

William T. Lawlor

THEY DIED FOR BIG RADIOS

Sammy Jackson, 14, of 2224 Cypress Avenue in the Bronx because of a .44 caliber bullet which entered his skull above his forehead and passed through the skull, exiting at the base of the back of his neck. To WCBS crime reporter Chris Borgen, Sammy's mother said that Sammy had not resisted the theft of his radio, for which he had saved his lunch money all last winter.

Ira Meshwick, 17, of 421 McKinley Avenue, Forest Hills, because of multiple wounds to the head and body administered with an undetermined heavy instrument. Although theft was the apparent motive, the radio, too, was smashed in the struggle, and the murderer escaped.

Melinda Johnson, 15, of 921 Fulton Street, Brooklyn, because of injuries received while being dragged alongside a speeding car. When thieves tried to escape with her Sony stereo portable with separable speakers and capacity for both eight-tracks and cassettes, she clutched at the driver through his open window, and he sped off, carrying her along, finally shearing her away from the car by passing a parked car with only an inch of clearance. The thieves drove to safety, and now they listen to the radio.

Officer Rafael Rodriguez, 27, of 2008 Clover Drive, Fairlawn, New Jersey, because of knife wounds to the neck and back from an unidentified assailant. Rodriguez had entered the handball court where three big radios were being played at full volume simultaneously; he sought to resolve an argument about which station all radios should be tuned to. The handball players ran off with their radios as Rodriguez fell to the ground among zip tabs and broken glass.

Bubba Johnson, Mavis Spivey, Marcus White, Clementine Darcy, and Vanderbilt Bishop, found dead of overdoses of narcotics in an abandoned loft at 5 West 119th Street in Manhattan. To acquire the money for their drugs, they had robbed the cab driver and had taken the cabbie's big radio. When authorities removed the bodies, the radio was found switched on, but the batteries were dead.

Andrea Cameron, 17, of Palo Alto Drive, Laguna Beach, while skateboarding on the smooth sidewalks near her home. Andrea skated with a Panasonic that had chrome trim on a gray plastic body, and she used lightweight headphones to get the best sound, even with surrounding noise pollution. Moreover, she included the radio in her calculations of acceleration and inertia, developing a system of swinging the weight of her radio in rhythm with the music. This swinging system enabled her to maintain speeds in excess of twenty miles per hour routinely, even while doing dance interpretations. A car crossed her path and she hit it broadside, driving the antenna up under her rib cage and into her heart. Her head smacked against the car and split open, and the blood of her brain ran down the side of the car like a million rolling skateboards. The radio crumpled and splintered into her belly, and the headphones made a momentary crackling sound before going dead.

Anthony N. Cirrano, 34, of Chicago; Vernon Panning, 31, of Little Rock; Bart Coleman, 40, of Miami; Clarence M. Jackson, of Spokane; and Leonard Brandenburg, 34, of Washington, because of an unexplained meteorological event. None of these men had ever owned a big radio. Nevertheless, one spring afternoon in Denver, as

these business associates exited from a small restaurant and walked across the parking lot to the company car, a small but dark shadow hovered over them. Feeling a light tap on his forearm, Cirrano thought it was rain. But the taps grew more frequent, and Coleman and Jackson noticed that the precipitation consisted of capacitors, transistors, and bits of wire and solder. The cloud kept the men in its shadow, intensifying its effect by raining large and jagged parts. The men fell to the ground, covering their eyes. Panning tried to pull his plaid sport coat over his neck, but soon the men were buried in the raining rubble. The bodies were mistakenly removed when sanitation crews cleared the debris, but the bodies were recovered and later properly buried.

Marcel Tommorrow, a veteran of Viet-Nam, a fan of Jimi Hendrix, a victim of suicide in his garden apartment at 7752 Montrose Avenue, Bayside, Queens. In his suicide note, Marcel wrote of angel dust, Jack Daniels, and yellow submarines. On his way out, he heard Howard Hughes take control of his big radio's signal. Hughes drew Tommorrow's spirit from his body like a genie from a bottle. The spirit hovered around a bare bulb, then was sucked into the cone of the radio's speaker.

