



STOCKTON

Three shot, killed in 12 hours

By **Alex Breitler**

Record Staff Writer

December 28, 2009 12:00 AM

STOCKTON - Police were investigating three fatal shootings in a 12-hour period Saturday afternoon through early Sunday.

Two of the dead have been identified: Arsenio Collins, 21, was shot by a passing motorist in north Stockton; and Angel Cruz Sanchez, 19, a disc jockey, was shot at a downtown bar, police said.

No arrests were reported in connection with Collins' death.

In the second case, police said they arrested one of Sanchez's friends, 18-year-old Leopoldo Carranza. Officers said Carranza was showing his gun to Sanchez when it went off inside of the bar. They said Carranza believed the gun was unloaded.

Details about the third killing remained sketchy. Police Lt. Theodore Montes said an 18-year-old man who may have been shot at a south Stockton party was dropped off about 4:40 a.m. Sunday at Dameron Hospital, where he died before officers could get there.

Investigators were still trying to locate the crime scene, Montes said.

Starting with the first shooting, here is how this weekend's violence unfolded:

Collins was walking near Calandria Street and La Cresta Way about 4:30 p.m. when a blue, four-door Lincoln drove by, and someone from the car opened fire.

Collins was taken to a hospital before police arrived at the scene and was taken into surgery for treatment of gunshot wounds to his upper body. Police initially said the wounds were not believed to be life-threatening. But at 9 p.m., the hospital informed officers that Collins had died, police said.

Ruth Gross, 69, was in a back room of her apartment near where Collins was shot when she heard at least two gunshots. She didn't dare peek out the barred window; three grandchildren, ages 4, 5 and 7, ran to join her in the rear of the home.

"They're used to it (gunfire)," Gross said. "I've heard it lots of times. "But on the day after Christmas," she said, shaking her head.

A 58-year-old man who lives closer to the scene said he heard eight shots. He did not want to be identified for fear of his safety.

In downtown Stockton, it was half past midnight Sunday when officers got a call of a shooting at Charlie's Bar & Nightclub at American and Market streets.

There, they found Sanchez dead from a single gunshot wound, they said. Numerous people were detained at the bar, but officers ultimately arrested Carranza after recovering the weapon. He was held on suspicion of murder.

The bar was locked Sunday; yellow crime scene tape was stuffed in a trash can. A man responded to a knock on the door but declined to talk about the killing.

More than four hours after the bar shooting, a third gunshot victim was dropped off in front of Dameron by two women and a man in a silver-colored, four-door sedan.

Later, two friends showed up at the hospital to ask about the victim, who had died. When questioned by police, one of the friends said the victim had been at a party in south Stockton.

Possibly related to that killing was an 18-year-old woman who suffered a gunshot wound to her leg and went to San Joaquin General Hospital. She said she had been at a party near Sixth and Sutter streets, but police could not find the scene of the crime.

Man killed in wave of violence in Tracy

By *The Record*
December 19, 2009 3:08 PM

TRACY – A 21-year-old man was killed Friday night in Tracy in the third of three gang-related incidents – two of them shootings – within two hours.

The Tracy Police Department reported that at 8:15 p.m. it received several reports of gunshots heard from the 1300 block of Holly Drive. A 16-year-old boy had been shot, and was taken to a hospital in stable condition. Two men were seen walking from the area immediately after the shots.

Then at 10 p.m. two men were attacked in the 1200 block of Holly Drive by four men who wore bandannas over their faces. One of the masked men brandished a handgun. Both victims were treated at a local hospital for minor injuries.

Within minutes police were called to the 1200 block of East Street, where a group of people shot at a man standing on the sidewalk. The shooters drove away in a dark sedan. The victim, a 21-year-old man, was pronounced dead about three hours later.

Stockton homicide victim identified

By *Christian Burkin*
Record Staff Writer
December 03, 2009 12:00 AM

STOCKTON - The man killed Tuesday afternoon in a shooting in southeast Stockton that left another man seriously injured was 21-year-old Roberto Hernandez, the Police Department reported Wednesday.

