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Suspect in murder of CSX train conductor arrested in shooting of JPSO deputy

By Masako Hirsch, The Times-Picayune

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A man who shot a Jefferson Parish deputy Wednesday night is the main suspect in the fatal shooting of a CSX train conductor on Father's Day, according to New Orleans police.

Byron Ross, 23, was arrested after the shooting of JPSO Detective Solomon Burke when Burke tried to execute a search warrant at the LaBella Motel on Jefferson Highway.

Ross shot Burke through the door, striking him in the side, authorities said. Burke was protected by his bulletproof vest.

Ross is being held in Jefferson Parish on charges of attempted murder of a police officer and possession of stolen property.

Jefferson Parish Sheriff Newell Normand and New Orleans Police Superintendent Ronal Serpas appeared at a news conference Thursday morning to announce the break in the cases. They said they were able to link the firearm that Ross had in his possession to Sunday's murder of CSX conductor Fred Gibbs, and that the gun used in both shootings was stolen from a pawn shop near the hotel.

Ross has been charged thus far with attempted murder of an officer and possession of stolen property, according to New Orleans police.

Gibbs, 52, of Mississippi, was shot several times while the train was parked near Florida Boulevard and Marshall Foch Street in Lakeview because of traffic delays. The shooting happened during what appears to have been an attempted robbery in the train's engine compartment.

The shooter fled after the incident and Gibbs died at the scene. Matthews said they found Ross by following the trail of some of Gibbs' possessions that were stolen when he was killed.

Serpas said they are continuing the investigation. "This guy is behind bars and hopefully behind bars for the rest of his life," Serpas said.

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