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3 West Hollywood homicide victims were targeted, officials reportedly believe

Two of the men were brothers, and the third was the brother of a girl who plunged off a high-rise two years ago in what was ruled a suicide.

By Sam Quinones and Richard Winton, Times Staff Writer

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A triple murder late Thursday night inside a West Hollywood apartment building may be tied to a robbery attempt.

The victims were identified as Pirooz Moussazadeh, 27; his brother, Shahriar Moussazadeh, 38; and Bernard Khalili, 27, said Craig Harvey, chief of investigations for the Los Angeles County coroner's office.

According to a law enforcement official familiar with the investigation but not authorized to discuss the attack, investigators believe the victims were targeted.

No arrests have been made, but Los Angeles County Sheriff's Lt. Pat Nelson said he is confident investigators will make progress over the weekend.

"I can say that we are throwing a lot of resources at this case," he wrote in an e-mail, adding that some of the department's most experienced investigators worked the case throughout Thursday night. "Their efforts included scene sketches, photographs, latent print searches, firearms experts, and testing for biological evidence."

Deputies went to the Kings Road Arms apartments in the 600 block of North Kings Road, south of Melrose Avenue, about 9:15 p.m. after neighbors reported hearing a series of gunshots.

The victims were found dead in various parts of one apartment in the building. The two brothers were tenants of the apartment.

There was no sign of forced entry or struggle, deputies said, and no drugs or weapons were found at the scene.

Early Friday evening, relatives and friends of Khalili, who was part of a close-knit Persian community on the Westside, struggled with the news.

They overflowed from the Khalili family's Westwood home, many crying.

Through relatives, Khalili's parents declined to comment, but a cousin of Khalili's said the 27-year-old was a gentle soul. The two, he said, grew up like brothers.

"My cousin was always a very kind person," he said. "A very forgiving person."

Thursday's killings were the second tragedy to hit the Iranian American family in less than two years.

In 2008, their daughter Bianca fell from a Century City high-rise. The Beverly Hills High School senior had been in the midst of a heated argument with another girl over a boy just moments before she died.

Authorities ruled the death a suicide, but gossip about foul play continues to swirl in the local community.

As the West Hollywood apartment was taped off Friday morning for further investigation, neighbors remained startled by the news. The 28-unit building is filled with immigrants from Iran, Israel and Russia. Residents said there was a high turnover of tenants in the building, which has a "For Rent" sign posted outside.

Maurice Chriqui, who lives next door to where the slayings took place, said he had just arrived home from a business trip to Seattle to find his wife upset.

"Thank God, you're home," she told him. "I just heard some shots."

Soon, Chriqui said, deputies flooded their quiet neighborhood with patrol cars and two ambulances. A sheriff's helicopter circled overhead.

Chriqui, who has lived in the neighborhood for 10 years, said he was shocked. "What a shame to have three people dead," he said.

Another neighbor, who did not want to give her name, said she also arrived home just after the shootings, but before deputies arrived, to find her roommate "freaking out." She said she saw several people coming and going from the area.

"It's just surreal," she said. "I've never seen anything like this."