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SUNDAY

ONLINE <http://www.timesdispatch.com>

Today's weather
Mostly cloudy.
High 66.
Low 48. /B12

INSIDE



Giants win opener in World Series

Barry Bonds homers in his first Series at-bat, and San Francisco edges Anaheim 4-3 in Game 1.

Sports /D1

College football

No. 3 Va. Tech	35
Rutgers	14
Virginia	37
UNC	27
Richmond	26
JMU	0
Arizona St.	45
No. 6 Oregon	42

A tourist gem, a terrorist base

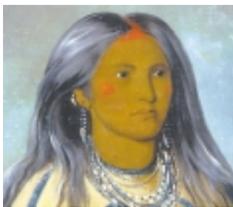
The Sept. 11 terrorists chose to make their final plans in a small resort city in Spain, authorities say.

World /A10

Road referendums

What highways will be built if voters approve sales-tax increases in Northern Virginia and Hampton Roads?

Metro /B4



Indian gallery

George Catlin's paintings at the Smithsonian.

Arts /H1

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COMING

TOMORROW Slowpokes

Street Beat reports life is stop-and-go in the Powhite Parkway's fast lane.

Metro

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ASHLAND SHOOTING

- MAN, 37, SHOT ONCE OUTSIDE RESTAURANT, UNDERGOES SURGERY AT MCV
- POLICE TREAT SHOOTING AS POSSIBLE SNIPER ATTACK, SHUT DOWN MAIN ROADS



DEAN HOFFMEYER/TIMES-DISPATCH

Hanover County and Henrico County authorities stand watch at the Ponderosa Steak House, where a man was shot while returning to his car after eating in the restaurant.

Traveler and wife were returning to car in Ponderosa lot near I-95

BY MARK HOLMBERG, PAUL BRADLEY AND REX BOWMAN
TIMES-DISPATCH STAFF WRITERS

A man was shot in a restaurant parking lot last night near Interstate 95 in Ashland, sparking fears that the sniper who has terrorized the Washington area for nearly three weeks has moved farther south.

Police quickly descended on the area and began closing certain roads around the Ponderosa Steak House on state Route 54 just off Exit 92 of I-95. Three hours later, a limited amount of traffic was being allowed through.

"Right now, we can't confirm that it is related to the sniper shootings, but we are working it as if it were," said Doug Goodman, a spokesman for the Hanover County Sheriff's Office.

The 37-year-old victim's identity was not immediately available, but Ashland Police Chief Ric Pleasants said the man was taken to Medical College of Virginia Hospitals in Richmond with a single gunshot wound to the lower abdomen.

The man was conscious and talking at the time he was transported, and he was able to speak with doctors before surgery, Pleasants said.

He arrived at MCV about 8:30 by ambulance, said Pam Lepley, a hospital spokeswoman. He was listed in critical condition after he came out of surgery shortly after midnight, Lepley said.

The victim was leaving the restaurant and walking to his car with his wife when the shooting occurred at 7:59 p.m., Pleasants said.

Pleasants said they were travelers. The two were near a rear corner of the building and were approaching their car in the back parking lot when the man was struck in the abdomen and fell to his knees, Pleasants said.

"She did not see anything," Pleasants said of the victim's wife. "She did not think she heard a shot."

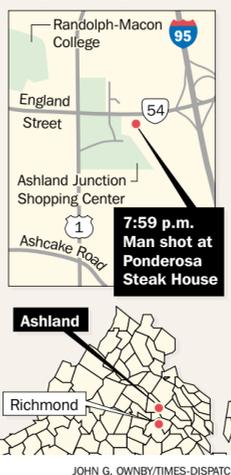
Other witnesses, though, reported hearing a single shot, Pleasants said.

At least one person who works at a nearby fast-food restaurant said the shooter seemed to be in a wooded area behind the Ponderosa's rear parking lot.

The restaurant is about 300

Ashland shooting

The shooting of a 37-year-old man at an Ashland restaurant last night was being investigated as a possible sniper attack.



