



Accidental shooting investigated

A man tells deputies a gun goes off accidentally four times - hitting him once and his half brother three times.

By Times Staff Writer

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TAMPA - Deputies arrived at a northwest Hillsborough residence early Friday morning to find 28-year-old Francis Matos lying outside the house with gunshot wounds to the head and back.

Then they found Matos' half brother, Fidel Vargas, 20, limping around with a gunshot wound to the leg.

Vargas admitted to shooting himself and his half brother, Hillsborough sheriff's spokesman Lt. Rod Reder said - but insisted it was all an accident.

Vargas told deputies he was carrying a .22-caliber handgun as he walked out of the house at 6906 N Hale Ave. with Matos. Vargas said the gun accidentally went off, hitting him in the leg. Vargas then insisted the gun went off three more times, hitting Matos, his half brother.

Reder said the shootings are under investigation.

"I've seen accidental shootings with one bullet," Reder said. "But three?"

Vargas was treated at St. Joseph's Hospital and released. Matos remains there in critical condition. "It doesn't look good," Reder said of Matos' injuries.

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