

Metropolitan Briefs

Prisoner Hangs Himself in Cell

A laborer, arrested early yesterday on charges of burglary and criminal trespass, committed suicide within an hour after he was locked in a cell in the Empire Boulevard police station.

The prisoner, Raymond Forte, 24 years old, of 39 Lenox Road, Brooklyn, had been arrested shortly after 2 A.M. in connection with a burglary at a garage at 312 Clarkson Avenue. Placed in a cell after being booked, he was discovered by an officer at 3:20 A.M., hanging from a cell bar with his belt around his neck.

The police said Mr. Forte had a record of seven previous arrests, dating to 1965, and had undergone psychiatric examination at Kings County Hospital from last March 11 to March 20.

Anti-Poverty Lawyers Plan Job Action

The city's antipoverty lawyers have voted to start a job action today, making it unlikely that 22 storefront law offices scattered throughout the city's low-income neighborhoods will take on any new cases.

David Lansner, president of the Legal Services Staff Association, which represents 100 lawyers employed by Community Action for Legal Services, Inc., said that the lawyers voted last week not to work overtime and to refuse to handle more than 75 active cases.

Overpayments Laid to Hospital Unit

The city's Health and Hospitals Corporation may have been overpaid \$4-million in Medicaid funds between July 1, 1970, and March 31, 1972, according to a state audit. The audit, carried out by the office of Controller Arthur Levitt, found that both before the corporation took over on July 1, 1970, and for a year thereafter, procedures for billing and collecting from third-party reimbursers, such as Medicaid, were "chaotic."

As a result, the audit found, when pressure was exerted for the corporation to issue bills and increase collections, there were no reliable records that could be checked to avoid duplicate claims. A spokesman said the corporation had challenged the report because the state had never shown any proof of double payments.

Fire Department Reducing Force

The Fire Department reported that increased productivity would allow it to shrink its force of 14,000 by 265 men, resulting in annual savings of several million dollars. The manpower reduction will be achieved by not replacing men who retire.

Immediately affected by a departmental order were 53 fire companies that already use "rapid water"—water with a chemical added that reduces friction in the hose, permitting the use of lighter hoses and fewer men to handle them without the loss of water power.

From the Police Blotter:

A Staten Island gun fancier, identified as Joseph Ladziak, 24 years old, of 28 Legion Place, Grosmere, was killed early yesterday when a foreign-made automatic pistol accidentally discharged as he was attempting to repair it. The victim was a member of the South Beach Rod and Gun Club, 232 Sand Lane, South Beach, where the accident took place.

. . . In the Bushwick section of Brooklyn, a 15-year-old boy picked up a pistol lying near the cash register of a small food store and accidentally shot a 14-year-old girl as she walked into the store at 1205 Myrtle Avenue Saturday night. The girl, struck in the right eye, was reported in serious condition. The store owner, Primitivo Sanchez, 27, was charged with possession of a dangerous weapon. The identity of the teen-agers was withheld. . . . A 63-year-old building superintendent, Antonio Mercado of 152 West 84th Street, was charged with homicide yesterday when a tenant, Eduardo Boria, 50, died from stab wounds he suffered the day before. The police said the two men had been in a fight.