

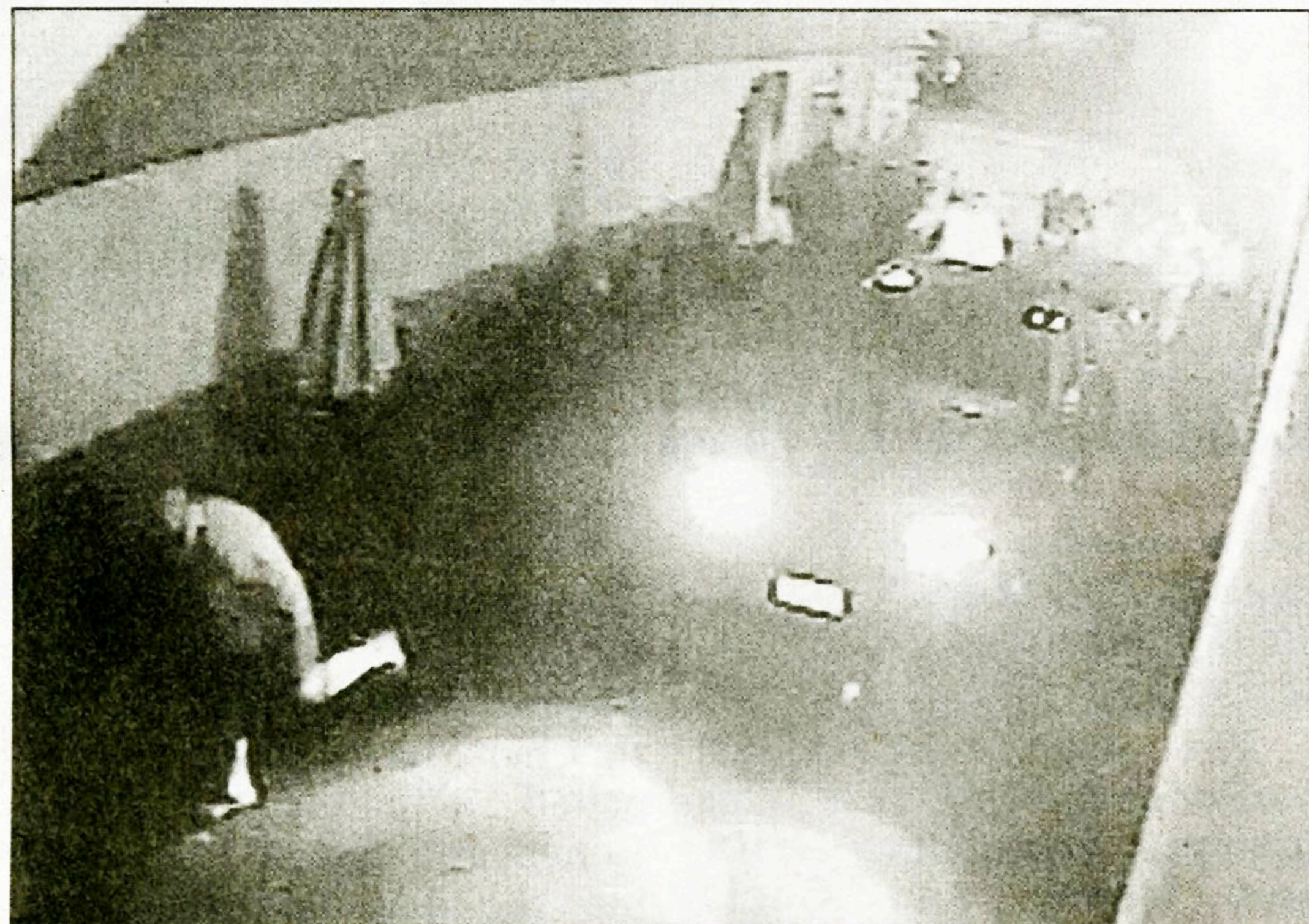


# Staten Island Advance

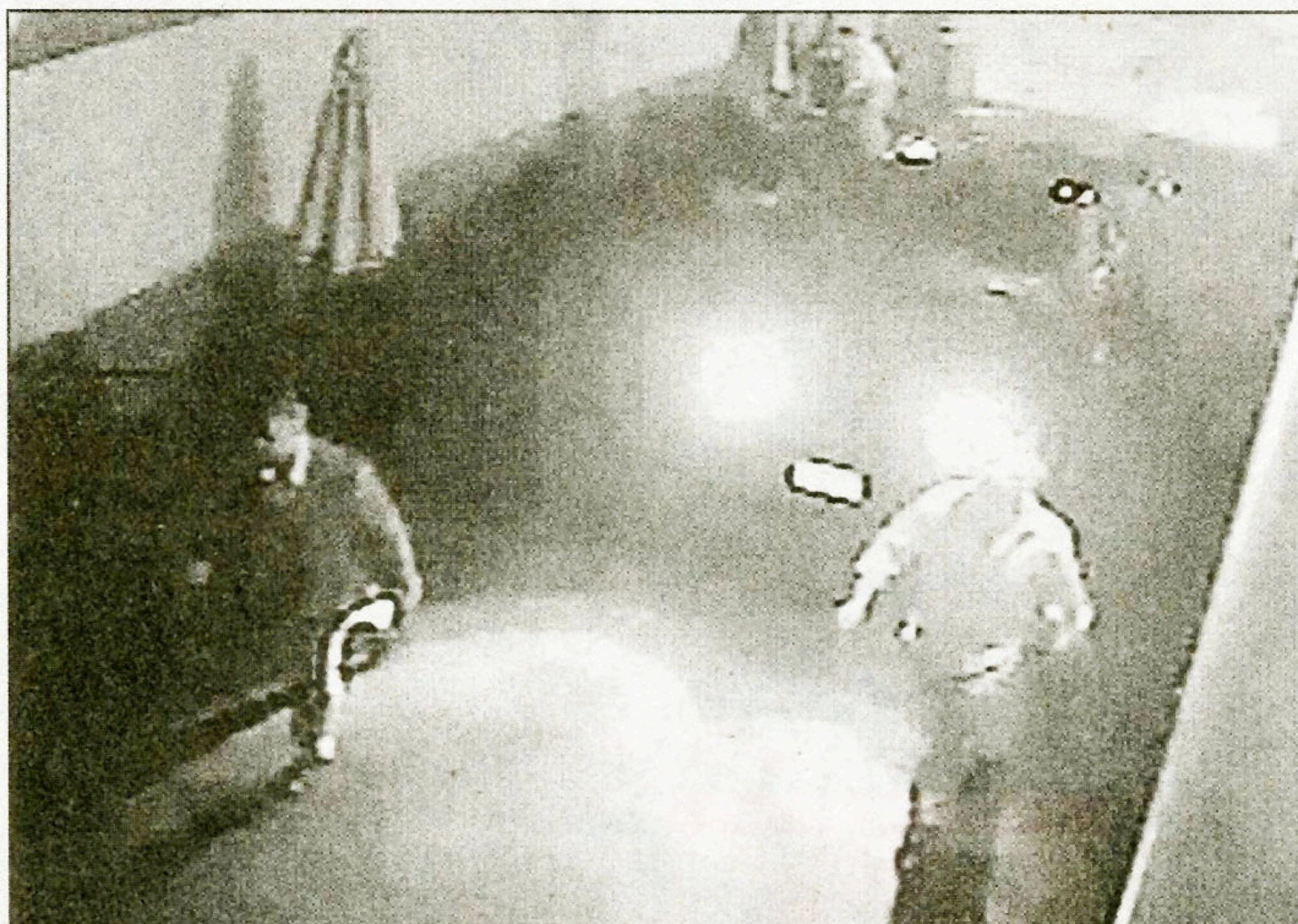
MONDAY, APRIL 23, 2012

POWERING **silive.com**

PUBLISHED SINCE 1886 | \$1.00



In this screen grab from a surveillance video, Redinel Dervishaj runs down the alley after the melee in front of Espana.



Almost immediately, Antonio Lacertosa, left, and others follow Dervishaj into the alley.



A short while later, Lacertosa is leaving the alley and appears to open his coat and discover that he's been stabbed.

