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SEATTLE TIMES SPECIAL REPORT

A path to murder

The story of Maurice Clemmons

BY SEATTLE TIMES STAFF

It was in the late 1970s that Joe Lewis Clemmons left the impoverished Delta region of Arkansas and moved to the Pacific Northwest, starting a migration for his family that would continue for decades.

He wanted something better for his family — a family so big Joe was one of 21 kids, although six died young. He wanted a haven from Lee County’s violence and racial hostilities.

“Joe started the string of us coming out here,” says his niece Carol Henderson, who now lives in Renton. “The whole reason for him trying to get his family to venture out here was for better opportunities and to do something different.”

The migration Joe set in motion would, a

Maurice Clemmons during a visit by his mother, Dorothy, in an Arkansas prison.

quarter-century later, sweep up his nephew Maurice Clemmons, who was a 32-year-old parolee when he settled in Seattle in 2004. Maurice told a parole officer he planned to become a plumber. Maybe he’d work for his Uncle Joe, transporting the elderly to appointments.

But when Maurice moved to the Northwest, he brought with him the demons of his Arkansas past. A week ago, he shot and killed four Lakewood police officers, a crime that has shattered families and generated such tension between Washington and Arkansas that both states’ governors talked at length Thursday to lower the heat. All four officers were parents; nine kids have lost a father or mother.

Maurice Clemmons was shot and killed by a

See > **CLEMMONS, A17**

Lakewood police Officer Greg Richards, 1967-2009

ERIKA SCHULTZ / THE SEATTLE TIMES

Kelly Richards compares a childhood photograph of her late husband, Gregory Richards, to their son Gavin, 10, last week in their Graham home. Kelly said her husband often told her: “I could die tomorrow, I’d be happy. I have everything I want.”

Loving family man was ‘the golden boy’

This is the third of four news obituaries on the slain Lakewood Police officers.

BY LYNDA V. MAPES / *Seattle Times* staff reporter

They called him Perma-grin for the smile seemingly always on his face.

Officer Gregory Richards, 42, was the glass-is-half-full guy, the one who saw the better half of any situation, said his widow, Kelly. Married nearly 18 years ago, she met Officer Richards at the H.D. Hotspurs bar in Kent, when she turned 21 and was old enough to go out dancing with her girlfriends at a club.

She was working at a gas station, selling sandwiches and working the cash register. He was working as a timber grader for Simpson Timber. He was different from other men she had dated, she said: almost angelic.

“He was too good to be true, almost. I thought, what the heck, I am going to get him,” Richards said.

Gregory Richards

And as for her friends? “They all said, ‘We were so jealous of you, we all wanted a Greg,’” she said. “And I had him. ‘Mine.’”

Born in Lynwood, Calif., on Jan. 4, 1967, Officer Richards began playing the drums at age 8, developing what would become a lifelong passion for music.

See > **RICHARDS, A23**

FOUR FALLEN OFFICERS

A tribute page in memory of the Lakewood and Seattle officers who were killed recently > **A3**

Census in April will be a tricky count

MILLIONS NOW HOMELESS OR JOBLESS

Officials say mistrust also makes tally difficult

BY LORNET TURNBULL
Seattle Times staff reporter

Where will you be on Census Day — living in your RV, couch surfing at your friends’, squatting in your parents’ basement?

The U.S. Census Bureau is preparing to count the more than 308 million men, women and children living in the country April 1, 2010.

With just 10 questions on next year’s form, this would seem simple enough. Yet the count is likely to be not just the most costly but possibly one of the most difficult ever staged.

“We are studying a population that is harder to count than the 2000 population,” census director Robert Groves told a group of journalists recently.

The lingering effects of the recession make it harder to find and count people. Millions of U.S. residents are now jobless or homeless — with no fixed address. One out of eight housing units is vacant nationwide; the rate in Washington state is about one in 20.

Furthermore, an influx of immigrants — legal and illegal — over the past two decades make the counting that much tougher.

The Census Bureau realized in recent years that it missed significant numbers of new immigrants in the 2000 count — including many from countries where mistrust of government is common.

