

Our views

Police diligence did pay off

THE CAPTURE of David Berkowitz as the prime suspect in the "Son of Sam" murders proves again the value of dogged thoroughness in checking out all possible lines of investigation, even down to the ownership of cars ticketed in the vicinity of the last shooting in Brooklyn.

If the suspect is who the police believe he is, he's well taken alive and intact. Whatever may be his mental and emotional condition, professional exploration could be helpful in the elusive business of trying to detect and identify dangerous people - in time. That was an identification pretty well made by Yonkers police, who have acted as a conduit to the investigation by relaying occurrences here to the New York City task force and by their own parallel probe of local incidents that was as important a detail as the traffic ticket in helping set the snare.

While the area sighs with collective relief, one arrest, although sensational, hasn't made basically unsafe areas such as lovers' lanes and other secluded places any otherwise. That's still stalking territory for muggers, robbers, rapists and assorted creeps.

Traditional conflict

FOUR JOURNALISTS were arrested by Yonkers police Thursday in the Apartment of Son of Sam suspect David Berkowitz at 35 Pine St. Police charged them with trespass, claiming they entered a posted crime scene without authorization. The journalists, representing the New York Daily News, Time magazine, the Washington Post and New York Post, said they entered unchallenged.

It was a "Front Page" confrontation, the traditional conflict between the two professions each trying to do its job. The journalists wanted to get material they knew their readers wanted. But they breached police security and, as one officer put it, "Damn right, pull something like that and you get arrested." He's right.

Another officer was apprehensive. "Time magazine - the Washington Post - these guys are heavies; imagine the kind of press we're going to get for throwing them in the slammer..." Not likely; the police are responsible for the private property of the suspect. And for enforcing the rules of their own investigation.

Interestingly, the Daily News did not report the arrest. The New York Post reported the arrest and used pictures taken in the apartment. Although police confiscated the film, the Post photographer turned over blank rolls.

Also interestingly, the Washington Post writer had called The Herald Statesman earlier to ask if he could use a typewriter. It wasn't until later we realized why he didn't show up.

By the way...

The CIA predicts a Soviet economic slowdown in the 1980s, aggravated by a prospective domestic oil shortage. If we think the Soviets already spell trouble in the Mideast, just wait.

Prayer for today

As Summer smiles her way in late this afternoon, I utter a joyous hymn of happiness, dear Lord of all seasons, for the loveliest and warming of them, for the sun and flowers, for the rain and rainbows, for the unfolding of all Nature. Make me worthy—in my hour of relaxation—of the glorious splendor of a summer's afternoon, and of a summer's night, which "has a smile of light and she sits on a sapphire throne."

THE HERALD STATESMAN

Larkin Plaza Yonkers, N.Y.
YO 5-5000

John E. Sheils David Hartley
Vice President, General Manager Editor

Gannett Westchester Newspapers

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Public opinion

Group home is welcome

I write concerning your front page headline of Aug. 2 "Group home site blasted by community" and the accompanying article.

IN THEM, Hastings sounds uninformed about the retarded and heartless about efforts to save them from grim institutional lives by providing homes where they can live more normal, community-based lives.

One can understand that neighbors of the proposed project might have questions and qualms about it. It is harder to understand the remarks by Village Board members you quote to the effect that "the site stinks." "It is clear they are not welcome here in Hastings," and so on. It is true that for many - maybe even the majority - there is no room at the inn. But it is not responsible of the board to speak for the community on this issue before most of the community even knows it exists. A careful weighing of the social costs and benefits of the program might well find community interests fall with the latter.

I live a block and a half from the site and pass it walking at least once every day. This neighbor welcomes it.

RACHEL SADY
Hastings on Hudson

U.N. farce

The United Nations has just recently displayed itself for the barbaric conglomeration of misanthropes it is. On Wednesday, July 20, a day that will surely be held in contempt by all who love justice, the U.N. opened the way for the admittance of Vietnam. Only the acquiescence of the United States could make this sham more deplorable than it already is, especially in the light of President Carter's vaunted human rights statements!

