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'Low priority' given to Berkowitz threats

This is the fourth of a five-part series disclosing that David Berkowitz, who terrorized New York City for a year, could have been jailed two months earlier on charges unrelated to the Son of Sam murders.

By MAURY TERRY and TOM BARTLEY
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While David Berkowitz remained at large during the final four Son of Sam attacks, his crimes in Yonkers were being variously ascribed to a "black" assassin, a "blond" rifleman, a disgruntled sheriff's employee and, only possibly, to David Berkowitz.

By mid-June, 1977, two homes in Berkowitz' north-west Yonkers neighborhood had been firebombed, the families in those homes had been subjected to a stream of hate mail, their dogs had been shot and a volunteer deputy sheriff had received a letter threatening his life.

But the crimes, although committed in an area the size of a football field over little more than a year's time, were viewed as isolated—and relatively insignificant—incidents by the Yonkers Police Department and the Westchester Sheriff's Office.

A Gannett Westchester Rockland Newspapers investigation has found that if the information held by those two agencies had been put together, Berkowitz could have been arrested as a suspect in a series of serious

local crimes two months before his eventual capture as the Son of Sam.

Repeated attempts to learn what steps Yonkers had taken to apprehend Berkowitz, not as the Son of Sam but as an arsonist, rifleman and writer of threatening letters, were officially rebuffed by the city, saying it was forbidden to comment on the recent while lawsuits over its handling of the case were still pending in the courts. The Sheriff's Department permitted a tape-recorded, on-the-record interview.

What emerged from interviews—on and off the record—was a picture of two police agencies trusting the crimes of David Berkowitz as low-grade incidents. A Yonkers source put it bluntly: Given the low priority

normally accorded to those crimes, "I think they (the police) did too much investigating."

Not everyone, however, accords low priority status to the crimes. An FBI agent sums up views expressed by other law enforcement officials:

"In the first place, it can be considered a federal felony as well as a state crime to threaten someone through the mails. In the second place, once a guy uses a gun—and you can safely believe the letter writer could be the same guy in this case—and in broad daylight aims the gun in the general direction of a house and pulls the trigger, you aren't dealing with any low-priority crime. You're dealing with a dangerous person. And, with the police

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Bomb hits Westchester Mobil office

By M.J. ZUCKERMAN
Staff Writer

Federal and local demolition experts were expected to begin sifting for clues today in the debris of a Mobil Oil Corp. office building in Eastchester that was apparently the target of a terrorist bomb Tuesday afternoon.

Police safely evacuated 300 office workers from the building and hundreds of shoppers from the surrounding Vernon Hills Shopping Center seconds before a blast, described as equal to 20 sticks of TNT, damaged the glass-and-steel, four-story office structure at 4:30 p.m.

Anonymous phone calls made to a Scarsdale church and the Mobil regional office at 670 White Plains Road one hour before the blast alerted authorities to the explosive device, planted by a group calling itself the Sam Melville-Jonathan Jackson Unit.

The group, in a note to the Associated Press, said the attack marked the 20th anniversary of Puerto Rican nationalists' armed attack on congressmen in the U.S. House of Representatives. The note demanded freedom for three radicals imprisoned after the attacks and for a fourth Puerto Rican nationalist who tried to assassinate President Harry S. Truman in 1950.

The Tuesday afternoon bombing left the second and third floors of the office building strewn with cinder blocks, and heavy steel structural beams bent and twisted. Authorities said they were uncertain how long it would be before the building could be reopened for business.

John Flint, public information director for Mobil in New York City, said he had "no idea" why the

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Blown-away ceilings and bent steel beams testify to the power of a bomb that struck a Mobil office in Eastchester seconds after evacuation.

Begin to visit U.S., will see only Carter

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Carter will meet with Menachem Begin to find out, face-to-face, whether there is any chance to complete a Madrid peace treaty.

The Israeli prime minister is due Thursday evening. Carter probably will take him to Camp David, Md., for quiet talks, but S. officials said that was not definite, nor was it clear how long the talks would last.