That could again be a problem. For example, a group of Latino clerics has been urging illegal immigrants to boycott the census until Congress fixes the nation’s immigration laws.

See > **CENSUS, A25**

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A salute to the fallen

*In memory of those who have been lost.
In gratitude to those who protect and serve.*



Officer Timothy Brenton,
Seattle Police Dept.
1970 – 2009

*Raised in a police family,
he was a respected training
officer and a married father
of two known for his humor.*



Officer Tina Griswold,
Lakewood Police Dept.
1969 – 2009

*She was tiny but tough,
a wife and mother of two,
and a school resource officer
who loved to help children.*



Officer Ronald Owens,
Lakewood Police Dept.
1971 – 2009

*Proud dad of a daughter,
he was a calming, positive
presence on the force
and a caring neighbor.*



Sgt. Mark Renninger,
Lakewood Police Dept.
1970 – 2009

*A leader, SWAT trainer
and department “rock,”
he was a devoted husband
and father of three.*



Officer Gregory Richards,
Lakewood Police Dept.
1967 – 2009

*He was the drummer in
a police rock band, but his
fondest times were at home
with his wife and three kids.*

Donate to the officers’ families through the Lakewood Police Independent Guild: www.lpig.us or P.O. Box 99579, Lakewood, WA 98499. The Brenton family asks for donations to be directed to the Lakewood fund.



WATERCOLOR BY SUSAN JOUFLAS, SEATTLE TIMES ARTIST

SEATTLE TIMES SPECIAL REPORT

AT 16, CLEMMONS WENT ON A CRIME SPREE. HE WAS SENTENCED TO 108 YEARS IN ARKANSAS BUT WAS GRANTED CLEMENCY. BY 2004, HE HAD A WIFE AND A JOB IN TACOMA.

< **Clemmons**
FROM A1

police officer early Tuesday morning after a two-day manhunt. In the aftermath, his family, in Arkansas and Washington, faces scrutiny from the police, the media, the public. Some of his relatives and friends have been arrested, accused of rendering help to a wanted man. One of his aunts turned him in, only to see her home busted up and tear-gassed in the manhunt. Some family members fear retribution, even though they weren't involved.

Henderson, an administrator at Swedish Medical Center, says: "It affects us, carrying that name, when we go to work, hearing, 'You should be ashamed of who you are and where you come from.'"

Poverty and prison

The Clemmons family comes from Marianna, Ark., the seat of one of the poorest counties in one of the country's poorest states. Unemployment pushes 30 percent; the typical family gets by on \$24,000 a year, not even half the national median.

One longtime resident calls the town "landlocked" — no freeway, no Mississippi River, not even a stop for the railroad anymore. In places, cotton fluff forms a haze that stretches almost to the horizon. Trim brick ramblers share property lines with clapboard shacks or trailers set on cinder blocks. Dozens of homes stand empty. One dilapidated house, owned by a member of the Clemmons family, is now home only to feral cats.

A web of one- and two-lane roads — most paved, some not — radiate from a square dominated by a statue of Robert E. Lee, the county's namesake.

Maurice Clemmons was born here in February 1972, during a period of tumult blamed to this day for the town's collapse. The year before, to protest discrimination, black residents staged a crippling boycott of white-owned businesses. Riots broke out, with homes and stores set afire and people shot at. A county judge almost ran down two black protesters with his car; when they urged his arrest, he pulled a pistol and ordered them from the courthouse.

The violence drove jobs away. The Coca-Cola bottling plant closed. So did the factory where Maurice Clemmons' father worked, making frames for automobile seats.

With Marianna offering so

“ He was determined to be successful. He was making up for lost time.”

CHRISCEDA CLEMMONS, AN AUNT

little, it's small wonder Joe Clemmons left for Washington.

Maurice Clemmons' mother, Dorthy Mae, was one of Joe's 20 siblings. She raised six kids, working two jobs. Looking to get out, she settled upon Little Rock, 85 miles west.

