# Possible break in Garfield Ridge robberies

## Residents seek answers at packed 'watch' meeting

**By Tim Hadac**

Hours after more than 125 people packed a Garfield Ridge Neighborhood Watch meeting Monday night—seeking answers to two recent armed robberies of local women, one a grandmother--the group announced that a "person of interest" has been arrested in connection with the crimes.

Further, the GRNW relayed a message they said was from Chicago Lawn (8th) District Police Commander Ronald Pontecore: that he is "totally committed" to devoting extra CPD resources to the west end of the district, including Garfield Ridge.

"We need to make sure that these types of crimes don't happen in our neighborhood," 23rd Ward Ald. Silvana Tabares—herself a Garfield Ridge resident--said at the GRNW meeting, held at the headquarters of the Croatian Radio Club, Archer and Nordica.

Tabares said she has been working with Pontecore on ideas to thwart criminals—including surveillance cameras at hotspots, such as near the Walgreens at Archer and Harlem and the CTA/ Pace bus turnaround at Archer and Neva.

Tabares also said cameras may be installed at 53rd and Harlem, as well as along 51st Street—and that "barriers" could be installed on 51st Street. Both are known to be used by burglars and other criminals who want to make a quick escape from the neighborhood because they offer easy access to Interstate 55.

The two robberies were reported exclusively in last week's Southwest News-Herald.

• A 61-year-old Garfield Ridge grandmother was robbed at gunpoint as she stood on the front porch of her home in the 5200 block of South Newland at 12:33 a.m. Saturday, Aug. 11.

The victim told police she had just gotten out of her vehicle and walked up the porch steps to enter her home, when a man ran up behind her and snatched away her Coach purse and laptop computer.

When the victim began screaming, the bandit said, "Shut up, b~tch," and pulled a pistol and fired one shot at her. It missed and hit a window.

The robber then ran away north on Newland, east on 52nd Street and then north

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Twenty-third Ward Ald. Silvana Tabares (right) and GRNW President Al Cacciottolo (left) listen to Garfield Ridge resident Lillian O'Donnell after Monday night's meeting.
– Southwest News-Herald photo by Tim Hadac

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through an alley.

The gunman was described as a black man age 18-21, about 5-foot-8 and 160 pounds, with a dark complexion. He wore a black hoody with white stripes and shiny black pants.

In a post on social media, the victim said she "was returning from the hospital after being with my son and daughter-in-law for the birth of my granddaughter."

Police recovered a shell casing on the victim's front lawn.

She said the because of the horrifying experience, "A very happy event in my life turned tragic…and now my life will never be the same."

• A 35-year-old Garfield Ridge woman was robbed at gunpoint in her garage near 51st and Newcastle, at about 2:20 a.m. Thursday, Aug. 9.

The victim said she had just pulled her car into the garage, but that the overhead door would not close.

When she got out of her car to investigate and step outside the garage, a man suddenly appeared and thrust a gun into her stomach. He pushed her back into the garage and exclaimed, "If you say a word or make a noise, I'll f~cking kill you!"

The gunman and an accomplice ordered the victim to surrender her purse and other valuables, which she did. One of the two also ripped a necklace with a cross off her neck.

The victim reported that when she told the gunman to take her car or any materials valuables she had on her, he said, "B~tch, I told you to shut up!"

The robbers then ran away towards 51st Street, and the victim ran inside her house to alert her husband.

The bandits were described as black men age 20-25, about 5-foot-10 with medium complexions.

Shortly after police arrived, they found the victim's purse with credit cards inside. Missing were a wedding and engagement ring and about $200 cash.

The victim also turned to Facebook to share her experience and said the harrowing ordeal left her unable to sleep or be alone in the house.