

# Cannabis Store Worker Shot in Armed Robbery

## INCIDENT FACTS

**REPORT #:** 71-233-2023s

**REPORT DATE:** February 13, 2023

**INCIDENT DATE:** March 19, 2022

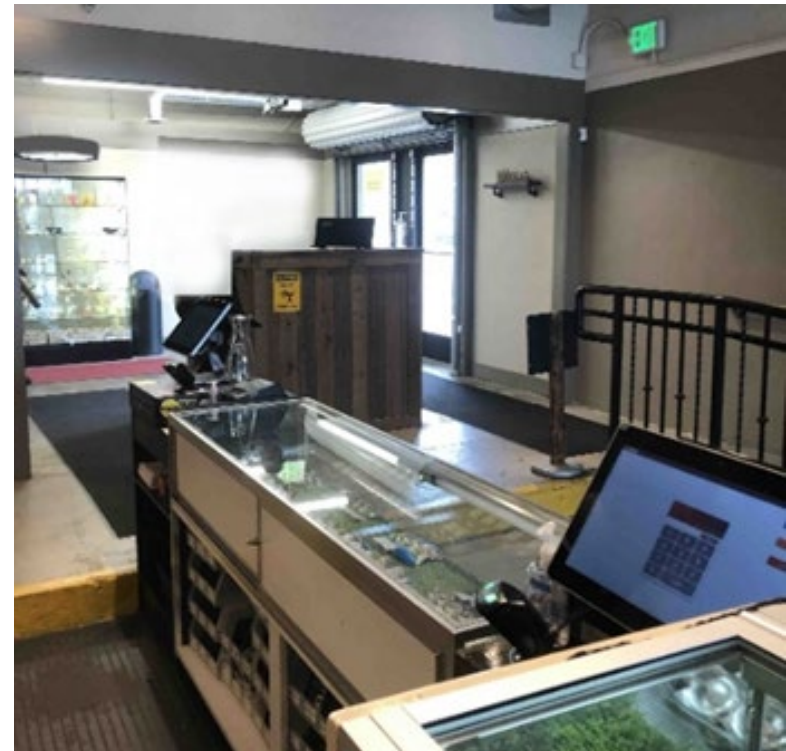
**WORKER:** 29 years old

**INDUSTRY:** All Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers (Except Tobacco Stores)

**OCCUPATION:** Sales Associate

**SCENE:** Recreational Cannabis Store

**EVENT TYPE:** Homicide



A 29-year-old recreational cannabis store worker was shot and killed during an armed robbery. He was employed as a sales associate, also known as a “budtender.” The incident happened around 10 p.m., when a car carrying two gunmen pulled up to the store. The store was brightly lit outside by several streetlights and spotlights. Four workers and four customers were in the store. Two unarmed guards were on duty; one was inside, and the other was outside helping a customer to their car.