There, 16-year-old Maurice Clemmons embarked on a seven-month crime spree. He robbed a woman in a hotel parking lot, punching her in the face. He burglarized the home of a state trooper. He got arrested and expelled for bringing a pistol to his high school. Years later, Clemmons would write from prison that he "fell in with the wrong crowd" and "wanted to fit in and be accepted." He described his youth in rhyme: a "16-year-old misguided fool, whose own life he was unable to rule."

At 17, Clemmons was sentenced to 108 years in prison. To Clemmons' family, the sentence was outrageous. He was staring down time that seemed more suited to rape or murder.

In prison, Clemmons continued to find trouble: battery, sexual assault, theft, drugs, weapons. Most violations occurred early in his prison stint, says Pulaski County Prosecuting Attorney Larry Jegley, who reviewed Clemmons' correctional records. "They got him under control," Jegley says. "He



MIKE CARTER / THE SEATTLE TIMES

At left, Maurice Clemmons played in this Marianna, Ark., neighborhood 30 years ago. The area, in one of the poorest counties in America, is host to a patchwork of trim brick ramblers and dilapidated shacks. A Civil War cannon stands in the town square, right, which is bordered by empty storefronts and a few die-hard businesses.



PULASKI COUNTY CIRCUIT COURT / THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Nicole Smith and Clemmons, photographed on the day of their 2004 wedding. When Clemmons landed in trouble in Washington, Smith worked to secure his release from jail.

started to get it after a while."

After serving 11 years, Clemmons appealed for clemency to then-Gov. Mike Huckabee.

In his petition, Clemmons said there was "absolutely no excuse" for his criminal past. He came from a good Christian family and was raised better than that. He lamented the shame he had brought to his family's name. While he was in prison, the "angel of death" had visited his "dear sweet mother," Clemmons wrote. "I wasn't



MIKE SIEGEL / THE SEATTLE TIMES



MIKE SIEGEL / THE SEATTLE TIMES



ELLEN M. BANNER / THE SEATTLE TIMES

Clemmons started amassing property in the Tacoma area in 2006. Pictured from top to bottom are the houses he owned: on Asotin Street in Tacoma; on 132nd Street in Parkland; and on 131st Street in Parkland, the home in which he lived.

wanted to leave Arkansas for Washington, but Washington refused to take him unless he had a sponsor. Rickey Hinton, Clemmons' half brother, stepped into that role — and Washington signed off, even though Hinton was a felon.

An Arkansas parole form said Clemmons was to be released "only" to Washington state, where he had family and a job prospect.

Money, money, money

Employers don't line up for convicted felons who never finished high school. But by the spring of 2004, Clemmons had his first job — bounty hunter for Metro Bail

Bonds in Tacoma, tracking down criminals.

"I read him as a guy that was in prison most of his life, but he wasn't too bad of a guy," says Dave Regan, the company's owner.

Still, Regan let Clemmons go after a month or so. Clemmons was too aggressive, he says.

Clemmons' first place in Seattle was a Pioneer Square apartment he shared with Hinton and a white bulldog puppy. In June 2004, Clemmons married his girlfriend, Nicole Smith, a manicurist he'd met three years earlier in a Seattle nightclub. A graduate of West Seattle's Chief Sealth High School,

Smith had a teenage son, a young daughter and almost \$60,000 in debt, driving her to declare bankruptcy.

To his community corrections officer, Robert Martin, Clemmons talked of skipping from job to job, working as a plumber, pulling seats out of buses, recycling metal. By summer he had bought a van and was cleaning moss off roofs and leaves out of gutters. Then he landed a job at Nortrak, a Seattle rail-supply company. Clemmons was punctual and a good worker, the company reported.

Clemmons told Martin he hoped to buy a house soon. But he quit Nortrak after a

year, leaving in December 2005. He showed Martin a business card for a company he had started, Sea-Wash Pressure Washing and Landscaping. The card pictured a tractor in one corner, a palm tree in the other. "Residential, Commercial, All Cement, Gutters, Siding, Houses, Landscaping, Clean Ups and More." The company's Web site promised reliable service and precautions against misuse of customers' sensitive financial information.

