

Tale of murder won't die

An analysis by **LARRY BLACK** NEW YORK (CP) — Last month, a 66-year-old black woman was shot to death by New York City police when she refused eviction from her public-housing apartment in Brooklyn. Last weekend, a young mother of three — also black — was killed by an off-duty Queen's policeman over a minor traffic violation.

Both shootings made headlines in this city, where more than four murders are committed on an average day. But neither received the attention that has been given the stabbing death two weeks ago of Caroline Isenberg, an unknown 23-year-old actress from an established Boston family.

The details of her rooftop murder and the subsequent capture of her suspected killer have filled the front pages of the city's tabloid papers and have been featured nightly on local "eyewitness" newscasts. The New York Times, which relegates most murders to a couple of paragraphs buried deep in its inside pages, has itemized the Isenberg stabbing in virtually every issue since Dec. 2 and headlined the story three times on page one.

Some 40 detectives were assigned to the investigation, while the dozen New Yorkers murdered since have been lucky if their deaths earned them the attention of three or four. Within six days, the police announced they had found someone — the son of the building superintendent — who confessed to the crime.

"Why is her life more valuable than another?" asks an official of the Upper West Side Hospital, where the Harvard graduate died on the operating table six hours after the stabbing.

"Because she was pretty and young and

talented and white and from Harvard," the spokesman said, expressing a cynicism with police and press methods apparently shared by many "minority" New Yorkers — those of non-European stock.

Despite New York's relative reputation among American cities for tolerance — the result of a constant turnover of immigrant nationalities — the city continues to experience race-related incidents involving police, ranging from charges of brutality to unwarranted shootings. Tensions have mounted as the Reagan administration has encouraged a heavy-handed crack-down on crime while ignoring the cause of much of it, the increasingly uneven distribution of wealth within the city.

The gap continues to widen between white and non-white unemployment rates, while city programs designed to offset that disparity have lost \$3 billion in federal funds since 1979. Figures released Wednesday by the city's Human Resources Administration show the number of New Yorkers living in poverty has increased 20 per cent since Ronald Reagan came to office, and that the poor now account for a quarter of city's population.

For its part, the press — particularly Rupert Murdoch's New York Post — has come under fire in recent months from black and Hispanic community leaders for reporting on minority New Yorkers only when they've committed a crime. A boycott

was launched recently against the Daily News because so few of its reporting staff are black.

"The communications world, though changing, is still like most other power centres and professions in our city — largely white, upper-middle-class and male," notes New York Times columnist Sydney Schanberg.

"Caroline Isenberg, while a woman, was part of that world. The other murder victims you fleetingly heard about in the last week and a half were not."

The New York press has defended its coverage of the murder, as Newsweek did this week, by pointing to "the unusually complete record of Isenberg's dying actions... (which) provided a dramatic glimpse into

the horror of urban violence." Other news media argued the quick reaction of neighbors who heard her screams in calling the police warranted comparisons with the infamous stabbing two decades ago of Kitty Genovese, whose anguished cries went unheeded by dozens of onlookers.

But The Times's Schanberg says the heavily weighted coverage is a reflection of the American media's preconceptions "about who and what are important."

As a police reporter 25 years ago, he remembers being trained to understand "that a murder on Park Avenue was big news and a murder on Dean Street in Brooklyn wasn't worth interrupting the card game for."

"Were the other victims (this week) less interesting than Miss Isenberg?" asks Schanberg.

Isenberg "lived in Manhattan, the glittery power borough; most of the others did not. She came from an affluent family; the others did not."

Schanberg says the attention given the Isenberg case by the police and the press is not "an intentional evil."

Body may hold down job

PLYMOUTH, England (Reuter) — A dead tramp nicknamed Diogenes has been embalmed, sealed in resin and hidden by a local artist who wants to use him in his library as "something like a large paperweight."

But painter Robert Lankiewicz's plan, reported by British newspapers Thursday, has run into opposition from authorities in this English south coast town.

The artist said he

befriended Edwin McKenzie, a tramp known as Diogenes because like the Greek philosopher he lived for some time in a barrel. McKenzie now has died, aged 72.

"Diogenes and I decided that his body should be preserved," Lankiewicz, 41, said.

"I have hidden the body until the legal questions have been

sorted out, when I will bring him home to remain with me for the rest of my life, something like a large paperweight in the library."

Plymouth District Health Officer Michael Fox commented: "The council does not think that this is an appropriate record of Mr. McKenzie's body."

