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Shot in Mexico at 'point-blank range'

By Sandra McCulloch, Times Colonist January 5, 2012



A former Saltspring Island man killed by robbers in Mexico was shot at point-blank range, a police translator said Wednesday.

Robin Wood, 67, was standing less than a metre from the gunman in a house near Melaque, south of Puerto Vallarta, when he was shot, said translator David Zvy, speaking for Mexican police.

Wood had been staying with his friend Arvid Chalmers, also from Saltspring. The two had been to a concert, then picked up tacos, arriving at the house about midnight Tuesday, Zvy said.

Between 12:30 a.m. and 1 a.m., two men wielding guns broke into the house and confronted Wood and Chalmers, Zvy said.

"One of the guys grabbed a backpack belonging to Robin, and Robin went to the guy and said, 'Don't take those,'" Zvy said. "Then the other guy said, 'You're dead,' and shot [Robin]."

The robbers left with the backpack and its contents. It is not clear if anything else was taken.

Chalmers called police at 1:08 a.m. and gave a description of the suspects, Zvy said. Chalmers told police he did not know what was in the backpack.

Police know who they are looking for - a local man - "and everyone is waiting for him to be arrested," Zvy said.

Wood, a retired mechanic, once operated Beddis Road Garage on Saltspring Island, then partnered with Blaine Johnson, who now runs the business as Johnson's Automotive. Wood was known as a friendly, gregarious man who loved dogs, his friends and his retirement home in Mexico.

News of his death has shocked Wood's many friends on Saltspring. "Everywhere I go, everyone is stopping me to talk about it," Johnson said Wednesday.

The feelings are of "shock and disbelief," he said.

Wood had lived in Mexico for about four years and had married a Mexican woman. He was married previously but his wife died, Johnson said.

Wood had a daughter, who lives in Britain, and two stepchildren, one of whom lives on Saltspring.

A spokesman for the Foreign Affairs and International Trade Department offered "deepest condolences" Wednesday to Wood's family and friends.

"Consular officials in Ottawa and at the Canadian consulate in Puerto Vallarta are working with local authorities and stand ready to provide consular assistance to the family during this difficult time," department spokesman Ian Trites said from Ottawa.

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