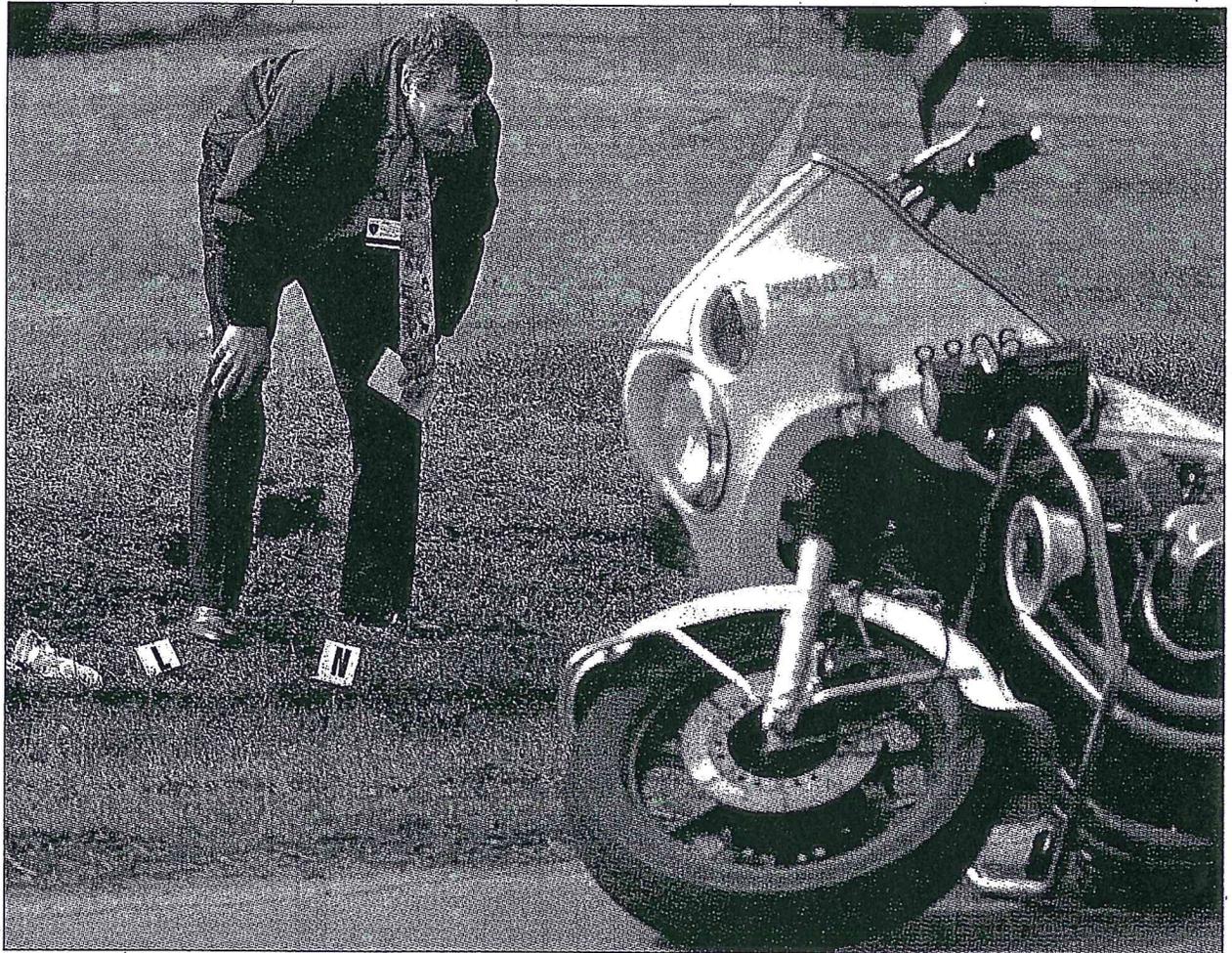
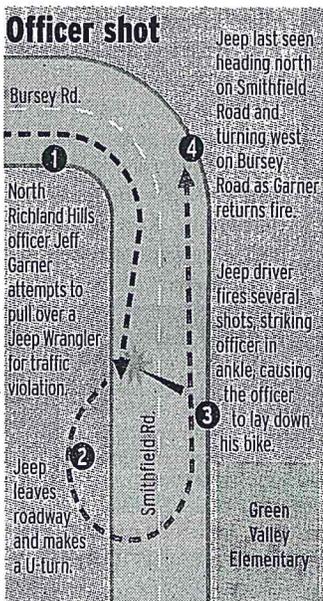


