

Congresswoman shot in Arizona rampage

SUSPECT HELD, ACCOMPLICE SOUGHT; CHILD AND FEDERAL JUDGE AMONG 6 DEAD



Rep. Gabrielle Giffords, D-Ariz., seen in a Jan. 5 photo, was hospitalized with a grave head wound.

BY MARC LACEY
AND DAVID M. HERSZENHORN
The New York Times

TUCSON, Ariz. — Rep. Gabrielle Giffords, D-Ariz., and 18 others were shot in suburban Pima County, Ariz., on Saturday when a gunman opened fire outside a supermarket where Giffords was conducting a public event.

A 22-year-old suspect was in custody, law-enforcement officials said. But investigators at a Saturday night news conference said they were looking for a possible accomplice.

Six victims died, Pima County



WOMAN WOUNDED cement sources deadly attack

the target of the gunman, credited as being in very critical condition late Saturday at University Medical Center in Tucson, where she underwent surgery. Dr. Rhee, medical director of the hospital's trauma and critical-care unit, said she had been shot once in the head, "through and through," with the bullet going through her brain.

"I can tell you at this time, I am very optimistic about her recovery," he said at a news conference. President Obama said FBI Director Robert Mueller had been asked to travel to Arizona to oversee the investigation.

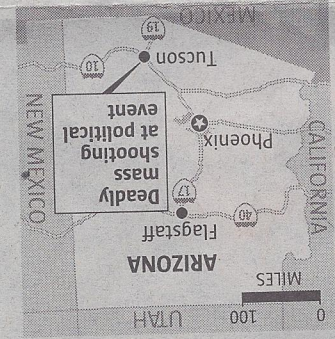
Young man in custody

Investigators identified the gunman as Jared Lee Loughner. Authorities were seen entering the house of someone by that name about 5 miles from the shootings. Potential political motives were raised, although officials did not speculate about what may have provoked the attack. Mark Kimble, an aide to Giffords, said the shooting occurred about 10 a.m. in a small area between an American flag and an Arizona flag. He said he went into the store for coffee, and as he came out the gunman was walking up and started firing.

"Everyone hit the ground," Kimble said. "It was so shocking, I still can't believe this happened." The Washington Post, citing federal law-enforcement sources, reported that the gunman used a Glock 19, a semiautomatic pistol, found with a fully loaded magazine that held about 30 bullets. He also was carrying a knife.

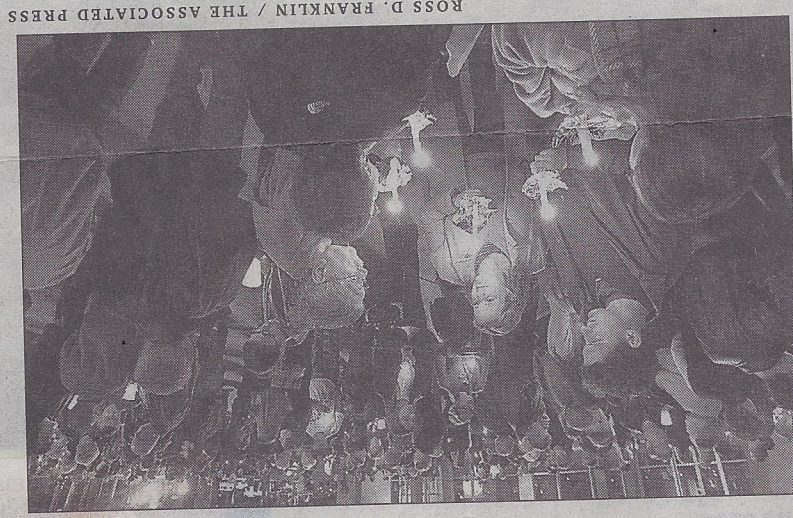
At the Saturday night news conference, Dupnik said there was "some reason to believe" the suspect in custody did not act alone. Officials said they were seeking a second suspect, a 50-year-old white male.

Loughner remained mostly silent during a day of questioning.



Source: ESRI
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Hundreds gather late Saturday at a vigil at the Arizona Capitol in Phoenix for Rep. Gabrielle Giffords, critically wounded by a gunman.



ROSS D. FRANKLIN / THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

term Wednesday after narrowly surviving a re-election bid in November.

"I saw the congresswoman talking to two people, and then this man suddenly came up and shot her in the head and then shot other people," said Dr. Steven Rayle, a witness and a former emergency-room doctor who now works at a hospice. "... He must have got off 20 rounds."

Rayle said Giffords slumped to the ground and that staff members rushed to her aid.

"A staffer had his arm around her, and she was leaning against the window of the Safeway," the doctor said. "He had a jacket or towel on her head."

In addition to the judge, the girl and the Giffords aide, Dorothy Murray, 76; Dorwin Stoddard, 76; and Phyllis Schick, 79, were killed in the attack, investigators said.

An uncle of the 9-year-old told the Arizona Republic that a neighborhood was going to the event and invited the girl because she had just been elected to the student council and was interested in government. Roll, the judge, had just stopped by to see Giffords, a friend, after attending Mass.

Congressional leaders of both parties issued statements throughout the day expressing outrage at the shooting, and concern and prayers for Giffords and her family. "I am horrified by the senseless attack on Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords and members of her staff," said House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio. "An attack on one who serves is an attack on all who serve. Acts and threats of violence against public officials have no place in our society."

Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., issued one of the strongest statements: "I am horrified ... Whoever they are a disgrace to Arizona, this country and the human race, and they deserve and will receive the contempt of all decent people and the strongest punishment of the law."

Giffords is a centrist Democrat who survived her tough re-election fight in November in part by stressing her strong support for gun rights and for tougher immigration controls, including tighter border security, even though she opposed the controversial Arizona law.

In March, after final approval of the Democrats' health-care law, which Giffords supported, the windows of her Tucson office were shot out. Similar acts were reported by other members of Congress, and several arrests were made, including that of a man who had threatened to kill Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash.

In 2009, amid widespread demonstrations against the health-care measure, a protester who showed up to meet Giffords at a supermarket event similar to Saturday's was removed by police when a pistol he had holstered under his armpit fell and bounced on the floor.

During the fall campaign, former Republican vice-presidential nominee Sarah Palin posted a map on her Facebook page depicting places where Democrats were running for re-election; those Democrats were noted by cross-hairs symbols similar to those seen through a gun scope. Giffords was among those on Palin's map.

Still, Giffords narrowly held on to her seat even as dozens of Democratic colleagues — including two fellow Democrats from Arizona, Ann Kirkpatrick and Harry Mitchell — were defeated, and she went on a district-wide "thank you" tour after the race.

In an interview last week, she said she was excited to count herself among the Democrats who joined the new House Republican majority in reading the Constitution aloud from the House floor. She said she was particularly pleased with being assigned the reading of the First Amendment. "I wanted to be here," she said. "I think it's important. Reflecting on the Constitution in a bipartisan way is a good way to start the year."

Material from The Associated Press included in this report.