In 2008, the company's third year, Clemmons reported grossing \$44,000.

"He was determined to be successful," says Chrisceda Clemmons, an aunt living in Seattle's Leschi neighborhood. "He was making up for lost time. He wanted to be a happy, successful person."

Chrisceda's husband, Michael Shantz, says: "He was an entrepreneur that I was in awe of."

In 2006, Clemmons began acquiring property in the Tacoma area, paying \$244,950 for a three-bedroom house in Parkland. In January 2008, he paid almost \$180,000 for a rundown house on 132nd Street, just blocks away. He planned to rent that home to family. Four months later he bought a third house, for \$265,000. His sister LaTanya moved in there.

When fire destroyed the house on 132nd, Clemmons hired Beach Wood Homes to construct a \$100,000 custom replacement. Insurance paid most the cost. "It seemed like Nicole was in charge and running the show," says Beach Wood owner Garrett Alwert. "She was picking out colors for carpet or countertops."

One subcontractor, Keith Bernasconi, talked with Clemmons while finishing the house's gutters. Clemmons told Bernasconi and his daughter, Melissa, they could relax in a small outbuilding on the same property. The place was decked out with a new pool table, black leather couches, a big-screen TV. "I was thinking, 'Wow, he's a high roller,'" Melissa says.

Since his release from prison, Clemmons held some legitimate jobs. But evidence now suggests he also may have committed a variety of crimes, all while evading arrest. Take the summer of 2004, for example, when he traveled to Little Rock to get married. Marion Humphrey, the judge who had urged Clemmons' release, officiated, reinforcing the sense of a new beginning. But just one month later, an armed robbery took place in a Little Rock hotel room. From the hotel registry and other evidence, it appears now that the robber was Clemmons.

Postal records link Clemmons to packages of marijuana shipped through the mail in 2005. He bears a striking resemblance to the sketch of a suspect in a series of armed robberies throughout the Puget Sound area between April 2008 and April 2009. He installed multiple surveillance cameras around his property. When sheriff's deputies searched his house last week, they found marijuana in an Igloo cooler.

Whatever the source of Clemmons' money, he appeared to hit financial difficulties last spring. In May, the first of six subcontractors filed liens for unpaid work on his custom house. In July, Clemmons began missing that house's monthly mortgage payments of \$1,100. By November, the bank issued notice that it planned to foreclose.

Family and friends

Every Memorial Day, the Clemmons family gathers for a reunion. Now scattered from Arkansas, they come from St. Louis and Chicago, Tacoma and Detroit.

They are a diverse group. Some have tangled with the law. Others have set down solid roots, with good kids and good careers in corrections, child care, health care, telecom.

Time and distance have not separated them. Growing up amid poverty and racial tension, the family members pull together, their

SEATTLE TIMES SPECIAL REPORT

CLEMMONS EXPLODED IN MAY, ASSAULTING DEPUTIES AND CALLING HIMSELF ‘THE BEAST.’
RELATIVES DESCRIBED A MAN IN A MENTAL TAILSPIN WHO FEARED A RETURN TO PRISON.

< Continued from previous page

views shaped by such influences as the 108-year sentence Maurice Clemmons once received.

“They grew up in a siege mentality of ‘us against them,’ ” says Michael Shantz, who is white. “The main contact with the white world is the police.... The family wouldn’t be here if they didn’t help each other.”

Some gave, and some received. Clemmons was known to offer his car to relatives who needed it. His wife complained that he handed out money even when they couldn’t pay their own bills. For some cousins, like Eddie Lee Davis and his brother Douglas, Clemmons put a roof over their heads, letting them live in one of his Tacoma-area houses.

Although parolees should avoid trouble, Clemmons kept company with ex-cons.

In 2005 the FBI suspected Clemmons was helping an old prison friend, Gerard Wells, now on the agency’s “Most Wanted” list. Clemmons told authorities he bought a plane ticket for Wells, who was accused of running an Arkansas auto-theft ring. Wells remains a fugitive.