Israel's Cabinet today accepted the revised plan for Begin's visit, but the prime minister said he had "no intention" to meet Egyptian Prime Minister Mostafa Khalil although he left open the possibility he might meet Anwar Sadat in the United States.

"If Sadat" will be in the United States and a proposal is made that I should meet him, why should I refuse?" Begin said.

About the refusal to meet Sadat's aide, Begin said Tuesday, "It's not that I don't like Khalil." He said that Khalil is not Egypt's leader and would not have equivalent negotiating authority to the Israeli prime minister.

"I do not agree with the statement made by President Carter yesterday, that only very small, insignificant things exist between Egypt and Israel," Begin said this morning. "With all due respect, in my opinion great issues relating first of all to our future and security" remain.

Begin was responding to a remark by Carter Tuesday evening. Carter told a dinner for the nation's governors that it is "almost disgusting" how close Egypt and Israel are to a peace treaty, but yet how far apart they remain.

"If these talks (with Begin) open up opportunities for improvement, I have no doubt that Sadat

Owner of one car loses in ration plan

WASHINGTON (AP) — The standby gasoline rationing powers President Carter says he needs just in case the nation's oil supplies sharply dip would go easiest on motorists with at least two gas-saving cars.

But the president's plan would allow people who ran short of gas to buy unused coupons from other drivers.

The plan, which would require a new bureaucracy to handle the paperwork and cost an estimated \$1.66 billion a year, will be submitted to Congress Thursday.

In either case, Energy Department officials say oil shortages anticipated this summer by the upheaval in Iran would not be severe enough to trigger the plan.

The president plans to send proposals dealing with the Iranian curtailment to Capitol Hill early next month. Because of the mechanics involved, the standby rationing program could not begin before next winter. And then it would be activated only by a "Severe Energy

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will be here immediately to resume negotiations," he said.

The president told a news conference Tuesday he and Begin would have "a frank discussion of all the issues" in the stalled treaty negotiations.

At least four issues remain unsettled, American officials said after four months of intensive, U.S.-directed negotiations.

These include whether Egyptian-Israeli peace terms would provide a timetable for granting civil settlement to the 1.1 million Palestinian Arabs on the Israeli-held west bank of the Jordan River and in the Gaza district.

Another is whether the peace treaty would take precedence over Egypt's pledges to assist other Arab countries should Israel attack them.

Two others involve disagreements about provisions for reopening the treaty in the future and the timing of the exchange of ambassadors between the two countries.

Carter announced Begin's visit after telephoning him. The call followed the Israeli cabinet's rejection of Carter's invitation to Begin to meet here with the president and Khalil.

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Valley shooting investigated

By JAMES WALSH
Staff Writer

At least 11 shots were fired late Tuesday night into a Spring Valley apartment building at 96 Bethune Blvd., the scene of a murder early last month.

Gambists were reported to police about 10:24 p.m., and despite reports that someone had been hit by the volley, village police were unable to find a victim after an extensive search of the area, said Police Chief Adam Krainak.

Soon after the police arrived on the scene, they received a report of a 15-year-old girl who had been taken to Community Hospital in Hillcrest.

The girl, Rosellin Smith of 56 Bethune Blvd., was in an apartment in a building next door when she heard a loud commotion coming from the hallway. When she went into the corridor, the

girl was punched in the face and knocked to the floor, Krainak said.

He said the girl, who was released from the hospital after treatment, gave a description of her attacker that was similar to that of one of the gunmen. Police are investigating a possible connection between the two incidents, the police chief said.

The police were wading through a variety of conflicting reports concerning the shooting, but Krainak said it was apparent that at least two people were involved, and that the weapon used was either a automatic or semi-automatic .45 caliber gun.

No motive for the shooting was established. The volley of gunfire was directed at the building. A window, a garbage dumpster and a street light were damaged, police said.

Eleven shell casings were found in the parking area next to the building.

Police said reports conflicted regarding the vehicle used by gunmen in their escape, but that

it may have been a blue Ford Pinto or a similar small car.

Village police are still searching for a suspect accused of shooting to death 24-year-old Kenneth Roscoe on Jan. 7 at the same address.