AS WITH so many of the member state's of the U.N., Vietnam is an outlaw nation, deriving its right to exist-

ence through the suppression of its own people. As if this were not bad enough, Vietnam is waging a continuing struggle (with the help of our "dear friends" Soviet Russia and Red China) against its neighbors, Thailand and Burma. Of course it wages war through such fronts and National Liberation Movements, which they used to great effect in South Vietnam (our radical protesters should note how long the Vietcong remained separate from North Vietnam after the South's fall). There can be no better testimony about the brutality of the North than that of one recently escaped former South Vietnamese senator, who opposed the Thieu government, when he said: "We asked the United States to leave, but now we ask for guns to free our land from Communist slavery."

It is time we recognized the dismal truth that the U.N. is nothing more than a forum to further world revolution and not one to further peace, unless it be peace with slavery. It is time that we stopped supporting this monstrosity of farce and deceit either monetarily, or by our continued presence. If the U.N. is our last hope for peace, as its supporters have said, then I submit there can be no hope. The peace the U.N. would offer is too expensive for one who believes in liberty!

JAMES MORRELLA
Yonkers

A winner

I would like to applaud all the men and women who run the Wednesday night bingo at the Ukrainian Youth Center.

I WAS at the bingo Wednesday

night when the lights went out and I must congratulate them on how well they kept everything under control and everyone in order.

Things ran very smoothly right up to the ushering of the people and cars at the end of the night.

I truly enjoyed your bingo and perhaps the next time I come I'll even win.

NANCY CAVE
Yonkers

Inaction

I hope that we are among the many citizens of this state who have written letters of protest for Gov. Hugh Carey's total inaction during the recent blackout.

We pride ourselves on law and order and there was neither when it was needed. The National Guard were conspicuous by its absence and therefore were unable to keep order. This it followed by a lack of due process therefore the law was flaunted.

It was an inopportune time to play politics and I do hope that the voters of this state will remember when the next election comes around.

ITA ABER
Yonkers

City business

A Yonkers auto parts supplier was the low bidder to supply our DPW with auto parts for the year, but it did not win the bid.

INSTEAD the winner is an out-of-state firm at an additional cost to us of almost \$1,700.00. Aren't we in a financial crisis? I wonder if any of our fire apparatus will be repossessed? I am sometimes thankful that Yonkers business is not in the same condition as certain New York City business but then again New York City reviews bids by out-of-town firms in an effort to keep business in the city.

Maybe it's time to change our policy.

NICHOLAS M. PANEBIANCO
Treasurer
Panco equipment corp.
Yonkers

Editor's note:

A bizarre involvement

By DAVID HARTLEY
Editor

Perhaps it began with the telephone calls that came in when the composite of the .44-caliber killer was published Wednesday.

Whispered, mostly anonymous theories about who the suspect might be and how to find him.

And warnings: "He won't wait as long as people think before he strikes again."

There was something, a feeling, in The Herald Statesman newsroom. The normal wind-down at the end of the day, the banter, wasn't there. A feeling of uneasiness was. It began to build.

As with most people, conversation in the newsroom was dominated by the Son of Sam and when and how his year-long reign of terror that has scared the metropolitan area silly would end. And where.



DAVID HARTLEY

City Editor Gwen Hall, a veteran of the old New York Daily Mirror and a staffer here 11 years, thought the composite had a resemblance to a former newsroom employe. One of the theories on Son of Sam's identity was that he was a free-lance journalist and as such, could come and go freely at crime scenes. Just what we need, I thought.

Half seriously, she began to check it out.

It didn't check out but it led somewhere else, to a former Yonkers police officer who had been in trouble. The composite and description fit perfectly. Two more staffers picked up telephones.

We didn't know it then, but law enforcement officials had begun to surround the suspect's home, an apartment in a building 10 blocks away from the newspaper office.

After several hours it was confirmed that Yonkers police had forwarded information on the officer to the New York City task force working on the case and, after an investigation, his name was removed from the suspect list.

But new information - that a Son of Sam suspect lived in Yonkers - was learned. Hard to believe, perhaps because we didn't want to. Five newsroom staffers live in the immediate area of the suspect. Two more live on the fringe. And two executives at other Gannett Westchester Newspapers live almost next door. Most of us have been driving past the house twice a day since he moved in.

The Son of Sam task force, with Yonkers police, was to make an arrest. Reporters, photographers and editors were called in. Communication with our group newspapers and with Gannett News Service began. The significance of the arrest, confirmed at 2 a.m., in the .44-caliber case determined that instead of our regular Thursday evening edition, we would publish in the morning.

