

City Council Members Shocked by "The NYPD Tapes"

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Some of the statements uttered by precinct supervisors "went beyond the normal procedure of what we would expect from a police force," Vann says. He says he intends

to meet this week with the commanders of Patrol Borough Brooklyn North to discuss the issues raised in the Voice article.

"The pressure that comes from police headquarters is there, and I would venture to say the 81st Precinct is probably not the only one to take on such aggressive acts," he says.

As for the precinct commander, Deputy Inspector Steven Mauriello, Vann said he has respect for him, but he was troubled by the statements attributed to him in the Voice.

"I was really shocked at what appeared in the Voice," he says. "It would seem to be two deputy inspectors: one that I know, who is very responsive to the community, and one who is I believe, in responding to his superiors, has become overly aggressive in trying to make the statistics look good in the district."

Councilman Peter Vallone says the Voice article for the first time put into cold relief the crisis in staffing faced by the NYPD. On a typical day tour in the 81st Precinct, there were just 3 to 9 officers to cover the whole precinct.

The explanation for that involves attrition, retirements and budget cuts. But it also involves patrol cops being constantly pulled out of their core duties to man parades and special events.

"The number one priority should be to return us to the number of officers prescribed in the Safe Streets, Safe City program of 38,200," he says. "The *Voice* article is a clear example of what is happening right now."

The Bloomberg administration recently decided not to cut 800 officers in the current budget, a move that Vallone applauds. But the administration it still plans to reduce the already stretched ranks by 400 officers, and replace those jobs with civilians. Vallone opposes that move.

"My precinct constantly loses cops to cover Mets games, for example," he says. "We just don't have enough cops. It's amazing to me that the local precincts can still get to the more serious incidents in record times. But anything that isn't immediate can take hours: like car accidents and past burglaries."

Meanwhile, an attorney for the Center for Constitutional Rights, which is suing the NYPD over its stop-and-frisk policies, called on the city to investigate how quotas drive questionable stops.

"This important *Village Voice* investigative reporting brings to light one explanation for the alarmingly high rate of stop-and-frisk activity in New York," Sunita Patel says. "Rather than good policing based on reasonable suspicion or probable cause, police officers are pressured by their superiors to ignore the Constitution."