

# City pressured for more ferry cops

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The head of the newly created Bureau of Transit Operations said yesterday he will ask the city to beef up its police coverage on the Staten Island Ferry, following the brutal beating of a passenger on Sunday.

Henry White said he "definitely" will meet with police brass to "work something out."

"I can't tell you what the result will be," White said. "It may not necessarily mean two cops on every boat."

Borough President Ralph J. Lamberti also has requested increased police coverage on the ferries in letters to Mayor Edward I. Koch, Police Commissioner Benjamin Ward and Transportation Department Commissioner Ross Sandler.

Following the July 7 attack on the ferry in which two people

were killed and nine wounded by a man wielding a sword, Koch proclaimed that two officers would be assigned to every boat. That policy was only temporary, however, and within a few weeks after the double homicide, police patrols were down to about 50 percent of the ferry's trips.

A spokesman for the police assigned to the ferry said there are 25 officers assigned to the special detail and said police patrol as

many trips as they can, depending on available manpower. He said between 50 and 60 percent of the trips are covered, but a ferry official said he thought the percentage was lower than that.

By comparison, a transit police officer is assigned to every subway from 8 p.m. to 4 a.m., according to William Murphy, a Transit Authority spokesman. They are randomly assigned during the rest of the day and are present on subway platforms during rush hours, Murphy said.

Sgt. Peter Sweeney from the Police Department public affairs office said the ferry detail will not be increased. He said police brass wanted to increase the amount of trips that were patrolled by sending police out alone, rather than allowing them to travel in pairs as they do now. The Patrolmen's

# Police

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Benevolent Association took the department to court over the proposal and the matter is still in litigation, Sweeney said.

Lamberti said in his letters that "the Staten Island Ferry has long been an extension of our city streets. Staten Islanders depend on it. There is no reason to believe that a Staten Islander, or any ferry rider, gives up the right to police protection merely because he or she boards the ferry."

No city police officers were on board the 10 a.m. ferry trip from Manhattan on Sunday, when 59-year-old Martin Honig, visiting from Palm Springs, Calif., was attacked while in the men's room.

Honig was in a car with his in-laws on the ferry. The group was going to visit the grave of a relative on the Island. When Honig did not return from a trip to the bathroom, his brother-in-law, Victor Rothstein of Manhattan, found him, beaten and bloodied, in a bathroom stall.

The alleged attacker, Willie Summers, 34, of Madison Avenue, Graniteville, was convicted in 1978 of fatally beating a 76-year-old tailor two years earlier on board the ferryboat John F. Kennedy, the same vessel where Sunday's attack occurred. Summers, a former resident of the Staten Island Developmental Center, served eight years of a 12-year sentence and was paroled in January.

At his arraignment in Stapleton Criminal Court yesterday, Summers was charged with first-degree robbery, first-degree assault, resisting arrest and criminal possession of stolen property. He was remanded to the Atlantic Avenue Men's House of Detention in lieu of \$20,000 cash bail. He is due back in court on Friday.

Police also said this morning

that Summers signed confessions holding him responsible for two recent attacks on elderly ferry passengers. A 71-year-old man was mugged and robbed in the men's room on Aug. 9 and a 73-year-old man was attacked, again in the men's room, on Sept. 1.

Detectives said this morning that they are investigating the two attacks for which Summers has claimed responsibility and are trying to locate witnesses who can place Summers on the ferry on those or other dates.

Lt. William Quinn of the Crimes Against Persons Squad said detectives are also looking for victims of similar crimes committed in the ferry terminals or on the ferry. Quinn said it did not matter whether the crime had been reported.

"We feel he's done similar crimes," Quinn said. "He's been out of prison since January."

Anyone with information is asked to call 667-1436. All calls will be kept confidential. Detective Edwin Thorne is assigned to the case.

Police are also checking with precincts in Lower Manhattan to find out if they have investigated any incidences in which Summers might have been involved, according to Quinn.

On Sunday, the ferry captain was told about the attack by a deckhand and then radioed to St. George and asked for police to be ready to board when he docked in St. George. Four officers rushed on board at about 10:22 a.m. and the boat pulled back out into the harbor while officers arrested Summers.

Police patrolled the Kennedy from 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. on Sunday but were not seen on board again until 2:30 p.m., when the daytime ferry crew was relieved, according to records kept by ferry personnel. Since the July 7 slayings,



Willie Summers

logs of police patrols have been kept for every ferry trip.

White said he also has been keeping track of any unusual occurrences on the ferries, including incidences of violence. He said his records show that a deckhand was "punched out" on Aug. 29 when no police officers were on board.

Mayor Koch was in Washington yesterday and could not comment on the situation.

In Sunday's attack, Summers followed Honig into the men's room and pummeled Honig's face and body with his fists, according to Police Officer Joseph Luzzi, who arrested Summers. Summers then allegedly stole \$49 from Honig.

Honig, who suffers from a debilitating arthritic condition, was listed in stable condition in St. Vincent's Medical Center yesterday, according to a hospital spokesman. His jaw was broken during the ferry attack, and he also received massive contusions to the head.

The scenario was quite similar 10 years ago. The tailor, Nicola Infantino, was found unconscious in the men's room, where the attack took place. He died 10 days later in a hospital without regaining consciousness. Summers pleaded guilty to a charge of second-degree manslaughter.