



## 3 killed, 5 wounded at ABB before gunman kills himself

JANUARY 08, 2010 12:00 AM • BY KIM BELL • KBELL@POST-DISPATCH.COM > 314-340-8115 AND TIM O'NEIL • TONEIL@POST-DISPATCH.COM > 314-340-8132 PAUL HAMPEL, CAROLYN TUFT, HEATHER RATCLIFFE, DENISE HOLLINSHED, KAVITA KUMAR, MARGARET GILLERMAN AND STEPHEN DEERE OF THE POST-DISPATCH CONTRIBUTED TO THIS REPORT.

**ST. LOUIS** - The first 911 call was from a woman who said someone was firing shots inside a factory. Other calls gave conflicting descriptions of the mayhem.

"They are still shooting," a police dispatcher called over the department radio at 6:34 a.m. Thursday. A few employees sought refuge in the snowy cold of the windswept roof. A caller said he was watching a gunman blast away.

When police entered ABB Inc., at 4350 Semple Avenue, the first body they found eventually was confirmed as that of a lone gunman, Timothy G. Hendron, 51, of Webster Groves. He was a longtime production worker there.

Police said he armed himself with what they described as an assault rifle, shotgun and pistol and, upon arriving at 6:30 a.m., quickly shot eight co-workers - killing three - before shooting himself.

Verifying that he was the killer took several hours. Until heavily armed tactical teams could retrieve workers in a methodical sweep of the 200,000-square-foot factory, panicked employees kept using their cell phones to call police or relatives.

At 7:15 a.m., one man called from a supervisor's office, saying he had been wounded in the torso, leg and arm and was afraid to leave the office. He said he was with another victim, who was not moving or breathing.

Twenty minutes later, employees hiding on the roof called to ask whether it was safe to come down. No, said officers. At 7:45 a.m., two employees called to say they were hiding in a room accessible only by ladders and couldn't hear over the machinery noise what was going on.

Two bodies were found in the parking lot. Two more, including Hendron's, were inside the factory, a maker of electric transformers just north of the old General Motors plant at Interstate 70 and Union Boulevard.

Police shut down I-70 during early efforts to learn the extent of the crime, and whether the gunman may have fled. Before confirming that Hendron had killed himself - or even where he was - police broadcast his name after a supervisor inside the building identified the gunman.

Police searched for almost four hours before investigators determined it all had ended quickly. Officers escorted the liberated employees to waiting Metro buses to keep them warm - and keep them around for interviews.

City officers were assisted by Missouri Highway Patrol troopers, St. Louis County police and FBI agents. The Fire Department sent 10 ambulances and other equipment to the scene.

A detailed search of the sprawling complex lasted into Thursday evening.

Friends described the stocky, balding Hendron as a friendly, laid-back, beer-drinking guy. But a neighbor said Hendron once grumbled that some supervisors were picking on him.

He was one of four named plaintiffs whose lawsuit against ABB, alleging it charged excessive fees for the employee 401(k) retirement plan, went to trial Tuesday in federal court in Kansas City.

Police Chief Dan Isom declined to discuss why Hendron would go to work heavily armed and start blasting away.

"We are not really sure what was the motive," Isom said in a press conference. "It will take a long time for us to put together the pieces of what happened."

ABB employs about 270 people here, and about 50 were at the plant at the time of the shootings. The home office of the international corporation is in Zurich, Switzerland.

Police did not provide identities of any of the dead or wounded, all men. But friends said Cory Wilson, 27, of Collinsville, and Carlton Carter, 57, of St. Louis, were killed. Police said the third fatality was a man, 55.

Wilson, a supervisor at ABB, had been a standout linebacker for the football teams at Collinsville High School and McKendree University, in Lebanon, coaches said. He worked last season as a volunteer coach with the Collinsville Kahoks.

John Blaylock, who was Wilson's high school defensive coordinator during late 1990s, said he was a leader when he played, and brought that talent to the current team. By coincidence, Blaylock is a mechanical contractor who serves the ABB plant. He also was a fellow volunteer coach for the Kahoks.

"He was a pretty good judge of what buttons to press and how to push a kid forward," Blaylock said of Wilson. "He had a very good sense of what each kid needed to be motivated."

Rene Bonner, a friend of Carter's, said he typically arrived at the plant about 6:15 a.m. and that he was fatally shot in the parking lot. She said he bought a home about five years ago one mile from the factory.

Said Mary Kelly, a neighbor: "We're going to miss him greatly. My heart is hurting."

At 2 p.m., Carter's brother, Alan, entered the police North Patrol Station, at 4014 Union Boulevard, to inquire about him. The station is less than a half mile from the ABB plant.

"I'm hoping he's here," Alan Carter told reporters gathered there. "I can't find him anywhere." He could not be reached after talking with police.

Police said two of the wounded, 55 and 51, were hospitalized in critical condition, two more, 56 and 51, were in fair condition, and one, 52, was treated and released.

Hendron, the shooter, lived at 307 Dobbin Road, in the Webster Downs subdivision, off South Rock Hill near Watson Road. The 1950s brick-and-siding ranch home backs up to Southwest Park and is visible from the Hawken House, an antebellum home and museum on Rock Hill.

He lived there with his wife, Kate, and a grown son, Robert, by a previous marriage. A man who answered the door at the home declined to talk to reporters Thursday. Webster Groves police said they had never responded to any call at the home.

Later, a Clayton man who is a brother-in-law of Hendron's, said only: "It's really sad. It's just really sad."

Victim Cory Wilson, a former standout football player is remembered as a natural leader and good role model with a blossoming personal life. Story • A11

Friends say victim Carlton Carter was a polite, hard-working man who was always quick to help his neighbors (no photo available).

Story • A11

Police had not identified the third victim Thursday night.

Gunman had filed suit • He was part of a class action against ABB and Fidelity claiming employees were charged excessive fees in their 401(k) plans. A11

Timeline • The sequence of events in rampage. A11

More on the shootings

- Sign a guestbook and share your memories, condolences.
- See a video from the police news conferences.
- View a gallery of photos from the scene.
- Discuss the shootings in our forums.