

Guards face charges of neglect after recent escape from jail annex

By MEG NUGENT

A corrections officer was suspended without pay yesterday and, along with two other guards, faces disciplinary charges in connection with an inmate's recent escape from the Essex County Jail Annex.

Michael DeMeo of West Orange was suspended after investigators determined he left a door unlocked, easing the escape of 32-year-old William Dillahun from the North Caldwell facility Sunday night, said Gerald Lenihan, deputy director of county public safety.

In addition, neglect of duty charges are pending against corrections officers James Goi of Belleville and Sgt. Samuel Preziosi of Long Valley for "improperly conducting" a head count of inmates the night of the escape, said Lenihan.

Noting charges were in the process of being drawn up yesterday against DeMeo, Lenihan said the four-year corrections officer probably faces a charge "in the area" of neglect of duty.

DeMeo will remain suspended pending a disciplinary hearing on the three men's actions to be conducted by the county counsel's office, said Lenihan. He added no date was set yesterday for the hearing.

Preziosi, a corrections officer

since 1969, and Goi, who was hired in 1974, could be suspended or fined depending on the outcome of the hearing, said the deputy director.

Lenihan said action against the three guards resulted from an investigation by Internal Affairs Officer Gary Pannullo conducted in the wake of the escape.

Dillahun, who was being held at the annex on charges of aggravated assault and weapon possession, was captured within three hours of his escape at an East Orange hotel and transported to the county jail in Newark. He escaped from a relocatable confinement facility (RCF), one of several modular units located on the annex grounds.

The inmate, who was assigned to work in the RCF kitchen, hid himself in a kitchen closet and later walked through an unlocked door located about seven feet from the main entrance.

He then concealed himself in a county van that was parked in a nearby lot and later left the grounds of the annex on foot.

Lenihan announced an investigation was under way on Monday. He blamed the escape on improper security measures, noting that both a door was left unlocked and a routine head count at the RCF was not performed or improperly conducted.

Repair work slows Newark downtown traffic

Traffic along Broad and Market streets in Newark slowed to a crawl for most of yesterday as workers from the city's Water and Sewer Division installed a fire connection from the underground water line to a new business on Broad Street.

Daniel Berardinelli, superintendent of the water utility, explained: "We hope to be finished with the work tomorrow (today)."

"However, whenever we work at Broad and Market streets we run up against so many other utility lines in the street—telephone, Western Union, you name it—that it is possible we might be held up," he said.

Berardinelli added his workers are also looking for a water leak they have detected in the water line under Broad Street.

"The excavation for the fire line is full of water, so we feel the leak is probably north of where we are digging," he said.

Berardinelli explained his workers detected the leak "about a month ago, and we have been using geophones (a machine that can detect a leak through the pavement) to track it down."

"We don't feel it is a big leak. But if you let it go, you could find the street is undermined eventually," he said.

Police said traffic near the intersection "is slow, but it is still moving."

The workers are digging on Broad Street a few feet south of the intersection.



Photo by John A. Gibson Jr

Traffic on Broad Street in Newark backs up as a crew installs an underground water line to a new business

Sgt. Ernest Newby, a police department spokesman, said: "Traffic is down to one lane, but still, cars aren't backed up for blocks or anything."

"We have two patrol cars and our walking policemen there to help out," he said.

Berardinelli added, "Certainly this isn't the most convenient place in town to do the work, but it has to be done."

Three held in Orange gang-style stabbing death

By KEVIN DILWORTH

Three people have been arrested in connection with the beating and stabbing death of a 20-year-old Orange woman earlier this week, the city's police reported yesterday.

Police Director Charles Cobbert identified the suspects as Harvey Holland, 28, of Glenwood Avenue in East Orange, a 17-year-old girl who lives on the same street and Keela Simon, 21, of Ward Street in Orange.

The three have been charged with the murder of Aliha Reese of New Street in Orange.

According to Cobbert, more arrests, involving at least three other women, are expected.

Reese died about 2:15 a.m. Wednesday, shortly after she was attacked in the street by six women who beat her before stabbing her once in the leg and once in the heart, he said. The stabbing was the end result of a dispute Reese had with a woman near Park and William streets about 11:30 p.m. Tuesday, he noted.

After the two fought in the street, the suspect left Reese, drove into Newark and got five women friends and one man, Cobbert said, and the group returned to Orange in a van and a car.

Holland's connection with the homicide is that he drove some of the suspects to the murder scene, Cobbert explained.

About two hours after the original fight, Reese

was found bleeding and sprawled on the ground at New and Park streets.

The police said the murder motive apparently stems from a fight Reese and a woman had over a man.

Detective Sgt. Joseph McNair and Detective Steven Crumpton are credited with arresting the first three suspects.

In addition to McNair and Crumpton, Cobbert said, the continuing investigation is being handled by Detective Capt. Anthony Benevento, Lt. Dominick Scarola, Detectives Todd Bertolini, James Cullen and Clarence Derricott, and members of the Essex County Prosecutor's Office.

Essex inmate protests 15-month trial delay

By DIANE CURCIO

A prisoner in the Essex County Jail in Newark is complaining that he has been under arrest for 15 months and still has not been brought to trial.