# Motorcycle officer shot in North Richland Hills



STAR-TELEGRAM/KELLEY CHINN

Investigator J.D. Snow of the North Richland Hills Police Department examines the area where officer Jeff Garner was shot in the ankle.



STAR-TELEGRAM/TIM BEDISON

## Gunman robbed Watauga bank just minutes before, police say

By **DOMINGO RAMIREZ JR.** and **GORDON DICKSON**  
STAR-TELEGRAM STAFF WRITERS

**NORTH RICHLAND HILLS** — A man suspected of robbing a Watauga bank exchanged gunfire with a motorcycle officer Monday afternoon, wounding the officer before eluding police.

Officer Jeff Garner, 29, was shot in the right ankle after attempting to make a routine traffic stop in North Richland Hills. Authorities had not caught the gunman by Monday night.

Ten schools in the area were

locked down about 1:45 p.m. Monday and reopened within an hour.

Garner was unaware of the Watauga bank robbery when he attempted to stop a red Jeep Wrangler about 1:35 p.m. Garner was riding his motorcycle on Bursey Road when the Jeep made an unsafe turn in front of him, authorities said.

The Jeep headed east on Bursey Road and turned south on Smithfield Road, and Garner pursued, North Richland Hills police Sgt. Ken Bounds said.

The Jeep left the road and made More on SHOOTING on 6B

"It's just a freak thing. You never want your school to be in a lockdown situation. ... But this is one of the safest neighborhoods anywhere."

— Bob Ward, parent of two Green Valley Elementary students

# SHOOTING

Continued from 1B

a U-turn back toward Garner. The driver fired several shots at Garner as he drove past, Bounds said. The gunman had a revolver, "which means that he had ... six or less shots," Bounds said.

Garner got off his motorcycle and returned fire, but it is not known whether the driver or the Jeep was hit, Bounds said.

Several bystanders came to the Garner's aid, and several police officers responded immediately, said Bob Ward, a computer engineer who lives near where the shooting occurred.

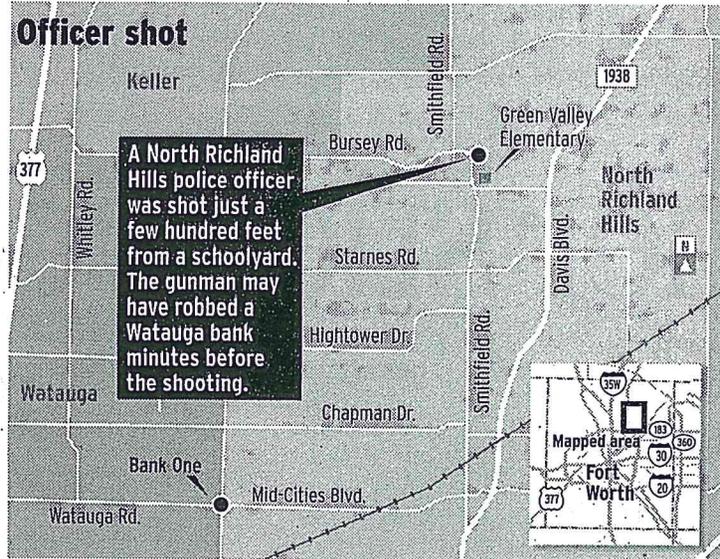
Garner, who has been with the North Richland Hills Police Department for 4 1/2 years, was in good condition Monday at Harris Methodist Fort Worth hospital. He was expected to stay in the hospital overnight, Bounds said.

