

# GROUND CONTROL

Forsett runs for 130 yards to power Hawks past Rams 27-17

SPORTS > C1

## Holmgren ready for a return

STEVE KELLEY > C1



MONDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2009



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> B10

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# 4 OFFICERS SLAIN; SEATTLE MANHUNT

### IN WASHINGTON

Subject of search, believed cornered in Leschi home, has violent past  
See story below

### IN ARKANSAS

Lengthy prison term commuted by then-Gov. Mike Huckabee  
See story > A6



Sgt. Mark Renninger



Officer Tina Griswold



Officer Ronald Owens



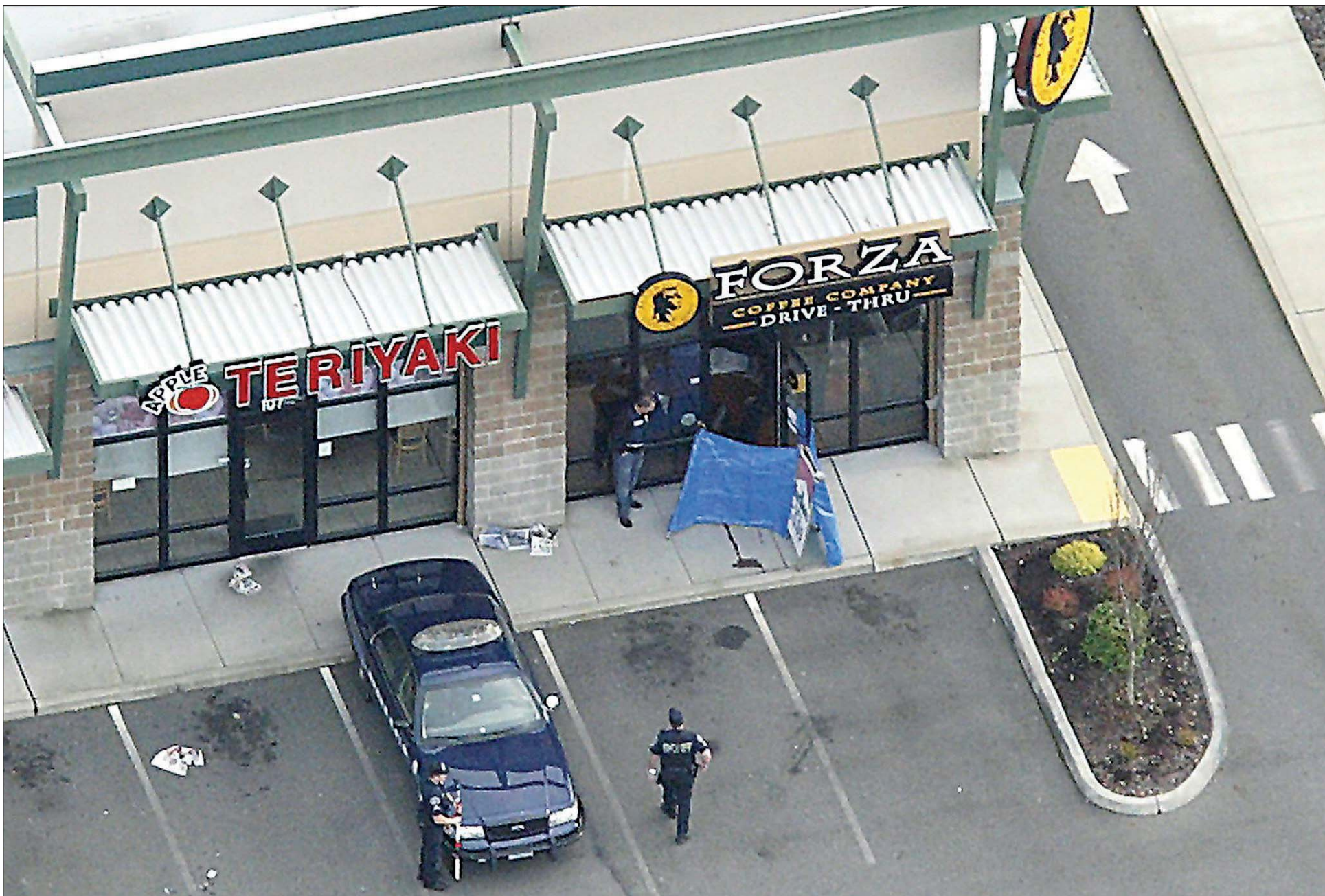
Officer Gregory Richards

### HOW THEY DIED

2 were 'flat-out executed'; the other 2 tried to stop killer  
See story below

### THE FAMILIES

'Outstanding' Lakewood officers leave behind 9 kids  
See story > A7



DEAN J. KOEPFLER / THE NEWS TRIBUNE

An aerial view shows the scene at Forza Coffee Company near Parkland on Sunday after four Lakewood police officers were shot dead in what authorities call an ambush.

