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## **Shoplifting suspect held in shooting of 2 Burbank police officers**

Authorities say a man suspected of shoplifting at a Kmart grabbed a gun and shot two officers. Neither officer sustained life-threatening injuries.

By Sam Allen and Andrew Blankstein, Los Angeles Times

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The routine arrest of a shoplifting suspect at a Kmart in Burbank went awry Friday when the man grabbed a gun and shot two police officers, bouncing three shots off one officer's bulletproof vest before being subdued, authorities said.

Neither of the Burbank police officers sustained life-threatening injuries in the shooting, which broke the quiet of a routine lunchtime as shoppers prepared for the Fourth of July weekend.

Authorities did not immediately identify the suspect or the officers, one of whom underwent surgery after being shot in the hand.

### **FOR THE RECORD:**

An earlier version of this article said the officer underwent surgery after being shot in the hand and the leg; he was not shot in the leg.

One witness to the shooting, Burbank resident Joseph Hoage, said he had just walked out of the Kmart store at 1000 N. San Fernando Blvd. when he saw a handcuffed man with two police officers. Suddenly, he said, he heard someone say, "He's got a gun!"

Hoage said he dived behind a car and heard four or five shots. When he looked up, one of the officers was holding his right hand, which was bleeding profusely.

The other officer was struggling with the suspect, wrestling until he finally pinned him down. Hoage said the second officer emptied his Taser weapon in the struggle, but the suspect wasn't immediately subdued.

Another witness, Frank Galuppo, 50, of Burbank, said he saw the first officer stagger backwards, and the second officer struggle with the alleged gunman. Galuppo, who owns a nearby Curves Fitness center, said the suspect was wrestled to the ground and then shot with the Taser.

A Burbank police spokesman, Sgt. Robert Quesada, confirmed that a Taser was used, although he could not say who fired it. He said the second officer is the one who was shot three times in the chest, with the impact absorbed and deflected by his vest. That officer also sustained a minor

gunshot wound to his leg, for which he was treated at a hospital and released.

"If he was shot, he's a pretty brave guy," said Hoage. "He never stopped fighting."

According to Quesada, the first officer, who was more seriously wounded, was unable to help subdue the suspect.

Police would not say whether the suspect was using his own gun or one belonging to the officers, nor would they confirm that the suspect was handcuffed when the incident occurred. Hoage said he was sure that the man was handcuffed.

"I was shocked," he added. "I have no idea how he got the gun."

Chris Alcala, 19, of Burbank, said he was eating at a nearby Subway restaurant with a friend when they heard the gunshots. "When we went in to eat at 12:15, it was silent, and when we came out around 12:30, it was chaos," he said.

Alcala said the suspect was already inside a police car by the time he walked out of the Subway.

"They got him pretty quick," he said.

Quesada said the incident began about noon when police received a call from Kmart security saying they had a shoplifting suspect. The officers were dispatched to arrest him and had just led him out of the store when the shooting began.