

Is real .44-caliber killer in jail?

By MAURY THERRY and JAMES MITTEGAER
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David Berkowitz, the self-proclaimed Son of Sam, lied in his confession and apparently had an accomplice with him the night of the final attack, new information uncovered by Gannett Westchester Newspapers shows.

It also appears that it was the accomplice, not Berkowitz, who killed Stacy Moskowitz and blinded Robert Violante with the notorious .44-caliber weapon Berkowitz was carrying when arrested.

Berkowitz, police sources say, may have been nothing more than a lookout for the killer.

A witness says that 15 minutes before the shots were fired, Berkowitz jumped into his car and sped from the scene, following a police car blocks from the shooting site.

That report contradicts Berkowitz' account of his movements that night in Brooklyn. Further, it puts him out of the area at the same time Violante says he and Miss Moskowitz were watched by a "wheat-grub" man — always presumed to have been the killer — in a playground adjoining the parking spot where they were shot shortly after returning to their car.

Berkowitz, who said he never left the scene, had maintained he was the man in the playground.

The report of Berkowitz' departure has been withheld from the public by the police and prosecution. It was supplied by Cecilia Davis, the woman credited with alerting police to the parking ticket placed on Berkowitz' car a half-hour before the shooting, which occurred on July 21, 1977.

This ticket, written because Berkowitz had parked at

a fire hydrant on Bay 17th Street — two blocks from the murder — led to his arrest in Yonkers on Aug. 19.

Mrs. Davis also later encountered a man she positively identified as Berkowitz as she walked her dog on Bay 17th Street just moments before the shots were fired.

However, her crucial first sighting of Berkowitz, as he earlier drove from the neighborhood, has not been released by police.

In addition to uncovering the major contradiction in Berkowitz' confession, the Gannett investigation of the Manhattan-Violante shooting has found the following:

• The second sighting of Berkowitz by Mrs. Davis as he walked by her on Bay 17th Street just before the shooting shows Berkowitz appears to have returned to the area too late to have been the gunman. A limited re-enactment put him two blocks and more than 2½ minutes from the Violante car at barely a minute before the shots were fired. Police sources have acknowledged a "three-minute" time gap at the scene.

Moreover, Mrs. Davis' report of a neat, short-haired Berkowitz sharply contrasts with the description of the actual killer provided by the key eyewitness to the shooting itself, Tommy Zaimo. He describes a long-haired assailant who was also dressed in clothing other than what Mrs. Davis says Berkowitz was wearing only 70 seconds earlier. And Zaimo, the re-enactment also shows, was observing the killer standing by a park bench at about the same time Mrs. Davis was seeing Berkowitz two blocks away.

Likewise, the blinded Violante's depiction of the man he saw in the playground before the shooting as a

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The Journal News

Serving all of Rockland County

ROCKLAND COUNTY, N.Y., THURSDAY, JULY 19, 1979

A MEMBER OF THE GANNETT GROUP

Taxi drivers paralyze city in fare protest

NEW YORK (AP) — Thousands of irate taxi drivers virtually paralyzed traffic for several hours Wednesday in a violence-marred demonstration for a 50-cent fare increase to cover rising fuel costs.

The protest, mainly by taxicab owner-operators, wrapped Manhattan in a yellow blockade and stranded would-be riders on street corners fighting for the few cabs in service.

Confrontations erupted between protesters and motorists as the cabbies drove onto bridges, tunnels and roadways leading into the city, got out of their cars and refused to move for 2½ hours during rush-hour traffic.

Police arrested six protesting taxi drivers and one motorist. Authorities said two cabbies and a police officer were slightly injured during a scuffle outside the Lincoln Tunnel.

One cabbie suffered an apparent heart attack on the 59th Street bridge and was taken to a hospital, demonstrators said.

The demonstration left Kennedy and LaGuardia airports with far fewer cabs than normal and clogged city access routes until 9:30 a.m. Some downtown streets were snarled until after noon.

Some 3,000 drivers from 18 groups claiming to represent 80 percent of the city's 12,000 medallion cabs converged on Battery Park on Manhattan's southern tip for a 2½-hour morning rally.

The Associated Radio Meter Taxi Owners Council representing 2,500 cabs and the Independent Taxi Owners Association with 3,000 cabs were the two largest groups participating.

