

News Lab Samples

Article 1

STUDENT REPORTED / FACULTY EDITED NYC NEWS



All CUNY Colleges

NYCityWatch

June 21, 2010

Doc Testifies in Police Brutality Trial

FEBRUARY 3, 2010 | BROOKLYN COLLEGE

By Christina Rodriguez

The supervising doctor at the hospital where alleged police brutality victim Michael Mineo was treated testified yesterday that it was "highly unlikely" that the wounds to his rectum were self-inflicted, a scenario that the defense advocates.

Syed Ahmed, a volunteer attending physician at Brookdale Hospital, supervised the treatment of Michael Mineo, who alleges that he was sodomized by Officer Richard Kern in a Brooklyn subway station in 2008. In his testimony, Ahmed said that Mineo's injuries could not have been self-inflicted because finger tissue could not create an injury like Mineo's.

When the prosecution showed Ahmed the retractable baton used in the alleged attack, he said that its use would be consistent with Mineo's injuries.

Ahmed added that Mineo had anal tearing, bruising to his pelvis and a high white cell blood count, indicating that he was in pain. Ahmed interpreted Mineo's medical records for the jury, but conceded under cross-examination that he did not treat Mineo.

The defense probed for inconsistencies in Mineo's medical reports and treatment. In a heated cross-examination defense lawyer Stuart London elicited testimony that Mineo was not given anti-biotics during his stay, though Ahmed said they were not needed at first because the patient suffered only an inflammation.

"I think I brought out the truth that he never examined him, that there's strong indication that there was a pre-existing infection in his system prior to the three hours before the incident," defense lawyer Stuart London told reporters later.

Officer Kern, 26, is charged with aggravated sexual abuse and co-defendants Alex Cruz, 28, and Andrew Morales, 27, are accused of covering up the deed.

Article 2

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NYCityWatch

June 21, 2010

School Bus Drivers Picket Their Own Union

MARCH 5, 2010 | BROOKLYN COLLEGE

By Christina Rodriguez

A group of frustrated school bus drivers and escorts who have been without a contract for eight months protested on Tuesday in front their union building in Ozone Park, complaining of a lack of transparency by their union leaders who are negotiating the new contract.

The dissident union members, who call themselves Local 1181 Members for Change, belong to the Amalgamated Transit Union and are among those who bus hundreds of children to New York City Public Schools and school trips

"They won't tell us what's on the table," said Reina Martinez, a member for 15 years. "They won't say anything. The last contract, negotiations lasted for almost a year."

The group marched around the front of the building shouting rhythmic pleas: "What do we need? Contract! When do we want it? Now!"

The protestors said that they have the lowest pensions for bus drivers in the city, no medical coverage for retirement, and receive no retroactive pay.

"If you retire before you are ready for Medicare, you have nothing," said Dina Nero, who has been an escort for the past 15 years.

"I know guys who are still driving in their late 70's," said John Eadicicco, a bus driver for 20 years. "It's a shame."

School bus drivers put in \$38.50 weekly towards their pension for 40 weeks of the year while management contributes \$74.40. After 25 years of service, that equals \$1275 a month compared to \$2650 a month in pensions for city bus drivers.

Escorts complain that they get much less though they work just as many hours and days as the school bus drivers.

"I deal with a lot," said Dina Nero. "Some of the children are difficult. We're out in all kinds of weather. And now we have the union who's supposed to stand besides us and we still have no contract."

Union leaders were not available for comment.

Article 3

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All CUNY Colleges

NYCityWatch

June 21, 2010

Climax of Queens Murder Trial Featuring 'Touch DNA' Evidence

MARCH 17, 2010 | BROOKLYN COLLEGE

By Christina Rodriguez

Both sides rested yesterday in the case of a Queens man accused of slashing the throat of a woman set to testify against him for allegedly raping her.

Defendant Hemant Magnath was on trial for the alleged rape of Natasha Ramen when she was murdered in front of her home on March 15, 2007; her attacker came up behind her and slit her throat from ear to ear. Ramen died 14 hours later.

A significant point of the case was when Supreme Court Justice Robert Hanophy became the first judge in the nation to approve the use of "low copy number" DNA, also known as "touch DNA", as evidence in a trial.

The procedure allows investigators to scrap and test a small amount of cells left behind by a person who briefly touched an object, such as clothing.

The practice of looking for LCN DNA involves examining smaller amounts of DNA at higher magnifications under microscopes and crime scene tools. A trace of blood was found on a seat belt in Ramen's car which was linked to DNA from Magnath.

Other than the DNA, the case also centers around the details of the previous rape case, where circumstances during the trial may have lead Magnath to allegedly commit murder and take the life of Natasha Ramen.

Summations in the case were expected today. Magnath, charged with murder in the first degree, murder in the second degree, assault in the second degree, intimidation, bribery, and coercion, faces life in prison without parole.

Article 4

**NYCityWatch**

June 21, 2010

Hate Crime Trial Begins in Brooklyn

APRIL 21, 2010 | BROOKLYN COLLEGE

By Christina Rodriguez and Alshawn Rushing

The Brooklyn hate crime trial of two men, accused of beating to death an Ecuadorian immigrant who they thought was gay began today.

In their opening statements, prosecutors recapped what happened the night in December, 2008 when Jose Sucuzhanay was attacked and beaten to death while walking with his brother Romel in Bushwick.

The prosecution alleged that several witnesses heard the two defendants, Keith Phoenix and Hakim Scott refer to the brothers, as "faggots" and used ethnic slurs. The brothers were embracing after a night of partying.

"This is not an accident, not poor judgment, not even a fight gone out of hand," said Assistant DA Josh Handshaft in his opening statement.

Taxi driver Davi Almonte testifying through a Spanish interpreter said he had parked his cab across the street from where the beating took place and that the beating was so brutal he had to turn his head.

"I didn't want to see the head bleeding or explode," said Almonte.

When asked why he didn't originally report the crime, Almonte said "I didn't have a telephone on me, and I didn't want to get involved in this." Friends then urged him to contact the police.

Prosecutors said they intend to call a number of witnesses, including the cousin of Phoenix, who was at the scene when the assault occurred.

Jose was hit over the head with a bottle, and severely beaten with an aluminum bat. He died of his injuries a few days later. Romel managed to escape with minor injuries.

Scott and Phoenix are charged with second-degree murder as a hate crime.

The defense argues that the incident was merely a late-night brawl among four men, all of whom had been partying and that the defendants did not intend to seriously injure anyone. They each have separate juries and defense attorneys.

The defendants are charged with second degree murder as a hate crime. Both men face life in prison if convicted.