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# Teen arrested near fatal shooting

## Friends mourn South End man

By **Matt Rocheleau** | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT    SEPTEMBER 06, 2011

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**Denni Saucedo (left) and Natalia Aponte wrote on a flag that was part of a memorial to Alex Sierra in the South End.**

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**A 16-year-old was arrested and charged with illegal possession of a gun Saturday night, shortly after a man was fatally shot nearby in the South End.**

**The 16-year-old was among four people in a vehicle that officers said they stopped about a mile from the scene because it fit the description of a vehicle seen leaving the shooting.**

**No arrests have been made in the homicide, but police have brought in “several people” for questioning, Boston police spokesman James Kenneally said yesterday.**

**About 7:20 p.m. Saturday, police found the victim, whom they declined to identify, with multiple gunshot wounds inside El Barberito’s Unisex hair salon on Tremont and West Brookline streets. Yesterday, Kenneally said the victim, 18, had been shot outside the salon.**

**In a phone interview last night, Aida Sierra said the victim was her nephew, Alex Sierra.**

“I’m too sad to talk right now,” she said.

Tearful friends who gathered yesterday at the scene, where a memorial had been created, described Alex Sierra as a hardworking student, dedicated to making his family proud of him.

Two men at his family’s home on the same block said relatives did not want to speak.

The vehicle the 16-year-old was in was stopped by police on Annunciation Road. As officers approached, two people ran from the gold-colored vehicle and were apprehended, police said.

During the chase, the 16-year-old discarded a gun, which police said they recovered. He was charged with illegal gun and ammunition possession.

Jake Wark, spokesman at the district attorney’s office, referred media inquiries to police.

Police officers yesterday spoke with people around the memorial seeking witnesses or those who knew the victim.

At the memorial, friends looked at photos posted on a brick wall outside the salon and read personal messages to Sierra. Rosary beads hung on the wall along with a Puerto Rican flag. The flag and the wall were covered with marker-inscribed quotes and farewell messages to the young man many called “Blanco.” Dozens of candles, several stuffed animals and a few liquor bottles lined the sidewalk.

Among the messages on the flag was one written in Spanish that translated to: “This is not the end of it.”

Natalia Aponte, 19, remembered the neighbor and friend she said she had known since childhood.

“He was a great kid, funny,” she said. “The person I never thought this would happen to was him.”

On Saturday, after learning of the shooting, she walked from her home to the scene.

“I looked in through the window,” she recalled, pausing to catch her breath as tears streamed down her face. She said she saw him on the floor.

Grieving beside Aponte was a former South Boston High School classmate of Sierra’s. Denni Saucedo, 20, said Sierra graduated in 2010 and was studying at a Boston area college. She said he was known by high school teachers as a dedicated student.

“I remember talking to him one time and he told me his ultimate goal was to make his family proud,” she said.

South Boston resident and Puerto Rico native Pablo Rodriguez, 60, described himself as a longtime friend

of the victim's parents. "He was a good, kind man," he said of Sierra.

Standing on a block nearby, a 26-year-old South End resident who declined to be named said, "He was waiting for a haircut at the wrong place at the wrong time. It wasn't meant for him."

Employees at the hair salon, which opened early yesterday afternoon, declined to speak.

Friends said the victim lived with his parents, who once ran a travel agency nearby.

While some residents said the shooting did not surprise them, others were alarmed.

"There hasn't been anything like this in a long time," said Guale Valdez, 54, who has lived in the South End for about 15 years. "The South End used to be a tough place a long time ago."

Police urged anyone with information to call the homicide unit at 617-343-4470, or anonymously via the CrimeStoppers Tip Line at 1-800-494-TIPS.

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