## Person of interest let out of Pierce County jail one week ago



Maurice Clemmons

### FACING 8 FELONY CHARGES, HE HAD BEEN HELD MONTHS

#### Prison time, at least 5 convictions in Arkansas

Seattle Times staff

Maurice Clemmons, the 37-year-old man wanted for questioning in the killing of four Lakewood police officers Sunday morning, has a long criminal record punctuated by violence, erratic behavior and concerns about his mental health.

His criminal history includes at least five felony convictions in Arkansas and at least eight felony charges in Washington. That record also stands out for the number of times Clemmons has been released from custody despite questions about the danger he posed.

Mike Huckabee, while governor of Arkansas, granted clemency to Clemmons nine years ago, commuting his lengthy prison sentence over the pro-

tests of prosecutors.

"This is the day I've been dreading for a long time," Larry Jegley, prosecuting attorney for Arkansas' Pulaski County, said Sunday night when informed that Clemmons was being sought in connection with the killings.

In Pierce County, Clemmons had been in jail for the past several months on a child-rape charge that carries a possible life sentence. He was released from custody one week ago, even though he was staring at eight felony charges in all.

Clemmons posted \$15,000 with a Chehalis company called Jail Sucks Bail Bonds. The bondsman, in turn, put up \$150,000, securing Clemmons' release on the child-rape charge.

Clemmons moved to Washington from Arkansas in 2004. He was placed under the supervision of the Washington State Department of Corrections (DOC) for an Arkansas conviction, according to a department spokesman.

See > CLEMMONS, A6

"This is the day I've been dreading for a long time."

LARRY JEGLEY  
Prosecuting attorney for Pulaski County in Arkansas

**OFFICERS MOURNED |**  
Police see themselves as targets again  
> A8

Shocked community holds vigil hours after shootings > A8

## Attack in Lakewood area worst on police in state

### 'TARGETED ... AMBUSH'

Deadly attack came in coffee shop known to police as 'safe haven'

Seattle Times staff

A SWAT team and police negotiators surrounded a Leschi home in Seattle late Sunday where the man sought in the Lakewood police shooting may have been hiding.

Police surrounded the home at East Yesler Way and 32nd Avenue South, where a woman told them Maurice Clemmons, 37, was on the property and bleeding, according to law-enforcement sources.

The woman told police that someone had dropped Clemmons off at the home. The source also said police had received tips about two other properties they needed to search, in Seattle's Queen Anne neighborhood and in Renton.

Police were trying to confirm that the man inside the Leschi home was Clemmons, said spokesman Jeff Kappel. Clemmons' sister, Latanya Clemmons, 34, said Sunday night that she

**Forza Coffee Co.**  
Gunman kills four police officers



Source: ESRI, TeleAtlas

THE SEATTLE TIMES

was driving to the Leschi area to try to find out what is happening. She said their aunt lives at the house where police were focusing their attention.

Police told residents to stay indoors and keep their doors locked.

See > SHOOTINGS, A7

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4 POLICE OFFICERS SLAIN

Huckabee commuted long term

CLEMMONS FREED IN 2000  
Former Arkansas governor issued 1,033 commutations and pardons over 10 years

BY JIM BRUNNER  
Seattle Times staff reporter

Former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee's record of freeing criminals from prison was controversial even before news that the man sought for questioning in the killing of four Lakewood police officers had a lengthy prison sentence commuted by Huckabee.

The one-time Republican presidential contender granted twice as many pardons and commutations as the previous three governors of Arkansas combined, The Associated Press reported in 2007.

In all, he issued 1,033 pardons and commutations during more than 10 years as governor — an average of about one every four days.

Maurice Clemmons faced decades in prison for robberies and other charges when his sentence was commuted by Huckabee in 2000. Clemmons later was sent back to prison after violating parole, but was released again five years ago.

Clemmons was released from jail in Pierce County seven days ago after posting bond. He'd spent the past several months in jail on a charge of child rape. His release came even though he faced seven additional felony charges in Washington state.

Huckabee issued a written statement Sunday night through his daughter and spokeswoman, Sarah Huckabee, saying the "senseless and savage execution" of the police officers "has saddened the nation."

If Clemmons is found to be responsible, Huckabee's statement said, "it will be the result of a series of failures in the criminal justice system in both Arkansas and Wash-



Former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee

ington state."

The statement said Clemmons had been recommended for commutation and that his release was approved by the state parole board.

Huckabee noted that Clemmons later was arrested for parole violations but was released after prosecutors failed to press new charges that could have kept him in prison.

"It appears that he has continued to have a string of criminal and psychotic behavior but was not kept incarcerated by either state. This is a horrible and tragic event and if found and convicted the offender should be held accountable to the fullest extent of the law," he said.

Huckabee's clemencies became a campaign issue when he ran for the

"[If Maurice Clemmons is responsible], it will be the result of a series of failures in the criminal justice system in both Arkansas and Washington state."