Roscoe, who lived several blocks away, was found dead in the apartment of Josh McLean, a caretaker of the building.

McLean was named several days later in a murder warrant issued at Spring Valley Justice Court.

A reporter from The Journal-News who had gone to the scene of Tuesday's shooting was threatened with arrest by Spring Valley Detective Clifford Tallman, who said he would lock up the reporter if he didn't leave the property.

The reporter was in the parking lot of the building and was trying to find out what had prompted the shooting and whether anyone had been injured.

Priest charged in armed holdups

MIDDLETOWN, Del. (AP) — A Roman Catholic priest has been arrested and charged with a string of armed holdups identified as the work of a man dubbed the Gentleman Bandit, authorities said today.

Delaware State Police said the Rev. Bernard Pagnano, assistant pastor of the St. Mary's Refuge of Sinners in Cambridge, Md., was charged with seven counts of armed robbery and one count of attempted robbery.

The charges stemmed from holdups of grocery stores and other commercial establishments in northern Delaware by a neat, quiet, well-behaved man, authorities said.

Pagnano was arrested Tuesday night at his sister's home here. Police said a composite drawing of a suspect circulated following one of the robberies led to the priest's arrest.



Staff photo — Warren Ingless

Police escort three of the seven men arrested in Tuesday's raid to county's jail in New City.

Police charge 7 in numbers racket

By FRANK LEONARD
Staff Writer

The largest police operation ever in Rockland County was halted Tuesday when police raided two Spring Valley locations and arrested seven men.

The seven were being held pending arraignment on gambling charges in connection with what District Attorney Kenneth Gribeta said was a quarter-of-a-million-

a-year policy (numbers) operation, the largest ever in the county.

State troopers, Spring Valley police and investigators from the district attorney's office began the raid at 1:30 p.m. About a dozen officers divided into groups and raided Woods Take-Out Store at 78 Ewing Ave. and Clayton's Record Shop at 72 Ewing Ave.

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The anatomy of a common cold is the subject of a two-part series starting today in Wednesday Magazine.

Low priority given to Berkowitz threats

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terns involved here, he would certainly be a suspect in the arson, too.

The sheriff's chief investigator, referring to a letter that had threatened a volunteer deputy's life, said simply, "If I got scared every time someone said he was going to kill me, I'd have to hang up my badge."

The missing element, of course—and it was missing—the linking of one crime to another, the formation of a pattern, the realization that one man was behind the crimes.

The Yonkers neighborhood in which Berkowitz lived and in which he waged his guerrilla war is deemed a high-crime area. Indeed, 40 complaints were recorded in 1977, sources say, in an area behind Berkowitz' apartment the size of a football field. At least four of those complaints related to crimes Berkowitz admits he committed.

Given that crime rate, could a pattern of arson and dog shooting have been observed at the time, or is it simply hindsight—and Berkowitz' admissions, that tie the crimes to him? The question was put to veteran law enforcement officers inside the Yonkers and Sheriff's departments. Their conclusion: The pattern was clear, or should have been.

A New York City detective with 23 years on the force says, "You've got to think there's most likely a single person living in the neighborhood. There was the (arson and dog shooting and then the same thing happens to Carr. The pattern was exactly the same, and the letters Carr got were about his dog. It makes sense to think the same person was responsible for all of it, and that he probably lived close enough to be tagged by the dog barking. You've got a narrow area to search."

Yonkers sources disagree, saying the information given to the police indicated at least two other persons had committed those crimes, and neither was Berkowitz.

After Berkowitz shot Sam Carr's dog in April, 1977, for example, sources say, a man walking his dog told police responding to the scene that he had seen a slender, blond youth about 17, running on the apartment behind Carr's home with a rifle.

But the police did not obtain the witness' name, the sources acknowledge, and an FBI agent says, "They had nothing without this witness, and if the blond guy (with the gun) did exist, it doesn't mean he wasn't Berkowitz' buddy. And it became irrelevant once they had Berkowitz' name and all that handwriting. He should have been a hot suspect."

