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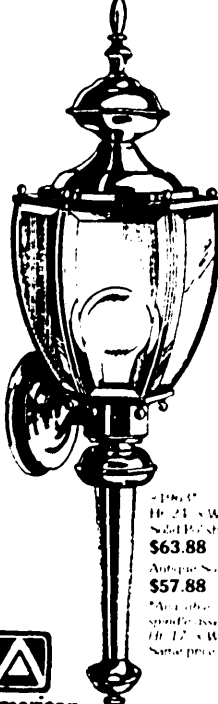
AMERICAN LANTERN

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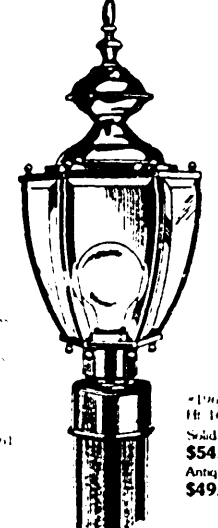


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Orange cops probe case of cabbie charged with 'ramming' an officer

By KEVIN DILWORTH

The Essex County Prosecutor's Office and Orange police yesterday confirmed that they are investigating a weekend shooting and aggravated assault incident that followed a collision between a cab driver and an off-duty city police officer riding a motorcycle.

Jean C. Raymond, 29, a cab driver who lives on Halsted Street in East Orange, was charged with aggravated assault for deliberately ramming into the policeman, and with fleeing the scene of an accident at Tremont and Mosswood avenues, according to Orange Police Director Charles Cobbetti.

The charges were lodged against Raymond by Officer Madison Brown, 27, who was off duty when the collision occurred at 7:12 p.m. Sunday, he added.

Brown told police he fired five shots at Raymond's 1981 Dodge cab following the collision, because the suspect knocked him to the ground by backing his taxi into him. Raymond ran over and destroyed Brown's motorcycle, then fled toward East Orange, Cobbetti continued.

Following the collision, Brown "reported that he identified himself as a police officer, pulled out his badge and displayed it at the driver's side window of the cab," Cobbetti explained.

"The driver did not respond and instead began racing his car engine as Officer Brown shouted, 'I'm a police officer. Don't move the car.' The suspect then reversed his car, backed up, ran over the motorcycle, and knocked Officer Brown to the ground," he said.

Brown reported that after getting up, he pulled out his

revolver and fired five shots, two of which hit the cab, before Raymond drove off, Cobbetti said.

"Within minutes," East Orange police caught Raymond and returned him to Orange, Cobbetti said.

Brown, treated at Orange Memorial Hospital for injuries to his shoulder, neck and left arm, returned to police headquarters about 10 that night and filed charges against Raymond for aggravated assault and fleeing the scene of an accident, he added.

Raymond, employed by the Westland Taxi Corp. Inc. on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard in East Orange, was jailed overnight and released after posting bail, pending the outcome of an investigation by Orange police and the prosecutor's office, noted Acting Orange Police Chief Anthony Benevento.

A preliminary report on the incident has been sent to the Essex County Prosecutor's Office in Newark for review, John S. Redden, a deputy first assistant prosecutor, confirmed.

The prosecutor's office routinely investigates all shooting incidents in the county, he said.

Capt. John Rappaport, the Orange Police Department's internal affairs officer, also is investigating to see whether Brown used his weapon in conformance with guidelines established by the prosecutor's office and the state Attorney General's Office.

Benevento said Brown, employed by the Orange police since Jan. 3, 1983, is assigned to the patrol division's day shift.

Officials at Madison drug clinic say state deserted them in ouster fight

By LAWRENCE HACKETT

Officials from a Morris County methadone clinic, which has been ordered to move out of its offices in Madison, yesterday blasted state officials for failing to help them in their legal battle with the borough and the clinic's neighbors.

"The (state) Department of Health in my eyes stinks," said Mary Mulholland, the founder of the Morris County Aftercare Center, which must move by March 31 under a Superior Court order issued Tuesday. "Upset? No, I'm disgusted, totally disgusted."

Mulholland and clinic board president Howard Steinberg charged yesterday that the Health Department and the state Attorney General's Office had vowed to help them

keep their space in Madison. The clinic was encouraged to move by state health officials last March, Steinberg said, after 22 years in Morristown.

However, the clinic's officials entered Tuesday's hearing before Superior Court Judge Reginald Stanton alone and spent \$8,000 of the center's money to defend themselves, Steinberg said. Stanton found the clinic in violation of local zoning regulations and ordered it to move elsewhere.

"It's our feeling the state must step in and give us some direction," said Steinberg, who will meet with attorney Harry Sears and other board members tomorrow to consider an appeal and other strategy.

"Is it our obligation to go forward on our own to set a precedent for the state of New Jersey, or is it their obligation to set precedent-setting decisions on behalf of drug programs?" he asked.

Health Department spokeswoman Marilyn Riley said the department was "looking into" providing money for the clinic's move as well as helping officials find a new location. "We'll try to do everything we can to support them, both financially and in the relocation," she said.

"Obviously, it's a needed service, and we're disappointed," Riley said.

Acting state Attorney General Donald Belsore said the clinic's case was reviewed by high-ranking staff at the request of Mulholland. Before he resigned, Attorney General Cary Edwards had said he was interested in joining the clinic in its court fight.

Officials, however, found no reason to intervene in the case, Belsore said.

"There was very little we could do beyond what was being done," he said. Belsore said he would review Stanton's decision for a possible appeal, but said it was too early to tell if his office would help the clinic press on.

The clinic is a private, nonprofit center funded by the state. It distributes methadone to about 120 persons seeking to break their heroin habits.

After its move to Madison a year ago, neighbors became outraged at the clinic's presence in a residential area. After a review of zoning laws and the documents surrounding the clinic's move, the Madison board of adjustment ordered the clinic to leave. Tuesday's court hearing was an appeal of that decision.

Stuck truck snarls Pike

A dump truck became wedged under a bridge on the New Jersey Turnpike in Linden in a freak accident yesterday.

State Police said the bed of the empty truck had risen up from the vehicle's carriage and struck the bridge, pushing the truck up on its rear wheels with the hood scraping against the underside of the bridge.

The accident, which happened about 6:15 a.m. under the Wood Avenue bridge, forced the closing of one southbound lane of the Turnpike and drew stares from passing motorists, resulting in lengthy rubber-necking delays both southbound and northbound, State Police said.

The driver of the truck, identified by police as Emmanuel Gonzalez, 42, of Delancy Street, Newark, was taken to St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Elizabeth, where he was treated for a facial cut and released, hospital officials said.

In an attempt to reduce traffic in the southbound truck lanes, troopers changed overhead signs at Interchange 14, where traffic from the eastern and western spurs of the Turnpike merge, and at Interchange 13, to urge all drivers to use the inner car lanes.

The truck, owned by the M.S.P. Construction Co. of Newark, was removed from the highway by 8:45 a.m., but the lane remained closed until early afternoon while workers removed debris from the roadway.

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