MIKE HUCKABEE  
Statement issued through his daughter

Republican presidential nomination last year. He was criticized by prosecutors and political rivals for releasing prisoners who went on to commit more crimes.

"It's a crying shame that a sitting governor would be so insensitive to victims' rights," Pulaski County Prosecuting Attorney Larry Jegley told an Arkansas newspaper, The Leader, in 2004.

In one high-profile case, castrated rapist Wayne DuMond was set free by the Arkansas parole board at Huckabee's urging, according to news accounts. DuMond later suffocated a mother of three in Mis-

souri and was sentenced to life in prison, where he died in 2005.

A Southern Baptist preacher, Huckabee sometimes was motivated to release prisoners at the urging of pastors or other acquaintances, according to news accounts.

His clemencies also benefitted the stepson of a staff member, and even Rolling Stones guitarist Keith Richards, who received a pardon for a 1975 traffic offense. Huckabee, who sometimes jammed on the bass guitar with his band at campaign events, pardoned Richards after meeting him at a concert.

In an appearance on "Fox News Sunday" — before the news about Clemmons was out — Huckabee said another presidential bid in 2012 is "less likely rather than more likely."

Times reporter Susan Kelleher and researcher Miyoko Wolf contributed to this report, which also includes material from The Associated Press.  
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< Clemmons  
FROM A1  
MAN SOUGHT WAS LET OUT OF JAIL WEEK AGO  
Sister told police he's 'not in his right mind'

The DOC classified him as "high risk to reoffend." His supervision was to continue until October 2015, the spokesman said.

He lives in Tacoma, where he has run a landscaping and power-washing business out of his house. He is married, but the relationship has been tumultuous, with accounts of his unpredictable behavior leading to at least two run-ins with police this year.

Clemmons punched a Pierce County sheriff's deputy in the face during one confrontation, according to court records.

Two days later, at his home, Clemmons allegedly gathered his wife and two younger relatives at around 3 or 4 a.m. and had them all undress. He told them that families need to "be naked for at least five minutes on Sunday," a Pierce County sheriff's report says.

The family complied because they were afraid of Clemmons and thought he was growing increasingly erratic.

"The whole time Clemmons kept saying things like trust him, the world is going to end soon, and that he was Jesus," the report says.

The Sheriff's Office interviewed Clemmons' sister in May. She said her brother "is not in his right mind and did not know how he could react when contacted by law enforcement," a sheriff's report says.

"She stated that he was saying that the Secret Service was coming to get him because he had written a letter to the president. ... She suspects he is having a mental breakdown," the report says.

Family members also told deputies that Clemmons claimed he could fly and expected President Obama to visit to "confirm that he is Messiah in the flesh."

While investigating this incident, deputies uncovered evidence that led to a charge that he had raped and molested a 12-year-old relative.

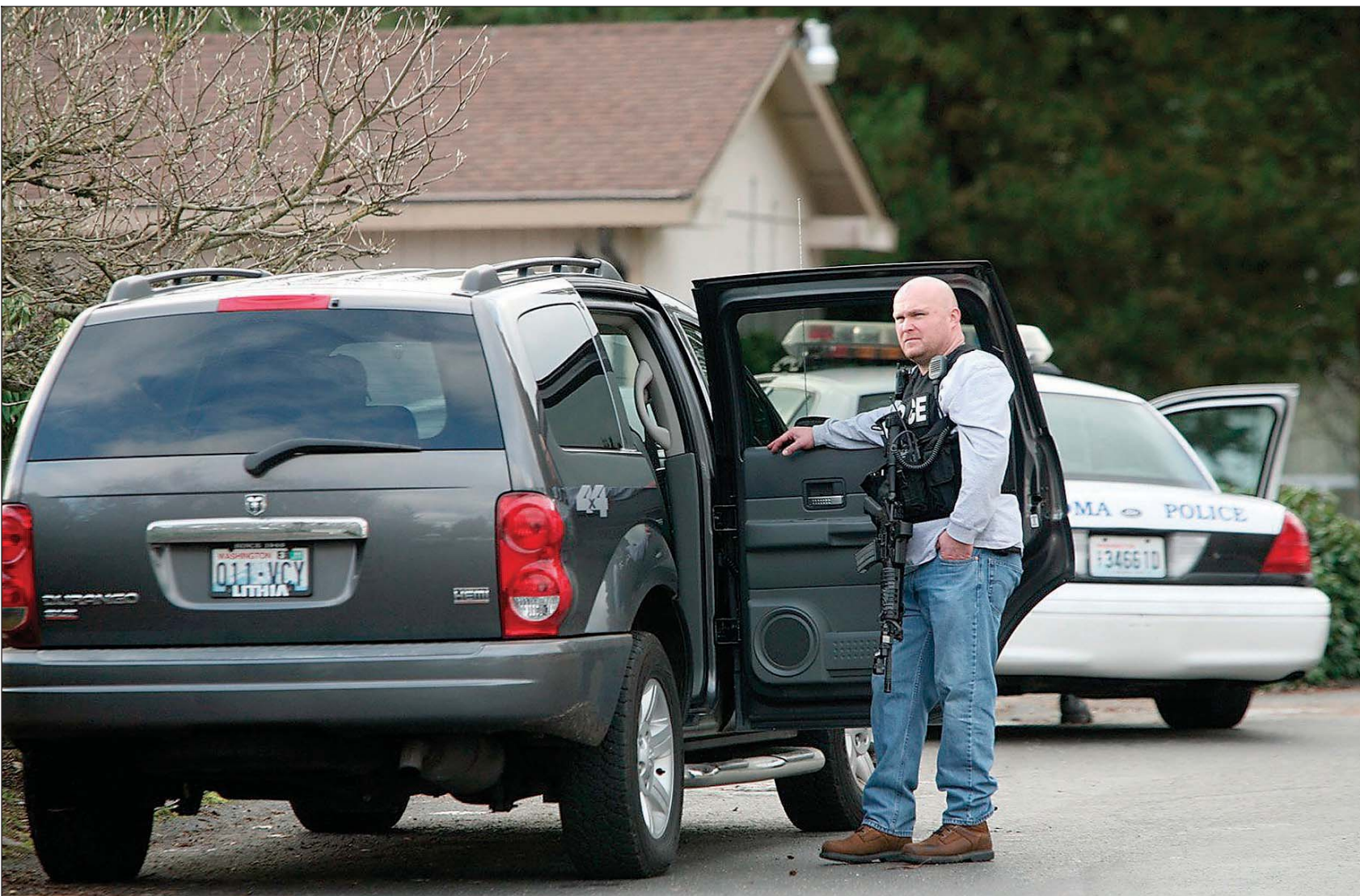
Prosecutors in Pierce County recently had requested a mental evaluation for Clemmons at Western State Hospital. On Nov. 6, a judge concluded that Clemmons was competent to stand trial on the child-rape and other felony charges, according to court records.

