

OFF-DUTY OFFICER SLAIN IN BROOKLYN

By Lindsey Gruson

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A 42-year-old off-duty police officer was fatally shot early yesterday on a Brooklyn street after he intervened in a dispute between a man and a woman, the police said.

The officer, James Whittington, was shot three times a few minutes after midnight in front of 340 Dumont Avenue in the Brownsville section, said John Clifford, a spokesman for the Police Department.

The officer was taken to Brookdale Hospital, where he was pronounced dead at 1:20 A.M.

Officer Whittington, who lived in the Canarsie section of Brooklyn, was socializing in a nearby barber shop when he was told that a man with a gun was fighting with a woman outside, Deputy Inspector Robert Burke said.

Officer Whittington confronted the man, who started running away, the police said. The officer gave chase in his car and overtook the gunman in front of a housing project on Dumont Avenue. Found by Housing Officer

There was a brief struggle, Inspector Burke said, and the gunman fired three shots. Two bullets struck Officer Whittington in the face, and one lodged in his right shoulder. A housing police officer found him lying on the street and took him to the hospital.

Inspector Burke said that the police had recovered a bullet, but that it was too mangled to identify easily the type of gun used. Officer Whittington's revolver, which had been drawn but not fired, was found at the scene.

The police said they did not have a description of the gunman, and had not identified the woman in the dispute. Several witnesses were being questioned yesterday at the 73d Precinct station house.

Officer Whittington, who was married and the father of two daughters, was assigned to the Brooklyn North Field Internal Affairs Unit.

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