Police Officer Killed; Robber Sought

Rookie and former Marine Robert Buitrago just started working the streets by himself.

By Rich McKay and Christopher Dobbs

A rookie police officer and another officer at a shopping center killed a man who had shot a woman in the face and shot the officer in the chest.

Police Chief George Brown said the officer, Robert Buitrago, was shot in the chest after he stopped the man in a vehicle and shot him in the head.

Buitrago was a rookie just out of the academy.

Our Sunday Best...

A Look at What's Inside

THE ART: All the art in John Nygren's life is at the center of all the art in John Nygren's life. Today, galleries throughout the country sell his art. In a few days, much of his art will be in Winston-Salem, at a retrospective showing at the Winston-Salem Art Museum Inc. He'll have time out to talk to the Journal's Ken Underwood.

Dredges used in streams on federal land are at heart of environmental dispute

MUDDY ISSUE

By Frank Toral

It's a recurring theme in a lawsuit and its courts at odds about是不是 environmental protection.

The US Forest Service worries that if it will be equally as precedent in working up...
In the Line of Duty

A.G. Tise
Michael Jennings
Bobby Beane

Since June 1992, four Winston-Salem police officers have died in the line of duty—three of them killed by criminal suspects.

- April 23: Senior Officer Bobby F. Beane, 40, was shot in the forehead at an apartment on Kennerly Street. Beane was part of a team raiding the apartment with a search warrant in a drug case. The man who lived in the apartment was convicted of first-degree murder Nov. 10.

- Jan. 15: Robert Buitrago, 23, tried to stop a robber fleing the Food Lion in Southpark Shopping Center, striking the man with a bottle. The man pulled out a pistol and shot Buitrago.

- Jan. 29: Senior Officer Michael Ray Jennings, 30, died after loss of control of his patrol car on Winston Lake Road. His car hit a tree and caught fire. He was on his way to assist another officer. No charges were filed in the accidental death.

- June 26, 1992: Lt. A.G. Tise, 46, was killed when he and his car were crushed by a stolen motor grader on East Drive off New Walkertown Road. The man accused of driving the motor grader pleaded guilty to second-degree murder on July 6, 1993.

SHOOTING

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Parkway toward Clemmonsville Road.
Police dogs tracked him to a house on West Clemmonsville Road near Orchidview Drive at 11:30 p.m. before losing the scent.

Officers closed the store and Officers said that Buitrago stood out among the newer officers. He was typically chipper and was proud to become a police officer. He was unmarried, and is survived by a brother and father living in Union City.

Solemn and subdued, Sweat spoke of the death of the fourth officer under his command:

"Here was an officer like any citizen, standing in line in a store, But be..."
SHOOTING

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Police dogs tracked him to a house on West Clemonsville Road near Orchidview Drive at 11:30 p.m. before losing the scent.

Officers closed the store and took witnesses to the Public Safety Center and had witnesses look at mug shots, hoping that someone would recognize the robber.

No one had been arrested as of 1 a.m.

Bultrago, a native of Union City, N.J., joined the department in March and graduated from rookie school July 30. He was assigned as a Foot Patrol officer working in Southeast Winston-Salem.

Sweat said that he was fluent in Spanish and that one of his rookie projects was to translate the city resource directory into Spanish.

A half-dozen grim off-duty officers, some with their spouses beside them, arrived at the emergency room at Baptist Hospital shortly after the shooting.

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Solemn and subdued, Sweat spoke of the death of the fourth officer under his command:

"Here was an officer like any citizen, standing in line in a store, minding his own business. But because he was an officer he was different, and he responded to the situation because of who he was, and it cost him his life."

"What this community needs to do is pray — pray for the officer's family and other officers out there. This community needs the intervention of God more than any I know of right now."

Sheriff Ron Barker drove up to the emergency room about 11:40 p.m. He said that he had just gotten dressed to go out on patrol when the phone rang. A sheriff's dispatcher told him that a police officer had been killed.

"I just couldn't say anything for a minute," Barker said. "There's too much of this going on."