**Long record in Arkansas**

News accounts out of Arkansas offer a confusing — and, at times, conflicting — description of Clemmons' criminal history and prison time.

In 1990, Clemmons, then 18, was sentenced in Arkansas to 60 years in prison for burglary and theft, according to a news account. Responding to a circuit judge's comment that Clemmons had broken his mother's heart, Clemmons said, "I have broken my own heart."

Newspaper stories describe a series of disturbing incidents involving Clemmons while he was being tried in Arkansas on various



A police officer stands near the Tacoma house of Maurice Clemmons, the 37-year-old former Arkansas man wanted for questioning in the killing of four Lakewood officers near Parkland on Sunday morning.

Clemmons' record in Washington state

**In July,** Maurice Clemmons was arrested and charged with raping and molesting a 12-year-old female relative in May. The arrest occurred when he was seen in a Pierce County courtroom, attempting to quash warrants from other charges. He was held in the Pierce County Jail until his release last Monday after posting a \$150,000 bond.

**In May,** Clemmons was arrested on two counts of third-degree assault and five counts of second-degree malicious mischief stemming from an incident when Pierce County sheriff's deputies responded to a disturbance report. Clemmons allegedly punched a deputy in the face, while the officers were struggling with two other men. Neighbors said Clemmons also had been throwing rocks through windows and cars, damaging at least five cars and three houses.

Source: Pierce County Superior Court

charges.

During one trial, he was shackled in leg irons and seated next to a uniformed officer. The presiding judge ordered the extra security because he felt Clemmons had threatened him, court records show.

At other times, Clemmons was accused of hiding a piece of metal in his sock to use as a weapon; throwing a lock at a bailiff, and instead hitting his mother; and reaching for a guard's pistol while being transported to court.

Clemmons was arrested when he was a junior in high school for having a .25-caliber pistol on school property. Clemmons told police that he



Police surround a house in Seattle's Leschi neighborhood Sunday night. A woman leaving the home told them Maurice Clemmons was there and bleeding, a source said.

brought the gun to school because he had been "beaten by dopers" and that if they got after him again, he had "something for them," a newspaper account says.

When Clemmons received the 60-year sentence, he already was serving 48 years on five felony convictions and facing up to 95 more years on charges of robbery, theft and possessing a handgun on school property, according to a story in the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette.

Clemmons served 11 years before being released. Then-Governor Huckabee, who was a Republican presidential candidate in 2008, commuted Clemmons' sentence. He cited Clemmons' young age, 17, at the time the crimes were committed, according to news reports.

**Huckabee's statement**

Huckabee, in a statement released Sunday night, said Clemmons' release from prison had been reviewed and approved by the Arkansas parole board.

If Clemmons is found responsible for the police killings, "it will be the result of a series of failures in the crimi-

nal-justice system in both Arkansas and Washington State," Huckabee said.