Clemmons also re-established ties with Darcus Allen, who had been convicted of two murders in a liquor-store holdup and served time in prison with him. Earlier this year, Allen fled to Washington after being linked to a bank robbery in Little Rock.

Eddie Davis and another of Clemmons’ cousins, Joseph Pitts, have been convicted of drug charges.

On May 9, both were with Clemmons when 911 calls started coming in from Clemmons’ neighborhood.

Throwing softball-sized rocks, Clemmons had broken out windows in at least seven cars and three houses. When a Pierce County sheriff’s deputy responded, Davis and Pitts were outside the house. At that point, neither was a suspect. Yet when the deputy asked for Clemmons,

“ He listened and said, ‘I don’t want to go to the police, I don’t want to turn myself in, I don’t want to go back to prison.’ ”

BISHOP E. BERNARD JORDAN
On his meeting with Clemmons

Davis “stood defiantly in my way,” the deputy’s report says. The deputy stepped forward. Davis pushed. The deputy stood firm. And the fight was on.

Pitts jumped in, too. Then Clemmons came running out of the house, the deputy wrote. Clemmons clenched his fist and landed three blows to the deputy’s head. Another deputy arrived, and he, too, was under attack. It wasn’t until the second deputy drew his gun that the fighting stopped.

Davis and Pitts both wound up being charged with assault. Each pleaded guilty and was sentenced to jail.

Clemmons was charged with seven felony counts of assault and malicious mischief.

Stand by your man

By last spring, Clemmons and Nicole Smith had been married for nearly five years.

In the early morning hours of May 11, the Pierce County Sheriff’s Department was summoned once again to the couple’s home.

Smith told sheriff’s deputies that Clemmons had molested her daughter, now 12.

At least that’s what Smith said at first. Soon after, she took it back, refusing to cooperate with investigators, sheriff’s reports say.

Smith didn’t want deputies to take photos inside the family’s house. She didn’t want to take her daughter to a children’s advocacy center for an exam, the reports say. She relented only after a relative chastised her, saying she needed to “get her priorities straight.”

When Smith backtracked and insisted that no rape had occurred, an officer told her she could be arrested for making a false report. Smith replied that she would “take the rap,” a sheriff’s report says.



PIERCE COUNTY SHERIFF’S DEPARTMENT

Pierce County deputies used two sets of handcuffs to restrain Clemmons after he assaulted a neighbor and a deputy during a rampage in his neighborhood in May. Two days later, officers were back, responding to a call about an alleged rape at Clemmons’ house.

Two months later, in July, Clemmons was arrested and charged with second-degree child rape — the eighth felony charge filed against him this year. Because those run-ins appeared to violate his parole in Arkansas, he also was accused of being a fugitive from justice from that state.

If convicted of the rape charge, Clemmons likely was facing a “third strike” and a life sentence.

On the eight felony charges, Clemmons’ bail was set at \$190,000.

On the fugitive warrant, he was denied any bail at all.

Still, Smith set out to secure his release. She wrote to Stephen Morley, a North Little Rock attorney. Morley, in turn, wrote to Arkansas parole administrators, asking them to lift their state’s fugitive warrant. Smith says even have made a personal appeal. One document says she talked with G. David Guntharp, director of the Arkansas Department of Community Correction.

Guntharp has said he does not recall talking with Clemmons’ family. But whatever the state’s reason, corrections officials in Arkansas rescinded their no-bail warrant on Clemmons — infuriating their Washington counterparts, who were desperate to keep Clemmons behind bars.

With her husband’s release now possible, Smith put up the family’s home as collateral to secure a \$190,000 bond.

Clemmons was released from the Pierce County Jail on Nov. 23.

“ He listened and said, ‘I don’t want to go to the police, I don’t want to turn myself in, I don’t want to go back to prison.’ ”

‘Lord Jesus Christ’

Before last spring, accounts of Clemmons’ criminal behavior centered on violence, money, street reputation. But then a new element surfaced: madness.

