

Bullets fly as cops capture drug suspect

By William Kenny

Times Staff Writer

An alleged high-level cocaine dealer who was on the lam from local and federal authorities for eight months was captured in a hail of gunfire last week outside of a Wissinoming garage.

Philadelphia police and FBI agents wounded Joseph Doebley, 34, five times, sources said, after he allegedly ran down a pedestrian and a police officer with an SUV while attempting to flee. He was initially transported in critical condition to Frankford Hospital's Torresdale Campus and listed in fair condition as the *Times* went to press.

The arrest occurred on June 14 at about 4 p.m. along the 1900 block of Cheltenham Ave.

Armed with drug-related Philadelphia and federal warrants for Doebley's arrest, authorities cornered him outside of a rear garage, sources said. That's when the suspect allegedly jumped into a white GMC and attempted to run down one cop, who avoided the vehicle, and then struck a pedestrian — a man in his late 30s or 40s.

The GMC then struck a police car, which in turn hit a cop. Police and federal agents fired numerous times at Doebley, whose vehicle came to rest against another parked car.

The officer who was struck by a vehicle was taken to Frankford-Torresdale and treated for an injured hand. The pedestrian was treated for non-life-threatening

injuries at an undisclosed hospital, sources said.

Police who discharged their weapons have been placed on administrative duty with the department pending a routine Internal Affairs investigation of the shooting.

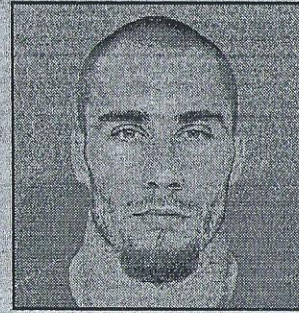
Doebley, formerly of Higbee Street in Wissinoming, was charged locally with aggravated assault, flight to avoid prosecution, causing or risking a catastrophe and related offenses. He also faces federal drug charges.

Doebley has been a fugitive since last October, when city narcotics officers raided seven locations — including five on the 5000 block of Homestead St. — in connection with an investigation into an alleged drug organization that called itself the "Ugly Squad."

The raids allegedly netted 11 kilograms of cocaine, along with heroin, crystal meth, Ecstasy, marijuana and prescription pills valued at a combined \$1.3 million if sold at street level.

The raided homes allegedly yielded an assortment of high-powered firearms, too, including a sawed-off shotgun, a handgun with laser sight, an assault rifle and a rifle with a bayonet.

Perhaps the "ugliest" part of the whole scenario,



Joseph Doebley

however, was what investigators found in one of the Homestead Street houses — a man-made pond with six alligators, some as long as 6 feet, which fed on pig and chicken parts.

Police believe the drug dealers used the gators not as security but rather to promote their own status as high-level operators. The organization allegedly dealt cocaine in bulk to middlemen throughout the area, who in turn served street-level dealers, police claimed at the time.

Members of the gang also kept pit bulls and used electronic surveillance equipment for security purposes, investigators said.

At the time of the raids, police arrested Chris Simon, then 20, of the 6600 block of Charles St. in Tacony; and Michael Doebley, then 25, of the 4700 block of St. Denis Drive, Torresdale. He is the brother of Joseph Doebley.

Both were charged locally with a series of drug offenses and subsequently indicted federally, police said.

A fourth suspect in the case, Edward Stern, 31, of the 5000 block of Homestead St., surrendered to authorities shortly after the October 2005 raids, police said. He also was charged locally then indicted federally.

Simon, Stern and Michael Doebley await trial. ••

Reporter William Kenny can be reached at 215-354-3031 or bkenny@phillynews.com