. They hadn't heard a thing.

"I think (three homicides) would be unusual for any big city, let alone a small one."

— Police Chief Mike Wilhoit

"We saw people running" from the car-care center across the street that Long also owned, said Mary Blackburn. "His daughter was with him. People heard her scream."

The third victim, Wilks, was discovered by retiree Roy Webb, 70, at the warehouse space Webb rents.

"I came back and walked over toward the end of that trailer, and there lay a man, with blood all over his upper torso," Webb said.

After seeing Wilks' body, Webb said, he "got out of there as fast as I could." He dialed 911 on his cell phone.

Springfield resident Fred Condra made the final discovery: Lam's



Former Nasco plant — The body of Jerry Lam, the last of the four gunshot victims to be discovered, was found behind the former Nasco Inc. consumer textile plant near First Avenue West and North Oak Street.

body behind Nasco. He had no idea that police were searching for the green truck, which he had not seen before in the neighborhood. And Condra thought the man inside was sleeping.

"I walked around," Condra said. "I saw him laying down."

Police soon converged on the scene with their guns drawn. They told Condra to back away.

Wilks' relatives were among the many in town wondering what had really happened.

"Donnie didn't run with those other people that got killed," said Wilks' mother, Nancy Wilks. "He may have known them, but they didn't associate."

Wilks' family also has heard that someone had been yelling in Wilks' yard the morning before the shooting.

Throughout the day, details were repeated in factual and reshaped versions all across town by friends, relatives and spectators.

Some people made a day of it.

"This is the biggest thing that's happened," Denise Chatman of Springfield said. "I've been going to all the crime scenes; I want to see what happened."

Spectators traveled from site to site, despite the pouring afternoon rain. They stood in churchyards, along tiny roads and on other people's porches as the real-life version of CSI played out in their hometown.

Rumors would swirl that a high-stakes card game among the four acquaintances went wrong Thursday night. Or maybe the mafia was involved.

Wilks' family and friends say they've heard the rumors about Lam gambling away money but they do not think Wilks was involved.

Others aren't sure what the truth may be.

"There are card games in this town," said Lionel Powell, who knew all four victims but isn't convinced the shootings were gambling-related. "People play poker. They come from Kentucky. They used to run numbers here all the time."

"When you live here any length of time," Powell continued, "you hear it on the street." ■

Kelli Samantha Hewett is a staff writer. Contact her at 726-5938, or khewett@tennessean.com. Lea Ann Overstreet of the Robertson County Times, a Middle Tennessee Community Newspaper, contributed to this report.



Long's dealership — The car dealership of Paul Long on Memorial Boulevard. Long was in critical condition last night.

How to get help

National Council on Problem Gambling 24-hour help line
1-800-522-4700
<http://www.ncpgambling.org>

Gambling: Men's names had come up in prior cases

FROM PAGE 1A

field, along with a third man. Long, who was wounded, was in critical condition last night at Vanderbilt University Medical Center.

Joel Perry, an assistant district attorney in Robertson County, said Lam was convicted of aggravated gambling promotion in April 1995.

Perry also said he was familiar with Long, 49.

Lam "was sentenced to probation," he said. "And Mr. Long, well," he said with a chuckle, "Mr. Long was very interesting."

Long has a felony burglary conviction from 1984, said Dent Morriss, also an assistant district attorney in Robertson County. Morriss said Long also had been an associate of Thomas "Sonny Boy" Sircy.

Sircy, 56, the owner of two Robertson County markets, and his wife, Mabel Daniels Sircy, 45, were brutally tortured and slain in their Springfield home in 1989. Almost 10 years passed before two Georgia men were charged in the killings.

"Mr. Long was in a way involved in Mr. Sircy's demise, even though Mr. Long lost his pickup truck to Mr. Sircy in a game a few days prior to Sircy's death," Morriss said.

Forrest, the Metro Police sergeant, said he knew nothing of yesterday's events in Springfield but said that generally speaking, high-stakes gambling can lead to violence.

"People get in over their head and then they start gambling more money to try to get themselves out of it," he said. "I guess they'd just lose all hope. Some could feel like they've been cheated and have a feeling of overwhelming hopelessness."

The officer said groups such as Gamblers Anonymous offer assistance to use in need.

He said its phone number can be found on the back of any lottery ticket.

"I think that was one of the best things the lottery did have done," Forrest said, putting Gamblers Anonymous' number on file. "Then, you know, if you're sitting around, looking at 1,000 stubs, you might need a call." ■

Michelle E. Shaw can be reached at 259-8277 or shaw@tennessean.com.

CORRECTION

No U.S. coins will stick to a magnet, contrary to information in an item on Thursday's Shortcuts page. The Tennessee Times regrets the error. ■

Tennessee
Cash 3
8-6-2

Prize: up to \$500



Get your state-by-state lottery results online at www.tennessean.com