



## MIDTOWN PONCE SECURITY ALLIANCE

*Eye on Midtown – 1/07/ 2008*

---

### **SAFETY MEETING**

Our January public safety meeting will be held on January 14th, 7pm, at Mary Mac's. In response to recent assaults and robberies we have arranged for Colonel Wayne Mock of Midtown Blue to give pepper spray training for the Midtown community. The training portion will take at least an hour and will include aspects such as:

- How to defend yourself and keep from becoming a victim
- The legalities of pepper spray
- When and how to deploy pepper spray.

A high-quality brand of pepper spray and a holder for it will be available for sale at the safety meeting for \$25 (checks payable to MPSA).

If time permits we will also discuss robberies and other public security issues affecting Midtowners.

As always we encourage you to come early, enjoy a great meal, and socialize with your neighbors.

### **NOVEMBER ROBBERIES**

We pulled the robbery reports for the month of November for further assessment. We would like to add that these are only incidents actually reported to the Atlanta Police as robberies. We suspect there are actually more incidents than these, especially since one local news station reported 14 robberies in a similar period. We have heard more about residents and business patrons being robbed, assaulted, and accosted in a two-block radius of the 10<sup>th</sup> and Piedmont intersection.

It appears that street thugs have area residents and business patrons under surveillance. Even though most of the residents and business patrons in the neighborhood make it home or back to their cars without incident, a robbery is a step away from a homicide, and this naturally causes great concern for us.

MPSA and Neighborhood Response:

- Pepper spray training at next safety meeting
- Sgt. Cooper is working with regular APD operations to coordinate a response to this issue.
- Officers working for the MPSA are keeping an extra eye on specific areas at strategic times.
- Residents in the upper Myrtle Street area have formed a block watch group
- We still urge you to trust your instincts.

In our *Eye on Midtown* sent out on 12/28/2007 we wrote about the issues affecting the 10<sup>th</sup> and Piedmont area (available at [www.midtownponce.org/news](http://www.midtownponce.org/news)).

***Below are the narratives from the November robbery reports (these were heavily edited for flow and removal of victim identity):***

#### **11/5/2007 (10:36pm) | MYRTLE & 8TH ST | ROB-STREET-GUN | #073092281**

Officer responded to a pedestrian robbery call in the 200 block of 9th Street. Upon arrival the officer was met by the victim. The victim stated that he was on his way home from the Midtown MARTA station. Three black males in a white four-door vehicle pulled up to the victim on Myrtle Street at 8th Street. One of the passengers jumped out and pulled out a handgun, possibly a revolver, and put it in his face. The suspect then told the

victim to empty his pockets. The victim surrendered several credit cards, his cell phone, driver license, and other items to the suspect. The victim could not see the other two males but could tell that they were wearing dark clothing with hoods covering their faces. The suspect that got out of the vehicle was around 6'3" in height, and weighed around 190 pounds, and was wearing dark clothing and was clean shaven.

**11/8/2007 (09:48pm) | 700's ARGONNE AVE | ROB-STREET-GUN | #073122147**

The responding officer met the victim in the 700 block of Argonne Avenue. The victim stated that he was walking south on Argonne to return to a friend's house. As the victim approached 4th Street the suspect appeared from behind and pointed a shotgun at him, yelling to the effect of "give it up!" The victim immediately ran away to his friend's home less than 100 feet away. The victim noticed a black car parked near the location of the incident, with a passenger door open. The victim described the vehicle as "like a Chevrolet or Lumina." The victim believes that another suspect or two may have been involved with the gunman, but is not sure. Nothing was taken in the incident, and the victim was not injured. The vehicle described was gone before the officer arrived.

**11/11/2007 (11:56pm) | 600's MYRTLE ST | ROB-STREET-GUN | #073151622**

An APD officer was dispatched to the high 600 block of myrtle Street in response to a pedestrian robbery call, where he met three robbery victims. The victims stated that they walked outside to smoke cigarettes when a gold Lexus sitting in the back parking lot drove up next to them. Four black male suspects got out of the vehicle and approached the victims with two handguns and a shotgun. The suspects then demanded wallets, money, and cell phones. As the victims surrendered the demanded items the suspects got back into the gold Lexus and sped away south on Myrtle. There were no injuries.

**11/11/2007 (01:06am) | 300's PONCE DE LEON AVE | ROB-STREET-GUN | #073150131**

While the APD officer was en route to an armed robbery call in the 300 block of Ponce, another officer spotted a vehicle at a BP on Boulevard matching the description in the same 911 call. As the driver (black male wearing a black shirt and a green jacket with fur around the hood) of the vehicle returned the second officer detained the suspect. The victim back on Ponce told the officer that she could identify the suspect so the second officer drove the suspect to the robbery location on Ponce. The victim then stated that she was 100% positive that the detained suspect was the individual who jumped out of a white pickup truck, put on a white ski mask, pointed a gun to her head, and said, "Give me your bag!" The suspect snatched her purse, and fled in the white pickup truck eastbound on Ponce de Leon Avenue. The victim stated that there were two people in the vehicle at the time of the robbery. The white pickup truck was recovered at 356 Boulevard, with a gray ski mask, and a .32 caliber revolver in the glove compartment. The suspect, the 31 year old Mr. Brandon M., stated that he was at his girlfriend's house all night and did not know what the police officers were talking about. The BP has cameras, one of which was pointed at the white pickup truck, but the clerk did not know how to operate it.

