

World and Nation

SHOE

by Jeff MacNelly



FBI will hold press meeting to explain agent's death

Associated Press

PHOENIX — Authorities Sunday investigated the shooting of the first woman FBI agent to die on duty, as the FBI declined comment on a city police report that she was mistakenly shot by two fellow agents.

Special Agent Robin L. Ahrens, 33, died early Saturday after being shot in the hand, arm and eye late Friday as about a dozen FBI agents arrested a robbery suspect at an apartment complex.

Phoenix Police Chief Ruben Ortega said Ahrens was shot by two agents who mistook her for the robbery suspect's girlfriend.

Ahrens' death will be explained at a news conference that probably will be held Thursday, said FBI

agent Herb Hawkins.

"We know what happened," Hawkins said, adding that a bureau investigation is expected to be finished Tuesday. "I just am not permitted to tell you what happened until this inquiry is over."

Added FBI spokesman James Bolenbach, "The problem is that there were lots of shots fired."

Ahrens, a native of St. Paul, Minn., joined the FBI in November 1984 and was sent to Phoenix as her first assignment. A funeral for her was set for Wednesday in Hudson, Wis., where her parents live, said Hawkins.

She was the first female agent to die on the job since women joined the FBI in 1972, and she was the

first agent killed since 1979, said FBI spokesman Thomas J. Deakin in Washington, D.C. He estimated there are 500 to 600 female agents out of a total of 8,900.

FBI spokesman Jack Smythe said Saturday he "cannot comment and will not" comment on whether Ahrens was shot by her other agents until an investigation was completed.

A statement released by Hawkins on Sunday morning said the FBI investigation was continuing, and police Sgt. Tony Kruczynski said a city investigation also was under way. "We've still got detectives working on it now," Kruczynski said.

Ahrens died almost seven hours after FBI agents arrested Kenneth Don Barrett, 27.

Guards line route of funeral for victim of police shooting

Associated Press

ASHBURN, Ga. — Ashburn's black community gathered amid tight security and refrains of hymns Sunday to bury a black man whose shooting death by police touched off a violent demonstration and several days of racial tension.

State patrol officers lined the funeral route and stood outside the new Mount Olive Baptist Church, where nearly 300 people attended services for Robert L. Wright.

About 30 extra law enforcement officers waited at the Turner County Sheriff's Department in case trouble developed, but the southern Georgia town of 4,500 people, about evenly split between whites and blacks, was calm.

The Rev. Fred Taylor of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference told mourners that the "ultimate question" blacks in Ashburn face is how to "prevent or lessen the chance of the same thing happening again."

Taylor, bearing a message from SCLC President Joseph Lowery, said, "It is very tragic. We live in a world where people resolve human conflict with the barrel of a gun."

Wright, 22, was killed by a white city police officer a week ago after he bolted from a probation revocation hearing at the Turner County court-

house. Sheriff Lamar Whiddon and Ashburn police officer Scotty Ireland chased Wright into an alley, where he was shot in the back.

Whiddon said he directed Ireland to fire because he considered Wright dangerous, even though he was not armed.

His death touched off an hour-long demonstration by 300 to 500 mostly young blacks, some of whom hurled rocks and bottles through shop windows and vandalized two stores. Racial tension was high for several days after that.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People called a community meeting Tuesday night at which black leaders urged calm. And NAACP regional Director Earl Shinhoster met Wednesday with Gov. Joe Frank Harris' chief executive officer, Tom Perdue, to discuss problems in the town.

Wright's death also prompted state authorities to send patrol officers into the community to prevent further violence.

Earl Shinhoster, regional director of the NAACP, on Sunday said Ashburn blacks are "still very tense and very concerned" about the death of Wright. But he said the community "intends to wait for justice."

Catholic bishops issue new pastoral letter on economy

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Unfazed by conservative critics, Roman Catholic bishops issued a strong new draft of their pastoral letter on the economy Sunday, calling poverty amid America's riches a "social and moral scandal."

The letter, aimed at national policymakers as well as the nation's 52 million Catholics, calls for basic policy changes, including government job programs and defense spending cuts opposed by President Reagan.

About 300 church leaders will discuss the new text at next month's annual meeting of

the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, with a final vote not due until November 1986.

The first draft, released just after the 1984 election, was widely described as mirroring many of the economic "fairness issues" that Democratic candidate Walter Mondale used against Reagan.

Administration officials have said little publicly about the letter, but their conservative allies blasted it as naive and misguided.

The head of the five-man drafting committee, Archbishop Rembert Weakland of Milwaukee, noted "the richness" of response to

the first version and said in releasing the new draft: "We do not back away from our strong conviction that more can and must be done to fight poverty and unemployment."

The document has been shortened by 20 percent — to 106 pages despite addition of a new section calling for help for family farms — in response to complaints about length, Weakland said. But he also said bishops have generally "affirmed and supported the basic concepts and the thrust of the first draft."

In its new form, the letter declares that:

- Having a job with a fair wage isn't just a goal but a basic right, and the current unem-

ployment levels that government officials brag about are "neither inevitable nor morally acceptable."

• "Extreme inequalities of income and consumption," which are obvious among individual Americans as well as American and foreign nations, are morally "appalling" and threaten world order.

• "Some elements of the military budget are both wasteful and dangerous for world peace. Careful reductions should be made... to free up funds for social and economic reforms."

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