After his release, Clemmons remained on parole. Soon after, he found trouble again. In March 2001, he was accused of violating his parole by committing aggravated robbery and theft, according to the Democrat-Gazette.

He was returned to prison on a parole violation. But in what appears to have been a mistake, he wasn't served with the arrest warrants until leaving prison three years later.

Clemmons' attorney argued that the charges should be dismissed because too much time had passed. Prosecutors thereafter dropped the charges.

On Sunday night, Clemmons' sister Latanya said her brother is the second-oldest of six children.

"Maurice is a fairly good person, good heart," she said. He came over to her place on Thanksgiving for about an hour and seemed fine, she said.

Clemmons' maternal grandmother, Lela Clemmons, 82, of Marianna, Ark.,

said her grandson lived in Marianna when he was young. Later, as a teen, he lived in Little Rock, another relative said.

"All I know is he is a pretty good guy," Maurice Clemmons' grandmother said.

She said both of his parents died years ago. His mother worked in a nursing home, and his father was a factory worker.

**Trouble at home**

In addition to the child-rape charge, Clemmons faces seven felony charges and a misdemeanor count stemming from a May 9 disturbance outside his home, according to a probable-cause declaration.

When a Pierce County sheriff's deputy went to Clemmons' home at 12:45 p.m., two men, Eddie Lee Davis and Joseph Denton Pitts, were standing outside, the declaration says.

They told the deputy that Clemmons was inside the house.

But when the deputy tried to go in, Davis grabbed him by the wrist. Pitts joined in, and, while the three men struggled, Clemmons ran out

of the house and punched the deputy in the face, the declaration says.

Another deputy arrived, and the two officers were able to gain control over Clemmons, Davis and Pitts. Both deputies suffered injuries during the fight, court records say.

Afterward, neighbors told deputies that Clemmons had been throwing rocks through windows and at cars. One resident was struck by a rock that crashed through the window.

At least five cars and three houses were damaged, including a car that belonged to Clemmons and his wife, the declaration says.

His wife "declined to complete domestic-violence paperwork," the declaration says, "but did tell deputies that she and Clemmons argued over a newly discovered child and theorized that this argument precipitated the rampage."

On Sunday, one neighbor said the fight ended only when an officer pulled a gun and threatened to shoot Clemmons. This same neighbor said one officer came to his door afterward with a black eye.

Clemmons moved into the home a couple of years ago and had a number of loud parties, this neighbor said.

Another neighbor, a 70-year-old man, said that Clemmons threw rocks through two of his plate-glass windows. After he tried talking to Clemmons, the neighbor walked away, only to have Clemmons throw a rock that hit him in the hand, splitting it open.

Until that day, Clemmons had been cordial and friendly and never had given anyone trouble, this neighbor said.

Contributors to this story include staff reporters Susan Kelleher, Jonathan Martin, Ken Armstrong, Steve Miletich, Jennifer Sullivan, Mike Carter and Jim Brunner, and news researchers Gene Balk and Miyoko Wolf. Jonathan Martin: 206-464-2605 or jmartin@seattletimes.com.

# 4 POLICE OFFICERS SLAIN



ERIKA SCHULTZ / THE SEATTLE TIMES

Central Pierce Fire & Rescue Capt. A. Dulas salutes during a procession that escorted the officers' bodies to the Pierce County Medical Examiner's Office in Tacoma.

## < Shootings

FROM A1  
**ATTACK IN 'SAFE HAVEN'**  
**Not clear if gunman was injured**

More than 12 hours earlier, police had converged on an upscale coffee shop in Pierce County, a hangout for officers that became the scene of the deadliest attack on law enforcement in state history Sunday.

Four Lakewood officers — three men and one woman — were shot and killed at 8:15 a.m. as they sat working on their laptops at Forza Coffee Company in nearby Parkland. The first two officers were “flat-out executed,” while the third tried to stop the gunman and the fourth fired at him, according to Pierce County sheriff's spokesman Ed Troyer.

Those killed were identified as Sgt. Mark Renninger, 39, and officers Ronald Owens, 37, Tina Griswold, 40, and Gregory Richards, 42.

Authorities were seeking Clemmons, from Tacoma, as a “person of interest” they wanted for question-

ing.

“We have evidence to believe he was here, in this area,” Troyer said. A \$120,000 reward was offered for information leading to an arrest in the deaths. The Pierce County tipline is 866-977-2362.

Clemmons has a long criminal record in Arkansas and Washington. He was released from custody in Pierce County just a week ago, and was facing a charge of raping a child. Family members described him as being in a state of mental deterioration. Last spring, he was also accused of punching a sheriff's deputy in the face.

Sunday's shootings came as officers from across the state were still coming to terms with last month's ambush-slaying of Seattle police Officer Timothy Brenton. The two incidents do not appear related, police said.

The coffee shop, in a strip mall across the street from McChord Air Force Base, is favored by officers from several nearby jurisdictions.

