

## BALLISTICS NOW TIES SMITH TO ALL OF SPREE SHOOTINGS

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Investigators have matched bullets from each of the shootings attributed to Benjamin Smith with the weapons he was carrying at his death, officials said Tuesday.

In addition, investigators examining telephone records have uncovered extensive contact between Smith and Matthew Hale, leader of the World Church of the Creator, in the weeks leading up to the spree, a federal source said.

The U.S. Justice Department is considering opening an investigation into Hale's East Peoria-based white supremacy group and whether it provoked Smith into the shootings, which began in Chicago. Two state agencies are investigating the group's tax status and if it should be sued for failing to register with the state as a charity or a business.

Ballistics tests concluded Tuesday at the Illinois police crime laboratory linked bullets that killed Won-Joon Yoon, a Korean doctoral student at Indiana University, with a .380 semiautomatic handgun found with Smith, Skokie police Lt. Barry Silverberg said.

Earlier tests tied Smith's weapons to bullets found in the shootings in Springfield, Urbana, Decatur, Skokie, Chicago and Northbrook.

Until now, authorities had believed Smith, who committed suicide during a struggle with police officers in Downstate Salem, was responsible for all of the shootings in Illinois and Indiana, but they lacked conclusive evidence linking him to each one.

The shootings, over the Independence Day weekend, wounded nine and killed former Northwestern University basketball coach Ricky Byrdsong and Yoon.

"It's just simple math," Silverberg said. "All of the evidence collected so far indicates that Smith acted alone, at least alone in respects of pulling the trigger."

FBI agents and police detectives also have been interviewing friends and associates of Smith as they try to determine what led the Wilmette native and avowed white supremacist to become violent.

Meanwhile Tuesday, in its first public meeting since the rampage, the Village of Wilmette Community Relations Commission fielded calls from some 70 residents for decisive and clear action to promote unity.

"I think that as a racial minority in this community I have definitely noticed all of the racial problems that we've heard about," said Angela Henderson, 20, a New Trier High School graduate. "I think people feel a sense of panic right now, and we need to take this opportunity to do something."

Residents offered suggestions, ranging from sponsoring small group dialogues to putting signs in store windows announcing the town's commitment to diversity.

In Urbana-Champaign Tuesday, one of the shooting victims told reporters he is worried about more violence if the World Church continues to exist and promote white power.

"It still scares me a little bit to see that it might happen again if the organization is allowed to go on," said Steven Kuo, a native of Taiwan and University of Illinois student who was shot in the leg as he walked on campus with friends to get ice cream on July 3.

A second memorial service for IU student Yoon will be held at 8 p.m. Thursday in the Korean Central Covenant Church, 950 Northbrook Ave, Northbrook.

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