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Wounded store owner known for generosity

Attack at fish market stuns friends, patrons of Jack Feldman

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Staff writer

Jack Feldman survived the Holocaust, living on scraps of bread in Nazi concentration camps. His Joseph Avenue storefront escaped the 1964 race riots untouched because neighborhood residents knew him as a man who understood hunger.

As he recovers from a gunshot wound from a robbery Saturday morning, those who know Feldman have no doubt he'll soon return to his spot behind the counter at J Fish Market.

Feldman, 81, is listed in guarded condition at Strong Memorial Hospital, but his son, Irving Feldman, expects his father to make a full recovery.

"If Jack could get out today, he'd be here this afternoon," Irving Feldman said, adding that the bullet didn't strike any major organs or arteries. "He loves this store. He loves this neighborhood."

Yugnman Ching, whose father once owned a diner on Hudson Avenue and bought fish from Feldman, made a special trip to the store Monday to learn how his old friend is doing and deliver his sympathy.

"He's a landmark in this neighborhood," said Ching, who recalled buying fish for the diner as a boy and how Feldman taught him how to pick out the best pieces.

The robbery happened about 9:50 a.m., shortly after Feldman opened for the day and two men with a gun entered the store and demanded cash. Feldman was shot in the back after he handed over \$20 from the register.

Police have arrested one teenager and are searching for one or two accomplices.

Quinton Harvey, who was arrested near the store with a stolen handgun minutes after the shooting, told police he never entered the store but acted as a lookout for two other youths. But a witness identified Harvey as one of two teenagers he saw fleeing the store after the shooting.

Harvey, 17, of 63 Locust St., has been charged with first-degree assault, first-degree robbery, second-degree criminal possession of a weapon, fourth-degree criminal possession of stolen property and petit larceny. He was ordered held in the Monroe County Jail in lieu of \$10,000 cash or \$25,000 bond.

In his statement to police, Harvey said he was hanging out at the Little Brooklyn market on Joseph Avenue when he ran into two friends who asked him to help rob the fish market.

Harvey, who has a profile on MySpace.com that includes photos of him brandishing a sawed-off shotgun, insisted in his written confession that the other youths performed the robbery and shooting. He said one of the other youths handed him a gun as they fled from the store.

"I was just the lookout," he wrote in his police statement. "I knew (the other youths) were going to rob the store, but I didn't know anyone was going to get shot."

Irving Feldman said Jack Feldman immigrated to the United States from Poland in 1951, after spending six years in Nazi concentration camps. He said his father's experience with the Nazis inspired him to provide free meals to those who had lost their jobs.

"In the concentration camps, he was cold and hungry and that's what he remembers," Irving Feldman said. "He hates to see anyone not fed."

Eddie Felder, who has worked at the fish market since 1962, said Feldman has long been known for his generosity. That's why Felder believes only someone too young to understand Feldman's place in the neighborhood would attempt to rob him.

"If they would have known who Jack is, they would never, ever done that," he said. "Jack fed everyone."

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What's next

A City Court preliminary hearing for Quinton Harvey is set for Wednesday.

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