

2 nabbed in local slaying

Two Queens men, who had been on the run since one of them allegedly shot and killed a man in a fight over a young woman in August, were arrested Saturday afternoon after police tracked them to a three-room bungalow in the Hamptons.

The two men, John Pennisi, 20, of 101-25 92d St., Ozone Park, and Michael Liguori, 21, of 155th Ave. in the Lindenwood area of Howard Beach, were charged with second-degree murder in the slaying of Robert Kuper, the police said.

Neither man offered resistance, the cops said.

Kuper, 20, a plumber from 74-23 64th Place in Glendale, knew Pennisi, a butcher, from high school, the police said. Both had been involved with Theresa Stumpf, 18, of 80th St. in Glendale, the police said.

Tell-tale car

At 2:30 a.m. on Aug. 19, Kuper drove by Stumpf's home and saw Pennisi's 1989 Lincoln Town Car parked outside, according to Detective Walter Panchyn, one of the cops who made the arrests.

Kuper demanded to see Stumpf, but was turned away by her father. He then smashed in one of the the car's windows and walked to a neighborhood bar, Panchyn said.

Pennisi, who was with Stumpf at the time, then called Liguori, who reportedly brought a .25-caliber automatic with him, the detective said.

Pennisi and Liguori met Kuper on 80th St., near the bar. The shooting occurred in front of 78-67 80th St., Panchyn said.

Two shots were fired, and Kuper was struck by one in the chest, Panchyn said.

Detectives do not know which of the two men allegedly fired the shot.

Cops seek shooting suspect

Police today asked the public's help in locating a 20-year-old Queens man identified as a suspect in an Aug. 19 shooting in Glendale that claimed the life of another 20-year-old.

John Pennisi of 101-25 92d St., Ozone Park, dropped out of sight immediately after the fatal shooting of Robert Kuper of 74-23 64th Place, said Detective Walter Panchyn.

Pennisi and Kuper, who knew each other from high school, had been involved with the same woman, said Panchyn. The events that led up to shooting began at 2:30 a.m. when Kuper drove by the home of his former girlfriend and saw Pennisi's 1989 Lincoln Town Car parked outside, said Panchyn. Kuper demanded to see the young woman, but was turned away by her father, he said. He then apparently broke one of the Town Car's windows before walking to a neighborhood bar.

Police say that Pennisi, who was visiting the young woman at the time, phoned a friend, Michael Liguori, 21, of 155th Ave., in the Lindenwood area of Howard Beach. Liguori, police said, is reported to have brought a gun with him when he met Pennisi. The two met up with Kuper on 80th St. as he was walking back from the bar



John Pennisi

when the shooting occurred in front of 78-67 80th St.

Kuper was killed by a single gunshot to the chest from a .25-caliber automatic, said Panchyn. Pennisi and Liguori fled the scene in Liguori's car. Police would also like to locate Liguori in order to question him about the killing, said Panchyn.

Anyone with information is asked to call Panchyn or Detective John Wilde of the 104th Precinct at 417-2209.



Nothing odd in bail for slay suspects, says lawyer for one

Nor for fact that part of sum is unsecured

By **JAMES PETERS**

Daily News Staff Writer

A lawyer for one of two men accused of killing a 20-year-old Glendale man has defended the decision to release the defendants in high bail pending trial, saying it was not "unusual."

Lawyer Ronald Rubinstein represents Michael Liquori, of 155th St., Howard Beach, who along with John Pennisi, of 92d St., Ozone Park, has been charged with the shooting death of Robert Kuper. Rubinstein added that it was neither "unheard of" nor "unusual" for judges to release murder suspects on partially secured bail bonds as in this case.

Supreme Court Justice Phillip Chetta, over the objections of the District Attorney's Office, set bail of \$1 million for each defendant. In both cases, the bail was secured both by funds and property, but in less than the stated amount.

"There are other (such) cases," said Rubinstein, adding that partially secured bail was also commonplace in the Federal Court system.

The District Attorney's Office had pointed out to Chetta that both men

tried to evade authorities by hiding on Long Island for two months after the Aug. 19 killing on 80th St. in Glendale.

