

Manhunt Underway for Florida Suspect Who Murdered Pastor, 2 Others

A search is underway for a man suspected in the fatal shooting of a pastor at a Florida church, as well as the murders of his wife and another woman at a nearby home. Authorities conducting the search are investigating a triple homicide on the state's Gulf Coast.

Sheriff's deputies responded to reports of a church shooting around 1:20 p.m., according to a news release. While at the scene, they learned about two more people slain at a nearby home in Bradenton, located about 45 miles south of Tampa.

Police were searching for Andres "Andy" Avalos, 33, who may be armed and dangerous, Dave Bristow, a spokesman for the Manatee County Sheriff's Office, told reporters.

He was last seen driving a gold 2003 Chevrolet Suburban in Bradenton, authorities said.

The male victim was James Battle, 31, a pastor at Bayshore Baptist Church in Bradenton, where the shooting occurred outside a residence on the grounds used as an office, Bristow said.

According to the church website, Battle went by the nickname "Tripp." His wife was the church secretary, and they had two young children.

Also killed was Amber Avalos, 33, the wife of the suspect, who was the church's nursery and children's director, according to the website, which said she and her husband had six children.

Authorities said the children were in protective custody.

The third victim was identified as Denise Potter, 46, a

neighbor, according to local media reports. The killings appeared to involve a domestic dispute, authorities told reporters.

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