**11/11/2007 (09:02pm) | MYRTLE & 9TH ST | ROB-STREET-GUN | #073151460**

The APD officer met with the victim in the 200 block of 9th Street, who stated that someone attempted to rob him. The victim had used an ATM on 10th Street and was walking home when a black male bumped into him on Myrtle Street and demanded his wallet. The suspect then displayed a large revolver, which the victim described as silver

in color with a 6-8 inch barrel. The suspect asked what was in the victim's pocket and began to put the weapon back into his jacket. At that point the victim pushed the suspect into some bushes and ran off. The suspect gave chase but stopped once the victim ran down 9th Street - this is where the suspect was last seen. The victim was not injured, and could identify the suspect if possible. Suspect description: black male, wearing ball cap, dark sports jacket, sport-like blue hoodie, and baggy sweat pants.

**11/15/2007 (10:52pm) | 900's MYRTLE ST | ROB-STREET-GUN | #073192310**

*APD officer responded to a robbery call at 10th & Myrtle and met with the victim. The victim stated that he exited his vehicle near Myrtle and 9th Street and walked northbound along Myrtle Street. Two black males walked southbound, passed him for about 20 yards, and then turned and ran toward the victim. One suspect about 6'00" in height wore a blue hoodie sweatshirt and was armed with a pistol. The other suspect was about 5'09" in height and was armed with a single-barrel shotgun. The suspects told the victim to lay down on the ground and give them his keys and wallet. The suspect did not lay down but did give them the demanded items. The suspects took off running eastbound on 9th Street. APD had a lookout over the radio. The victim lost cash, credit cards, and driver license in the incident.*

**11/16/2007 (10:32pm) | 300's PONCE DE LEON AVE | ROB-STREET-GUN | #073202364**

At approximately 22:40 hours the officer responded to a report of an armed robbery at 306 Ponce de Leon Avenue, behind the Eagle nightclub. The victim stated that he had been at the club for a few hours before going to his car to get a CD. The victims had passed some individuals on the back deck of the club, including a young black male who was standing on the deck. The victim continued to his car, made entry, and was leaning into the vehicle. A subject then approached the victim and stated "Give me your money, I will shoot you, I am not even kidding!". The victim recognized the young black male from the deck of the club. The victim stated that he gave the subject \$10 and his empty wallet (except for some identification and some credit cards). When the victim told the subject that was all he had the subject searched the victim's pockets. The subject then left the location walking towards Argonne from the parking lot. The responding officer was working for MPSA. She searched the area for the suspect but was unable to locate the suspect.

Suspect description: black male, late teens to early 20's, approximately 5'9" in height, smooth baby face, medium complexion, thin dreads at least jaw length on the sides of his face, possibly longer at the back, last seen wearing a Philadelphia 76ers hat and jacket, carrying a silver gun with gold trim.

**11/28/2007 | 800's GLENDALE TER | ROB-STREET-GUN | #073322075**

Previously reported by MPSA – see our December 2007 *Public Safety Report*.

**BELTLINE WALK**

Sgt. Cooper and MPSA Board member Steve Gower walked the stretch of the defunct track along the eastern border of Midtown, from North Avenue to Montgomery Ferry Rd to survey the extent of urban camping. This track will hopefully sooner than later be developed into the Atlanta Beltline, as presented at [www.beltline.org](http://www.beltline.org). We found plenty of active campsites littered with trash, and recent issues of newspapers found there confirmed recent activity. We made a short video clip (see <http://youtube.com/watch?v=Ike4sWpd4>).

**All sites plague area residents and businesses with petty crime such as car break-ins, robberies, burglaries, and shoplifting. Many duffle bags, purses, and suitcases litter the entire stretch of the defunct track, indicating that criminals go back there to sort their loot.**

**The most active campsites found during this walk:**

1. **Along the side of City Hall East.** A large tent stands just south of North Avenue. Lots of trash along City Hall East, and an open garage door with evidence of vagrant activity inside the facility.
2. **Behind a vacant building on Ponce de Leon Place** – several vagrants were camping there despite cold temperatures, and others stash things on that property.
3. **Under the Virginia Avenue Bridge**
4. **Under the Park Drive Bridge**
5. **North Woods of Piedmont Park** – this was the site of a major campsite eliminated 4 years ago but is now becoming active again.
6. **Under the Piedmont Avenue Bridge behind Bangkok restaurant** –vagrants were sleeping here, and some very interesting graffiti reflecting high artistic skill covers the area.
7. **The most interesting spot:** the trestle over the creek behind Ansley Mall – a group of vagrants have actually built a house under the trestle by nailing plywood to the bottom side of the trestle, building walls, and furnishing it with mattresses and dressers. This has been there for quite some time and is easy to miss unless you go down the steep side of the trestle and look under it.

