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Suspected gunman in Valley massacre captured

The fugitive wanted in the slaying of four at a Valley Village restaurant is caught, along with his brother, near Seattle.

By Richard Winton

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A man wanted in connection with the slaying of four people at a Valley Village restaurant has been captured by a federal fugitive task force in the Seattle area.

Nerses Arthur Galstyan, 28, was taken into custody Tuesday evening along with his brother Samuel Galstyan in the suburb of Kenmore. The men are expected to be returned soon to the Los Angeles area.

Deputy U.S. Marshal Al Rios said the brothers were captured about 9 p.m. without incident by the regional fugitive criminals task force.

Police consider Nerses Galstyan the main suspect in the April 3 shootings at the Hot Spot Mediterranean Restaurant on Riverside Drive in Valley Village. Investigators believe he grew angry at six acquaintances. Law enforcement sources would not say what role, if any, Samuel Galstyan played in the attack. LAPD investigators believe that Nerses Galstyan was the lone shooter but said he may have had assistance.

Police said Nerses Galstyan was among a group attending an afternoon celebration in honor of a friend who had died in an accident a year earlier. Authorities allege that a quarrel broke out and that Galstyan began shooting. Hayk Yegnanyan, 25; Sarkis Karadjian, 26; Harut Baburyan, 28; and Vardan Tofalyan, 31, were killed, and two other men were wounded.

Based in part on information uncovered in the homicide investigation, a federal grand jury in the Central District of California, which includes Los Angeles County, indicted Nerses Galstyan on charges of dealing firearms without a license and possession of a firearm with an obliterated serial number.

Law enforcement sources familiar with the firearms probe said Tofalyan is believed to have been a co-conspirator with Galstyan in weapons dealing.

The indictment alleges that Galstyan cleaned and prepared firearms for sale and had bragged to an informant that he could get his hands on 10,000 to 100,000 rounds of ammunition.

The indictment says Galstyan or Tofalyan unwittingly sold weapons to a U.S. Bureau of Alcohol,

Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives informant at a water store in North Hollywood several times in August, September and October.