Hernandez and the other victim, a 19-year-old Stockton man, were with a group of people gathered near two parked cars at the corner of Skyline Drive and Amsterdam Place on Tuesday afternoon when an unknown person approached and began shooting, said Officer Pete Smith, a police spokesman.

Hernandez fell where he stood, while the other man fled to the backyard of a nearby home.

Hernandez was pronounced dead at St. Joseph's Medical Center. The other victim was taken to San Joaquin General Hospital, where he remained in serious condition Wednesday.

The people with Hernandez at the time of the shooting had initially fled but were later found and interviewed.

"I believe they've all been identified and are cooperating with the investigation," Smith said, adding that there was no evidence the shooting was gang-related.

Smith said neither Hernandez nor the injured man lived in the neighborhood where the shooting occurred but did live in southeast Stockton.

Anyone with information is asked to call investigators at (209) 937-8323 or the Stockton Police Department's non-emergency number at (209) 937-8377.

Driver shot to death while baby riding in back

By *Christian Burkin*

Record Staff Writer

August 29, 2009 12:01 AM

STOCKTON - Riding in the back of the same red Acura coupe a young man was driving Friday night when he was shot to death was an infant, no more than a few months old and secured in a car seat.

The child, whose relationship to the victim had not been confirmed Friday night, was uninjured.

Merary Picos, 22, said she heard the gunshots, counted as many as eight, and then went outside to see what had happened. She said she found the man bleeding and near death. He was staring at the child in the back seat, she said. Picos tried to help him.

"I couldn't do anything," she said. "I'm always going to carry that with me."

The Stockton Police Department released few details in the first few hours after the shooting, reporting that a 24-year-old man had been shot at about 5:30 p.m. near Bianchi Road and Hillsboro Way. He was taken from the scene in "extremely critical" condition and later died.

Officer Pete Smith, a police spokesman, said police did not know what might have happened before the shooting but said the man was in his car when he was shot. The Acura, its windshield cracked, was parked on the northwest corner of Bianchi and Hillsboro, with one front tire up on the sidewalk. The intersection was closed, and residents of the neighborhood had gathered at different spots around the yellow tape marking the crime scene.

The victim, Smith said, was a documented gang member, but investigators were not prepared to say that the shooting was gang-related. The victim's identity was being withheld pending notification of his next of kin.

Susan Palacio, who lives in the neighborhood, said the response by police had been rapid but that she wished there were more in the area to begin with. Greensboro Way to the east, Kentfield Road to the west and Townehome Drive to the south are all

troubled by gangs and violence. Palacio said she's been told there have been improvements but that they simply need more police.

"I know that they're trying. I know that there are cutbacks, but we need more," she said. "There are idiots driving around shooting, and it's just a matter of time before a kid gets hurt."

Fourth Louis Park defendant guilty on all counts (UPDATED 2:58 p.m.)

by *The Record*

August 28, 2009 12:59 PM

STOCKTON – Jurors found Chanreasmey Prum guilty today of first-degree murder, three counts of attempted murder, and gang and gun charges likely to put him in prison for the rest of his life.

The guilty verdicts – nine in all – cap a trial in the Louis Park shooting last year that killed 13-year-old Aaron Kelly Jr. Prum is the fourth person found guilty of the Feb. 8, 2008, killing. All defendants are expected to be sentenced in October.

Prosecutors considered Prum to be the lead defendant, who brought three others with him to the park to run off a rival gang member. Wearing a mask and carrying a MAC-10 submachine gun, he approached a party barbecuing at the park.

As a caravan of cars fled, shots rang out, and a single bullet fired from Prum's gun struck Aaron in the front seat of his mother's car. He died as his mother, who was struck by the same bullet, sped to the hospital.

Stockton man arrested for shooting

By *The Record*

August 25, 2009 12:00 AM

Arrest made in Lodi shooting

LODI - Police said they have arrested a Stockton man accused of shooting a 17-year-old boy Sunday in Lodi.

The Lodi Police Department said in a statement Monday that it is investigating the possibility the incident was gang-related.