Stanley Bakalar, president of the owners council, labeled the 15-cent fuel surcharge approved last week and effective Wednesday "a broadsword that the Taxi and Limousine Commission thinks we should be grateful for."

The taxi drivers are pressing for a fare hike that would raise the initial drop on the meter — the charge assessed before mileage rates are added — from 75 cents to \$1.25.



High angle photo shows part of the thousands of taxis that snarled New York City traffic Wednesday as they drove down Broadway toward Battery Park during their protest for higher fares.

Nyack merchant charged 7 held, linked to sale of million in heroin

By FRANK LEONARD
Staff Writer

Federal and county authorities, working in an investigation that began two years ago at a South Nyack food store, have arrested seven persons charged in connection with the sale of more than \$1 million in heroin.

The arrests were announced Wednesday by Rockland District Attorney Kenneth Grietz following the late afternoon arraignment of the defendants at the U.S. District Courthouse in Manhattan.

Among those arrested after a raid Tuesday by about 20 agents of the federal Drug Enforcement Administration, the county Narcotics Task Force, investigators from the district attorney's office and Nyack police was Joseph Lenti, described by Grietz as the owner of the American Tropical Food Store at 92 S. Franklin St., South Nyack.

Lenti, who will be 32 this month, was taken into custody at his home at 25 Dickson Ave., Nyack.

Arrested by federal agents was Nazir Zada, 36, of 61-25 97th St., Rego Park, Queens; Zada is the brother of convicted slayer Samir Zada and the brother of Amer Zada, the 17-year-old South Nyack youth who has pleaded not guilty in the June 19th knife slaying in Nyack of Sharley Smith, a 17-year-old village resident.

Others arrested were 38-year-old Antonette "Tania" Vitale, her 21-year-old sister, Angelina, and Linda Biera, 24. All three women live at the Rego Park address with Nazir Zada, Grietz said.

The other two defendants are Graziano "Rocky" Barzani, 28, of 72-25 68th St., Middle Village, Queens, and Anthony Diaz. Authorities had no age or address available for Diaz.

Zada, Barzani and Diaz were charged with selling, possessing and distributing heroin, Lenti was

charged with possessing and distributing the drug. Zada was also accused of possessing two guns, one described as a derringer and the other only as a handgun. All seven were charged with conspiracy to possess and distribute heroin.

The investigation began in South Nyack and centered on the food store about two years ago after members of the Narcotics Task Force received confidential information. Officials of the Drug Enforcement Administration soon entered the case.

Grietz said federal undercover agents spent more than \$100,000 to make heroin "boys." Involved in the investigation was heroin valued at more than \$1 million in "illegal street" prices.

Although the exact quantities of heroin involved and the amount spent to make the purchases are known, the information was not

contained in the federal indictment charging all seven defendants. Grietz would not divulge additional information because of the pending trial.

"This is the most important narcotics case to develop in Rockland County in the past several years. It deals with connections in several New York City locations," he said.

The heroin sales were made in New York City. When the federal officials and local police raided the South Nyack food store they confiscated 20 pounds of detritus, an agent used to dilute high quality heroin. Lenti was the only one to be arrested in Rockland. The rest were arrested at city locations.

It was charged that the heroin sale conspiracy began Feb. 1 of this year and lasted until the time of the arrests. The actual investigation, began about two years ago.

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Califano appears the first to go

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Carter has decided to accept the resignation of HEW Secretary Joseph A. Califano and to replace him with Housing and Urban Development Secretary Patricia Harris.

several sources reported today. The outspoken, liberal secretary of health, education and welfare became the first casualty of Carter's Cabinet shakeup. Califano abruptly canceled a congressional appearance and called a news conference later today at which sources said he was expected to announce his departure.

Other sources said that Mrs.

Harris had accepted another post in the government and that it would be HEW.

There was no formal confirmation from the White House.

Meigsville, Hamilton Jordan, taking over as White House chief of staff, ordered an evaluation of top officials throughout the government while President Carter's Cabinet members waited today to learn whether their resignations would be accepted.

The only formal announcement Wednesday from the White House revealed Jordan's promotion.