Production departments - teletyping, composing, camera room, engraving and press room - reported for work. Circulation personnel began the massive job of trying to contact nearly 1,000 newspaper carriers about the early edition. Trucks filled the loading dock at our Larkin Plaza plant.

The Herald Statesman hit the streets and doorsteps of Yonkers before the New York Post. And there began to unfold the strangest case Yonkers police have ever been involved in, a story that becomes more bizarre with each new fact to be told.

And it will be awhile before all this story is told.

Oliphant's view



Buckley's view

Get serious about crime

By WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

The conventional wisdom is that one needs to spend one's time in probing the CAUSE of our social maladies. A few very bright men (e.g., James Q. Wilson, Ernest Van Den Haag) have been trying to tell us, particularly in the field of penology, that it would be splendid if we were to discover the causes of crime, or the techniques of rehabilitation, but it is our absorption with these pursuits that distracts us from coping with crime.

Weeks after the anarchic outburst in New York City, the talk still tends to dwell on the causes of it. But what should be DONE?

Herewith a few propositions:
—More people than are now in jail ought to be in jail.

—The objection that there are not enough jails is an insufficient one. There are two ways of dealing with the problem. The first would be to build more jails. The second would be to release from jail prisoners who have been sent there as punishment for committing non-violent crimes.

In federal institutions, only 25 per cent of the inmates are there for having murdered, kidnapped, raped, or mugged. In New York State prisons, 30 per cent of the inmates are not there for violent crimes. These people could be punished in different ways, outside jail.

—THERE BEING NO way to make parents responsible for the behavior of their children when there are no parents (it is estimated that over 50 per cent of black teen-agers in New York City live without one or more parent) legal distinctions between children and adults should be abolished where there are no parents; and where there are parents, they should be abolished after repeated offenses.

—Judges or parole boards who release a prisoner of whatever age before he is 25-years-old, who has been convicted three times of a Class A misdemeanor, or twice of a Class E felony, should be subject to impeachment proceedings.

—The community should acknowledge responsibility for failures to grant adequate protection to a member of that community. Victims of violent crimes should be compensated; so also should victims of theft, under reasonable regulations.

Now none of this suggests thought should cease to be given to the causes of every kind of misbehavior. If the future holds for us some thaumaturgical medication that will transform the Son of Sam into St. Francis of Assisi, we should by all means do our best to get it past the Federal Drug Administration.

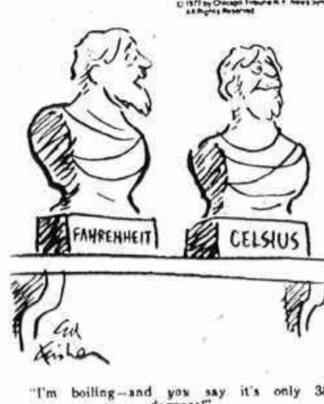
But the methodological breakthrough is overdue: we must reason from the particular back toward the general, rather than the other way around. It is nice to see old Spencer Tracy movies with Father Flanagan saying such things as: "There's no such thing as a bad boy."

BUT THE BROKEN arm, the ravished girl, the tortured old man, are the concrete realities. It does not preclude any kind of inventive ministrations to bad boys to rule that these should be given inside prison walls.

Going after the symptom of the disease (a cognate cliché) is unreasonable only when it is not known how to treat the disease. Since we do not know how to treat the disease, lacking — for instance — the authority to require people to procreate children only in wedlock, then we must ask whether dealing with the symptom isn't to be preferred to doing nothing at all.

The answer should be plain. But of course it isn't; and that is why no reform movement has grown out of the awful events of the past weeks, and years.

William F. Buckley Jr. is editor-in-chief of the conservative magazine National Review.



"I'm boiling—and you say it's only 38 degrees!"

Welfare fraud

New York State spends more than \$6 billion a year on welfare, wasting about \$1 billion in tax dollars through fraud, mismanagement and other abuses.

If you know of an individual or agency involved in welfare fraud, do something about it.

Write: Welfare Fraud, The Herald Statesman, Larkin Plaza, Yonkers, N.Y., 10702.

Or write to the Westchester Social Service Department at: Welfare Fraud, P.O. Box 411, White Plains, N.Y. 10601