Victor Estrada Jr., 19, was a passenger in a minivan police said left the area of the shooting about 10:30 p.m. Sunday in the 400 block of East Locust Street, the statement said. He was arrested on suspicion of assault with a deadly weapon, police said.

The 17-year-old boy who was shot was a passenger in an SUV also seen leaving the area of the shooting, police said. Police said that when they stopped the SUV, they saw that the victim had been shot in the back.

An 18-year-old who was riding in the minivan with Estrada had a gunshot wound to his arm, police said.

The 18-year-old and the 17-year-old were taken to a hospital and were listed in good condition, police said.

Was shot that killed boy fired first?

Defense attorney argues his client was retaliating

By **Scott Smith**

Record Staff Writer

August 22, 2009 12:01 AM

STOCKTON - A man other than the one on trial for killing an innocent 13-year-old boy in a Louis Park shootout last year fired the first shot, a defense attorney told jurors Friday in closing arguments.

A bullet from a gun fired by Chanreasmey Prum, 23, killed Aaron Kelly Jr., but Prum was returning fire to rival gang member Jonathan Tellez Jr., San Joaquin County Deputy Public Defender Sam Behar said.

Placing the blame on Tellez, Behar wants jurors to find his client - a member of the Westside Bloods - guilty of a lesser charge than first-degree murder and keep him from spending the rest of his life in state prison.

"This case comes down to one question," Behar told jurors. "Did Jonathan Tellez Jr. fire first?"

Kelly was at the scenic park along the Stockton Deep Water Channel on Feb. 8, 2008, at a barbecue with friends and family when Prum approached them, ordering Tellez - who was among them - to leave. They all left in a caravan of cars.

Shots rang out, and one bullet struck Kelly, who rode in the front passenger seat of his mother's car. He died as she sped to the hospital. Tellez, a Norteño gang member, testified in trial - and prosecutors maintain - that he fired back in response to Prum and three others.

Tellez is the son of a man Kelly's mother is dating. Tellez spent some time in jail after the shooting but is now out of custody.

In her arguments, San Joaquin County Deputy District Attorney Janet Smith called Prum a liar and a coward who confronted a group of women and children that day as he carried a loaded MAC-10 submachine gun and wore a mask.

She wants jurors to find Prum guilty of murder, attempted murder and acting on behalf of a criminal street gang, among other charges.

As proof that Tellez fired first, Behar read from the same jailhouse letters Prum wrote that prosecutors used to show the defendant has consistently lied and schemed out of desperation to beat the murder charge.

Prum sent Tellez a series of jailhouse letters, called kites, which inmates secretly tossed to each other from cell to cell. In the letters, Prum tried negotiating with Tellez so they could both beat the charges.

Behar said Prum believed the letters to Tellez were confidential, so in them Prum is telling the truth, despite his general lack of credibility. Tellez fired first, which the letters establish, Behar said.

"They're accurate. They're true," Behar told jurors. "Tellez was the first to shoot, and he caused the murder."

Behar is expected to continue his closing arguments Tuesday.

Jail plot in Kelly case detailed

Lead defendant tried to persuade rival to help him avoid murder charge

By **Scott Smith**
Record Staff Writer
August 19, 2009 12:01 AM

STOCKTON - A Stockton man testified Tuesday that he sent jailhouse letters called kites to a rival gang member in an attempt to scheme his way out of a murder charge stemming from the Louis Park shootout last year that killed an innocent boy.

Testifying in his own defense, Chanreasmey Prum, 23, admitted sending the kites to Jonathan Tellez Jr. while both men were held at the San Joaquin County Jail after the shooting. Kites are sent by throwing them from cell to cell.

In one of the intercepted notes about which San Joaquin County Deputy District Attorney Janet Smith questioned him, Prum tried to persuade his rival to relay a story that downplayed his role in the death of 13-year-old Aaron Kelly Jr.

In another kite, Prum urged Tellez to say the incident wasn't gang-related. "The DA is going to offer me a sweet deal, so I won't get life," Prum wrote about his potential prison term.

