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Arizona News

Drugs, Money Initially Motivated Mesa Shootings

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Posted Thursday, March 19th 2015 @ 2pm

MESA, Ariz. - Mesa police say they believe drugs and money were the initial motive that triggered an ex-convict to shoot and kill one person and wound five others in a rampage in Mesa. Afterward, officers flooded the streets in an intense, hourslong hunt for the gunman.

According to police, the string of crimes included a motel shooting, a carjacking and a home invasion and ended with the suspect's arrest Wednesday at an apartment.

He was taken into custody after officers spotted him on an apartment balcony and hit him with a stun gun. Numerous officers led the handcuffed man to a truck parked outside the apartment complex.

The Maricopa County Sheriff's Office says 41-year-old Ryan Giroux was booked Thursday on suspicion of murder and numerous other crimes, including armed robbery, auto theft, kidnapping and aggravated assault.

A prosecutor asked that bond be set at \$2 million for what he called a "spree of multiple serious offenses."

The judge set a court date for next week.

Giroux's face was bruised because police said he struggled with officers as he resisted arrest.

A prior mug shot from the Arizona Department of Corrections shows him with several face and neck tattoos, including the word "skinhead" where his eyebrows normally would be.

The shootings started with an argument inside a motel room that spilled outside, leaving David James Williams, 29, dead and two women wounded, Mesa police Detective Esteban Flores said. The women were Williams' mother, Lydia Marie Nielson, 51, and Jessica Lee Burgess, 19.

The gunman then shot Isaac Martinez, 20, who was working at a nearby restaurant. Martinez, a culinary student at the nearby East Valley Institute of Technology, was able to run across the street to emergency responders at the motel, Flores said. Seven students and an instructor were working at Bistro 13 restaurant. Martinez has been treated at a hospital and released.

The gunman got away from the restaurant by carjacking the school instructor's car.

Police say the man then went to an apartment complex about 2 miles away, where he went into an apartment and shot Donavon Worker, 24. Worker is expected to survive, police said.

A police officer then found Marcus Butler, 25, in a neighboring apartment building with multiple gunshot wounds. Flores said Butler was in critical but stable condition Thursday and is expected to recover.

The shootings set off an intense hunt for the gunman. Mesa police searched the trunks of cars and brought in SWAT and canine units from other agencies.

Giroux served prison terms totaling more than eight years for burglary, theft, attempted aggravated assault and a marijuana violation, according to an Arizona Department of Corrections profile.

He was first incarcerated in 1994 and returned to prison in late 1995 before being released about a year later. He then returned to prison in mid-2007 after a run-in with police outside a Mesa convenience store.

According to court documents, Giroux shoplifted a bag of potato chips in December 2006, resisted arrest once outside the business and started to fight with two responding police officers. The officers said Giroux reached for a gun in his waistband. Giroux denied reaching for his gun and claimed officers beat him.

At his 2007 sentencing, he was a divorced father with a GED and a certification in fighting wildfires. He also was using cocaine, heroin, LSD and methamphetamines off and on for the past 20 years, according to court records. He sought substance abuse treatment but never finished.



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Giroux was released in late 2013. Last year, a Maricopa County Superior Court judge allowed Giroux to remain on probation despite an unspecified probation violation.

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