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Ammunition Clues Sifted in Sniper Case

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NEW ORLEANS, Jan. 12 — Federal agents said today that they were gathering ammunition records for the New Orleans police department to be used to help pinpoint the number of weapons used in last weekend's sniper attacks. Six persons were killed and 15 wounded by gunshots in the attacks here.

A spokesman for the Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms Division of the Treasury Department said that the department was sorting records of ammunition purchases, but declined to release any information.

The New Orleans police have said they have evidence that at least two rifles were used. One hotel guest has said he was shot by a man with a bolt-action rifle and that the slug that hit him was of small caliber.

Ammunition Found

A New Orleans ballistics expert has said that at least two of the victims were slain by bullets fired from a .44-caliber magnum rifle.

The only firearms that the police have acknowledged recovering from the hotel was a .44-caliber carbine.

The Orleans Parish coroner's office has said that three suitcases of ammunition were found in the Downtown Howard Johnson Motor Lodge Monday night after the police had killed one sniper and stormed the hotel roof, where a second sniper was believed to be hiding.

The second sniper, if there was one, escaped.

Eyewitnesses have told the police that they saw as many as three Negroes slipping through hotel corridors and along the roof or along an eighth-floor sundeck during the day and a half of terror that brought New Orleans commerce to a virtual standstill.

Deputy's Recollections

Jefferson Parish Deputy Sheriff Dave Munch, a member of a rescue squad, said that the sniper who shot him was accompanied by a Negro woman wearing a light brown, full-length coat.

"I guess it was a woman," Mr. Munch said. "She had long hair."

The deputy, who had gone to the motor lodge routinely after hearing of the fire alarm,

reported to his superiors Monday that he had been shot by a man with a shotgun. He said he had been hit two or three times in the arm and side.

But Mr. Munch said late last night that he had since decided that he was hit by an exploding bullet that had struck a concrete pillar.

Mr. Munch said that the man who shot him was a light-colored Negro with a goatee.

Mark J. Essex, a 23-year-old former sailor who was shot to death by the police on the hotel roof, was darker and did not have a goatee.

Shooting of Grocer

Meanwhile, the police acknowledged for the first time that they had more than a routine interest in a white grocer who was shot in his ghetto store Sunday morning.

Policewoman Carol Gomon, the New Orleans Police Department public information officer, said she had been ordered by Police Superintendent Clarence B. Giarrusso not to discuss the

shooting of the grocer. The grocer, Joseph S. Perniciaro, 33 years old, is under police guard in a New Orleans hospital.

Police sources have said that the authorities believe Essex or an accomplice shot the grocer in retaliation for his having told the police that Essex might have been involved in the New Year's Eve sniper attack that killed police cadet and wounded two police officers in New Orleans.

The New Orleans ballistics department has said that the rifle found on the hotel roof was used in the New Year's Eve attacks.

An examination of building plans of the hotel showed today that a hidden trapdoor leads from the roof into a maid's closet on the top floor. The trapdoor is in the floor of a machinery penthouse containing heating and cooling equipment and elevator controls.

The police had said they had found a secret exit from the roof, but have not said what it was.