JOHN G. OWENBY/TIMES-DISPATCH

yards west of I-95's Exit 92 interchange on the south side of state Route 54. The steak house is in a row of businesses that also includes two fast-food restaurants.

All three restaurants are bordered by I-95.

SEE SHOOTING, PAGE A8 ▶

All-too-familiar scenes of horror, frustration moved closer last night

BY KIRAN KRISHNAMURTHY AND MARK HOLMBERG
TIMES-DISPATCH STAFF WRITERS

The terror that has gripped the Washington area came to Ashland last night.

Flashing emergency lights, blocked roads and police checking white vans signaled what was flashed to the world in minutes — that a fast-food and gas station strip almost two hours south of Washington could be the latest location for an assailant who has killed nine.

Witnesses told how the drama unfolded.

Raymond A. Loving, a clerk at the Texaco station east of the Ponderosa Steak House on state Route 54, said he was working when a woman rushed into the business and said someone had been shot. She asked Loving to dial 911.

"She told me that she heard a loud sound like a car backfiring. She heard a woman scream that a man had been shot."

Mike Alsop said he and his wife, Bobbie, were returning from shopping at Virginia Center Commons when police swarmed a white box truck on the inside

eastbound lane of Route 54. "The police came with their guns drawn and took the guy out of the truck and had him face down on the road. They told us to get back," Alsop said.

Alsop said police searched the truck with dogs. That may have been the same Ford box truck with a roll-up door that was driven by Rocky Taylor of Hanover County and was stopped by police. Taylor was right behind his wife, Cheryl, who was driving a white Ford van with no windows.

They had just finished shopping at a Food Lion and were driving up U.S. 1 when the shooting occurred. They turned onto Route 54, were stopped and were quickly surrounded by police.

"It wasn't a good feeling," Rocky Taylor said. "Flashlights staring you in the face, and you see the barrel of a gun."

Cheryl Taylor's van is the one that viewers across the country saw on television last night.

"It was scary at first, but we were glad we knew they had to do their job," Cheryl Taylor said.

Rocky Taylor added that he uses his box truck to haul pro-

SEE ASHLAND, PAGE A8 ▶

Worst budget cuts still to come

Major reductions are necessary to cope with \$2 billion shortfall

BY MICHAEL HARDY AND JEFF E. SCHAPIRO
TIMES-DISPATCH STAFF WRITERS

Gov. Mark R. Warner didn't shrink from slicing up a business rival or two in amassing his high-tech fortune, but nothing prepared him for the bloody butchery of budget-balancing.

And the politically charged process promises to become even messier for the Democratic governor and the Republican-dominated General Assembly in the election year ahead.

Warner's grim first round — layoffs and cuts totaling \$858 million — is little more than a tourniquet for the two-year budget. It still faces a roughly \$2 billion shortfall after being depleted earlier by \$3.8 billion

because of a stubborn economic contraction.

"This budget isn't balanced yet," Secretary of Finance John M. Bennett said last week. "There's something on just about every page that I wince at. ... It's not going to be any fun."

In one sense, Warner's budget-cutting by executive fiat last week may be mild. The much harder cuts that he will announce by Dec. 20 could hit previously exempted areas, ranging from aid to public schools to the Medicaid health-care program for the poor and elderly.

Any reductions will further

squeeze local governments, which, for example, already bear the burden of the state's chronic underfunding of schools. A legislative study found that the state would have to ante up an extra \$1 billion to fulfill its current obligations.

Bennett also warned that programs that escaped with relatively minor cuts in the first round might be on the chopping block again for round two.

Additionally, the governor's promised consolidation or elimination of

SEE BUDGET, PAGE A15 ▶

Tight times

■ **Inside:** DMV plans to close 12 offices, including two in the Richmond area.

Page A14.

■ **Coming Tuesday:** Richmond-area governments assess the impact of state budget cuts.