

Police: Suspects casually left murder scene before wild chase, shootout

Torres-Cortez, Ricardo . TCA Regional News ; Chicago [Chicago]19 July 2018.

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FULL TEXT

July 19--Once gunfire exploded just outside a car wash bay in broad daylight, the pair of slaying suspects were so nonchalant about fleeing that it gave witnesses in nearby businesses time to exit, take a peek and identify the black Ford Expedition they drove away in.

That description -- two hours later on July 11 -- led to a running shootout with dozens of exchanged rounds between the suspects and Metro Police.

Body-camera footage of the chase and gunfight, which left Fidel Miranda, 23, dead and Rene Nunez, 30, wounded, has garnered national attention.

The slaying that precipitated it may have been gang-related, according to police. Nunez, who is expected to recover, is accused of murder.

Officers were dispatched about 7:30 a.m. to the car wash in 1400 block of Eastern Avenue where they encountered Thomas Romero Jr., who'd been pumped with bullets, police said. He died at University Medical Center.

At least five witnesses told police that the sound of gunfire directed their attention to the shooting scene, where they saw two suspects leave in a black SUV. One of them even described one of the suspects bending to pick up something off the ground.

That same witness rushed to Romero, asking him if he knew who shot him. But "the victim shook his head as if to say no," police said.

Footage from the car wash revealed that and more. It captured Romero, Nunez and apparently Miranda, too, according to the report.

Romero was standing toward the back of the Expedition, which was being washed by Nunez, when one of the suspects -- possibly Miranda -- approached him in a shooting stance and opened fire, police said. Nunez also drew a gun, and then conversed with the shooter before they walked toward Romero who was lying motionless.

"Both Nunez and the unidentified suspect appeared calm and walked at a normal pace," police wrote in the report.

"The suspect bent over and removed an unknown object from the waist of Romero Jr. before returning back to the Expedition."

The report also shed a few more details on the subsequent chase and shootout.

About 30 minutes after the initial shooting was reported, a Metro sergeant spotted the stolen Expedition on the road, which description was broadcast over the radio, but lost it.

During the chase around 9:30 a.m., Nunez, who was driving and shooting, accelerated well into the 70-mph range, police said. In the hospital, he tested positive for methamphetamine.

Nunez, a convicted felon who was booked in absentia at the Clark County Detention Center, is being held on one count of murder, three counts each of attempted murder and assault with a deadly weapon on a protected person, and one count each of robbery, and possession, and carrying a concealed weapon by a convicted felon.

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