

## ***Off-Duty Officer Is Killed By Hit-Run Driver in Bronx***

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### ***Off-Duty Officer Is Killed By Hit-Run Driver in Bronx. — The New York Times***

An off-duty New York City police officer was killed late yesterday in the Bronx when a car that was involved in a collision on the Major Deegan Expressway suddenly accelerated and struck him as he attempted to approach it, the police said.

The car that struck the officer sped from the scene, near Yankee Stadium, and its driver was captured about a half mile away after hitting another car, according to a police spokesman, Sgt. Edward Burns.

The driver who struck the officer, identified as Steven Gatto, 25 years old, of 44 Flagler Street in East Brunswick, N.J., was charged with driving while intoxicated and leaving the scene of the accident. Sergeant Burns said more serious charges were likely to be filed against him when the police completed a detailed investigation of the incident.

A passenger in Mr. Gatto's car escaped and was being sought by the police early this morning. Cars Stop Near Divider

The police said the off-duty officer, Myron Parker, 26 years old, was traveling north on the Major Deegan Expressway behind a car driven by his brother, Lance Parker, when the brother's car was struck by Mr. Gatto's vehicle at 7:42 P.M. near 155th Street.

All three vehicles stopped near the center divider of the expressway, and Officer Parker got out of his car to investigate the accident, Sergeant Burns said. Another of Officer Parker's brothers, Mark Parker, who was a passenger in Officer Parker's car, remained behind.

Officer Parker had reached inside Mr. Gatto's vehicle in attempt to take his keys, when Mr. Gatto suddenly accelerated, Sergeant Burns said. Mr. Gatto's car crushed Officer Parker against the concrete divider, then knocked him over the divider into the southbound lane, where he was struck by an oncoming car, he said.

Officer Parker was taken to Lincoln Hospital, where he died a short time later. The driver of the southbound car stopped at the scene and was not charged, Sergeant Burns said.

### **A Half-Mile Car Chase**

The Chief of Department, Robert J. Johnston Jr., who came to the scene to help direct the investigation, said Officer Parker's brother, Lance, who witnessed the incident from his own car, chased Mr. Gatto for about one-half mile, where Mr. Gatto's car struck a car driven by two elderly women.

When Mr. Gatto's car came to a stop after the collision, Mr. Gatto was captured, but the passenger in the car escaped. The women in the car that was struck were not injured, Chief Johnston said.

Officer Parker, a Queens resident who entered the police force in 1982, was assigned to narcotics duty in the Bronx, Sergeant Burns said.