

Identity of Assailant Of Flynt Is Unknown

LAWRENCEVILLE, Ga. (AP)—The shots that critically wounded Hustler magazine owner Larry Flynt and one of his attorneys may have come from an abandoned building across the street, police said yesterday, but they still have no idea who fired them.

"We really don't know if we're looking for a demented person or a religious fanatic, or the guy next door," Gwinnett County Police Chief John Crunkleton said. "It appears the shots could have come from the abandoned building across the street," about 100 feet from where Flynt fell.

Flynt, 34, and Gene Reeves Jr., 47, were under police guard at Button Gwinnett Hospital. During about seven hours of surgery, in two operations, doctors removed Flynt's spleen and part of his intestines. Reeves suffered stomach and liver damage. Both men were listed in critical condition yesterday.

A bullet was lodged near Flynt's spine, according to aide Andrew Jaffe. Flynt was hit by bullets from a .44-cal. rifle, sources at the state crime laboratory said.

Ralph McGee, an investigator for county Solicitor Gary Davis, said an anonymous telephone caller contacted officials about 20 minutes after the shootings and said: "Jesus had taken a hand in it."

McGee also confirmed that "at least one bullet casing" was found in the building.

Police cordoned off the two-story structure, in which several window panes are broken. Reporters said they saw technicians taking plaster casts—used in identifying footprints or tire tracks—from behind the building and in an alleyway beside it.

Flynt's wife, Althea, and President Carter's sister, Ruth Stapleton, were among the few people who got in to see Flynt yesterday. Jaffe said Flynt joked with them, saying: "If I could get rid of the pain, the rest would be duck soup."

"Larry Flynt is one of my good friends, one of my good Christian friends," said Stapleton, whom Flynt credits with converting him to be a follower of Jesus Christ.

The hospital lobby began taking on circus aspects. Al Goldstein, publisher of Screw magazine, arrived in a bulletproof vest. Throughout the day a man identifying himself as Michael Hood, a disciple of the Swami Parahansa Muktananda, and two female companions stood stiffly at opposite points of the lobby, their eyes closed, their bodies swaying. They said they were exerting healing powers for Flynt.

Moments before Mrs. Flynt appeared in the lobby, Hood began swaying back and forth and yelled "Larry Flynt! The power of God is invested in me. Get up and walk and come in here!" Two policemen grabbed him and took him to jail, where he was to be charged with creating a disturbance. The two women remained in the lobby, swaying.