Prum's one-time plot has so far failed him. Prosecutors consider him the lead of four defendants, and he is on trial on murder and gang-related charges stemming from the Feb. 8, 2008, shooting. Three others await sentencing to lengthy prison terms. In the Friday evening shootout, Tellez, a documented Norteño gang member, was at Louis Park barbecuing with a group of relatives and friends. They included Tellez's father, Jonathan Tellez Sr., who was with his girlfriend, Renee Garcia, Kelly's mother.

Prum allegedly wore a mask and carried a fully loaded MAC-10 submachine gun while shouting his gang affiliation and ordering Jonathan Tellez Jr. to leave.

Tellez's group was driving away when a bullet struck Kelly in the passenger seat of his mother's car.

Prum testified that he was the masked gunman who confronted Tellez, but he said he only wanted the rival gang member to leave the park, and he denied firing the first shot.

Tellez has testified to returning fire while riding as a passenger in a fleeing car.

Prum, who is known on the street as Beast, said he feared Tellez because Tellez tried to run over his cousin and was rumored to have shot up a neighborhood home on New Year's Eve 2007. Prum said he brought the weapon but only to intimidate Tellez.

"If I didn't pull it out, he wouldn't do nothing," Prum testified. "I wanted him to leave, because he's a danger to my neighborhood."

After ordering Tellez from the park, Prum said he turned to walk away when he heard gunfire. Prum said he ducked at first and then returned shots, firing four to six times.

He demonstrated holding the gun sideways, which Smith called "gangster style."

Smith told Prum he was aware of the consequences when he went to the park with a loaded weapon. She asked Prum why he lied in his initial interviews with Stockton police detectives and then urged Tellez to lie in the kites.

"I was just desperate," Prum said. "I don't want to be involved."

Prum told Smith that after the shooting, he went to friends' nearby home for about an hour. He told an associate there to get rid of the gun. Prum said he then drove to Jackson Rancheria with a couple of others to get out of town.

Detectives booked him into the San Joaquin County Jail three days later.

Latest homicide may be related to others

Sisters recall victim's sense of humor

By **Christian Burkin**

also by **Jennifer Torres**

Record Staff Writers

August 19, 2009 12:01 AM

STOCKTON - Jose Parra, the 20-year-old man killed Sunday in Stockton's fourth homicide in six days, was always cracking jokes.

Parra's sister Sarena Regalado of San Jose, said the last time they saw each other was on a visit about a month ago.

"He was just funny, she said. "Everything that came out of his mouth."

And if it somehow wasn't, love made up the difference, said another sister, Vanessa Grijalva.

"He would make a joke. Even if it wasn't funny, we would laugh at him so he wouldn't feel bad," she said.

The Police Department has reported that a vehicle pulled up outside Parra's Spring Street home Sunday night, and someone in the vehicle opened fire, injuring Parra, who later died at San Joaquin General Hospital. Brittany Jones, Parra's girlfriend, said they were hanging out in front of his house with his cousins and some friends when the shooting happened.

Officer Pete Smith, a Stockton Police Department spokesman, said Parra's killing may be related to one or more of the recent homicides.

Last week, 17-year-old Bear Creek High School student Sophia Fernandez was killed in a drive-by shooting in north Stockton.

The next day, 45-year-old Andre Beach was dropped off outside a north Stockton clinic, suffering from a gunshot wound; he later died.

And Friday night, Vincent Salazar, 15, was gunned down at Fremont and Filbert streets; police have said his killing was gang-related.

"There's always a possibility (that they're related) when you have a cluster like that," Smith said, adding that he had not heard that any evidence had yet surfaced that could connect the killings.

Jones said she and Parra had known each other about a year, and she had been excited to celebrate their first anniversary as a couple.

"We were so happy that our anniversary was coming up. We were going to go out to eat," she said.

Then they were going to have pictures taken of themselves - maybe at the mall.

Man dies after south Stockton drive-by; homicide is city's fourth in a week

By *The Record*
August 17, 2009 8:21 AM

STOCKTON - A 20-year-old man was killed and a 19-year-old woman was injured in a drive-by shooting in south Stockton on Sunday night.

