

# Gas Bootlegger Guilty of Tax Dodge

By Anemona Hartocollis  
Newsday Albany Bureau

Albany — A Brooklyn man who ran a gasoline bootlegging operation with reputed ties to organized crime pleaded guilty yesterday to gasoline tax evasion and agreed to repay \$4.75 million to state, federal and county governments.

The defendant, David Bogatin, 41, of 104 Amherst St. in the Manhattan Beach section of Brooklyn, pleaded guilty in Albany County Court to two counts of a 14-count state indictment charging he evaded sales taxes on 15 million gallons of gasoline between January and August, 1983.

Bogatin, a Russian immigrant, arrived in the United States in 1977, and seven years later he purchased five apartments in Manhattan's Trump Tower, according to state Attorney General Robert Abrams. Bogatin has guaranteed payment of the back taxes by agreeing to give the government

mortgages on the apartments, bought for \$5.82 million in October, 1984, Abrams said.

Bogatin declined comment on the instructions of his lawyer, David Clayton of Hauppauge, L.I. Clayton said his client, now a U.S. citizen, had spent two or three years in prison on "political" charges related to being Jewish and fled the Soviet Union without permission.

Abrams said Bogatin secretly controlled a company called Shoppers Marketing, formerly of 1611 Avenue Y in Brooklyn, that was used as a dummy corporation to evade sales taxes on hundreds of millions of gallons of gasoline. The president, Mieczyslaw Szczepkowski, a Polish-born house painter, spoke little English and lived in a Brooklyn boarding house, but signed all tax returns and checks, Abrams said.

Bogatin also was associated with the former Lesez Petroleum, of 650 Jericho Turnpike in Commack, L.I.,

which operated a terminal in Ocean-side, L.I., Abrams said.

He was part of a cartel of gas distributors controlled by Michael Franzese, a reputed captain in the Colombo crime family, according to Nathan Riley, a spokesman for Abrams. Franzese was convicted of tax evasion in March, 1986.

Judge Joseph Harris put off sentencing until September to give Bogatin time to meet a schedule of payments and to enter related guilty pleas in federal court in Brooklyn and in Nassau County Court. He is free on \$500,000 bail, and faces a maximum jail sentence of two and two-thirds to eight years.

He is to pay \$3 million to the state — of which \$750,000 will go to Nassau and Suffolk Counties — and \$1.75 million to the federal government.

Michael Markowitz of Brooklyn, and Joseph Skolnik of Roslyn Harbor, L.I., also were named in the indictment.



David Bogatin

AP Photo



Newsday / Alan Raja

## Accidental Inmates

A Correction Department officer stands guard while an inmate is wheeled away from a bus that was sideswiped and forced into the middle guard rail on the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway yesterday. Twenty-four Rikers Island inmates were en route to courts in Staten Island when the accident occurred at about 10 a.m. near the 84th Street overpass in the Bay Ridge section of Brooklyn. There were no serious injuries, and no prisoners escaped.

**APPEARED IN EARLIER EDITIONS**

## Woody Allen Sues 2 Firms

By Gerald McKelvey

Woody Allen sued a menswear firm and its advertising agency yesterday for placing an ad in Newsday that featured a look-alike of the movie star hawking suits that the ad claimed made him "a sex symbol."

Allen's attorneys asked for \$10 million in punitive damages from Men's World Inc. and its ad agency, Ribaud & Schaefer, for the full-page ad that ran in the April 5, 1986, editions of Newsday. In addition, the lawsuit filed in U.S. District Court, Manhattan, asks that a jury assess the amount of compensatory damages that Allen is entitled to.

Allen recently won another lawsuit over an ad that featured the same look-alike, Phil Boroff.

Neither Boroff nor Newsday is a party in the current lawsuit.

Allen claimed that Men's World of Long Island's use of the look-alike amounted to a "false impression" that Men's World's "goods and services are authorized, approved and endorsed by Allen."

A call for comment to the ad agency in Manhattan was not returned. A woman at Men's World who identified herself as a receptionist said that only the owner could comment, that he was not in, and "I don't want to divulge his name over the telephone." According to the ad, the chain has seven stores on Long Island, one in Connecticut and two in New Jersey.

## Complaints Heat Up Hotline

It's only three days old, but a public-safety hotline started by Manhattan Borough President David N. Dinkins has received more than 40 telephone calls, many complaining about police brutality.

The 'round-the-clock' hotline, attacked by some police officers but supported by Police Commissioner Benjamin Ward and Manhattan District Attorney Robert Morgenthau, was begun after the fatal police shooting of a young, black man who police said had attacked an officer with a lead pipe. Dinkins said that shooting — following the controversy over the shooting death of Eleanor Bumpurs by a police officer, and the "unanswered questions" over Michael Stewart's death, which happened while Stewart was in police custody, as well as the 77th Precinct scandal — once again raised questions "in the minds of the public about the conduct of the entire New York Police Department in minority neighborhoods."

The hotline has already generated controversy, most of it coming from police spokesmen, including Patrolmen's Benevolent Association President Phil Caruso, who said he was "disappointed" with Dinkins.

Caruso said Dinkins was "caught up in a frenzy of distrust for the police." Referring to the new hotline, he said, "it kind of creates further suspicion."

But yesterday, Bill Lynch, executive assistant to Dinkins, and Barbara Turk, his senior policy analyst, defended the hotline.

"It is not a way of looking over the cops' shoulders or an anticop effort, but a way of alleviating the tensions between police and the minorities," Lynch said. "It's for people who feel that the criminal-justice system isn't working for them."

Turk added that "we're not here to replace the Civilian Complaint Review Board. We're here to help them, the police, and the community."

Still, the idea of another monitor on their activities isn't going to please most police, who al-

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