When Clemmons was arrested for assaulting the sheriff’s deputy, he told the officer: “Here’s what I want your report to say. President Obama. He’s my brother.” The officer thought maybe Clemmons was talking emotional kinship. But then Clemmons continued: “Many white people will be killed” if they do not right their ways. Clemmons called himself “the beast.”

Clemmons’ relatives described a man suffering a mental breakdown. Clemmons said he was the Messiah. That Nicole was Eve. That he could fly. That he was going to save the world. That his family needed to undress, all of them together, at 4 in the morning — “on the dot,” because that was “God’s number.”

Last summer Clemmons

In his May spree, Clemmons also broke windows in at least seven cars and three houses in his neighborhood.



PIERCE COUNTY SHERIFF’S DEPARTMENT



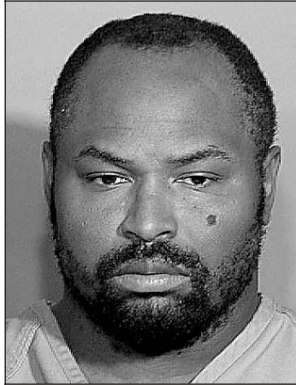
ZOE MINISTRIES

Clemmons, right, traveled to New York in June to speak with Bishop E. Bernard Jordan. After a companion introduced Clemmons as Jesus Christ, Jordan said: “If there are some mental problems, then you need to find an institution.”

WEB EXTRA
Photos, video online
See a gallery and a video clip of Clemmons speaking with Zoe Ministries Bishop E. Bernard Jordan at seattletimes.com



CRIME STOPPERS



PIERCE COUNTY SHERIFF

took a road trip, coast to coast, to visit Bishop E. Bernard Jordan’s Zoe Ministries church in New York City. Video captured Clemmons’ companion as he introduced Clemmons to the minister as Jesus Christ. “We don’t toler-

A sketch of the suspect in a series of armed robberies starting in April 2008. A corrections officer noted the resemblance to Clemmons, right.



JOE BARRENTINE / THE NEWS TRIBUNE

Police gather at Forza Coffee in Parkland after Clemmons killed four officers who were at a table inside, drinking coffee and working on their laptops.

ate stupidity,” Jordan told Clemmons’ companion. “If there are some mental problems, then you need to find an institution.”

Jordan asked what brought Clemmons to New York. “God told me to come,” he recalls Clemmons replying. “The police have been knocking on my door, and I’ve been running ever since.”

In New York, Clemmons donated about \$1,500 to the church. Jordan says that after Clemmons returned to Washington, the two spoke on the phone. The minister urged Clemmons to turn himself in, to get mental help. “He listened and said, ‘I don’t want to go to the police, I don’t want to turn myself in, I don’t want to go back to prison.’ ”

Clemmons’ aunt Chrisceda says she called Maurice during the summer, and his cousin Eddie Davis answered the phone. “He said, ‘Aunt C, you know that Maurice is your lord savior Jesus Christ.’ ”

“It was kind of like a cult thing, as far as I can tell,” Chrisceda says. “He was believing what Maurice was telling him, that he was God. Eddie was going along with Maurice’s program, as crazy as it was.”

Clemmons sought help from Timothy Bean, a registered counselor in Lakewood. “Maurice Clemmons is not a monster,” Bean says. “He’s a normal man who loves his family and did well in life until he had a crisis.” Clemmons feared a return to prison, based on all he had done in May. Bean described Clemmons’ state as “sitting on the edge of an abyss.”

“It was a spiritual crisis for him,” Bean says, one Clemmons coped with through prayer, meditation, exercise and sporadic counseling sessions. “He’s trying to solve the hole within him — the great injustice that occurred when he was 16 years old. All his choices led him back to solve that crisis.”

When Clemmons was booked on the child-rape charge, he gave his middle name as “The Lord Jesus Christ.” When the officer refused to write that down, Clemmons became angry, saying the officer was a non-believer.

