

Baltimore police identify victim in downtown club stabbing

By Dan Rodricks and Jill Rosen, *The Baltimore Sun*, April 3, 2011

Baltimore police have identified one of the victims of the multiple stabbings that occurred early Saturday inside the downtown nightclub Bourbon Street.

Charles Johnson 24, died of his injuries. The three other victims were transported to local hospitals and are expected to survive, according to spokesman Detective Jeremy Silbert.

Police responded at 1 a.m. to Bourbon Street, on the 300 block of Guilford Avenue, to find four men stabbed inside the club, Silbert said. A couple of events were scheduled Friday night at the club. It was "Ladies' Night" in the Ballroom with all-you-can-drink specials for women. There was also a "Zombie Strippers and Beer" event, which advertised 12 bands.

David Adams, one of the club's managers, said the violence erupted in the ballroom where ladies' night was happening. He declined to elaborate on what happened, but said the bar was immediately discontinuing the popular promotion.

"Obviously we're pretty frustrated this morning," Adams said Saturday. "We've run that promotion for three years and it has not been a problem. The folks that have been coming to the event are going to end up punished because of some other idiot's behavior. But we have to protect our core business. It is what it is."

Late Saturday morning, splotches of blood were still visible on the club's front steps along Guilford Avenue.

The perceived bloodiness of the night's events was likely heightened, clubgoers said, by the copious amounts of fake blood that were brought in for the zombie event.

"There was blood before and after [the stabbing]," said Jeff Conner, part of the band Eat Your Neighbors that performed that night. "We had several gallons of fake blood. ... The police cleaned up all the real blood."

Homicide detectives are investigating the incident, Silbert said. The victims have not been identified.

One of the victims was taken to police headquarters to be interviewed, with apparently neither police nor the victim realizing he had been stabbed, police said. Once they realized he was injured, he was taken to a local hospital for treatment. The man was not considered a suspect, police said.

Bourbon Street occupies the site on Guilford Avenue, not far from City Hall, where Hammerjacks used to be. It has a New Orleans theme and is a popular venue for smaller

concerts. Recently the Christian rock group Stryper played there, as did Jefferson Starship.

Last June, two former state high school wrestling champions from Anne Arundel County were charged with assaulting a pair of Navy football players at the 18-and-over club.

Councilman William H. Cole IV said he was frustrated Saturday by another violent incident in a club in his district.

"What bothers me is in every single one of these incidents, it's just stupid fighting between individuals, but instead of settling it the way everybody used to settle things, a weapon is involved," Cole said. "I don't know how you police it."