

IT'S SITTING BULL

Bronx man gets ticketed for resting on a milk crate



By **BILL EGBERT** and **OWEN MORITZ**
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITERS

A lot of New Yorkers have outrageous stories about how the city is milking them dry with ridiculous fines — but Jesse Taveras has them all beat.

The 19-year-old Bronx man got a summons Sunday — for simply sitting on a milk crate on the Grand Concourse.

“I don’t believe this,” Taveras said he told the cop who handed him the ticket, citing him for “unauthorized use of a milk crate.”

“Don’t blame me,” Taveras said the cop told him. “Blame Bloomberg.”

The summons didn’t say how much Taveras would have to pay for planting his bottom on the crate, which bore the imprint of Sunnydale Farms and a warning: “Use by anyone but registered owner is liable to prosecution, article 17A, General Business Law.”

Deputy Chief Administrative Judge Joan Carey said a judge would decide the amount of the fine.

But Carey conceded she was stumped by the case of the sitting man. “I’ve never heard of this [violation] before,” she said. “But I learned something new today.”

She did note that an ages-old provision of the general business law deals with abandoned milk cans. It involves a \$50 fine.

And a 1988 law calls for fines of up to \$100 for stealing milk crates — but doesn’t address the legality of sitting on them.

The summons from hell came days after the Patrolmen’s Benevolent Association charged that beat cops are under pressure to write tickets and meet illegal quotas to help pump money into city coffers. City officials strongly deny those charges.

‘Because you’re sitting’

Taveras’ descent into a bureaucratic Twilight Zone came about 6:30 p.m. Sunday, as he sat on the crate in front the Grand Concourse hairbraiding salon where he works.

He said he was asked for identification, which he showed the officer.

The cop then called the 46th Precinct to see whether there was a warrant out for Taveras’ arrest.

“I wondered if maybe I littered,” he said.

There was no record and no warrant, he said. But he was then hit with the summons and immediately asked why.

“‘Because you’re sitting,’” Taveras said the cop explained. “‘We have to make our daily quota.’”

The cop, whose last name was Payan, could not be reached for comment.

Taveras said the cop’s partner told him not to worry. “It’s not a big deal,” she said. “The judge will throw it out anyway.”

According to a Bronx police source, cops are enforcing a quality-of-life campaign called Operation Impact.

“There have been complaints of people hanging out, sitting on milk crates, drinking beer, playing cards,” the source said.

The summons could cost Taveras more than a few dollars or a lost day of work in court.

His court date is June 25 — when he expects to be in the Dominican Republic visiting his sick mother. He said he has paid \$700 for plane tickets. “Regardless of what the fine is,” he said, “if I have to cancel my trip, this ticket is going to cost me \$700.”

Although Taveras’ friends and family were outraged by the ticket, Jogi Singh, 52, the manager of a Sunnydale Farms Food Store in Westchester County, had little sympathy.

“I’m going crazy,” he said. “We lose 200 to 300 crates a year.”

Meanwhile, the evidence remains at the scene of the crime.

“The crate’s in front of the salon, where it has always been,” said owner Michele Adams.

With Bob Kappstatter

DAILY NEWS
EXCLUSIVE

HUH?

Jesse Taveras of the Bronx shows summons he got for sitting on milk crate.

MICHAEL DABIN

Post writer borrows a page from Blair

By **BEN WIDDICOMBE** and **LEO STANDORA**
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITERS

Holy kangaroo — the New York Post has its own plagiarizing scandal!

After writing gleefully about The New York Times’ Jayson Blair scandal, the Rupert Murdoch-owned tabloid admitted yesterday that it published a plagiarized piece last week.

The Post identified its bad boy as Robin Gregg, a freelancer who the paper’s brass said ‘fessed up to stealing a story from that paragon of journalism the National Enquirer. Some would call that a perfect fit for the fact-challenged Post.

The purloined piece dealt with the relationship between Kathie Lee Gifford and Wal-Mart, which sells her sportswear, and appeared in the daily’s May 15 edition.

Gregg admitted he stole the story — almost word for word — and never told his editor where it came from, the Post said in a statement that it issued in response to questions.

“He took full responsibility,” the statement said, and “apologized to the Post editors and its readers.”

“We were deceived by Mr. Gregg, and he will never contribute to the Post again,” said Aussie-in-Chief Col Allan. “Now that we are aware the

National Enquirer reported the story, we will appropriately credit the publication in tomorrow’s paper.”

“The campers aren’t very happy here today,” said one Post staffer. “This is very embarrassing — especially with the timing.”

The tables were turned on the Post after it was relentless in attacking The Times over the Blair scandal. In a May 13 editorial, the Post mocked The Times’ four-page examination as an “act of self-flagellation.”

The Post did not say whether it would examine Gregg’s other stories for possible plagiarism. The paper has published about a dozen stories under his byline in the past year.