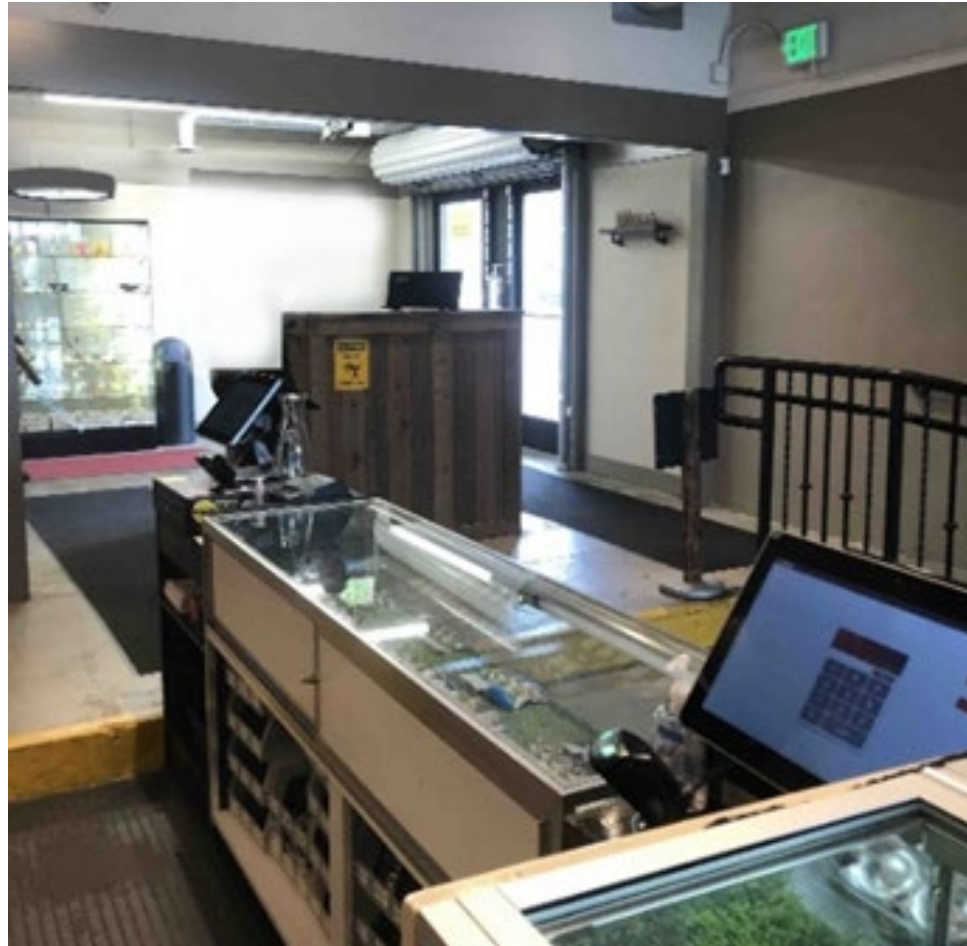
While their getaway car waited outside, the gunmen entered the store, drew handguns, and fired a warning shot into the ceiling. A budtender instantly pressed a panic button under a cash register. Everyone was ordered down on the floor, and workers were given plastic bags to put money in. One of the robbers aimed his gun at the worker and forced him to open one of the store's seven cash registers. A fight suddenly ensued between the worker and gunman and ended with them struggling on the floor.

The fight alerted the second gunman, who was watching the front doors. He walked to the cash register counter, leaned over it, and shot the worker in the neck. The worker was shot three more times. The gunmen stole \$250 from the opened register and fled in the getaway car. First responders arrived quickly but were unable to save the fatally injured worker.

## Investigators found:

- The employer's Accident Prevention Program (APP) had a standard operating procedure (SOP) for emergencies and robbery responses. The SOP instructed workers to comply with robber's demands and call 911 or press panic buttons. Safe drops were required every 30-45 minutes or when a cash register reached a certain dollar limit.
- Store security included two unarmed guards, surveillance cameras, and an alarm system with panic buttons under each cash register.

# FATALITY NARRATIVE



**Photo 1.** Area behind cash register counter where the worker was shot. Gunmen entered and fled through the double doors at the right rear of the store.



**Photo 2.** Interior view of cannabis store from entrance. Arrow points to area behind cash register counter where the worker was shot.

# FATALITY NARRATIVE



**Photo 3.** Arrow shows yellow sticker below cash register that reads “No More than \$100 is Kept in Tills.” The employer applied the sticker in the days after the incident to help prevent a reoccurrence.



## Requirements

The employer met all applicable late night retail establishment crime prevention and worker safety requirements in [WAC 296-832](#) and laws in [49.22 RCW](#).

## Recommendations

- Develop, review, and enhance security plans and train all workers on the security procedures.
- Hire armed security guards and consult a security company to assess store vulnerabilities.
- Make frequent cash deposits to minimize the amount of cash in the cash register.
- Use “drop safes” and post signs in store explaining that staff cannot open the safe.

## Recommendations

- Post signs stating that video surveillance is in use.
- Ensure adequate outdoor and indoor lighting.
- Use walk up window(s) instead of allowing people in to the store.
- Have an initial entry area separated by a security door that opens into the retail area.

## Resources

[Crime Prevention Opportunities for Cannabis Licensees.](#)

Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board

*This narrative was developed to alert employers and workers of a tragic incident in Washington State and is based on preliminary data ONLY and does not represent final determinations regarding the nature of the incident or conclusions regarding the cause of the fatality.*

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