

A CRUEL CRAZE

'Theft' not a game, sez slain cop's ma

BY VERONIKA BELENKAYA,
JESSICA DURANDO
and STEPHANIE GASKELL
DAILY NEWS WRITERS

AS NEW YORKERS lined up to get the latest version of a violent video game yesterday, the mother of a slain Staten Island cop warned players that crime is "for real."

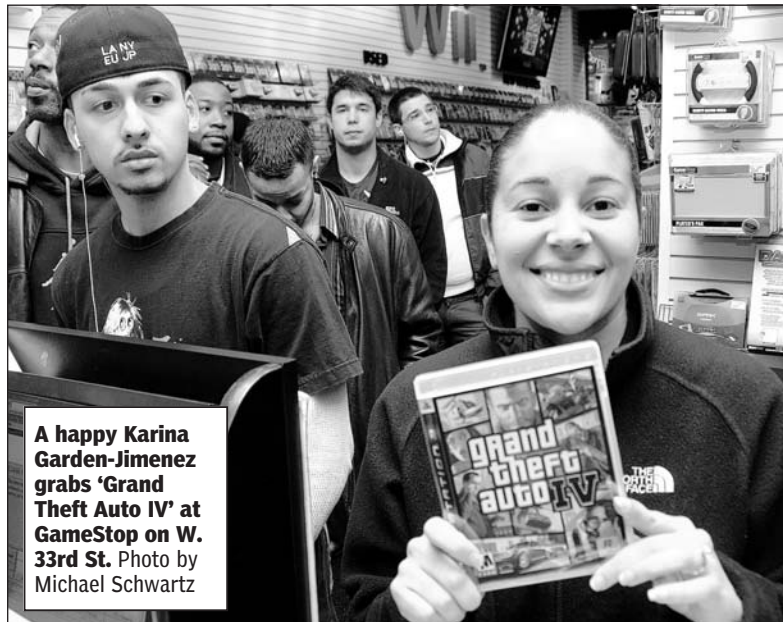
"For some people, it's a game," said Tatyana Timoshenko, mother of 23-year-old NYPD Officer Russel Timoshenko, who died last July after being shot in the face during a traffic stop in Crown Heights, Brooklyn.

"But for me, it's not funny. It was for real. It was my son," she told the Daily News. "This game teaches children to kill, then they wonder where criminals come from."

The much-anticipated "Grand Theft Auto IV" hit stores yesterday at midnight. Customers lined up to purchase the \$65 game and stores were selling out fast.

"Grand Theft Auto IV" is set in Liberty City, a fictional place apparently based on New York City.

The game begins with the city in lockdown because of a terrorist threat. Niko, the game's main character, is then "dragged into a criminal underworld" where players



A happy Karina Garden-Jimenez grabs 'Grand Theft Auto IV' at GameStop on W. 33rd St. Photo by Michael Schwartz

shoot at police and beat up prostitutes.

Many New Yorkers said they saw no harm in playing the ultraviolent game.

"It's like a movie and you're part of it," said Wilson Muniz, 35, of the Bronx. "You have to know the aspect of it being a game and violence in real life."

But Patrolmen's Benevolent Association President Pat Lynch said the game desensitizes players to real violence.

"Being involved in a shootout in a video game has no consequences and that is the wrong message to send to young people," Lynch said.

Mayor Bloomberg said although crime is down in the city, he can't do much about crime in its cyber-world substitute.

"The kids are playing these violent games that don't exactly teach the kind of things that you'd want to teach your kids," he said.

With Adam Lisberg
sgaskell@nydailynews.com

'Long way to go' on PCBs

BY BILL EGBERT
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

EDUCATION Department officials unveiled a new policy to address the problem of PCBs in school caulking at City Council hearings on the issue yesterday, but conceded that they had a long way to go for a full solution.

Shortly after the Daily News broke the story of illegal levels of PCBs in school caulking, the department formalized a protocol for monthly inspections in all school buildings, requiring custodians to report any cracks or damages they find. "It's certainly more vigilant guidelines than we had before," Deputy Chancellor Kathleen Grimm told members of the Education, Environmental Protection and Oversight committees at emergency joint hearings at City Hall yesterday.

The new policy is similar to inspections called for by Environmental Protection Committee Chairman James Gennaro the day after the story broke. While he was pleased to see the Education Department take heed, Gennaro said he was disappointed the city still has no plan to test caulk for PCBs or to remove the illegal caulk already found.

Oversight Committee Chairman Eric Gioia agreed, likening the department's resistance to testing to "a sick guy who's afraid to go to the doctor because he doesn't want to find out how sick he is."

Earlier, a representative from the Environmental Protection Agency, George Pavlou, confirmed that the city is obligated to remove caulk with PCB levels like that The News discovered.

Randi Weingarten, president of the United Federation of Teachers, presented a plan for dealing with the problem, including incorporating the cost of PCB-caulk removal into the capital plan. Many parents from the schools tested by The News also testified about their concerns and complained about what they saw as stonewalling by the Education Department.

wegbert@nydailynews.com

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Advice for all in Mike's new book

BY KIRSTEN DANIS
DAILY NEWS
CITY HALL BUREAU CHIEF

MAYOR Bloomberg doesn't just run New York — he wrote the book on it.

Bloomberg is penning a new how-to management book called "Do the Hard Things First (and Other Bloomberg Rules for Business and Politics)."

It's the second book for the mayor, whose breezy 1997 autobiography, "Bloomberg by Bloomberg" — written with Matt Winkler — has sold 90,000 copies.

The mayor described the book, which comes out in September, as a collection of what he's learned after decades in business followed by six years at City

Hall. "I thought it would be interesting to try to share my view," the mayor said yesterday.

Tips include "how to build a first-rate team, to create the conditions for innovation, and to know when to say 'yes' to your customers and when to say 'no,'" according to the publisher, Vanguard Press.

Bloomberg LP columnist Margaret Carlson is writing the book with the mayor. Another columnist, New York Times writer Joyce Purnick, has been working on a biography of the mayor.

Bloomberg was not paid an advance for his book, and the proceeds will be donated to the World Trade Center Memorial Foundation.

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