

# Strongsville Bank Holdup Suspect Slain, Another Wounded by Police

Strongsville police, foiled an armed robbery yesterday at the Ledgewood Plaza branch of National City Bank and shot one suspected gunman dead and critically wounded another.

Three hours later a woman suspect was captured in Indiana.

Two gunmen, wearing stocking masks, emerged from a car, leaving its motor running, and entered the bank at 17300 Royalton Road at 10:20 a.m. An assistant manager saw them through a glass wall in the outer lobby and triggered an alarm. Authorities declined to identify the assistant manager.

Three Strongsville police cars responded from the station about half a mile west on Royalton.

One thief vaulted the counter and scooped \$1,700 into a briefcase.

Patrolmen Ralph C. Graves and Michael Koloda arrived and blocked the idling getaway car just as the gunmen emerged from the bank. The man carrying the money crouched and aimed his pistol at Graves.

Graves fired twice through the glass door and the man fell with a bullet in his lung. He was identified as Robert Thatcher, 35, of Chicago.

Sgt. Earl Wuensch arrived in the second car and chased the other gunman into a park at the shopping center. The man turned and tried to fire at Wuensch, the sergeant said, and Wuensch fired a shotgun at him, killing him.

The dead man was identified as John M. Ruark, 26, of Denver. The FBI said he was a suspected fugitive

from a Colorado jail.

The getaway car had been stolen earlier yesterday in Middleburg Heights, police said, and had license plates stolen from another car.

Police said both suspects had brand-new Colt automatics that had never been fired.

Police found a registration card for a black 1971 Oldsmobile in Thatcher's wallet. Patrolman David H. Gladys, who was off duty but answered the alarm remembered a black Oldsmobile speeding out of the shopping center parking lot.

An alert was sent on police network. Indiana police stopped the Oldsmobile at 1:20 p.m. 38 miles west of the Ohio line and arrested the woman occupant.

The FBI said the woman will be returned from Fort

Wayne jail today to face charges of aiding and abetting a bank robbery.

About half a dozen employees and customers were at the bank during the hold-up. No one was hurt.

THE PLAIN DEALER, THURSDAY, MAY 24, 1973



Patrolman Ralph C. Graves



Sgt. Earl Wuensch