

114th Police Precinct Blotter

COMPILED BY LINDA J. WILSON

Those engaged in criminal activity did not observe the Labor Day holiday in the 114th Police Precinct. On Monday, September 3 at 22-08 25th Rd., a **34-year-old Indian male** was charged with assault after he punched a victim in the face and twisted the victim's finger. A **51-year-old white male** was charged with assault after he repeatedly punched a victim, causing a tooth to come out, and a **53-year-old white female** was also charged with assault after she kicked and punched a victim in the face. Both incidents took place at 20-09 Steinway St.

Tuesday, September 4:

- A 24-year-old Indian male was charged with aggravated unlicensed operator after he was involved in a car accident at 23rd Street and Broadway and was found to have a suspended license at the time.
- Two Hispanic males 32 and 42 years old were charged with criminal possession of stolen property and petit larceny after they were observed stealing merchandise from 50-10 Northern Blvd.
- A 28-year-old white male was charged with aggravated unlicensed operator after he was involved in a car accident at 41st Avenue and 29th Street and was found to have a suspended license.
- A 25-year-old Hispanic male was observed running a red light. When he was stopped at 25th Avenue and 43rd Street he was found to have a suspended license and was charged with aggravated unlicensed operator and traffic device violation.
- A 27-year-old white male was observed operating a vehicle with a broken tail/ brake light. When he was stopped at 8th Street and 27th Avenue, he was found to have a suspended license and was charged with aggravated unlicensed operator, inadequate/no stop lamps and unlicensed operator.
- A 34-year-old Hispanic male was

observed at 34th Avenue and 41st Street operating a vehicle without a license and was found in possession of forged identification. He was charged with possession of a forged instrument, unlicensed operator and traffic device violation.

- A 36-year-old Hispanic male was observed at Ditmars Boulevard and Steinway Street drinking beer in public and could not produce valid identification. He

was charged with having an open container of an alcoholic beverage in public.

- A 27-year-old Hispanic male was observed running a red light. When he was stopped at 30-37 43rd St., he was found to be operating an uninsured vehicle and to have a suspended license. He was charged with aggravated unlicensed operator, operating an uninsured vehicle and a traffic device violation.

Borough-Wide Blotter

COMPILED BY LIZ GOFF

108th Precinct

Taxi Owner Masterminds Car Theft Ring & Credit Card Scam

Prosecutors last week charged Saleem Latit, the owner of a Long Island City taxi service, with masterminding a huge car theft ring and using the stolen auto parts to repair his 200-vehicle fleet.

Latit was arraigned in Queens Supreme Court on enterprise corruption and stolen property charges after police at the NYPD Auto Crimes Unit raided his taxi dispatch company at 52-01 Van Dam Street, authorities said.

The raid wrapped up a yearlong investigation by the Auto Crimes squad and detectives at the Queens District Attorney's Squad. Prosecutors charged Latit with spearheading a systematic auto dismantling ring, through which other defendants provided him [Latit] with stolen parts used to maintain [his] vehicles.

Latit was caught with wiretaps where he ordered "hot" car parts from co-defendants Eduardo Aguayo and Robert Franov. Both men, described as chop-shop owners, were arraigned along with Latit on the same charges.

Seven other men have also been charged in the ring and more arrests are likely, law enforcement sources said.

Prosecutors assert ring members would routinely drive stolen vehicles to the chop shop where they were stripped and their spare parts then delivered to Latit.

Latit is also being investigated by the Secret Service and the FBI for using stolen credit card numbers to purchase more than \$100,000 in insurance for vehicles in his taxi fleet, prosecutors said.

Defense attorney Stephen Mahler said his client has known for more than a year that authorities were building a case against him. Mahler said authorities have fabricated charges against his client, and that Latit has been cooperating with investigators at the district attorney's office.

109th Precinct

City Bus Sideswipes & Kills Bicyclist

Police are investigating a fatal accident that took the life of a 31-year-old Flushing bicyclist on September 1.

Habian Rodriguez was riding his bicycle northbound near the intersection of Main Street and the Horace Harding Expressway when he was side-swiped by a city bus traveling in the same direction. Rodriguez, who was knocked off his bike, was taken to New York Hospital of Queens where he was pronounced dead on arrival.

Police said no summonses were issued and no one has been charged in the incident.

Queens Drug Sting

BY LIZ GOFF & SUSAN CLEARY

Officers assigned to the Queens narcotics squad raided a College Point-based steroid ring on September 6 where a top female boxer, a former police officer and others were arrested for peddling performance-enhancing drugs out of two Queens gyms, police said.

Police charged Cindy "Checkmate" Serrano, 25, the ninth-ranked junior lightweight female boxer and her husband and trainer Jordan Maldonado, 41, with the criminal sale of a controlled substance and grand larceny.

Law enforcement officials charged 24 individuals on drug-related charges as a result of an 18-month undercover investigation that focused on two gyms as well as 10 other locations. The Envy Us Gym, 126-19 20th Ave., College Point and the Powerhouse Gym, 35-09 Francis Lewis Blvd., Flushing were declared public nuisances on September 6 and ordered closed by Queens Supreme Court Justice Orin Kitzes.

Several competitive body builders were also arrested in the operation, including Gregory Kovar, 43, whose College Point condominium held a makeshift steroid lab where police seized a centrifuge, syringes, torches, gallon jugs of steroids, a bottling machine and a labeling machine. Police said the suspects emptied the jugs into smaller bottles, which they labeled and sold for \$100 at the gyms. They also found 50 Oxycontin pills, nearly \$40,000 in cash, a .357 magnum and a shotgun at his home. Sources said police believe Kovar was the rings kingpin.

"Half of what Kovar sold was fake," according to police. "He mixed the raw materials with oil, bottled and labeled it using the name of a company that had gone out of business, and sold it to people. People who bought this stuff had no idea what they were injecting into their bodies."

When detectives arrived at Kovar's Julius Road condominium in College Point on Thursday morning, he escaped from an upstairs window wearing only his undershorts. According to Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly, Kovar was apprehended moments later on a neighbor's roof.

Kelly continued saying more than 60 undercover narcotic and steroid purchases were allegedly made among gym employees and members. Cocaine, Vicodin, Oxycontin, Percocet and Xanax were among the drugs sold. Many of the purchases were supposedly made inside the locker rooms, on the gym floor, in the trainer's office and near the front desk. "Our undercover detectives infiltrated this closed circle, a difficult thing to do," Kelly said.

Police said Maldonado, who was also manager at Envy Us Gym, sold vials of "real" pills and fake pills to boxers-in-training at the gym. Maldonado, a former Golden Gloves boxer who was featured in a 2000 Showtime cable TV film, "Bounce Behind the Velvet Rope," spent two years

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109th Precinct Holds VIN-Etch Session

Photo Vinny DuPre

Crime prevention officers of the 109th Precinct, Flushing, held a VIN-etching session on Saturday, September 8 at the Target Shopping Center in Whitestone. Police used an acid solution to etch Vehicle Identification Numbers (VINs) into the window glass of participants' vehicles as a deterrent to thieves who make car windows their specific targets. Police also distributed anti-theft decals identifying cars as being registered under several Police Department anti-theft programs.