**Notables along the defunct track:**

1. **Unsafe conditions prevail** - the rubber covering the railroad ties on the Ponce de Leon trestle is fatigued. You must tread carefully lest you plunge down into busy Ponce de Leon traffic. The other trestles also have hazards. Kudzu conceals metal rods on the track – take care not to get your foot caught in one of these. Vagrants living back there are usually irrational, territorial and/or criminally opportunistic. Wild animals and rodents abound in this area. Sanitation leaves much to be desired – it is not unspoiled wilderness. You should wear long pants and good hiking shoes when venturing into that area. If you run into trouble in this hostile territory help cannot get to you easily.
2. The two wild cat stations are still active though there seem to be fewer cats. A neighborhood group feeds them on a regular basis. Some wonderful organization captures the cats, spays/neuters them, and returns them to these stations. This helps keep down the rats and other vermin affecting nearby residents and businesses.

We will seek the current owners of the defunct track to arrange for brush to be cut down, fences secured, and to have the area aggressively patrolled. These areas must be kept securely under control to prevent escalation to full-blown shantytowns inhabited by street criminals attacking the surrounding neighborhoods and businesses.

The ultimate solution to this serious plague would be to finally realize the Beltline proposal. This proposal would:

- Significantly enhance Atlanta's public transportation infrastructure
- Greatly increase the parks and green space, including a bike path.
- Spawn additional pedestrian-friendly and transit-oriented development to enhance the intown experience
- **And certainly improve the public security situation for intown neighborhoods including ours!**

**Notable related weblinks:**

- **Beltline official information** - [www.beltline.org](http://www.beltline.org)

- *Atlanta Journal Constitution* ran an article in its January 6<sup>th</sup> issue – this is also online at [http://www.accessatlanta.com/arts/content/arts/stories/2008/01/02/beltline\\_0106.html](http://www.accessatlanta.com/arts/content/arts/stories/2008/01/02/beltline_0106.html)
- New MPSA video - [http://youtube.com/watch?v=Ike4s\\_Wpd4](http://youtube.com/watch?v=Ike4s_Wpd4).

### **COURT WATCH**

On December 26<sup>th</sup> Tywong M. had another court hearing. Because of holiday issues only Sgt. Cooper could attend the hearing on behalf of the Midtown community. He wrote us this report:

*Glad I went to the court hearing on Tywong M. I think the judge was going to grant him bond even though I'm sure he could never make it. Anyway the ADA in Sharla Jackson's place was great. Once she understood the dynamics of the issue she went to town. We had to go to the clerks office and pull a copy to the restraining order for the judge. She started to get me ready to testify if needed. She even called the victim while I was there. Once we went back to court that was the end of it. The defense attorneys were surprised I showed up with such an interest in the case. That should hold him for a few months. Tywong M. has a hearing on the stolen credit cards on Friday in courtroom 8c. All the cases will be tied together at that point and he still will not have a bond.*

### **MPSA MAILBAG**

*Ironically, on Christmas night, my new tenant upstairs [on] Myrtle Street had her car broken into. This is after my talking about the 30+ years I have lived in Midtown without any incidents. She did have bags and things in the car and they just looked through them and threw them on the lawn, and she said she has learned her lesson on leaving nothing in the car. I just joined the MPSA and would like to know what you do.*

**Car break-in** - *My neighbor's car was broken into last night while parked on Myrtle Street between 10th and 9th. They jimmied a window (did not break it), then took her radio/CD player, and stole her brief case (black) out of her trunk. She reported it to APD. If anyone sees her black TUMI bag (satchel) ditched in their garbage can or in some bush, she needs some important documents in there, such as her 2 CDC Security Badges for work, and her immunization records. There was a blackberry in there as well, but we're not hopeful we will find that. We are looking around right now. **MPSA Note: if you find these items please contact us immediately – we will arrange to get them back to the owner.***

**STAY SAFE! Please encourage your fellow Midtowners to join the MPSA!**

**- Your Neighbors at the Midtown Ponce Security Alliance**

---

**WITH MUCH GRATITUDE FOR OUR COMMUNITY PATROL SPONSORS**

***The Sembler Company | Post Parkside | Midtown Neighbors' Association***

***Midtown Tire, Inc. | Ackerman & Company***

***AND OF COURSE THE MANY RESIDENT AND BUSINESS MEMBERS!!!***