

# Robberies rare at Pullman



Lori Wolfe/The Herald-Dispatch

Marquee Cinemas, shown here in a 2005 file photo, was the target of an armed robbery Saturday night. [Purchase this photo](#)

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HUNTINGTON -- Long holiday weekends are typically big draws for movie theaters.

Which could be why Marquee Cinemas at Pullman Square was the scene of an armed robbery Saturday night, said Brent Brown, chairman and chief executive officer of Chesley Brown International, the security company that oversees the downtown shopping and entertainment hub.

"It appears to be targeted," Brown said via telephone from the corporate office in Atlanta. "A movie theater deals with a lot of cash on the holiday weekend. It seems like a crime of opportunity."

The armed robbery took place just after 10 p.m. Saturday. A white or Hispanic man in his 20s or 30s and wearing a brown hooded sweatshirt, a white cloth across his face and a pair of goggles over his eyes, brandished a rifle or shotgun and told the manager to take him to the office. There, the suspect had the manager fill a bag with cash from the safe.

Eyewitnesses told Huntington Police officers that the suspect immediately fled. A K-9 unit tracked him to Veteran's Memorial Boulevard before the track was lost.

He got away with an undisclosed amount of money.

Brown, who spent more than two decades in law enforcement, said his company has clients like Pullman Square in 28 states and three countries, many with large movie theaters.

"We have a lot of cinemas, but (robberies) are very rare," he said. "(But) even in the most safe areas, with that much cash, the potential is there."

Many, he said, hire off-duty police officers to work during busy weekends. It's not known whether Marquee Cinemas has its own security, but Pullman's security company does have a team of unarmed and uniformed security officers, plus at least one off-duty officer from the

Huntington Police Department. That position is fairly new, funded with a grant from the Empowerment Zone, the Tri-State Transit Authority and Pullman Square.

The combination does give businesses a feeling of safety, even when incidents do occur.

"Anytime we've ever needed somebody, they are right there," said John Brooks, general manager of Max & Erma's and Frankie D's Italian Chophouse. "They are on top of it."

But Brooks, a veteran of the restaurant biz, said businesses have to be more aware of incidents, especially during the holiday season.

"We always know this time of year gets that way," he said. "It heightens our awareness."

He said they'll probably change the way deliveries are taken at the back door, keeping the door locked and making sure drivers are identifying themselves.

But serious incidents such as the robbery have been rare at Pullman Square. The only other serious incident of note was a theft from Empire Books & News in early June. An unknown person took more than \$950 from an unlocked safe in the store's office.

The loss was discovered when a store supervisor went to the back of the store. It would later be discovered that \$50 and \$60 in cash also was stolen from two employees' purses, which was later confirmed by surveillance tape.

Pullman Square and many of its businesses have surveillance cameras. Brown wouldn't say which stores have cameras, where the cameras are located or which ones his security company monitors.

"It's still a very safe place to shop," Brown said of Pullman Square.

Curtis McCall, president, CEO, and chairman of the board of Marquee Cinemas, Inc. did not return calls for comment on Monday.