

Beat: News

Gunman, 3 victims found dead after police standoff at Colorado townhouse

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USPA News - Police in Colorado on Saturday discovered the bodies of three people after officers shot to death a gunman who had barricaded himself inside a townhouse, officials said. It happened in the same Denver suburb where a gunman killed 12 people at a movie theater last year.

The situation began shortly before 3 a.m. local time on Saturday when officers responded to reports of shots being fired at a townhouse in Aurora, a city which is part of the Denver Metropolitan Area. They found a woman who had escaped from the house uninjured, but said several people were still inside. "Upon arrival they learned from a female witness who escaped from the home, that an adult male still inside was armed and had fired shots inside the home," a police spokeswoman said. "The witness advised that she observed 3 people inside the home who appeared lifeless as she was leaving." Officers then took positions around the house and attempted to make contact with the gunman, who later answered a phone call from a hostage negotiator. The phone contact continued intermittently for several hours, but the suspect refused to comply with repeated commands to surrender. "He was behaving very irrationally throughout the incident and often hanging up on the negotiators," the spokeswoman said. She said SWAT team members were fired upon when they moved an armored vehicle to the front of the house in an attempt to break out a window, but none of the officers were hit. The suspect was killed at around 9 a.m. when he appeared in a second story window and again started shooting, prompting officers to return fire and striking him. The SWAT team then entered the house and found the bodies of three victims, as well as the lifeless body of the suspect who was found in a second story bedroom. Police described the victims as two adult males and an adult female, but their identities were not immediately released. The killings are believed to have been an act of domestic violence, although the exact motive was not yet known. Detectives from the Major Crime Homicide Unit remained at the scene throughout Saturday to collect evidence, and the officers who fired their weapons were placed on paid administrative leave pending an internal review, as is standard procedure. The shooting happened only several miles from the Century 16 Movie Theater where a gunman, identified by police as James Holmes, walked into an auditorium in July 2012 and opened fire during the premiere showing of a new Batman movie, killing 12 people and injuring nearly 60 others. It was one of the worst mass shootings in U.S. history.

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