But Rubinstein denied that Pennisi and Liquori had been hiding from police. "They had been in touch almost immediately after the incident with (Robert) Alexander (the head of the district attorney's Homicide Investigations Bureau)," he said.

Kuper was killed by one shot from a .25-caliber pistol during a fight with Pennisi over a 18-year-old female who lived in the neighborhood. The gun has not been recovered, and it is unclear who fired the shot.

Cops tracked Liquori and Pennisi to a bungalow in the Hamptons and arrested them there on Oct. 14.

"The purpose of bail is to make sure that defendants show up," Rubinstein said. "They (Pennisi and Liquori) showed up for their (first) court appearance with their family." The two are due back in court Thursday.

Rubinstein also said that a Daily News story on the arraignment "was one-sided" and could adversely affect future defendants, because it might discourage other judges from accepting such bail arrangements.

Bail riles family of slain man

By JAMES PETERS
Daily News Staff Writer

The family of a 20-year-old Glendale man shot dead last summer in a dispute over a young woman have questioned a Queens judge's decision to release his two alleged killers on \$1 million bail each.

Relatives of Robert Kuper also are angry because Supreme Court Justice Phillip Chetta apparently did not take into consideration the fact that the suspected murderers attempted to evade police by hiding on Long Island for about two months after the killing, which took place Aug. 19 on 80th St. in Glendale.

Seized in Hamptons

Detectives from the 104th Precinct tracked the alleged killers, John Pennisi, 20, of 92d St., Ozone Park, and 21-year-old Michael Liquori, of 155th Ave., Howard Beach, to a three-room bungalow in the Hamptons, where they were arrested Oct. 14.

According to investigators, Kuper was killed by one shot from a .25-caliber handgun during a fight over an 18-year-old woman who lived in the neighborhood. The gun has not been recovered, detectives said. It also is unclear who shot Kuper.

"It's just terrible, just terrible," said Kuper's mother, Angela. "They were on the run for two months. I just don't know how the judge could set them free like that."

Chetta, over the protests of Assistant District Attorney James Quinn, who had want-

ed the two jailed, set the \$1 million bail Nov. 9, when Pennisi and Liquori were arraigned on a second-degree murder indictment.

The judge's law secretary defended the release of the

two on bail, which was secured by property and other valuables that was less than the value of the bail.

"The bail bond was unusual," the law secretary said, "but only in the amount. The

judge has taken property (as collateral) before." He said that the people who put up their property guaranteed to pay the balance of the bail if it's forfeited.

The law also permits

judges to accept partially secured bail bonds.

"Those two will be home for the holidays," said Mrs. Kuper, who has three other children. "My son won't be. He's in a grave."



Yule cheer's here

By ALBERT DAVILA
Daily News Staff Writer

When Lance Liebl says Christmas should be one big party, the Flushing resident doesn't joke around.

For the sixth year in a row, the police officer, an eight-year veteran of the force, has gone all out to make sure his neighbors and friends enjoy the holidays in a big way.

This time, he has surpassed previous years, with an 18-foot-long automated display of Santa Claus and the elves in front of his house on 65th Ave., about a block off Parsons Blvd.

"This is a time for good times and good feelings," Liebl explained. "This gives me a good feeling. Every year, I add a little bit to it."

Liebl, who is convalescing from injuries suffered when a motorist he was ticketing in Manhattan drove off and dragged him along, said that this was almost the Christmas that wasn't.

"My mother-in-law died a couple of months ago, and so we weren't sure whether to have it," he explained. "But my wife, Joan, said, 'Mom would had love it,' and so we're doing it."

Liebl added, "I used to play Santa every year for the kids in the hospital and also at the party at the 19th Precinct, but this year I can't do it because of the injury."

This year, however, his oldest boy, Lance Jr., is set to play an elf. Matthew, who is only 14 months old, is ready for a bit part too.

"The little one has learned to say Ho-ho-ho," Liebl laughed.



IN ADDITION to Santa's workshop, the display includes a letter from the Jolly Old Elf (above). **BILL TURNBULL** DAILY NEWS