Similarly, when Berkowitz first struck in Yonkers, at the Wicker Street home of Joachim Neto, the firebombing was linked to a black youth. Police responding to the arson, sources say, were told by Sylvia Neto, then 12, that she heard a young, black male calling to a companion just before the bottle of flammable liquid crashed into the side of the house at about 4 in the morning.

Sylvia Neto acknowledges today that the spoke with the police after her home was firebombed.

"I told them (the police) that it could have been a black voice," she says. "But it could have been a white voice of any kind of voice."

Further, says an FBI agent, "You cannot put exclusive stock in anyone's recollection of a voice in the middle of the night. She's not even anyone, so there's no way of knowing for sure it came from right outside the house. She could have dreamed it. It could have been someone mistaking a black voice. Or it could have been a white guy with a black voice."

"Besides," the agent says, "they hadn't gotten anywhere at that case in a year. The name of the game is to solve crimes and close the books. Berkowitz was a live suspect. You've got to get at least one name."

Maria Neto says the police never asked her family whether they had ever heard of Berkowitz. Her daughter, Sylvia, also adds no information. When her dog, Berkey, was shot to death by shooting in the back, she says she saw a large white car driving away after the shot. Mrs. Neto says her husband reported Sylvia sighting to the police. Sources say the Yonkers police recorded the information in "red" card.

Sylvia's sighting becomes important in light of Sam Carr's call on the Yonkers police six months later when he gave them the name, address and telephone number of David Berkowitz as a suspect in the crimes committed against him in the previous eight months. Berkowitz drove a large white Ford Galaxy.

Asked if the Yonkers police, after hearing Sam Carr's assertion, checked Berkowitz with the State Department Motor Vehicle, a city official said, "What for a crank letter writer?"

Instead, the city says, detectives obtained a copy of Berkowitz' lease, had printed and signed, and sent it with copies of the letters threatening Carr to the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The city says that step was taken by the June 20, 1977. The FBI replied in a letter dated Aug. 4, 1977, the city says. The letter informed Yonkers that the lease was not sufficient enough a sample to compare the handwriting. Yonkers police had not obtained the representative matching handwriting samples needed to put Berkowitz behind bars.

A source in the New York City Police Department's Document Section says, "Sometimes a signature is enough to go on. But it's safer to get as much of a suspect's writing as you can."

Asked about the June-to-August time span in waiting for an FBI response, the police source pointed out the options available to a local force. "You ran to the FBI, to us, or to any acknowledged writing expert. Most large police departments have their own people," Yonkers does not.

"Just how do you go about getting these matching writing samples?" ask Yonkers detectives challenged a reporter.

"In any number of ways," says a New York City homicide detective. "His job, his schools, his friends, his family or his bank. I name just a few of the top. You could even ask the suspect himself to provide them."

The Yonkers police did not confront Berkowitz to question him and did not contact the Casaras until Au put to learn more about Berkowitz' background.

The city maintains it did more than enough in sending the lease and letters to the FBI. "I think the only



The path of David Berkowitz' incriminating letters

reason they (the police) did it," a city official says, "is because Sam Carr is such a pest."

While Carr's letters went off the FBI, another letter was in the hands of the Westchester Sheriff's Office. It warned volunteer Deputy Craig Glassman that he was targeted to die. Its envelope provided something more. The most recent previous address of David Berkowitz and the address to which he had sent Jack Casara a get-well card one day before he mailed the letter to Glassman.

Since Casara had already voiced his suspicions of Berkowitz to Sam Carr, his address on the letter provided the Sheriff's Department with a direct line to Berkowitz in the anonymous threat against Glassman, and by extension, to Sam Carr and the crimes in Yonkers.

Glassman, called Under-Sheriff John O'Brien, who ordered the letter checked for fingerprints. "The letter didn't produce any prints," says Chief Criminal Investigator Salvatore Iorio.

But the residents who lived at that return address on the envelope went unchecked.

"It was the opinion of Glassman, the under-sheriff and myself when we looked over it (the letter)—based on other information, not just what was in the letter—that it very possibly could be an internal situation within the organization itself."

