

Irish setter provides thread to complex Manchester shootout

By CHARLES BONENTI

A small, thin Irish setter dog emerged as a continuing thread in circumstances surrounding Tuesday night's shooting death of Manchester Police Chief Dana L. Thompson and the wounding of village Chief George F. Hoag.

Two suspects have been apprehended in connection with the shootout at Whipple's Pharmacy here. Brian O'Keefe, 24, has been charged as an accessory to murder while another suspect, Edward Battick, 25, remains in serious condition at Putnam Memorial Hospital suffering from gunshot wounds as a result of the incident.

Numbers of Manchesterites reported seeing either one or two men with an Irish setter dog prior

to the shootings.

Keith Porter, the son of Town Manager Oakley K. Porter told police he saw a single man walking with an Irish setter on the night of the shootings.

Several others, including about five people at the Equinox paddle tennis clubhouse on Union Street, reported two men entered the establishment about 9:30 Tuesday with an Irish setter. One woman said the two asked several questions, hung around for a while and then left.

After the shootings, State Police said they found an Irish setter running at large near the Manchester firehouse which is adjacent to the police station on Routes 11-30 here. The dog, which spent the night underfoot in the

town offices while the investigation was going on, is now being held by State Police in Shaftsbury.

According to authorities, one of the suspects, O'Keefe, said the dog at the station was a stray he had picked up but that it had later run off. Police said that based on stories of people in the area, they are holding the dog as possible evidence.

Happy ending to a sad tale

SHAFTSBURY — Ten months after the slaying of Manchester Police Dana Thompson, the two men accused of this and other crimes have been convicted and sentenced.

Many people have wondered what happened to the "thin red setter dog" which was reported to have been with the two men on the day of the tragic incident.

It can now be revealed that the dog was taken to the Shaftsbury Animal Shelter where it was found to be in a pitiable state.

After months of tender loving care, good feeding and medical treatment, the setter was restored to such good health that many visitors to the shelter wanted to adopt him, but he was being held as a "witness" in the case.

When the case was over, the police began to locate the owners of the stolen property found in possession of the convicted men, after they were arrested, and it was then they discovered that the dog too had been stolen. He has now been returned to his original owner.

So at least one victim survived the ordeal without lasting harm, thanks to the Bennington Humane Society which operates the Animal Shelter.