## Final moments – frame by frame

Surveillance video that captures fatal melee outside Espana restaurant is posted on Internet

By **JOHN ANNESE**  
and **JILLIAN JORGENSEN**  
STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE

The chaotic final moments of Antonio Lacertosa's life

play out on grainy surveillance footage — two videos that helped Redinel Dervishaj walk away from murder charges in the stabbing after a grand jury declined to indict him.

Now, those videos have been put on the Internet for all to see.

Lacertosa, 27, was stabbed to death at the Espana Restaurant in Annadale after celebrating his engagement.

Dervishaj, 35, said he stabbed the groom-to-be in self-defense, and his lawyer, Thomas Reilly, said the video now circulating online backed up Dervishaj's claim.

"Basically, it really just shows my client trying to get away from the rowdy crowd as much as possible, and unfortunately, he wasn't really given an opportunity," Reilly said.

The raucous melee was

caught on two cameras next door. One, in color, is aimed at the sidewalk in front of the restaurant. The other, in black and white, shows the alley between the restaurant and the Annadale Family Pharmacy, where patio furniture and a bar were set up for outdoor dining.

The two videos were posted on YouTube by someone using the handle "Tomas Sangiorgio." As of late last

night, they remained online.

"The district attorney's office did not release any evidence that we obtained for this investigation," said Peter N. Spencer, spokesman for District Attorney Daniel Donovan. "We will try to determine where the video came from."

Often, businesses voluntarily provide videos to law enforcement officials to aid investigations, but any copies

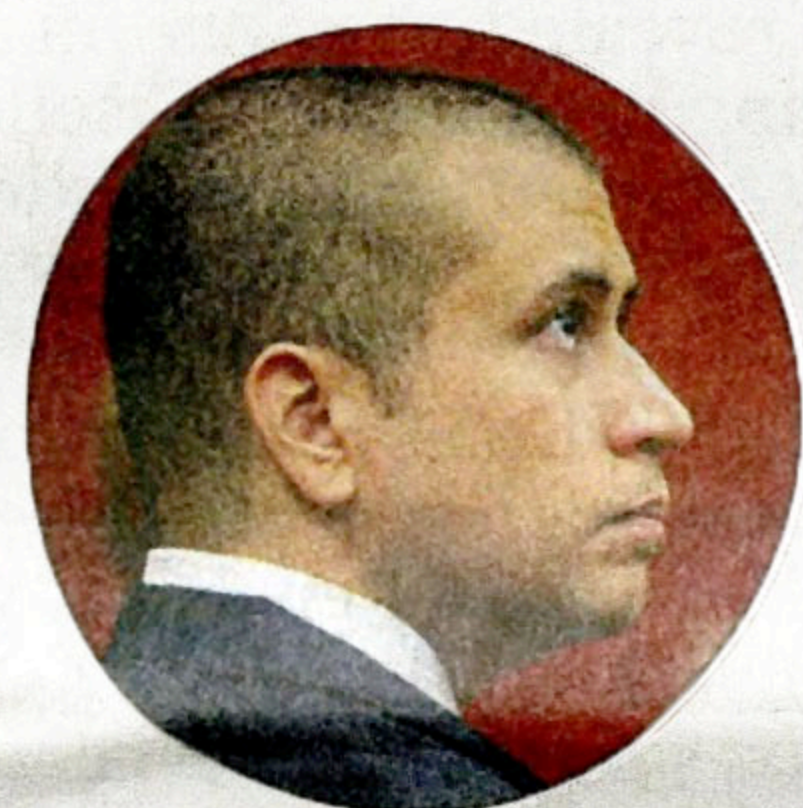
they keep are legally theirs to do with as they see fit, a law enforcement source familiar with criminal cases said.

Lacertosa's brother, Joseph, did not return a phone call seeking comment from the family.

The video shows a large group of party-goers standing in front of the restaurant on the sidewalk, while a large

SEE FRAME, PAGE A 10

### INSIDE YOUR ADVANCE



#### ZIMMERMAN RELEASED

George Zimmerman is released around midnight Sunday from a Fla. county jail on \$150,000 bail as he awaits his murder trial for fatally shooting Trayvon Martin.

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#### GOP PRIMARY

Mitt Romney is the presumptive GOP nominee against President Obama, but Republican primaries will still be held in New York and elsewhere tomorrow.

