

Tenderloin crime: 5 cases that ex-Capt. Garrity will never forget

BY TOM CARTER

JOE GARRITY'S recent promotion from Tenderloin police captain to commander in the SFPD Operations Division put the iconic beat cop in a fifth-floor Hall of Justice office with a nice, tall northern exposure window. He keeps a handful of mementos on the sill and on his desk — like the miniature 49ers helmet signed by TL luminaries that Supervisor Jane Kim gave him as a going-away present. Occasionally he fumbles answering the phone: “Joe Garrity, Tenderloin sta ... er Operations.”

“Real quiet around here,” Garrity says, flashing the smile that endeared him to legions of residents, most of whom he knew by name.

The Extra asked what he considered his top five Tenderloin cases. He rattled them off in a flood of details, unrehearsed, in not even two minutes. Garrity, who has been a cop in the TL for 27 years, sat down with The Extra recently to explain.

1. 1984: The beating, rape and murder of Mei “Linda” Leung, a 9-year-old Vietnamese girl, in the basement of the apartment building at 765 O’Farrell St. where she lived. “I’ll remember it ’til the day I die,” Garrity says, shaking his head. This, though he was a graveyard beat cop who never saw the body nor got past the crime scene perimeter. Garrity said there are limits even among murderers that carry some hint of humanity. “I’ve seen shootings, sure, but there’s a kind of etiquette between cops and crooks in the Tenderloin, and this was over the line. It shocks any consciousness.”

The case came to mind in June when Richard “Night Stalker” Ramirez died of cancer on San Quentin’s Death Row. In an SFPD cold case examination four years ago, the DNA of the devil worshipper convicted of 13 murders was discovered to have been at the girl’s crime scene. He was living here at the time, months before committing his first murder in Los Angeles. “The chief, Greg Suhr, said he was an evil guy,” Garrity said. “The case is still unsolved.”

2. 2003: The Dalt Hotel lobby massacre, late on a on a Saturday afternoon in June. “I came in later that day, a lot of innocent people got hurt, 34 Turk, and I knew John Bravard — he was a security guard, a crazy guy, a gun guy.”

Bravard, a 14-year resident of the hotel, was known as a hothead and loner with mental problems. People avoided him. But the Vietnam vet bumped into fellow resident Paul Howard in the lobby and an argument ensued. Bravard went off to get his gun, came back and killed three people, wounding another, before going to his room and killing himself. The Chronicle quoted a resident: “Bravard was a disaster waiting to happen.” Blood was still on the floor when Garrity showed up.

3. 1990: Drive-by shooting with an AK47, wounding three. On April 30 at 10:30 p.m., a 1960s truck zoomed down Eddy Street near Jones with a guy firing an AK47 out the back at street dealers in a turf battle. Garrity, out of Central Station, was patrolling with his partner, John “J.J.” Newman, and interviewed bystanders as “Inspector Lum chased them over the bridge” where they ditched their vehicle and were lat-

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CORRECTION:

The credit on the Jazzie Collins photo in the August 2013 issue of The Extra was incorrect. The photographer was Christopher D. Cook.



Jones Street emerges as the go-to place for a variety of activities during the revival of Tenderloin Sunday Streets.

Sunday Streets resurfaces in TL

CBD, Zendesk, The Extra all play a role in the revival

STORY AND PHOTOS BY TOM CARTER

THE RESUSCITATED Tenderloin Sunday Streets was a lively success Aug. 18, with people cycling, skating and dancing in closed-off streets, thanks to a community that got involved and thus avoided being bypassed by organizers for the second straight year over its lack of enthusiasm.

An estimated 10,000 people joined the festivities, according to Susan King, executive director of Sunday Streets. The number of participating organizations quadrupled compared with two years ago.

This year’s event coincided with Glide’s 50th anniversary, which alone drew about 3,000, King said. The area involved 15 square blocks car-free but for a few, monitored, drive-through intersections.

“I was happy the neighborhood responded,” King told The Extra. “It had a lot of challenges. People had to step up and they got that. But it does take a lot of time to get traction. This year was more than just the small group at the beginning.”

Rain and attractions elsewhere in the city practically sank the event in 2011 while incurring a hefty expense for rerouting a thick web of bus lines. It was such a dud, King left the Tenderloin out of her neighborhood planning last year. That May, though, she met with a handful of neighborhood leaders to stress what had to be done to bring the popular event back in 2013.

And, in an interview in the October 2012 issue of The Extra she outlined the obstacles, which could be overcome if the community really got behind it.

“It’s time for the neighborhood to shine,” she told The Extra, then. “If you want it, bring it. Or we’ll leave you alone.”

King said reporting the ultimatum helped light a fire.

The first of the new techie kids on the block to join the participating organizations was Zendesk, the software company at Market and Sixth.

“They basically were the first tech company to support this,” King said. “They broke the ice and gave us a \$5,000 corporate sponsorship and sent volunteers, too.” She said she hoped other tech companies would jump in next year and maybe Zendesk would bump their sponsorship up “to \$15,000. It’s very important that the public knows these companies underwrite the costs.”

It costs about \$35,000 to put on a

Sunday Streets in any neighborhood.

And here, the stalwart support has been the Tenderloin CBD.

“Each year the CBD has given \$2,500, and it really helps us,” King said. “They help us organize, too, Dina Hilliard (former executive director) attended all the meetings. The CBD is really our go-to group.”

Jones Street was a magnet. The Tenderloin Boys and Girls Club had a disk jockey, Duy Nguyen, who played hot music for street-dancing dozens outside

while the club sold \$1 hot dogs inside. There was also ANTS tennis and the San Francisco Skate Club with a ramp course, plus a block away on Taylor at Ellis, Glide had a band and a big crowd.

“This year we had a lot of activity on Jones Street and people abandoned Larkin Street,” King said. “One was so crowded you couldn’t move and the other was dead. So we’ve got some work to do to anchor activity. But altogether it was fairly successful.” ■



An eight-year-old meets the challenge of a San Francisco Skate Club ramp.

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