Richard Coleman wrote in a letter to The Star-Ledger, "I am appealing to the public for help with my case. They have confined me to this jail, without a trial and found me guilty. I need help."

Coleman said he was arrested on June 28, 1987, and he must post a \$50,000 bond, or \$5,000 in cash, to be released. Despite letters to Superior Court Judge Sidney Reiss, who oversees the criminal court calendar, and state Public Advocate Alfred A. Slocum, Coleman said he has had no movement in his case.

He said he wrote to his public defender, but the attorney has never written back and has visited him only once.

Records in the Essex County Prosecutor's Office show when Coleman was arrested, he and a co-defendant, Ralph Sowell Jr., were charged with the attempted murder of Victor Charles Dizly, who was shot with a 9mm handgun on a Newark street.

John S. Redden, a deputy first assistant prosecutor, said when Coleman was arrested, he was out on bail for a March 3, 1987, arrest. At that time, he had been charged with possession of 12 grams of cocaine with intent to distrib-

ute. He was released after posting \$500 bail. Coleman also faces a 1987 indictment for receiving stolen property.

Redden said, "This was not a case that was ignored or fell through the cracks." After reviewing Coleman's file and speaking with the assistant prosecutor and investigators who handled the matter, Redden said the delays were due to prolonged but unsuccessful plea bargaining and the transition to a new complaint-processing system in the prosecutor's office.

Records show Coleman's public defender filed a motion to have the charges dismissed in July on the basis that the prosecutor's office had failed to bring him to trial in a timely fashion. Judge Reiss denied the motion July 29 when the prosecutor's office showed the case had been forwarded to the grand jury July 27, according to Redden.

He said from November to March, there were negotiations between his office and the public defender to try to resolve the case through a plea bargain incorporating all three charges against Coleman. When the negotiations failed, Redden said the file was sent to one of the four new units established by Prosecutor Herbert H. Tate to process complaints.

The case is scheduled to be presented to a grand jury next Friday.

Appeal panel to study Hillside desegregation

By LISA PETERSON

Oral arguments are scheduled today before an appellate panel in Trenton on whether the Hillside Board of Education should be forced to integrate first-grade classes this month as the final phase of its court-ordered desegregation plan.

State Education Commissioner Saul Cooperman took the desegregation issue back to court after Hillside Superintendent of Schools Anthony Avella said the board of education did not intend to adhere to the state's mandate.

The district intentionally missed an Aug. 17 deadline to notify parents and staff about the reassignment of first-graders, and Avella said if the district is ordered to integrate the first grade after school opens on Tuesday he will defy the court.

The district also failed to meet its Aug. 17 deadline to submit a plan to the state for the eventual desegregation of the predominantly black George Washington School.

Union County Superintendent of Schools Vito Gagliardi Sr. yesterday accused the Hillside board members of acting "irresponsibly" and not living up to their oaths of office. Defending the integration mandates, Gagliardi said it is the state that actually "runs the schools."

Hillside for years failed to address a racial imbalance in the school system cited in 1973, and in 1983 a Superior Court judge gave Cooperman the authority to choose a desegregation approach for the township.

Desegregation opponents maintained their resistance was not racial, and asserted they merely wanted to maintain neighborhood schools and open enrollment.

Cooperman allowed a modified version of a computerized desegrega-

tion plan he chose to go into effect. It involved the reassignment of students in grades 6 to 8 in the 1983-84 school year and for students in the lower grades to be reassigned in 1984-85.

Because of their age, kindergarten children were exempt from the plan so they would not have to travel outside their neighborhoods. The state also agreed to allow first-graders to be exempt from the desegregation plan until the opening of school this fall.

Although much of the desegregation plan is in effect, state officials said a racial imbalance continues due to the granting of numerous sibling and medical waivers and the failure of the district to adopt a policy governing the size of classes.

To address the racial imbalance, Hillside was given the option of participating in a pilot program, Integrated Quality Education (IQE), which brings students from different schools together for various activities during the year.

However, Hillside and the state again locked horns when Department of Education officials recommended students from George Washington and the predominantly white Hurden-Looker School be brought together for 36 days during the school year.

Avella, who said reorganization of the school system is planned for the 1989-90 school year, maintained that any more "movement of students" would disrupt their education.

He added many students left the system when integration went into effect, and the district no longer has enough students to balance the racial makeup of schools.

Avella noted that IQE did not work for Plainfield or Paterson, although state officials said it has been successful in Trenton, Atlantic City and Camden.

Two homeless people arrested for 'living' in stolen car

Two homeless people have been arrested in West Orange after authorities discovered the car in which they "apparently lived" was stolen.

Police Chief Edward M. Palardy identified the suspects as William E. Vaughn, 41, whose last known address

was on Rankin Avenue in Newark, and Patricia Madison, 31, no known address.

The pair, "who apparently lived out of a car they had been driving," were picked up about 4:30 p.m. Wednesday, he said.

Officer John P. Palardy while on

routine patrol noticed a car being driven erratically and pulled it over on Route 280, the chief said, and asked the occupants for identification.

What the pair gave him, the police chief continued, was a stolen driver's license and false information about who

owned the car.

According to Palardy, Vaughn "has an extensive arrest record for narcotics and burglary offenses" and is wanted for questioning in connection with several crimes in Essex and Union counties.

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