

# Coming home to fight terror

BY ANTHONY M. DESTEFANO  
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When federal prosecutor Richard Daddario takes over as the NYPD deputy commissioner for counterterrorism in August he will have much on his hands: possible nuclear terrorism, the lower and midtown Manhattan security initiatives and maintaining ties with other agencies.

But from a criminal justice standpoint, Daddario said yesterday that the city probably shouldn't have to worry about a possible trial for suspected terrorist Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and four others just blocks away from his new office.

"Whether or not it makes sense to conduct a trial in New York City is a separate question," said Daddario, 59, in a telephone conference call with reporters from Moscow, where he is serving as a Department of Justice attache.



Richard Daddario will join NYPD counterterrorism unit in August.

But on a personal note, Daddario said "an absolutely fair trial would be where costs and disruptions are far less than in New York."

Daddario, who lives in Manhattan with his family, didn't suggest a possible location for the trial, which is still awaiting a final decision by the Obama administration. But he believes that New York should stay connect-

ed with international developments and other foreign law enforcement agencies in combating terrorism.

"I think the NYPD is trying to spread out and get the best information . . . it is absolutely essential," said Daddario.

While living in Russia, Daddario said he has had to confront the prospect of terrorism every day, particularly with subway bombings. In particular, Daddario notes that Chechen groups have been smuggling heroin into Russia and using the proceeds to fund terrorist activities.

"A lot of that heroin money supports terrorist organizations, a lot of this destabilizes the [Asian] region," said Daddario.

Coming back to New York for Daddario will be a welcome relief. He admits to not having an easy time learning foreign languages.

"I love Russia very much, but I won't miss it," he said.

# Park: Tree branch fatality was accident

BY PERVAIZ SHALLWANI  
Special to Newsday

The branch that killed a 6-month-old New Jersey girl in Central Park had been trimmed twice in the past six months and appeared healthy, city parks department officials said in a statement yesterday.

"This is a city tree that stands in one of the busiest public parks in the world," parks spokeswoman Vickie Carp said in the statement.

Carp and the NYPD maintained that as far as their investigations go, the Saturday incident that killed 6-month-old Gianna Ricciuti and left her mother, Karla DelGallo, 33, in critical but stable condition at New York-Presbyterian Hospital/Weill Cornell Medical Center was an accident.

Carp said there are several organizations tasked with maintaining trees in Central Park, including the Central Park Conservancy and the Wildlife Conservation Society. She said that "in this case, the tree is on the grounds of the Central Park Zoo and is maintained and cared for by the Wildlife Conservation Society."

She said that according to conservation society reports, the tree, along with other trees at the zoo, were "pruned by professional tree care contractors" twice in the last six months — on Dec. 31 and again in March after damage to trees at the zoo following a heavy snowfall in late February.

Officials for the Wildlife Conservation Society had no comment beyond a statement released Saturday that offered

"condolences" for the accident.

Parks officials on Long Island said the fluke accident is not out of the realm of possibility. Joe Montuori, Suffolk County parks commissioner, said even trees that appear healthy can suffer limb breaks and he can't fault officials in the city. "It's a very hard call. You can't predict it," Montuori said.

The Central Park Conservancy spends more than \$800,000 a year on tree care and spent an additional \$1.7 million after the February storm, spokesman Scott Johnson said in an e-mail. He said high-traffic areas such as ballfields, the Great Lawn and areas near the park perimeter "are inspected and pruned more regularly."

With Anthony Destefano and Will Van Sant

# Franzese lawyer: He's no Donald Trump

BY JOHN RILEY  
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John "Sonny" Franzese is no Donald Trump or George Steinbrenner, a defense lawyer for the 93-year-old reputed Colombo family underboss said yesterday as closing arguments began in Franzese's Brooklyn federal racketeering trial.

Dismissing his client's bragging about his mob power on secretly recorded audiotapes as exaggera-

tions by a has-been, defense lawyer Richard Lind said real bosses like Trump or Steinbrenner wouldn't need to chest-thump with underlings.

"You think Donald Trump tells people he's the boss of the Trump organization? You think he needs to do that?" Lind said. "... It's pathetic. He's got to say, 'I'm the underboss'? I think it's a sign of insecurity, not strength."

Franzese, once a feared enforcer who was widely viewed as

Long Island's most powerful mobster, and three other men are charged with a racketeering conspiracy including loan-sharking, robbery and extortion of strip clubs and an Albertson pizzeria.

Franzese's son, John Franzese Jr., testified against him — a first in mob lore.

Prosecutors told jurors that despite his advanced age and more than half of the last four decades spent in jail, Franzese has remained a potent criminal force.

## IN BRIEF

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### SOUTHAMPTON

#### Man fatally hit by car on Tuckahoe road

A man crossing County Road 39 at North Sea Road in Tuckahoe was struck by a car and killed early yesterday Southampton Town police said.

Police identified the victim as Margarito Rojas DeJesus, 33, of Southampton.

Police said DeJesus was walking northbound across County Road 39 when he was struck by a westbound black 2001 Dodge Stratus at 12:50 a.m.

The victim was "thrown into the air and subsequently run over by the vehicle," police said. Police have not released the identity of the driver and said the investigation remains "active and ongoing."

Volunteers from the Southampton fire department and Southampton ambulance responded to the scene, and police said DeJesus was flown by medical helicopter to Stony Brook University Medical Center. Police said he was pronounced dead at 3:30 a.m.

— JOHN VALENTI

### BRENTWOOD

#### Man facing charges for emaciated dog

A Brentwood man faces an animal abuse charge "after his dog was found to be near starving," officials said yesterday.

The Suffolk County Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals said Kevin Brunson of Wilson Avenue was charged with one count of animal abuse for failing to provide proper sustenance for his dog, a Cane Corso named Rambo.

SPCA chief Roy Gross said the agency began an investigation last month after receiving a complaint that the dog was "undernourished" and had bones "protruding through his skin."

After the dog was seized, officials said, it was taken to the Veterinary Medical Center in West Islip.

Veterinarians determined the dog was emaciated due to starvation, officials said.

The SPCA said the dog weighed just 51 pounds — and stressed that a dog of this breed could weigh as much as 125 pounds at the same age.

The dog has been placed in foster care, Gross said.

Brunson could not immediately be reached for comment.

He is scheduled to appear in First District Court in Central Islip on Aug. 30. The misdemeanor offense carries a maximum sentence of one year in jail and a \$1,000 fine.

— JOHN VALENTI

### MASTIC BEACH

#### Detectives probing fatal one-car crash

Detectives are investigating a one-car crash on the William Floyd Parkway that killed a Mastic Beach man on the Sunday night, Suffolk County police said.

Edward Madison Jr., 24, was driving a 1992 Ford Taurus south on the parkway at about 7:33 p.m. when the car left the roadway, south of Lombardy Drive in Shirley, and hit a utility pole, police said. The car then hit a fence and came to stop in the backyard of a Lombardy Drive residence.

Madison was the only person in the vehicle, police said, and was pronounced dead at the scene by a physician assistant from the Office of the Suffolk County Medical Examiner.

The car was impounded for a safety check, and the investigation is continuing, police said.

Anyone with information can call Crime Stoppers at 800-220-8477 or the Seventh Squad at 631-852-8752. All calls will be kept confidential.

— GARY DYMSKI