

Harassment charged in destruction of car



Mrs. Marie Stellate, a ward attendant at Willowbrook State School, who claims she is being harassed by other school employees she reported for rule infractions.

By LAWRENCE De MARIA

A Mariners Harbor woman who was apparently too conscientious about her work at Willowbrook State School, claims she has been the target of continual harassment from some of her fellow employees — culminating in the burning of her car last Saturday night.

Mrs. Marie Stellate of 14 Maple Parkway, a ward attendant in Ward B of Building 22, believes she is the target of a group of individuals who resented her reporting them to the administration for alleged drinking and other infractions of Willowbrook rules.

Mrs. Stellate, who is widowed, told police that Saturday night was not the first time her car had been damaged. In July, she said, the tires on another automobile she owned were slashed.

Saturday's incident was more serious. At 8:10 p.m. someone poured a flammable liquid over Mrs. Stellate's 1968 model Chrysler, which she had purchased two weeks earlier for \$3,000, and set it on fire. The car was a total loss.

After the blaze was put out by firemen, Mrs. Stellate was sent home and given sedation.

"It was the first good car I ever bought," she said yesterday, still very shaken by the incident.

Because of a possible insurance problem, Mrs. Stellate may have to bear the financial loss herself. She was near tears talking about her auto which she said, was a source of pride to her.

Harry Eliazarian, deputy director for administration at Willowbrook, confirmed that Mrs. Stellate has made charges against fellow workers. "We are looking into the situation," he added.

A fellow employe who called the Advance late yesterday afternoon intimated that Mrs. Stellate may have unduly aggravated some of her co-workers but acknowledged that Mrs. Stellate's complaints were justified.

Mrs. Stellate charges that some of the women workers in another wing of her building have entertained men inside the building. The men allegedly work at Willowbrook on the ground crew. Mrs. Stellate charges that the men have often been drinking. She thinks it is improper for men to wander around the women's wards as in Building 22.

She explains that the patients range in age from 15 to 60 and are often partially or completely naked. "How would you like it if you were a father and had a daughter here with men looking at her," Mrs. Stellate asserted.



The damage to Mrs. Stellate's car is very extensive.

S.I. Advance Photos by Tony Carannante

Moreover, she charges that it is her responsibility to protect her charges, and she doesn't know what the men might do.

The employe who called the Advance said that Mrs. Stellate's complaints "about the drinking and all the rest" were true.

Mrs. Stellate has been working at Willowbrook for six years. She said that the trouble was caused by newly hired help "who don't want to work."

"I mop the floors. I work eight hours. I expect everybody to work," she said.

After Mrs. Stellate reported the infractions in her building, certain individuals apparently were reprimanded. There reportedly were some transfers.

Administration officials, police and other employes seem convinced that Saturday's arson was retaliation.

"She is apparently a very dedicated person," Detective James Bartlett, who is investigating the case, commented.

Mrs. Stellate is taking the rest of this week off, but she insists she is going back to Ward B.

"I'm going back to the same shift," she added.

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