

Man Who Stole Car 'Definitely Essex'

The man whose car was stolen and found minutes later at the Downtown Howard Johnson Motel as sniping broke out there says Mark Essex definitely was the man who took his car.

Essex has been identified by police as the sniper killed on the roof of the hotel after six persons had died of gunshot wounds.

Marvin Albert said in an interview that the man he later positively identified as Essex commandeered his auto the morning of Jan. 7 at rifle point.

The information supplied by Albert has been widely reported as coming from various police sources, but the interview was Albert's first public account of the incident.

Albert said he was sitting in his car, warming it up, when a gunman came by with a rifle:

"He came up. He was running. He stopped and told me, 'Hi. Hi brother. Get out!'

"I asked him if he was crazy."

"He squared off with the gun and told me, 'I don't want to kill you too, but I will. Don't make me hurt you. Get out of that car.'"

"I got out and told him, 'Take it.'"

Albert said as Essex drove off in the car, he ran inside to call the police.

A squad car arrived within minutes, Albert said, and the officer had Albert get into the police car with him as they set out after the stolen vehicle.

Albert said he and the officer lost Essex and circled a housing project a couple of times trying to spot him before being summoned by the police radio to the Howard Johnson where the car was found.

Albert said a fire truck was on the scene at the hotel when they arrived, although he didn't see any fire at that time.