

Felton shooting suspect i

1/4/83 San Mateo

'My God,
he shot
the officer'

By PAUL BEATTY
Sentinel Staff Writer

FELTON — Jytte Beatty had watched "the miserable looking man in the scruffy clothes" from her shop window when he walked into town an hour before and wondered why he looked "so sad, so totally depressed."

Afterwards she thought, "Maybe underneath it all, he's happy in his own way."

She was with a customer in the south part of the Big Trees Press shop when the man walked back, still carrying his backpack and now with a medium sized bag of groceries.

He set the pack and groceries down by the corner telephone pole, 30 feet from her large shop window and began hitchhiking.

A normal occurrence at that spot.

Beatty took notice when within a minute or two a sheriff's patrol car approached from the south and made a left turn into the shop's southern driveway.

The patrol car pulled right in front of the hitchhiker in scruffy clothes and within about 15 feet of her window.

"I saw the hitchhiker moving toward the driver's side of the deputy's car with no expression on his face, just a blank look. And then I heard the shot."

"Then I saw the man sort of slowly turn as if to leave and I heard the officer moan."

SEE BACK PAGE



Dan Coyro/Sentinel

Sheriff's SWAT team with track dog resumes search of Henry Cowell Park this morning.

'He shot the officer'

FROM PAGE 1

He moaned a second time and I yelled, "My God, he shot the officer."

She reached for the phone while she was screaming to the three printers at work in the shop.

At the commotion, John Eaton, who was walking toward the large windows in the center section of the print shop, hurried over and saw the man walk up to the officer lying outside the car. The man shot him again.

"I saw him shoot at least three more times."

"Then he kind of walked away; I think, putting his gun back in his pocket. The cop revived somewhat and he shot twice through the fence at the man with the gun who was now walking down Highway 9. The guy turned back and shot at the cop."

"By this time, the guy was hitchhiking again. That's what made it so bizarre; so unbelievable to everyone," Eaton said.

Pressman Steve McQuilliams heard the hollering and the shooting and yelled back at Beatty to forget the phone and get down and lock the doors.

"We've got a madman on our hands," he yelled.

Beatty yelled back, "I have to call first. You lock the doors."

McQuilliams ran into the bindery and hurried the customer — Harriett Laurenzi of Santa Cruz — into the back shop and fought with the stubborn door lock, still within range of any shooting that might break out again.

Beatty got 911 quickly and told them, "An officer's been shot."

"The operator asked me 'where are you?' and of course I told her 'on the floor, under the table.'"

"She immediately spoke to me telling me to calm down and give the address and now and then she'd tell me to hold on a minute and she'd leave the line and then come back on for more information."

Outside, a woman returning from a doctor's visit, Mary Scibetta of Felton, had taken cover behind Laurenzi's Dodge Dart Swinger, still outside the print shop.

When the shooting stopped — momentarily as it turned out — Eaton and cameraman Royce Manchester went out the front door to give aid to the officer and get Scibetta inside.

As they stepped out, a California Highway Patrol car pulled up and they yelled

at him, "It's the hitchhiker" and pointed at the man who was just a hundred yards down the highway.

The CHP car pulled over to the right side, the man with the automatic pistol opened fire on him.

"That's when the window (of the Dart Swinger) shattered and it was self-survival from there on," Manchester said.

"As I started toward the deputy, the guy opened up on the CHP guy and I crawled back into the shop. We were digging concrete from there on," Eaton said.

Scibetta got left outside, where she had been "bobbing up and back down," according to a witness, until the window shattered. At that she moved from the center of the car to behind the rear wheel to cover her entire body from the line of fire.

"It was hard to believe it was the man who was hitchhiking who was doing the shooting and that may have confused the highway patrolman," Manchester said.

Manchester said the highway patrolman acted confused. "He stopped and got out and then got back in and then stopped again."

"He should have just run the guy over when he had him in the middle of the street."

Witnesses said the highway patrolman moved toward the man with the automatic pistol three times in his patrol unit, ending up about an eighth of a mile from the print shop, at the entrance of Henry Cowell Park.

The shooting stopped and the man escaped into the redwoods.

John and Royce went to the aid of the officer who was "trying to speak, but was incoherent," they said.

Scibetta was shaken and near tears, saying she didn't believe the man was shooting at her, "but it's too early in the year to go through this stuff."

The first ambulance on the scene went by the deputy and picked up the more visible patrolman, witnesses said, and it was a few minutes longer before the second ambulance got to the deputy.

In the meantime, the Felton firemen got there and began giving Deputy Mike Gray oxygen.

With the firemen was the deputy's father, Bob Gray, a fire commissioner.

Shaken and pale, he cradled his son's head while the fight to save his life began.

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