Troyer said the scruffy-looking gunman entered the shop, walked past the officers and three or four other customers, and approached the counter.

A young barista asked the man if she could help him, according to

Humberto Navarrete, 51, who lives nearby and later spoke to the barista. The woman stared at the barista without saying a word and then opened his coat, revealing a handgun, Navarrete said.

The barista and another female barista on duty ran out the back, according to Navarrete. The gunman turned and started shooting at the officers, he said, quoting the women.

“This was a targeted, selective ambush,” Troyer said.

The officers, who made up one patrol unit, were regulars at the coffee shop. They were wearing bulletproof vests and were preparing to start their day shift, Troyer said.

The first two officers apparently had no time to react. The third officer stood up and tried to go for the gunman before being shot, Troyer said. The fourth officer struggled with the gunman, wrestled him out the door and managed to fire off some shots before he, too, was killed, Troyer said.

It's not clear if the gunman was injured by gunshots.

“It's carnage out front everywhere,” Troyer said, describing the front of the coffee shop. “It's like a bad horror movie, it's horrible.”

Navarrete, a financial manager

who lives a block from the coffee shop, said he was in a nearby AM-PM minimart Sunday morning when the two baristas from the coffee shop ran into the store crying and upset.

Brad Carpenter, CEO of Forza Coffee, met with the two young baristas after they were interviewed by police and said they were shaken up.

The slain officers were “well-known to our staff,” said Carpenter, a retired police officer from Oakland, Calif., and Gig Harbor.

“It's supposed to be a safe haven for everybody,” he said of the coffee shop.

When the 911 calls started coming in, officers from several jurisdictions raced to the area.

“I have never seen this many scramble to a particular spot, ever,” said David Gabrielson, 27, who works as clerk at a gas station near the coffee shop.

An apparent hoax came when a man called 911, claiming to be the shooter. Police took the man into custody at a Parkland house, but he was not linked to the crime.

A second likely hoax came after a Tacoma man called his girlfriend and falsely claimed responsibility for the shooting, Troyer said. The

man has since been arrested on suspicion of obstructing a police investigation. His call had sparked a search at Evergreen Self Storage.

Heavily armed police on Sunday surrounded the Tacoma home of Clemmons' wife, not far from the shooting scene.

Troyer said police found a GPS ankle bracelet during a search of a house where Clemmons was believed to have been staying. Clemmons was required to wear an ankle bracelet under terms of his recent release.

The shootings rank as the worst attack on law enforcement in state history. Three Seattle police were shot and killed by a gunman in January 1921.

Carpenter, the Forza CEO, said donation boxes to help the families of the slain officers will be in place today at all 22 Forza stores in Washington and Colorado, and that information would be placed on the company Web site about making contributions.

*Seattle Times staff reporters Sara Jean Green, Mike Carter, Steve Miletich, Jonathan Martin, Nick Perry, Jennifer Sullivan and Christine Clarridge and news researchers Miyoko Wolf and Gene Balk contributed to this report.*  
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# Veteran officers were parents, too

**THE OFFICERS |**

BY JACK BROOM, LYNDA V. MAPES, BOB YOUNG AND SUSAN KELLEHER  
*Seattle Times staff reporters*

The four victims of Sunday morning's shooting were veteran officers who brought a range of talents to the fledgling Lakewood Police Department when it was created in 2004, according to Lakewood Police Chief Bret Farrar.

“This is a very difficult time for our families and our officers,” he said. “Please keep our families and Lakewood Police in your prayers.”

The slain officers “all have been outstanding professionals,” he added.

**Officer Tina Griswold**

Tina Griswold, 40, joined the Lakewood Police Department in 2004 and earlier this year won its Lifesaving Award.

“She was likable and enjoyed life,” said her former father-in-law, Carroll Kelley of Shelton, Mason County.

She and Kelley's son met when both were students at Shelton High School, Kelley said. Griswold became a police officer after they divorced, he said.

She remarried and is survived by her husband, a daughter, 21, and a son, 8, police and relatives said.

She previously worked as a police officer in Shelton for three years, public records show. She was an officer and SWAT team member for the Lacey Police Department from 1998 to 2004, according to Sgt. Scott Eastman, her former supervisor. The group was responsible for serving high-risk warrants and conducting high-risk



Officer Tina Griswold

entries, he said.

“Tina was an outstanding officer,” Eastman said. “She was very assertive, and had no fear in dealing with high-risk situations and suspects that were larger than her. She had this presence about her that was in charge and you were going to do what she said. She had the verbal skills and the confidence to pull it off.”

Griswold was avid about physical fitness, and lifted weights and ran regularly, Eastman said. She stood about 5 feet and weighed less than 100 pounds.

“She could do 30 to 40 pull-ups,” Eastman said. “A lot of the guys were talking about that this morning. We'd always joke that she didn't have much to lift.”

Griswold was one of the first members of Lacey's tactical team, and the first woman to hold the job, Eastman said.