About 1:20 p.m., a man walked into the Bank One in the 6600 block of Watauga Road and took an undisclosed amount of money, said Mary Jane Rogers, a Bank One spokeswoman.

The man told a teller that he was armed, said Lori Bailey, an

## Officer shot

A North Richland Hills police officer was shot just a few hundred feet from a schoolyard. The gunman may have robbed a Watauga bank minutes before the shooting.



STAR-TELEGRAM/TIM BEDISON

FBI spokeswoman in Dallas. No shots were fired and no one was hurt during the robbery, Rogers said.

Witnesses described the robber as a white male in his late 30s to mid-40s, about 5-foot-6 or 5-foot-7 and 280 pounds. He had a long mustache, which was possibly fake, and he wore a straw cowboy hat. He had acne scars on his face and a bandage over his left eye, Bailey said.

He wore an earpiece in his left ear with a wire hanging from it. He spoke loudly and said he could not hear well, according to a North Richland

Hills Police Department news release.

He drove away in a mid-1980s model red Jeep Wrangler with a black soft top, oversized tires, a black tire cover on the rear of the vehicle, fog lights with yellow covers, no front license plate and a paper Louisiana tag taped to the rear bumper, authorities said.

The robber and the shooter are the same person, according to the North Richland Hills news release.

At Green Valley Elementary School, a few blocks from the scene of the shooting, all doors

were locked at the request of police from 1:45 to 2:30 p.m., and 468 students were ordered to stay in their classrooms as a precaution, Principal Anita Silva said. No students were on the playground at the time of the shooting, and the children were never in danger, she said.

"We just told them we wanted them to stay in their classrooms to be safe," Silva said.

Nine other schools in the Birdville district were also locked down as a precaution, district spokesman Mark Thomas said. The campuses were North Ridge, Foster Village, Smithfield, W.A. Porter, and Grace E. Hardeman elementaries; North Ridge, Smithfield and Watauga middle schools; and Birdville High School.

Silva said students were not given details about what had happened. "We will let the parents decide how to handle the discussion within their own families," she said.

The lockdown was lifted about 2:30 p.m.

For hours after the shooting, more than a dozen police cars from North Richland Hills, Keller, Watauga and other communities patrolled within a five-mile radius of the shooting site in search of the

gunman's vehicle.

Ginger Ward of North Richland Hills was pulling into her driveway when she saw the wounded officer lying in the grass next door.

She and several other bystanders briefly tended to his injured ankle before police officers arrived and took over, Ward said.

Ward, who works at Microsoft in Las Colinas, said he left work early to get his two sons out of Green Valley Elementary School. He said that he was stunned by the event but that he did not feel it would have a long-term effect on the quality of life in his neighborhood.

"It's just a freak thing," he said. "You never want your school to be in a lockdown situation. So I left work early. But this is one of the safest neighborhoods anywhere. We moved here precisely to be close to this school."

ONLINE: North Richland Hills: [www.nrhtx.com](http://www.nrhtx.com)

Birdville school district: [www.birdville.k12.tx.us](http://www.birdville.k12.tx.us)

Staff writer Mitch Mitchell contributed to this report.

