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Long Beach, Calif., April 23 (AP)- A veteran reporter for the Long Beach Independent was accidentally shot and killed early today by a police detective described as one of his best friends.

Police said William B. Hunter, 32, died instantly, shot through the heart by a .32 caliber slug as he sat at his desk in the pressroom of the Long Beach police station.

Officers said the bullet came from the revolver of robbery detail detective Creighton Wiggins Jr., 29, son of the Long Beach police inspector.

They described Wiggins and Hunter as "best friends."

Hunter was sitting in the second floor pressroom when Wiggins and Errol Greenleaf, 32, also of the robbery detail, came in to chat at 12:05 a.m., officers said.

Wiggins took off his coat, catching it on a chair, and his service revolver dropped to the floor. It discharged accidentally when he picked it up, the bullet striking Hunter in the heart, police said.

Hunter, who had been a night reporter for the Independent for five years, recently won a California Newspaper Publishers Association special award for "Three Days in Dallas," his eyewitness coverage of the events immediately following the Nov. 22 assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

Hunter, a native of Dallas, returned to his native city to cover the trial of Jack Ruby, convicted killer of Kennedy's suspected assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald.

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