Witness told police that the victims were standing in the 1500 block of Spring Street around 8:40 p.m. when a vehicle pulled up and stopped nearby, and one of the vehicle's occupants fired several shots at them, hitting both.

The man later died from his wounds. His name has not been released pending notification of his family.

The woman was in stable condition at the hospital, police said.

The man's death is Stockton's fourth homicide in the past seven days. On Tuesday, 17-year-old Sophia Fernandez was shot to death in north Stockton and on Wednesday night Andre Gerard Beach, 45, was dropped off outside a north Stockton clinic suffering from a gunshot wound that proved fatal. On Friday, a 15-year-old boy was shot and killed at the intersection of Fremont and Filbert streets.

15-year-old shot to death in Stockton

By **The Record**
August 15, 2009 5:01 PM

STOCKTON — A dark spot on the concrete on Fremont Street, under a slice of pizza and a row of candles and cans of beer marked the spot where a 15-year-old boy was shot to death Friday night.

According to police, at 11:24 p.m. police were called to the intersection of Fremont and Filbert streets on a report that a person had been shot. When they arrived they found the boy dead of an apparent gunshot wound, said Officer Pete Smith, a police spokesman.

Smith said two men who were witnessed driving away from the shooting in a 2000s model Chevrolet Malibu, gray or silver, are suspects. There had been some sort of dispute involving them and the boy before the shooting.

Bear Creek student killed in drive-by

Three shootings in just over an hour

By **Christian Burkin**
also by **Daniel Thigpen**
Record Staff Writers
August 13, 2009 12:01 AM

STOCKTON - A 17-year-old girl was killed and a 20-year-old man was injured in a drive-by shooting in north Stockton on Tuesday night.

The Stockton Police Department said the victims were standing outside a home in the 9400 block of Hickock Drive around 9:40 p.m. when a vehicle pulled up and stopped nearby, and a man in the vehicle fired several shots at them, hitting both.

The man's injury was not life-threatening.

Officer Pete Smith, a police spokesman, said he had no suspect information to release but said investigators were following "active leads."

The Police Department withheld the names of the victims. Smith said the man either lives in the Bay Area or had recently moved here. The girl didn't live on Hickock Drive but did live in the area, he said.

Smith said he didn't know what the relationship was between the two, but he did say they knew each other and were not related.

Friends of the slain girl said she was Sophia Fernandez, a student at Bear Creek High School, where news spread of her death Wednesday. Principal Daryl Camp said faculty offered support to distraught students and tried to maintain normalcy. "It was a pretty normal day, as much as it could be," he said.

Friends described Fernandez as a quiet but well-liked girl who kept to herself and had no enemies. Fernandez loved hip-hop and was often seen smiling and wearing stylish outfits.

"She was just a laid-back person," said 15-year-old Maurisha McGowan. "She got along with everybody."

Shaquie Franklin, 16, said she lived a few doors from Fernandez, not far from the scene of the shooting. She said her close friend likely had nothing to do with what happened.

"All it was, was her being in the wrong place at the wrong time," Franklin said. Standing in the school parking lot with "RIP Sophia" drawn on her hand, Shania Parker, 17, said the news hit close: The two girls shared a sixth-period English class and had known each other since middle school.

"She sat right next to me," Parker said. "Now it's empty."

Friends of Fernandez's said the man injured in the shooting was her boyfriend. Smith said Stockton investigators are working with Bay Area law enforcement agencies to determine whether anything in his past could explain the shooting.

Police were called to two other shootings across the city in a little more than one hour Tuesday night. Around 9:15 p.m., a 28-year-old woman was grazed by bullets fired

from outside her south Stockton home, and at 10:30 p.m. a 15-year-old boy suffered a minor injury when he was shot in a robbery attempt in north Stockton.

The neighborhood around Hickock Drive, including Colt and Comstock drives, is troubled, Smith said.

"We know that we do have some gang element in that neighborhood. It's something we're aware of and we're always trying to work on," he said.