Gordon Dickson, (817) 685-3816  
gdickson@star-telegram.com

Domingo Ramirez Jr., (817) 685-3822  
ramirez@star-telegram.com

## NRH officer shot by suspect in Watauga bank robbery

From Staff Reports

**NORTH RICHLAND HILLS** — A police officer was shot by a man suspected of robbing a Watauga bank Monday afternoon.

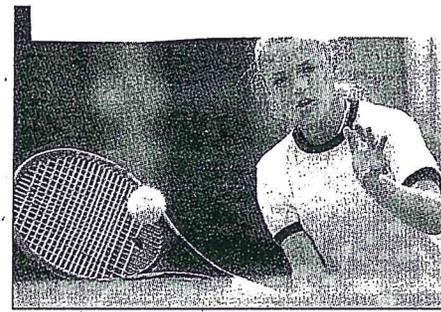
North Richland Hills police Officer Jeff Garner was taken to Harris Methodist Fort Worth hospital but was not seriously in-

jured, said Sgt. Ken Bounds, a department spokesman. The motorcycle officer was trying to pull the suspect over on Bursey Road, but he refused to stop. In the 7700 block of Smithfield Road, the man shot the officer in the ankle.

The man is suspected of rob-

bing a Bank One about 1:20 p.m. in the 6600 block of Watauga Road. He is described as white and in his 40s, about 5 feet, 7 inches tall, 230 to 250 pounds, with an acne-scarred face. He had a fake mustache, a straw cowboy hat and a flesh-colored eye patch. He was driving a red Jeep CJ7.

# Northeast Tarrant Morning News



## Fall's son could provide insight

Area high school tennis players are hoping that their success during the fall team season continues during the spring. 6S

ning News Community Newspaper

[northeasttarrantmorningnews.com](http://northeasttarrantmorningnews.com)

Wednesday, March 5, 2003

## NORTH RICHLAND HILLS

# Officer shot in ankle is recovering

Police searching for man also suspected of robbing Watauga bank

By **DEBRA DENNIS**  
Staff Writer

A steady stream of officers poured into Jeff Garner's hospital room Tuesday wishing the North Richland Hills officer well and expressing sighs of relief.

The 29-year-old traffic officer, was resting in good condition after being shot in the ankle by a man suspected of robbing a Watauga

bank Monday afternoon.

"When you first hear that an officer has been shot, it certainly caused some apprehension," said Sgt. Ken Bounds, spokesman for the North Richland Hills Police Department. "Once we found out it wasn't life-threatening, there was a bit of relief, although any type of police shooting is very serious. ... We're just grateful that he's going to be OK."

Officer Garner, who is married, was originally to have been released on Monday.

"They decided to keep him overnight. We hear he's in good spirits,"

Sgt. Bounds said.

The four-year police veteran, who is assigned to the city's traffic division, was on his motorcycle attempting to stop a red Jeep along Bursey Road for traffic violations, but the driver refused to stop and fled south on Smithfield Road.

The Jeep drove off the road, made a U-turn in the grass, and headed north back toward the officer. As it passed him in the opposite direction, the driver fired several shots from a revolver, hitting Officer Garner once in the ankle. Offi-

See **POLICE** Page 3S

# Police officer who was shot in good condition

*Continued from Page 1S*

cer Garner returned fire, but police are unsure whether the car or robber were hit.

Officer Garner was unaware that about 15 minutes prior to the 1:35 p.m. shooting, the same person is believed to have robbed a Bank One in the 6600 block of Watauga Road.

The man is described as a white male in his 40s, about 5 feet 7 inches tall and weighing 280 pounds. He has dark hair; a long, possibly fake moustache; and a ruddy complexion. He wore a light-colored straw cowboy hat and a long-sleeved button-up plaid cowboy shirt and spoke loudly, stating that

he could not hear well, officials said.

The Jeep was a red, mid-80s Wrangler with a black soft top, oversized tires, fog lights with yellow covers, and a wheel with a black cover on the back of the vehicle. It had a temporary Louisiana license tag attached with yellow masking tape, possibly over another license plate. There was no front license plate.

The FBI and the Watauga Police Department are investigating the bank robbery, said FBI spokeswoman Lori Bailey. The FBI is assisting North Richland Hills with the assault on the officer.

E-mail [ddennis@dallasnews.com](mailto:ddennis@dallasnews.com)  
or call 817-410-9602, ext. 4961.