

*Recently, my cousin shot five times (5), then his Mom killed right in front of him.

RICHMOND VIOLENCE

Saturday, August 27, 2011

Fatal home invasion shocks community

Grandmother dead, son critical; police seek second suspect

By Karl Fischer and Shelly Meron
Staff writers

A Richmond man who got up to cook breakfast for his family met a stranger in the kitchen Friday morning, touching off gunfire that left a grandmother dead and her son critically injured.

"People here aren't rich. Why do a home invasion robbery?" said a stunned Rolando Soto, who lives a couple doors down from the home in the 3200 block of Moran Avenue. "There's nothing here."

Yet police say the two suspects targeted the house on a quiet cul-de-sac behind a hospital for either a violent robbery or a pre-dawn burglary, while the family of five slept. Police detained two men, both parolees, for questioning in the case.

A 46-year-old man who



DOUG OAKLEY/STAFF

Neighbors and friends hold a vigil for a Richmond family that police say was the target of either a violent robbery or a predawn burglary Friday. A couple live at the house with an older relative and two school-age children.

lives at the house went to the trauma center in critical condition after the 3:56 a.m. shooting, and his mother, 67-year-old Sushila Prasad, died. Prasad stayed with her son and his family while visiting from Fiji, police said.

"About five minutes after 4, we started getting

neighbors saying they heard gunshots and Detective Nicole [redacted]. It appears that [redacted] persons entered [redacted] and there was [redacted] conversation with [redacted]

at the house [redacted] relative and two

school-age children, neighbors said. Abetkov said the children and one adult woke to sounds of violence and made it out of the house to a neighbor's home.

The children were not hurt, but "pretty traumatized," Lt. Lori Curran said.

Witnesses saw two men running away after the gunfire. Patrol officers guided by neighborhood tips quickly located a man sitting in a gray-blue Pontiac parked nearby.

Richmond police held the man, a parolee, for questioning Friday morning and described him as a "person of interest." San Pablo police got in a foot chase with another man on a neighboring street around the time of the shooting, and detectives also checked him for any involvement. He was released.

The 27-year-old parolee arrested in the Pontiac remained at the police department for questioning. Police

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have confirmed that they are seeking a second suspect in the case.

"This is a particularly heinous crime, and we intend to utilize all resources available to bring the perpetrators to justice," Richmond police Chief Chris Magnus said. "Unfortunately, the fact is that we have a number of individuals on parole, back in the community, who continue to engage in more and

more crime because of inadequate [state] supervision."

Magnus lives less than a mile from the crime scene in the North and East neighborhood, an ethnically diverse, working-class area with a mix of older homeowners and young families.

Felix Hunziker, an eight-year resident who serves on a volunteer neighborhood patrol organized by residents, said locals feel "dismay and anger that someone would do this to someone in our neighborhood."

"There's been an immediate call for how we can help

these people."

Neighborhood leaders will work with police to help the family, and they plan a candlelight vigil, Hunziker said.

North and East Neighborhood Council President Jan Mignone said her group is also organizing a crime prevention workshop with Richmond Police in October, and have a neighborhood picnic set for next month, where the council will likely accept donations for the victims.

"I'm upset, I'm frustrated, I'm angry. And in a way, I guess I feel violated.

You came into my neighborhood," Mignone said. "... I've always believed that this is a good neighborhood, these are good people and this is a good place to live."

Prasad became Richmond's 24th homicide victim of the year. Police say she was the victim of a street mugging last week in San Pablo, but found no evidence linking the cases. A suspect in that case was arrested, police said.

Staff writer Robert Salonga contributed to this report.