Teenage girl shot, killed in Stockton

By *The Record*

August 12, 2009 9:37 AM

STOCKTON -- A 17-year-old girl was shot and killed and a 20-year-old man was wounded Tuesday night in north Stockton, police said.

The girl and man were standing in the 9400 block of Hickock Drive at about 9:30 p.m. when a vehicle occupied by two men stopped nearby. One of the men in the vehicle began shooting, striking both victims.

The shooters then fled west on Colt Drive, police said.

The girl has not been identified by police pending notification of her family. The male victim was treated at a local hospital. Police are investigating.

Arrest made in shooting of Weston Ranch teen

By *Joe Goldeen*

also by *Ian Hill*

Record Staff Writers

July 24, 2009 12:01 AM

STOCKTON - Police have arrested a Stockton man wanted for questioning in the shooting of teenager Steufon Mackey earlier this year in Weston Ranch.

Clarence Murray, 35, of Greensboro Way was arrested about 5:30 p.m. Wednesday near Phelps and 11th streets in Stockton. He was in the passenger seat of a vehicle that had been reported stolen in a Sacramento carjacking, police said.

The driver, Dominick Mearis, 23, also was arrested. Police said Mearis ran from the vehicle when officers approached and was apprehended a short distance away.

Mackey, who turned 16 on June 23, was hit by a stray bullet March 9 at his home in the 4100 block of Bellettini Court. He was in his second-story bedroom piecing together a lamp with his younger brother when the boys heard gunshots in the neighborhood.

Mackey put his ear up to his bedroom window to listen and was struck in his left temple by a bullet, his mother, Yvette, said at the time.

He spent almost three months at Oakland Children's Hospital rehabilitating to the point where he could be discharged June 12.

"He's home now. He's walking now. He's not on a cane, not in a wheelchair. It's a miracle," said his father, Willie Mackey.

"He's going to physical therapy three times a week here in Stockton, and we are looking for improvement every day," Willie Mackey said.

Informed by a Record reporter about the arrest, all the father could say was, "Wow. I hope this is the right guy and, hopefully, whatever he receives is the right punishment for the crime. He's too old to be out doing that."

Police have theorized that the shot came from up to three blocks away, in the 1600 block of William Moss Boulevard, where gunfire was reported simultaneously with Steufon Mackey's injury. Police later found shell casings on William Moss Boulevard.

The shooting also spurred a late March gang sweep by police, who have said the bullet may have been fired in a dispute between two factions of the same gang.

Trial opens for lead defendant in Louis Park killing

Prum accused of killing teen

By **Scott Smith**
Record Staff Writer
July 22, 2009 6:00 AM

STOCKTON - The murder trial opened Tuesday for Chanreamsey Prum, a Stockton man who passed up a plea deal, deciding instead to face a jury on charges he fired a MAC-10 submachine gun inside Louis Park, killing 13-year-old Aaron Kelly Jr.

The attorney for Prum, 23, made no opening statement to present a case contrary to that of San Joaquin County Deputy District Attorney Janet Smith, who said she's prepared to prove that

Prum opened fire to take revenge in a gang feud.

Smith told jurors that Kelly died an innocent victim Feb. 8, 2008, while riding in the front passenger seat of his mother's car, with his two sisters and the family dog in the back seat.

Renee Garcia had gathered her children, fleeing Prum's gang threats, Smith said.

"They did exactly what they were told to do," Smith said. "All of these victims got into their cars immediately to leave."

Smith said that moments earlier, Prum approached the group relaxing near the park's boat ramp because of Jonathan Tellez Jr., the son of Garcia's boyfriend. Tellez is a documented gang member, and word on the street said Tellez was responsible for a neighborhood shooting two months earlier, Smith said.

According to Smith, witnesses said Prum - armed and wearing a red mask over his face - approached them, announcing his gang affiliation. He told Tellez that the only reason he didn't kill him then was because of whom Tellez was with, Smith said.

