

'Kojak' TV plot linked to murder

NEW YORK (AP) — Two boys aged 13 and 14 who allegedly killed a numbers dealer with a shotgun had been hired as "hit men" for \$500 by a rival gambler who may have gotten the idea from a television show, police said Thursday.

The boys have been arrested, but the man who hired them "is on the lam," Detective Lt. Gino Delsignore said.

The boys' names were not divulged because the law forbids it. Nor did police identify the man sought for paying the boys \$500 each to kill Elijah Smith, 36, with a promise

of \$400 more when the job was done.

Police speculated that hiring juveniles as killers was inspired by the plot line in an episode of the "Kojak" series that aired last week.

"The guy who hired the kids got the idea, just like in the Kojak story, that they would get off easy if caught because of their youth," said one policeman, who asked not to be identified.

Using children in crimes carrying major penalties is not new here. Juvenile runners were pressed into racketeers when New York adopted laws under Gov. Nelson A.

Rockefeller that subjected adults to life terms for dealing.

The "hit men" both are enrolled in public school, the elder in eight grade and the other a year behind him, police said.

They were remanded to the Spofford Youth House to await action by Family Court, whose proceedings are shielded from public and press scrutiny.

The stiffest penalty available by law for a juvenile homicide offender is 18 months in a "secure facility," meaning a place that is locked and guarded. An adult convicted of murder can get 25 years to life.

Smith was blasted in the body and head when he entered the hallway of the Bronx building in which he lived at 1 a.m. Wednesday. The waiting killers dashed down from a second floor landing, with the 14-year-old pulling the trigger, police said.

The man who hired the boys wanted Smith killed for infringing on his gaming territory, police said. They said he provided the boys with a 20-gauge shotgun, which was recovered.

Delsignore said Detective Jack McAnn and Thomas Davis learned that Smith once had gotten one of the youngsters in trouble.

World at a glance

From Associated Press Reports

Man survives 27-story fall

SAN FRANCISCO — Medical authorities expressed amazement Thursday that a man survived a 27-story plunge down a ventilation shaft of the Transamerica Building, hitting a cement floor at a speed approaching 100 pmh.

The man, identified by police as 22-year-old Harold Brown of Tacoma, Wash., suffered two severely fractured thighbones, two fractured kneecaps and a fractured heelbone, but apparently no internal injuries in the 324-foot fall late Wednesday night.

Brown was conscious as ambulance crews removed him from the landmark, pyramid-shaped building. He was chanting, "Help me. Oh God, help me," witnesses reported and was singing various tunes including "Camptown Races" and one that went, "Oh, what a trip I'm on."

James Earl Ray points finger

PETROS, Tenn. — James Earl Ray, serving a 99-year sentence for killing Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., said Wednesday he has made positive identification of a photograph of the man he says set him up to take the blame for the civil rights leader's assassination.

Ray, who has said he is innocent of the King slaying, said the photograph was shown to him two or three months ago but he would not say who showed it to him.

Interviewed at Bushy Mountain State Penitentiary, Ray said the photo showed "Raoul," the man Ray says set him up to take the blame for the April 4, 1968, shooting of King in Memphis.

Swedes blast Firestone

GENEVA, Switzerland (AP) — A decision by Firestone, the Ohio-based tire manufacturer, to close its factory in Switzerland has angered workers and aroused new charges that the dollar's weakness is hurting the Swiss economy.

"Americans — are they cannibals?" asked the newspaper Tribune of Lausanne on Thursday in an editorial attacking the plan by Firestone and Rubber Co. to shut down its tire plant employing 600 workers at Pratteln, near Basel. Firestone took over the enterprise from Swiss control five years ago.

Weizman's Cairo visit 'last chance,' official says

CAIRO, Egypt (AP) — Ezer Weizman's visit could be "a last chance" for Israel to prove it wants peace, a high Egyptian official said Thursday. No progress was reported in the Israeli defense minister's talks with Pres. Anwar Sadat on resuming deadlocked negotiations.

The lack of progress was reported by official Cairo radio. In a later broadcast Thursday night, it said Sadat was sending a letter Friday to Pres. Carter outlining the results of the talks.

Weizman was reported spending the night here, but his Friday schedule was not known.

Carter is on a seven-day, four-nation foreign tour.

He said Thursday in Brasilia, Brazil, that he has "not given up the possibility of a negotiated settlement in the Middle East" despite meetings with Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin last week during which Begin reportedly refused to make concessions demanded by the Arab nations.

Dr. Osama el-Baz, Egypt's undersecretary of state for foreign affairs, said in Cairo the Weizman-Sadat meeting did not mean Egypt and Israel were "reopening the chapter of back-and-forth negotiations" that ended with the suspension of direct talks 10 weeks ago.

Cairo radio said Sadat and Weizman also discussed Israel's occupation of south Lebanon. ..

Thousands of Mexico children food poisoned

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Thousands of children were treated at hospitals here Thursday — apparently for food poisoning — after eating free government breakfasts supplied to schools in Mexico City, a Red Cross spokesman said.

Dr. Mario De Vocos, the city's Red Cross director, said more than 9,200 children were treated and 894 were hospitalized overnight. He said eight are "gravely ill, with two in danger of death."

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Woman robs bank — twice

NEWTON, Mass (AP) — Twice in 11 days the grey-haired lady has walked into the same branch bank, demanded stacks of \$20 bills from the same teller and threatened to blow everybody up. Both times she got away without a trace.

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