“She was a very hard worker and just a fun person to work with,” he said. “She spent most of her free time with family. ... That was her priority.”

Although she left Shelton to join the Lacey department, she still lived in town and would run into her former colleagues.

“The young officers looked up to her,” Eastman said. “And she was a great partner for the experienced officers. She knew what she was doing.”

Lacey officers are still in shock over the news, he said, adding, “We're looking for an opportunity to honor her and her family.”

**Officer Gregory Richards**

He was known as one of the sweet guys, the one everyone liked to work with.

Gregory Richards, 42, of Graham had eight years of law-enforcement experience, starting with work as a patrol officer in Kent.

He worked there from September 2001 until October 2004, before hiring on with the Lakewood Police Department.

The Kent department was going through layoffs because of budget cuts, and Richards sought a more secure situation for his family, said Lt. Lisa Price, public-information officer for the Kent department.

“He was a very well-respected and well-liked co-worker, and when he left we were sad to see him go,” Price said. “People loved working alongside him. I firmly believe Greg would still be with Kent if we hadn't been going through layoffs.”

“He was just a nice, cute, angelic guy.”

He had a lighter side too. Richards was the drummer in an all-police officer rock band called Locked Down. The band played at social gatherings, including a recent police officers' motorcycle rally in Ocean Shores.

The killing was devastating news. “It was a complete shock to my system, it's a horrific crime and it hits close to home,” Price said.

Richards is survived by his wife, Kelly, a daughter and two sons.

“Everyone is just here,” said Melanie Burwell, a sister-in-law answering the door at Richards' home. “We are staying together.”

Burwell said she last saw Richards at Thanksgiving. “It was wonderful,” she said, fighting tears. “All he ever wanted was his family. He didn't want to do anything but be with them.”

“If there were more people in this world like Greg, nothing like this would ever happen.”



Officer Gregory Richards

**Sgt. Mark Renninger**

A decorated veteran officer and popular law-enforcement instructor, Sgt. Mark Renninger, 39, is survived by his wife and three children.

“Mark was a professional, dedicated police officer who made the ultimate sacrifice. More importantly, he was a loving and devoted father, husband and family member who will be missed by many,” said Renninger's brother, Matt, on a statement published on the Web site of WFMZ-TV in Pennsylvania's Lehigh Valley, where Renninger grew up.

He joined the Tukwila Police Department shortly after leaving military service in 1996. He was a patrol officer, a SWAT team member and was, for a time, president of the Tukwila police officers' guild.

“Mark was an outstanding police officer and a well-liked member of the department during his time with us,” said a statement issued by the Tukwila Police Department.

He moved to the Lakewood department in 2004. According to the program for a state 2008 law-enforcement conference, Renninger was an instructor in SWAT courses and served as an instructor for courses in firearms, chemical munitions and patrol responsibilities.

On a Facebook tribute page set up by his relatives Sunday, more than 1,000 messages of tribute were posted by early evening.

Among the postings was one from Rick Fisher, who said he coached Renninger's daughter in fastpitch softball two seasons ago. “Mark was a fun and compassion-



Sgt. Mark Renninger

ate man,” Fisher wrote. “He was always willing to help me and the girls out when he could. He was a tremendous help.”

**Officer Ronald Owens**

Friends describe Ronald Owens, 37, as a dedicated officer and devoted father. He was also an “ideal tenant,” said Toni Strehlow, who managed a property Owens rented, a house with a white-picket fence near downtown Puyallup.

“When he rented from us, the first thing he did was replace walls and a patio door and he never charged us, never wanted a rent deduction. He just wanted to do for people,” said Strehlow.

He was a good neighbor, too, said Charley Stokes who lived next door to him in Puyallup. “We'd talk over the back fence, have a beer once in a while.”

Owens, who was divorced, was very proud of his daughter, he said. Strehlow and Stokes said Owens was excited about going from his job as a State Patrol trooper to the Lakewood Police Department in 2004, saying Owens looked forward to more regular hours and better advancement opportunities.

Strehlow said she was speechless when she heard the news. “It's just wrong. He was truly an unforgettable man and a kind, kind person.”

Owens went into police work because his father, who died in 2006, was a detective, according to a neighbor, Edie Wintermute.

Owens checked in on her husband after surgery, she said. “He was a good father and very caring guy.”



Officer Ronald Owens

4 POLICE OFFICERS SLAIN



ERIKA SCHULTZ / THE SEATTLE TIMES  
Police officers talk near Parkland on Sunday after four Lakewood police officers were shot to death at a coffee shop earlier in the day.

LAW-ENFORCEMENT REACTION |

After Seattle slaying, another stressful hit

BY JENNIFER SULLIVAN  
Seattle Times staff reporter

The slayings of four Lakewood police officers Sunday came just as police across the region were starting to refocus and regain some sense of normalcy after the ambush killing of a Seattle officer a month ago.