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STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE PHOTO

During a recent visit to Staten Island, State Education Commissioner John King stopped by the Staten Island Center for Independent Living and chatted with Michael Affrunti, a student from the Hungerford School annex at New Dorp. Looking on is teacher Shannon Mahoney. King has come out against "teaching to tests."

## Ed Commissioner decries 'test prep'

John King believes such an approach is not going to lead to higher scores

By **JILLIAN JORGENSEN**  
STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE

As students around the state take standardized tests this week, education officials in Albany are working to shape the exams of the future.

And while many complain about the assessments — and linking them to promotion

for students and evaluations for teachers promotes "teaching to the test" — State Education Commissioner John King said test prep isn't the best way to pass tests.

"I think people make pedagogical mistakes in thinking that test prep will lead to better outcomes," King told the Advance editorial board recently. "As a general matter, the way to get better at reading is reading."

The best way to help a student prepare for an exam in

SEE TEST PREP, PAGE A 10

### IMMIGRANTS OF PORT RICHMOND/MARIA

## Relax and have a bite with Maria

She dreams big, and her busy restaurant on Port Richmond Avenue proves it

By **AVERY MILLER**

In a New York City community where demographics reveal that the majority of residents were born in another country, Maria Morales, a 50-year-old successful Mexican businesswoman, has truly made Port Richmond her home.

The delicious aromas wafting from the kitchen of Maria's Mexican-cuisine restaurant, Los Potrillos, at 150 Port Richmond

Ave., tip hungry customers to the delights on offer and serve to distract them from the asymmetric decor. No chair matches the one next to it; no two walls are the same shade. The intimate and homey feeling topped with food that one would swear was delivered straight from Mexico keeps the regulars coming back for more.

Maria is on a first-name basis with patrons and knows their orders before they even tell her. Warm yet focused, courageous and intuitive, Maria is the type of woman who makes the most of every situation.

SEE MARIA, PAGE A 4



PHOTO BY JOHN EMVERSON

Maria Morales at her Port Richmond restaurant, Los Potrillos.

### On the inside

Eleven years ago, Geronimo made the decision to cross the border from Barranca, Peru. He paid a smuggler \$6,000 to provide false identification and airfare for a journey to Port Richmond that would take 10 full days. Today Geronimo struggles with all the obstacles facing undocumented immigrants in a new country, and his loneliness as a single middle-aged man. SEE PAGE A 4



## IMMIGRANTS OF PORT RICHMOND/GERONIMO

## Eking out a living, with pangs of loneliness

Geronimo enjoys steady work in construction but yearns to return to his native Peru

By JOANNA NG

**G**eronimo wakes up at 7 a.m. After a quick breakfast, he heads out to start his day.

Unlike some of his friends who must wait on street corners for jobs that may or may not materialize, Geronimo waits patiently for his boss of several years to pick him up. He knows that soon he'll set eyes on a house that will test his skills in repairing windows, doors and what-not.

When the clock shows 5 p.m., Geronimo's boss tells him and his co-workers to knock off, and Geronimo finds himself dropped off in the same location where he was picked up in the morning.

Unless there is a workers' meeting at El Centro del Inmigrante in Port Richmond that night, Geronimo will head home to cook a Peruvian dinner for himself and his brother. Then he'll repeat the routine the next day.

Geronimo has a 9-5 job at the moment. But things were different 13 years ago, when Geronimo made the decision to enter the U.S. from Barranca, Peru. He paid a smuggler \$6,000 to provide false identification and airfare for a journey to Port Richmond that would take 10 full days.

Having left his family and friends behind at the age of 33, Geronimo struggles with loneliness as a single middle-aged man, as well as the obstacles facing undocumented immigrants.



PHOTO BY LEE MANCHESTER

Geronimo stands inside El Centro del Inmigrante.

During an interview at El Centro, Geronimo recounts one of the happiest memories of his life. Arriving in the U.S., he was greeted by his brother who had emigrated earlier. They had not seen each other in years. But reality soon set in. Life back then was much tougher than it is now, Geronimo recalls. He did not always have a stable job.