In October, two Western State Hospital psychologists interviewed Clemmons at the Pierce County Jail to determine if he was mentally fit to stand trial. Asked if he thought about hurting others, he said: “Sometimes I think about it ... a person gets enough ... everybody thinks the police can’t lie.”

Clemmons recounted hallucinating about “people drinking blood and people eating babies,” but said those visions had passed. The psychologists concluded that Clemmons’ insight was “adequate.” His capacity for abstract thought? “Adequate.” They found “no evi-

SEATTLE TIMES SPECIAL REPORT



PETER HALEY / THE NEWS TRIBUNE

Clemmons was shot and killed by a Seattle police officer early Tuesday. A staff member of the King County Medical Examiner’s Office, inside an ambulance near the scene, takes photographs of his body.

< Continued from previous page

dence of a mental disorder” at the time. They concluded he could assist in his defense and was fit for trial.

‘What’s our best move?’

On Nov. 26, three days after his release, Clemmons celebrated Thanksgiving with family and friends in the small town of Pacific.

A relative said Clemmons told the gathering that he planned to kill cops, that he planned to kill children at a school, that he planned to kill as many people as he could at an intersection.

Three days later, on Sunday morning, Clemmons walked into a Parkland coffee shop near his home. He approached the counter and, without saying a word, flashed a gun. He turned and began shooting at four Lakewood po-

lice officers drinking coffee and working on their laptops. One officer managed to return fire, wounding Clemmons.

All four officers were killed: Sgt. Mark Renninger and officers Tina Griswold, Ronald Owens and Gregory Richards.

Within hours, police say, several family members came to Clemmons’ aid, treating his wound, giving him cash, driving him to Seattle.

On his way north, Clemmons called his Aunt Chrisceda, saying he was wounded and wanted to come to her Leschi home.

When Chrisceda was 13, she baby-sat for Clemmons. “I have a long relationship with Maurice,” she said. “He has helped our family enormously. He is not a crazy monster. He developed a mental illness in May, some kind of nervous breakdown that made him ex-

tremely paranoid.”

Chrisceda’s husband, Michael Shantz, says: “You don’t have to look too far to see what he has endured in his life. I was very supportive of him because I felt he deserved it. I felt convinced not that he was a well person, but that he deserved some reciprocal generosity.”

But when Clemmons called that day, Shantz and his wife let that all go.

“Our first concern was for our family,” Shantz says. “Our next concern was for loss of life. He told Chrisceda that he wasn’t going to go down, that he was going to kill more people. Our concern was, how many people are going to die and what’s our best move?”

“How do we avoid anyone else getting killed, including Maurice?”

The couple told Clemmons not to come to their house. Then they went to police.

How this story was reported and written

The story was reported by staff writers Ken Armstrong; Sanjay Bhatt; Nicole Brodeur; Jack Broom; Charles Brown; Jim Brunner; Mike Carter in Marianna and Little Rock, Ark.; Christine Clarridge; Sara Jean Green; Susan Kelleher; Jonathan Martin; Justin Mayo; Steve Miletich; Maureen O’Hagan; Nick Perry; Eric Pryne; Jennifer Sullivan; Craig Welch; Christine Willmsen; and news researchers Gene Balk, David Turim and Miyoko Wolf. Armstrong and O’Hagan were the lead writers.

Five other family members have been charged with helping Clemmons after the shootings. They include Eddie Davis, the cousin who tried to stop a sheriff’s deputy from arresting Clemmons, and Rickey Hinton, the half-brother who sponsored Clemmons when he moved here on parole.

Carol Henderson, Clemmons’ cousin in Renton, is trying to find lawyers for her relatives who have been charged. She has made Clemmons’ funeral arrangements.

Whatever she’s suffering, she cannot share. “I can’t personally mourn my loss openly at work, because I’m going to be looked at,” she says. Instead she mourns in private.

Chrisceda Clemmons recognizes the pain of last week’s events extends beyond the families of Maurice Clemmons and of the four slain police officers.

“The ripple effect is enormous,” she says. “It’s just incredible what this has done to our family and this whole community.”

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