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Wounded Douglas County deputy dies

By [Mary Schenk](#)

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Long before television glamorized crime scene investigating, Tommy Martin was picking up clues at the scenes of horrific crimes using only his five senses.

The affable and professional law enforcement man died at 11:30 p.m. Tuesday at Carle Foundation Hospital in Urbana, after being shot almost a month ago by two men police say were on a multicounty crime spree.

Douglas County State's Attorney Kevin Nolan said this morning he will file murder charges today against William B. Thompson, 26, and Yusef Kareem Brown, 23, both of Chicago. He has also begun research into whether he'll seek the death penalty for the men.

"I'm researching the state rules on capital litigation. I'm digging up the treasurer's forms for accessing the trial litigation fund. I'm doing due diligence. I haven't made a final decision. I expect to make those decisions later this week," Nolan said.

"Tommy was an excellent co-worker. Our thoughts and prayers are with the Martin family right now," Nolan added.

Mr. Martin, also known to friends as "T.K.," had been the chief deputy for the Douglas County sheriff's office, under longtime friend Charlie McGrew.

Both McGrew and Mr. Martin were retired from the Illinois State Police, where Mr. Martin worked as a crime scene investigator and a supervisor to other crime scene technicians from 1978 to 2002. When McGrew was elected sheriff in November 2004, he brought Mr. Martin in as his chief deputy.

"The entire law community is saddened by the passing of Chief Deputy Tommy Martin. He spent his whole career in law enforcement and has many friends in the law enforcement community," said Sgt. Bill Emery, spokesman for the state police post at Pesotum, which spear-headed the investigation into his shooting. "We are there in support of his family and for his department. We have him and his family in our thoughts and prayers."

"It's a loss of a good friend and a great guy. That's not something you can replace on a personal level," said Mike Metzler, retired head of investigations for Urbana police.

"On a professional basis, law enforcement has lost a tremendous resource, a valuable colleague and somebody who won't soon be replaced for his experience, and for his personality, the way he was able to communicate with the public and fellow officers. He's going to be sorely missed," Metzler said.

Mike Robb, also retired from the state police where he worked as a detective, said he considered himself lucky to work with Martin.

"It seemed like every time we went to a crime scene, it got more complicated and we were asking Tommy to analyze and interpret more complex and challenging physical evidence. And each and every time, he just smiled and calmly went about proving not only what a professional he was, but just how ... smart he was, too," Robb said.

"On a personal level, I don't believe I ever met anyone who didn't like and respect him. Tommy Martin was a friend of anyone who knew him or worked with him," Robb said.

University of Illinois Police Chief Krystal Fitzpatrick said she and her late husband, Tim Fitzpatrick, who also had been a detective for the Urbana police for many years, knew Mr. Martin through their jobs.

"His skills were impressive but it was his caring for others and the profession I always remember. Tom would give 110 percent in support of an investigation and help us stay focused when we needed it most. Tommy Martin was not only a colleague but a friend and the best kind of friend anyone could have," Fitzpatrick said.

Funeral arrangements for Mr. Martin, the father of two children, are incomplete at the Hilligoss-Shrader Funeral Home in Tuscola.

Mr. Martin had been at Carle Foundation Hospital since June 21, when he was shot in the face and chest on the Hayes Road, south of Pesotum. He was looking for two men wanted in connection with a home invasion that had occurred about 10:38 a.m. at a home in rural Camargo.

Brown and Thompson are accused of having tied up Ryan Riddell and Jeremy Shunk and a woman at Riddell's home just south of Villa Grove. Police say the accused then stole their money and put Shunk in the trunk of a car they had stolen from Chicago. The owner of that stolen car was found dead later that night in his home on Chicago's South Side. He had been fatally stabbed.

They then left Riddell's home in Riddell's pickup truck and the van of the woman who had come to his home to deliver Cardinals baseball tickets to him, police said.

Mr. Martin had not gotten out of his car when he saw the two vehicles. One of the men approached him and opened fire, hitting him in the face and chest. He was able to radio for help.

Authorities said Thompson then jumped into the van with Brown, abandoning Riddell's truck nearby. They then led police on a chase at up to 100 mph, firing at police as they headed south on Interstate 57. They exited the interstate at Arcola, heading west on Illinois 133 and crashing as they crossed the railroad tracks just east of U.S. 45.

Thompson then bailed out of the van and ran into the nearby First Mid-Illinois Bank and Trust, where he demanded cash from the bank employees and took some of them hostage, police said.

Police immediately pulled Brown from the van and arrested him. They then cleared the area of citizens and began negotiating with Thompson, who remained inside the bank about seven hours.

The last of the hostages was released about 6:35 p.m., physically unharmed.

Before today, Thompson and Brown had been charged with attempted murder, aggravated discharge of a firearm, home invasion, aggravated kidnapping, armed robbery, aggravated unlawful restraint, aggravated vehicular hijacking, unlawful possession of a weapon, aggravated fleeing, and unlawful possession of a converted vehicle.

They remain in the Douglas County Jail in Tuscola.

News-Gazette staff writer Steve Bauer contributed to this report.

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