Geronimo remembers two instances in which employers who picked him up for work did not pay him for his services when the day was over. The first time, he worked two days and received no pay. But the second time, he worked 14 full days without compensation.

Valuing honesty and trust, Geronimo couldn't believe someone could be so deceitful and immoral. Though enraged that he'd been taken advantage of, Geronimo knew he could not complain to anyone. He yearned to find a way to effectively express himself to his employers.

So he challenged himself to learn English with videos and books and classes at El Centro. Now he puts his English skills to good use by suggesting to his bosses more efficient means of work.

Geronimo decided on construction because it was easy to learn. He had done laborious work for much of his life. Growing up on a Peruvian farm, he tended to

the cows and crops with six brothers and a sister. When his family moved, he began to buy products such as paper, calendars, magazines, gold and silver to sell for profit. But this line of work was unstable and the profits too small.

Now settled on Staten Island, Geronimo has made many strides but still struggles with loneliness. Four of his six brothers also moved to the Port Richmond area; three of them have families, while he is single and lives with his single brother.

He often feels left out. Making friends is tough even though he describes himself as outgoing, passionate and friendly. He is disappointed that some of his friends do not see and value friendship in the same way he does — unconditional and permanent.

Geronimo says limited access to health care is one of the biggest obstacles facing undocumented immigrants in the U.S. He remembers when intense stomach pains forced him to seek out a doctor several years ago. He learned that his appendix had to be removed, and the procedure cost \$3,000. Though the hospital absorbed much of the cost, Geronimo was still dealt a significant financial blow. He now avoids doctors and hospitals unless absolutely needed.

Though he enjoys steady construction work here, Geronimo plans to return to Peru to be close to his family. On his days off, he stays home to do chores and cook Peruvian food for himself and his brother.

"I don't like too much salt," he explains.

MARIA FROM PAGE A 1

## Relax and have a bite with Maria

She arrived in the U.S. at the age of 33, expecting to stay only a few years. Today, she epitomizes the American dream.

Working first as a maid and later as a waitress, Maria couldn't be more grateful for the experience she gained from these careers. Balancing work and night classes, she accumulated enough knowledge and insight to start her own business eight years after her arrival in the States.

Unlike many restaurants in the area, Los Potrillos has withstood the recession because of Maria's strong managerial skills. Her latest plan is to add an authentic Mexican machine that slices beef for a particular type of taco. She says customers will surely grab this fresh and traditional sandwich on their breaks from work.

A single mother of three, Maria's nearly 100-hour work week doesn't stand in the way of her neighborhood commitment and devotion to her daughter.

As she walks into El Centro del Inmigrante, a Latino civic center in Port Richmond, still wearing her hair net and apron from the restaurant, Maria is warmly greeted by all those at the Tuesday night meeting. An obvious favorite, Maria has a lot to be proud about.

Paradoxically, it was an incident of bias that led her to El Centro. A man drove his car into Los Potrillos and two adjacent stores, causing severe damage to each. One of El Centro's employees helped Maria collect insurance.

In the face of adversity, Maria was not bitter or discouraged by the damage done to her restaurant and

## More on the web

To see video footage of Maria Morales at her restaurant, go to [silive.com/video](http://silive.com/video).

the week's profits she had lost. She remained thankful for the generosity provided by El Centro.

And she felt compelled to give back to the neighborhood. Giving waitress jobs at her restaurant to other Mexican immigrants who have yet to learn English, and working to improve safety in the Port Richmond area, Maria has become a celebrated activist.

She is also an inspirational single mother to her 10-year-old, Kimberley, saving enough money to send Kimberley to a private Catholic school on Staten Island, where the girl excels.

Like her mother, Kimberley is outgoing, intelligent — and perfectly bilingual. After attending CYO after school, Kimberley hangs around the restaurant, keeping staff entertained and busying herself with crafts and reading.

Though Maria rues the fact that Kimberley has no blood relatives in the States, many in the community have become like family. Still, Maria sends Kimberley home to Mexico each summer.

Maria touches lives in Port Richmond. Her restaurant serves as a beacon of hope to those in quest of the American dream. Her dedication to her daughter's life and future is undeniable. Though some may only remember the struggles of immigration, Maria chooses to remember the opportunities she was given.