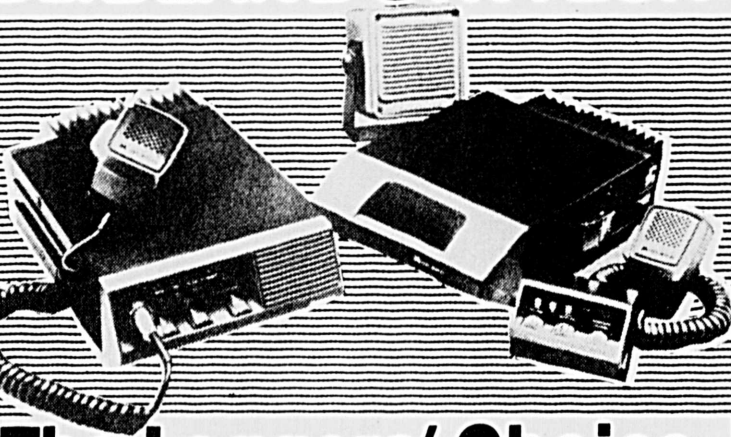
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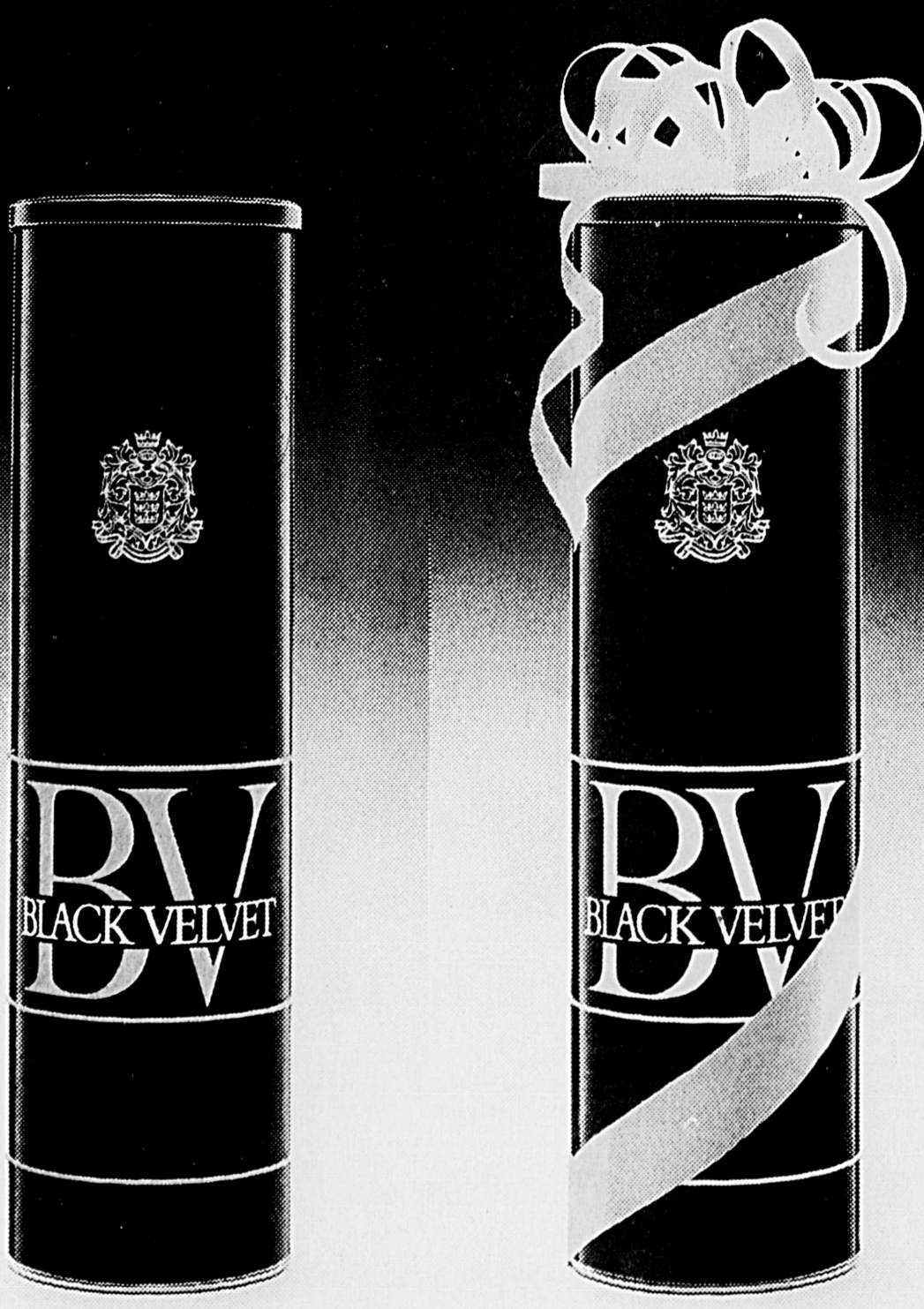
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