As Tellez and others left in a caravan of cars, Prum fired his gun, and a bullet went through Garcia's car door, hit her in the arm and then struck Kelly in the chest, Smith said. Kelly was dead before his mother reached the hospital. Tellez returned fire from another car, Smith said.

San Joaquin County Deputy Public Defender Sam Behar, who represents Prum, still has the option of giving an opening statement later in the trial.

Two weeks ago, his client passed up a prosecutor's plea deal of 25 years to life in prison. If jurors find him guilty of all the charges, Prum could face life in prison without the possibility of parole.

He is charged with first-degree murder, three counts of attempted murder, and gang and weapons charges.

Co-defendant Rattany Uy, 18, was found guilty on related charges that make him eligible for life in prison without the possibility of parole.

Deandre Cole, 18, pleaded guilty to voluntary manslaughter, gang and weapons charges. A judge is expected to sentence him to 30 years, eight months in state prison. Michael Garduno, 20, took a similar plea deal for 26 years in prison. Prum's trial before San Joaquin County Superior Court Judge George Abdallah is expected to continue today.



Gerardo Antonio Orozco, 22, charged with suspicion of murder

Three gang members charged with murder

By ***The Record***
March 03, 2009 6:00 AM

STOCKTON - Sheriff's detectives and Stockton anti-gang officers arrested three men Sunday on suspicion of murder in what sheriff's officials say was a gang-related crime.

A 36-year-old man was beaten and left for dead early Saturday behind a trash bin at the Shell gas station in the 7700 block of North Moreland Street in north Stockton, according to the San Joaquin County Sheriff's Office. The man has not yet been identified pending notification of next of kin.

Deputies were called to the gas station shortly before 8 a.m. Saturday and found the man lying on his back behind the trash bin on the south side of the building, according to the report.

He was breathing, but not responsive. He was bleeding from a large cut on the top of his head and several cuts on his face, and appeared to have been bleeding for some time, according to the report. His right eye was swollen shut, and his face was severely bruised.

Medics arrived and took the man to a hospital, where he was pronounced dead.

Deputies viewed surveillance tapes and spotted possible suspects - three men and a woman, all in their 20s - leaving in what appeared to be a newer tan or gold Cadillac El Dorado with polished five-spoke rims and tinted windows.

Sheriff's detectives suspected the crime was a gang-related and contacted the Stockton Police Department's Gang Street Enforcement Team on Sunday.

Within 45 minutes of being called, GSET officers found the vehicle parked near a home in the 2100 block of Peralta Avenue in south Stockton. The officers set up surveillance of the vehicle and later went to a nearby home to take two men and a woman into custody. The third man was taken into custody in the 13600 block of East Highway 88 in Lockeford. All four were turned over to sheriff's detectives.

Arrested were Gerardo Antonio Orozco, 22, of Stockton; Steven Mickey Alvarado, 20, of Stockton; and Jose Jesus Gomez, 25, of Lockeford. They each were booked into the San Joaquin County Jail by Monday morning on suspicion of murder, robbery and street terrorism.

Each was held without bail and are tentatively scheduled to appear in court Wednesday. The woman was not identified because she has not been charged.

North Side Crip sentenced to 68 years

By ***The Record***
March 23, 2009 7:24 PM

STOCKTON – A judge today sentenced Andrew Bruce Thompson III to state prison for 68 years and eight months to life for murdering his girlfriend, Erica Orsino, last year in her family's home.

Jurors earlier this year found Thompson, 25, guilty of second-degree murder, intentional discharge of a handgun, illegal possession of the gun and ammunition, and being a member of the Northside Gangster Crips.

On May 24, Thompson was with Orsino, a mother of two young sons, in an upstairs room of the Orsino family home in the 6500 block of El Capitan Circle. A gun was fired, killing Orsino. Thompson had tried to argue the gun went off accidentally.

Thompson also has a criminal record for his part in a 2004 gang shooting that killed 15-year-old Eric Castillo, who was attending a birthday party at a home on Blossom Circle.

San Joaquin County Superior Court Judge William Murray said in the hearing that the case illustrated the “gang mentality run amok,” while scolding Thompson for taking one life and wasting his own.

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