

Car strikes, overturns rescue vehicle in Fort Lauderdale

By Shannon O'Boye
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April 3, 2005

Fort Lauderdale · Two fire-rescue department paramedics returning to their station after an early-morning call were struck by a Honda Civic Saturday that knocked their truck over and sent them skidding across the road, an assistant fire chief said Saturday.

The bruised and bloodied medics climbed out of the ambulance through the shattered front windshield. The crew chief, Hugh Bayne, found his radio lying in the road and called for help. He then found the fire extinguisher that flew from the truck and put out a blaze burning under the hood of other vehicle involved in the accident, Assistant Chief Stephen McNerny said.

Bayne, 32, was tending to his partner, Derick Armstrong, 25, and the driver of the Honda Civic, Anit Chandra, 20, of Fort Lauderdale, when other firefighters arrived and took over.

The accident occurred in front of the federal courthouse on Broward Boulevard and Northeast Third Avenue about 2:45 a.m., Police Sgt. Andy Pallen said.

The medics had just transported a man to the hospital after he allegedly snatched a woman's purse on Las Olas Boulevard and then ran into a planter and knocked himself out while trying to escape, McNerny said.

The ambulance was crossing Broward on northbound Third Avenue when Chandra's Honda smashed into the back of the truck on the driver's side. Pallen said the police department's traffic homicide unit was investigating which vehicle had the right of way.

The vehicle turned over on the driver's side and slid onto the sidewalk in front of the First Baptist Church of Fort Lauderdale.

Chandra was trapped in the Honda's wreckage. It took firefighters working with heavy tools about 15

minutes to free him by cutting away the door and the collapsed dashboard and steering column, McNerny said.

Medics rushed Chandra to Broward General Medical Center as a trauma alert. Armstrong and Bayne also were treated at Broward General but were not admitted, McNerny said. Their rescue truck, valued at \$250,000, was totaled.

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