Seattle Assistant Police Chief Nick Metz said laughter and a sense of routine had returned to police headquarters in recent days, something that had been missing in the weeks after Officer Timothy Brenton was slain and his partner wounded on Halloween night.

But with four more officers killed in Lakewood — believed to be the highest number of police deaths in a single act in state history — law-enforcement officers and their families again are reminded that their badges can be viewed by some as targets.

“My first thought was, ‘Oh, my God, it’s too close to the Brenton situation,’ ” Port of Seattle Police Chief Colleen Wilson said. “We’re going to put people through all of that stress again.”

Brenton, 39, and rookie Officer Britt Sweeney were seated in their patrol car in Seattle’s Leschi neighborhood Oct. 31 when another vehicle pulled up next to them and someone opened fire. Brenton was killed immediately, and Sweeney suffered minor injuries.

Police shot and arrested Christopher John Monfort outside his Tukwila apartment six days after the attack. Monfort, 41, has been charged with aggravated murder and numerous other charges.

King County sheriff’s spokesman Sgt. John Urquhart and other law-enforcement officials say the most disturbing thing is that Brenton and the Lakewood officers were wrapped up in routine el-

ements of their jobs: doing paperwork, grabbing a cup of coffee and talking with fellow officers.

Authorities say the slain officers were not targeted individually but attacked because they were police.

“This is not about responding to a robbery, a D.V. [domestic-violence] call, or any other call we consider dangerous. These are four people having coffee on a Sunday morning at 8 a.m.,” Urquhart said of Sunday’s shootings. “It could have been anybody.”

Mountlake Terrace Assistant Police Chief Pete Caw said he plans to hold a debriefing this morning to remind his officers of the importance of “never letting your guard down” and focusing on safety even in public places.

“Guys were gathering at coffee and having a social moment together, and this thing walks in from the front door. It’s just terrible,” Caw said.

Wilson likened Sunday’s shootings and Brenton’s slaying to a type of “racial killing” based on prejudice.

“They’re a bias that solely because of the uniform you are wearing you are being attacked. It’s not what we do, but it’s who we are,” said Wilson, who also served as police chief in Monroe and Sumner. “Short of losing one of my children, I couldn’t imagine a pain more difficult than losing one of the officers I’m charged with taking care of.”

Urquhart called the five officer slayings “an assault on society.”

“We stand between guys like this and the rest of society,” he said. “When we are attacked like this, like Timothy Brenton was and these four law-enforcement officers were, this is an attack on everybody.”

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CANDLELIGHT VIGIL |

Shocked community grieves for officers



ELLEN M. BANNER / THE SEATTLE TIMES  
Stephanie James, center, wife of a Lakewood police officer, joins a vigil at Champions Centre church in Tacoma. James said she was at church Sunday morning when she heard about the shootings. “We were just flabbergasted. There are no words that I can come up with to explain.”

TEARS, PRAYERS AND CALLS FOR HOPE  
Hundreds gather at Tacoma church hours after shootings

BY CHRISTINE CLARRIDGE  
Seattle Times staff reporter

Several hundred people gathered outside Champions Centre church in Tacoma on Sunday evening, part of a candlelight vigil for the four officers who were slain in the morning in Parkland.

Prayers were offered for the Lakewood police officers, their families, and the shocked and grieving community.

The pastors spoke of the need for hope in the face of tragedy, and challenged the gathered people to commit their lives to something meaningful.

“Let’s ask how we can love more, be better parents, and how we can be better citizens,” said lay speaker Eric Van Alstine.

Pastor Kevin Gerald said that while none of the officers were

members of the congregation, the church was moved to hold the vigil in support of other church members who are in the law-enforcement and firefighting community.

“It doesn’t matter who it is or what agency, we’re a big family and this hurts.”

TONY RYAN  
Enumclaw police officer attending candlelight vigil

“We hope in a time like this the church can be there for the needs of community,” Gerald said.

Stephanie James, a church member and the wife of a Lakewood police officer, cried while the crowd sang “Amazing Grace.” She said she was at church Sunday morning when she learned of the shootings.

“We were just flabbergasted,” she said. “There are no words that I can come up with to explain.”

Enumclaw police Officer Tony Ryan was among the half-dozen

or so officers who attended. Afterward, he and his colleagues were surrounded by throngs of people who wanted to hug them or shake their hands and thank them for their service.

The gratitude was appreciated but it didn’t take away the pain, Ryan said. “It doesn’t matter who it is or what agency, we’re a big family and this hurts.”

Other community members left flowers and cards of condolences and appreciation near the scene of the shooting.

One poster taped to a utility pole was decorated with a drawing of a police badge with a black band across the badge. The poster read, “We love you! Our prayers are with you!”

Seattle Times reporter Sara Jean Green and news researcher Miyoko Wolf contributed to this report. Christine Clarridge: 206-464-8983 or cclarridge@seattletimes.com

WEB EXTRA  
See a photo gallery  
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