A New York City detective dismisses that position, saying, "They (the sheriff's investigators) didn't even thoroughly investigate their own theory. There could have been as many deputy sheriffs sharing the (Casara) house at 174 Coligni Ave."

Iorio would not elaborate on what led the Sheriff's Department to the conclusion that it was a member of the department. During this newspaper's initial interview with Iorio, conducted last December in the Sheriff's Department's Vahalla offices, the chief investigator showed what was sent a copy of the envelope from Glassman's June 7 letter and three others to Glassman. The return address was not on the June 7 letter, although other return addresses, almost as significant, appeared on the subsequent three. Glassman says the Coligni Avenue return address was on the first envelope.

Iorio confirmed in a subsequent interview that the Casara address was on one of the letters to Glassman. Like the Yonkers Police Department, the Sheriff's Office did not alert the FBI to the mailed death threat.

And an FBI agent, critical of the handling of the Glassman letter, says simply, "The first thing they should have done was look into that address. That's one hell of a strong lead. The letter threatened to kill Glassman and they took it (the threat) seriously enough to run the letter for prints."

In addition, a New York City detective adds, "Glassman's envelope said 'Ap. 6K' on it, too. That's an (apartment building) internal address—one you don't get too easily. Plus, his general address wasn't widely known. You should theorize that whoever sent the letter either lived in the building, had access to it, or knew Glassman very well."

There was much more to come. In his June 5 letter to columnist Jimmy Breslin, the 44-Caliber Killer had warned the world that he was "still here, like a spirit running the night." With the wounding of Judy Placido and Sal Lupo, he'd made his point. He was still here, though in hiding.

And he promised more.

Specifically, he had written "what will you have for July 29?" That was the upcoming anniversary of the first murder, that of Donna Lauria. Many thought the killer was planning to strike again on that night to celebrate, as Breslin put it, "his first birthday."

On July 11, with the tension mounting as the "death-day" countdown continued, the great storm-triggered blackout plunged New York into darkness. Lightning struck in Yonkers, too—again—in David Berkowitz' vicinity a mailbox and dropped in yet another anonymous threat to Glassman.

There one had a Co-Op City Zip Code and street referenced in the return address. Berkowitz had once lived in Co-Op City, but the Sheriff's Department, not having talked with the Casaras, had heard of David Berkowitz.

The return address also read "Command Post 118" and the letter itself contained several references to "Mr. Carr." Sam Carr lived at 216 Warburton Ave., behind Berkowitz and Glassman, but the Sheriff's Department, not having talked with the Casaras or the Yonkers Police Department, had not heard of Sam Carr either.

Glassman again went to the Sheriff's Department where this letter, like the first one five weeks earlier, was analyzed for prints. The department, however, still convinced it was dealing with what it calls "an internal matter," did not talk with the Casaras or contact the Yonkers police or the FBI.

While Sheriff's Investigator David Pelicciolo checked handwriting samples of department employees, two hot July weeks ticked by.

Once again the stage was set. On July 24, Stacy Moskowitz, 20, was introduced to another Brooklynite, Robert Volante, also 20. They made a date for Saturday, the 29th. On that night they drove to the Shore Parkway service road near Ith City Street in Bensonhurst. They parked under a brilliant soot street lamp. Although the area was well lit, they did not notice a young man standing opposite and slightly behind them at the mouth of the park, observing them.

At 2:35 a.m., the man slowly and deliberately walked up to the Volante car, drawing a gun from beneath his shirt.

He stopped six feet from the couple, crouched, gripped the .44 Bulldog in both hands and fired four times through the open passenger side window. He lowered the gun and sped away on foot. Thirty nine hours later, the death watch ended. Stacy Moskowitz succumbed a bullet in her brain. Robert Volante was blinded.

"Deathday" had come two days later, but it had been observed. In the wake of the shooting, the lid burst on New York's already boiling pressure cooker now that Son of Sam had ventured out of his usual Bronx and Queens hunting grounds.

Anticipating a possible attack in Westchester, Sheriff Thomas Delaney called a meeting at which he briefed police officials from around the county on a plan to increase local patrols. Yonkers police were present.

