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Owners, Cashier Slain in Pawnshop Robbery

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Police cordoning off a pawnshop after a robbery killed three Friday. **Mikhail Metzel**

An armed robbery escalated into a triple homicide at a pawnshop near Kievsky Station on Friday, investigators said.

Two men in surgical masks stormed into the business at 2 Bryanskaya Ulitsa around 11 a.m., swiping cash and jewelry and killing three people in the process, Interfax reported. Lifenews.ru said all three were shot dead.

The robbers had cased the pawnshop the day before, Investigation Committee spokesman Vladimir Markin said at the crime scene Friday.

The Thursday visit and Friday attack were both captured on surveillance footage.

On Thursday, "one of them came in a mask, and then they left. No one called the police," Markin said, Interfax reported.

Police identified the three victims as brothers Dzhakhangir and Rakhim Abulov, the shop's

owners, and Yulia Rastopchinova, a cashier. All three were fatally wounded and died before paramedics arrived at the scene.

"I walked by about three minutes after the murder," an eyewitness identified only as Olga S. told Lifenews.ru. "At the entrance lay a man who appeared to have a fractured skull. Later I recognized him: He was one of the shop's owners. They never hired security. They'd say, 'Why have so many police around?'"

Lifenews.ru reported that the thieves got away with 3 million rubles ($100,000) in cash and jewelry, but Interfax later described the figure as false and reported that the real amount was still under investigation.

A criminal case has been opened into murder, robbery and illegal use of a weapon. A single murder charge could bring up to 15 years in prison.

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