

City of Austin mourning shooting death of longtime downtown businessman John Turner

Written by Marty Randall

Tuesday, 10 November 2015 11:59 -

State police seeking information....

John Turner was one of the nicest, most honest businessmen in Southern Indiana.

When people visited his little hole-in-the-wall jewelry and coin shop on West Main Street in Austin, he was quick with a smile and a “Hi, how you doing today?” which quickly led to a “Just look around. We got a little of everything in here.”

Austin residents who knew John and his close-knit family were devastated to learn that John died of an apparent gunshot to the head, inflicted by a person or persons unknown, on Saturday afternoon, November 7. Indiana State Police (ISP) with the Sellersburg post are investigating the murder and subsequent robbery.

The incident apparently occurred some time after 3:30 p.m. when an as-yet unidentified person entered the tiny shop at 61 West Main St. and shot and killed the affable jeweler and coin dealer. Unidentified amounts of cash and merchandise were taken.

Despite his wound, John, 78, was still responsive when found by a family member who called 9-1-1 for help. He was on the shop's floor behind one of the display cases. A local registered nurse, who recognized a medical problem had apparently occurred at the shop, stopped her vehicle and assisted at the scene until Scott County EMS technicians arrived. Neither his family nor local police and EMS technicians realized that he had been shot; they thought it was a medical issue.

Turner died at Scott Memorial Hospital.

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Not until a doctor and Scott County Deputy Coroner Chris Fugate looked more closely at the body was the head wound examined and determined to be the result of foul play.

The case was then quickly pronounced a death investigation, with the Austin Police Department requesting assistance from the ISP. As ISP crime scene technicians processed the crime scene, ISP detectives immediately began developing and following leads on the perpetrator.

John Turner had operated his shop for years in the same little store. He was honest in his dealings and thoughtful, providing small gifts for his favorite customers at Christmas. There was no fancy showroom for the store's merchandise. Everyone was treated fairly, whether buying or selling, though Turner was not above setting some special item aside for a customer he knew would be interested.

Staff of the Buchanan Funeral Home in Austin is in charge of arrangements.

ISP detectives continue on the case, requesting that anyone with any knowledge of any detail on that quiet Saturday afternoon in downtown Austin to call toll-free at 1-800-872-6743 or at 1-812-246-5424. Callers can remain anonymous.

A possible breakthrough in the case was reported Monday night, November 9, from unofficial sources. Supposedly, ISP detectives were talking to a man of interest regarding the crime.