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Police: 'Miracle' more weren't shot by man with guns, armor

Posted On Thu. Nov 16th, 2017 By : Editor

By CAROLYN THOMPSON

Associated Press

CHEEKTOWAGA, N.Y. — Police called it a miracle that more people weren't hurt when a man wearing body armor and armed with two rifles and hundreds of rounds of ammo opened fire on a Dollar General store, wounding one man before being tackled by officers.

Investigators say 29-year-old Travis Green was initially unarmed when he walked into the store in this Buffalo suburb Tuesday afternoon before going back outside to his car, retrieving a pump-action, AR-15-style rifle and firing at least 20 bullets at the building. The only person hit was a 53-year-old man outside the store who suffered a non-life-threatening gunshot wound to his shoulder.

When police searched the gunman's car, they found 850 rounds and what appeared to be a semi-automatic rifle with ammunition magazines.

"It is a miracle I'm not reading the names of the deceased," police Chief David Zack said in a news conference afterward. Considering the number of rounds that hit the store, he said, those inside "clearly were extremely lucky."

Zack called it an unprovoked attack. And while a motive was under investigation, he said: "I believe we would be safe in ruling out terrorism."

Green, from Buffalo, was arraigned Wednesday in town court on charges that included attempted murder, assault, criminal use of a firearm and resisting arrest. He pleaded not guilty and was ordered held in the Erie County Jail without bail. The name of his lawyer wasn't immediately available.

His mother, Viola Green, was with her son during his arraignment and afterward said he and his wife recently broke up after seven years of marriage. She said her son spent part of the day Tuesday moving his things out of their house.

"I guess the stress took over," Viola Green said.

After the gunfire erupted about 2:45 p.m. Tuesday, police said there was some initial confusion over the exact location of the Dollar General, since the sprawling suburb of about 90,000 people has six of them.

Mark Pinnavaia, the owner of a neighboring auto electronics store, said that just before officers arrived he jumped in his car, drove across a grassy strip and hit the gunman, who flew over the vehicle and landed on the ground. The man, now unarmed, got up and ran with Pinnavaia and his employee, Christopher Kaufmann, in pursuit.

Police soon arrived and took over the chase. Dashcam video showed officers tackling the suspect and taking him into custody without firing a shot.

Zack called the bystanders heroes. "There's no question these individuals saved lives."

Back at work Wednesday, the men said they acted out of instinct.

"I felt I had to do something," Pinnavaia said. "I put my car in drive, and I proceeded to drive as fast as I possibly could to hit the individual. I had full intentions to hit him if that's what it would take to stop him. ... There's actually a footprint on the hood of my vehicle from where he hit."

Added Kauffmann: "I don't think it's about being a hero. It's about doing what you think you need to do."



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