While Delaney spoke, two threatening letters from David Berkowitz were sitting in his files, where one of the two June 6 letters to Mrs. Casara on June 14, after Sam Carr had reported the families' findings

about Berkowitz to the Yonkers police. Nam Casara says she went to her city's force in New Rochelle to relate her suspicions about Berkowitz.

New Rochelle police sources confirm Mrs. Casara's visit, saying the department contacted the Yonkers police and was subsequently assured in a return call that the Yonkers police had Mrs. Casara's information.

On Aug. 3, the day of Stacy Moskowitz' funeral, Mrs. Casara says, she called Yonkers police and spoke with Det. Michael Lorenza, who was working the Carr case.

"He was very rude," she recalls. "He at first told me he didn't know anything about Sam Carr and what happened to him. So I started to tell him about it. . . . He Carr and his goddamned dog and his home wasn't fire-bombed."

"He really upset me," adds Mrs. Casara. "I sure realized I couldn't get anywhere with him. So I told him so, said I thought David Berkowitz was Son of Sam, and I hung up the phone."

Lorenza declined comment. In Yonkers, at 7:30 a.m., Saturday, Aug. 6, Berkowitz started a rubbish fire outside his neighbor Glassman's door at 20 Pine St.

Two months too late, that fire put Yonkers police and Glassman in touch with one another, and it finally spurred a serious official Yonkers investigation of Berkowitz.

When Yonkers police arrived to investigate the fire, Glassman showed them copies of the threatening mail he had received. The handwriting was familiar to uniformed Yonkers Police Officers Peter Intervallo and Thomas Chamberlain.

They had seen it two months earlier, on threatening letters mailed to Sam Carr and on a copy of a get-well card sent to Jack Casara in New Rochelle. The officers told Glassman their suspicions about Berkowitz, took a report and left.

Glassman then called the Sheriff's Department, which quickly tried to obtain a warrant to search Berkowitz' apartment. Without knowing the significance of the Coligni Avenue return address on Glassman's first letter, and with no matching samples of Berkowitz' known writing, the Sheriff's Department had only what an assistant district attorney termed "a hunch" as grounds for the warrant request. The assistant district attorney denied it.

Later that Saturday, Glassman opened his mailbox to find two more envelopes with the same handwriting. Sam Carr's name and return address, only listed at the second letter, were spelled out on one of those envelopes. Glassman says he called Sheriff's Investigator Feliciano and quotes Feliciano as telling him not to open the letters and to bring them in Monday.

Glassman says he then phoned the Yonkers police and left a message for Detective Lorenza. Glassman says he did not receive a return call from Lorenza.

At 5 p.m., the Yonkers police called the Casaras, soliciting information on Berkowitz from the same woman who had called them three days earlier. Mrs. Casara says she was told by the Yonkers police that her family was "somehow referenced" in Glassman's letters, an apparent allusion to the Coligni Avenue return address of the first letter. It is not known whether the Yonkers police also alerted the Sheriff's Office to the significance of that address.

In calling the Casaras, Yonkers police wanted to learn where Berkowitz lived before moving into their home. That former address was on Barnes Avenue in the Bronx, where a dog had been shot and threatening notes had been slipped under a tenant's door during the time Berkowitz lived there.

It appears that outside of the independent work done by uniformed Police Officers Intervallo and Chamberlain, an serious investigation had been begun on Berkowitz by Yonkers detectives for any crimes unit, the call Aug. 6 to the Casaras.

"I told them I didn't think they had any interest in David Berkowitz and the information I had," Mrs. Casara says. "But I gave them what they wanted to know."

Although Mrs. Casara says Yonkers police told her that they now believed Berkowitz "may be Son of Sam," he was still not placed under surveillance.

Four days later, on Aug. 10, the Sheriff's Department sent Glassman's threatening letters to the FBI. Hours later, Berkowitz was arrested outside his Pine Street apartment by New York City police—the result of a parking ticket placed on his car two blocks away from and 30 minutes before the Moskowitz-Volante shooting.

As he was led away in handcuffs, the Yonkers police got their first look at David Berkowitz.