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Somoza's successor resigns post

MANAGUA, Nicaragua (AP) — The Sandinista junta prepared to move into Managua today or Friday after national guard resistance melted and President Francisco Urengo and other remnants of the Somoza dictatorship fled.

Urengo resigned Wednesday evening, 38 hours after replacing exiled dictator Anastasio Somoza, and sped to the airport. His destination was not known. There was no confirmation he had left the country, and there was speculation his takeoff might have been delayed until daylight.

Other Somoza men who hadn't escaped earlier fled to the airport, too, as national guard troops virtually disappeared from most of the capital. Guerrilla columns were reported headed toward Managua from rebel-held Leon. Few if any guard checkpoints were reported still along the highway.

The dictatorship's military chiefs negotiated by radio with guerrilla leaders in Leon, 35 miles northwest of Managua, trying to arrange terms for the surrender of the remaining troops, a reliable source with access to the conversations said.

The guard commanders were seeking assurance that their troops would not be executed. The source said agreement would probably be reached for the troops to assemble in churches, surrender and leave their weapons there.

For the first time in many weeks, no firing was heard in Managua Wednesday night.

"I expect we will be in Managua tomorrow or the next day," junta member Alfonso Robelo told reporters in Leon Wednesday after he and other junta members

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Outlook bleak for Valley mother seeking home

By JUDY GRANDE
Staff Writer

With each passing day, life gets a little bit tougher for Linda Jones. Efforts to find a larger apartment so that she can regain custody of her two seriously ill sons have so far turned up nothing.

The search, begun several months ago by the Spring Valley woman, intensified this week after an article detailing her plight in Sunday's Journal-News.

But no one has had any luck — not the mayor of Spring Valley who has called a few landlords; not the director of the village housing authority whose apartments are booked solid; not the county

Department of Social Services which has a housing division of its own to care for clients.

Not even an interview with the family on ABC's *Ewings* News Tuesday night elicited an available apartment.

And time is running out. Unless she and her husband Robert find a suitable three-bedroom apartment or home by Aug. 1, they could lose their sons forever. The county can and probably will file a petition against the parents that will free the children for adoption.

Stricken with a rare, incurable kidney disease, the boys, Robert, 6, and Joseph, 5, were placed in a foster home almost five years ago af-

ter they were diagnosed as having nephropenic diabetes insipidus.

At the time of the diagnosis, Mrs. Jones was having financial difficulties, as well as a problem with one of her two daughters who has epilepsy. Because she couldn't handle all the problems at once, she voluntarily placed them in foster care.

But now her life has straightened out and she wants the boys home with her. Her husband has a full-time job with the village of Spring Valley and she can receive a Section 8 grant from the village that will pay the bulk of their rent.

Only she can't find an apartment that will pay the bulk of their rent. Either the landlords don't want to accept wel-

fare clients, (they currently receive \$7.50 a month toward their rent) or they won't accept four children.

"I'm backed into a corner," said the 28-year-old mother, now living in a small apartment on Homerside Avenue. "I have the feeling that no matter what I do I'm going to lose them forever."

"I don't know how many years I have left with these kids. I just want them home with me now. If something happens to them, I don't want to be the last to know," she said.

Though the disease is not necessarily fatal, the boys' lives are in constant jeopardy because they run a very high risk of dehydration.

"Every day, it's a battle for them," said Mrs. Jones. "Summer-time it's really bad because when they sweat, salt just pours right out of them. I want them home with me so I can take care of them. We want to be a family again."

The mayor of Spring Valley, Lawrence Perlman, came up with one possibility — a vacant house on Hoffman Street in the village. But the landlord wanted \$50 a month rent, plus utilities, a figure too high for the Joneses.

The housing authority has one vacant four-bedroom apartment, but it needs extensive repairs that could cost about \$10,000 and will not be ready for several weeks.

Another four-bedroom apart-

ment that may soon be vacated is rough infested and needs even more repairs, according to Sandra Foreman, director of the housing authority.

The search for an apartment or house must be confined to Spring Valley because the family can recover the housing grant from the village and Robert Jones can retain his job as an assistant mechanic there.

Hejmer Klint, director of social services for the county, said he has notified his housing division to make the Jones apartment a priority.

But the market is very tight, he said, and the county, too, is having trouble.