Detective John Falotico, 10th Homicide, Brooklyn, and his supervising sergeant, William Garcia, were credited with the arrest.

But local authorities came in for a share of the credit at an awards ceremony held even before Berkowitz' trial. Among them were: Sheriff Thomas Delaney, Detective Michael Lorenza and other Yonkers detectives and supervisors.

Police Officers Intervallo and Chamberlain, in addition to being honored, were soon promoted to the detective rank.

In effect, the book was rapidly closed on the Son of Sam investigation.

But not for everyone. Today, the Casaras remain distraught that their information was not acted on and that they themselves could have been harmed. "I still think about those poor kids, too," says Mrs. Casara.

Volunteer Deputy Glassman went on to write a manuscript, parts of which were published in Westchester Illustrated, a magazine that lists Sheriff Delaney's son Peter as its president.

In Queens, Sal Lupo is physically recovered from his wounds, as is Judy Placido, who has worked to aid crime victims and has been studying at Pace College in White Plains. For both, the mental scars of that June night at Elephas endure.

In Brooklyn, Robert Volante, who has also worked for the benefit of crime victims, is capable today of all. Among them were: Sheriff Thomas Delaney, Detective Michael Lorenza and other Yonkers detectives and supervisors.

NEXT: The unanswered questions in the Son of Sam investigations.

Police charge 7 residents in raid on numbers racket

(Continued from 1A)

One other man, identified by police as policy investigator Paul J. Mahoney as Harry Crayton, the owner of the record shop, was still being sought by police in connection with the gambling investigation.

About three hours after the raid state police had traced Crayton to a Florida location. The record shop owner is expected to surrender to authorities in Rockland. If he doesn't return to the county, legal moves will be made to force his return on gambling charges, Gribetz said.

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Nesty Woods, 33, of 15 White St., Spring Valley, was identified as the owner of the food store and arrested.

Although authorities said the policy operation was the county's largest ever, Gribetz and Mahoney agreed that activities at the two Spring Valley locations were separate, rather than combined.

Gribetz said that Crayton ran one policy operation while Woods headed the other.

Others arrested during the daylight police raid in Spring Valley in addition to Woods were Bobby Lee Coleman, 28, of 8 Rose Ave.; John

Welch Jr., 42, of 14 Sinn Ave.; Robert Coleman, 34, of 2 Municipal Plaza; Ernest Renfro, 31, of 100 Kar-nell St.; Herman T. Burns, 31, of 2 Municipal Plaza, all of Spring Valley; and also Charles Vaughn, 35, of 193 Main St., Nyack.

Police seized a large number of policy records, an undetermined amount of cash, a small quantity of cocaine and also three cash registers and two time machines that were, it was charged, used to tabulate the policy bets.

Tuesday's bust was the second major gambling raid in Rockland County over a three-day period.

Sunday, about 30 police officers arrested 30 persons during a cock-fight at a Haverstraw barn. Cock-fighting materials were also seized the same day at a New City dairy farm. Gribetz said that about \$400 was seized on the two occasions. Individuals, ASPCA officials from New York City said it was the largest cockfighting operation in the metropolitan area.

Hundreds of persons betting on a seven-day-a-week basis wagered a total of about \$5,000 a week at the two Spring Valley locations. Individuals bet ranged from 10 cents to about three dollars. Bets were

made on the first three numbers of racehorse results at a flat track. Bettors attempted to guess what the first digits would be in the amounts wagered on win, place and show. Race results were checked daily in newspapers. Mahoney said when explaining what police learned during their six-month investigation.

A 10 cent bet at 500-1 odds would earn the person who correctly guessed the three-digit number \$50, the state police investigator said.

All but Vaughn were charged with possessing gambling records.

He was accused on a single count of promoting gambling. Woods, Welch, Robert Coleman, Renfro and Burns were also charged with promoting gambling.

Renfro was accused also of possessing a small quantity of cocaine, Gribetz said.

On conviction first degree charges of promoting gambling could bring possible maximum four-year prison sentences. Lesser charges of possessing gambling records in the second degree could draw one-year sentences on conviction, the district attorney said.