

## Assailant With Hammer Dripping Blood Rampages in Teaneck Pediatrician Office Asking for Jews

HAMODIA STAFF

**NEW YORK** – A man holding a hammer dripping with blood entered the office of Riverside Pediatrics Medical Group on Palisades Avenue in Teaneck, NJ, on Sunday, September 12, smashing glass and asking if the people there were Jewish, WNBC-4 reported.

A secretary at the receptionist table was cut and injured by the broken glass. Jill Gordon had brought her daughter to the physician when she complained of a stomach ache, and was confronted as she accompanied her daughter to the bathroom when the assailant asked her if she was Jewish. She did not answer the question but locked the door and barricaded herself inside.

Police then followed the trail of blood which led them to Parisian Cleaners, a short distance away, where the suspect smashed through the doors with a hammer to gain entrance, before he was arrested by police.

Teaneck Police charged Cameron

Cole, 23 years old, with aggravated assault and weapons possession, but not with a hate crime.

Rep. Josh Gottheimer (Dem-NJ) questioned why the suspect, who asked if the people were Jewish, was not charged with a hate crime. “Imagine someone coming after you with a hammer dripping with blood and asking if you are Jewish. New Jersey has the second highest amount of hate crimes, and that’s why this has to be investigated,” he said.

“If this isn’t prejudice, then I don’t know what is,” Mrs. Gordon said. “He was looking for Jewish people in a pediatrician’s office in a heavily Jewish area. That’s seems like a hate crime to me.”

The Gordons waited in the bathroom for 10 minutes until the police told them it was safe to come out.

Teaneck Police said that Cole showed signs of mental illness and he is being treated at Holy Name Medical Center in Teaneck, and will be taken into police custody after he completes treatment.

## NY Governor Vows to Fight Lawsuit Over Vaccine Mandate

**ALBANY, N.Y.** (AP) – New York Gov. Kathy Hochul vowed this week to fight a lawsuit launched by a group of Christian health-care practitioners who argue that New York’s COVID-19 vaccine mandate for many health-care workers is unconstitutional because it lacks a religious exemption.

A federal judge temporarily blocked the state Tuesday from enforcing any part of its mandate that prohibits religious exemptions for health-care workers. The court will hold arguments in coming weeks.

The judge’s order means health-care workers must still get vaccinated before Sept. 27 – but for now, they can ask for religious exemptions.

Hochul said Wednesday she’s not aware of any major religious group that has prohibited adherents from receiving the COVID-19 vaccine.

Thomas More Society Senior Counsel Stephen Crampton, who’s representing the anonymous group of nurses, doctors and other health-care workers, said he’s confident the courts will find that people have a right to refuse the vaccine on religious grounds, even if they are part of a religious group that is endorsing the shots.

“My sincere religious convictions may not be 100% the same as the leader of my church or my denomination,” Crampton said. “And the law respects that and it should.”

New York has a long history of requiring health-care workers to be immunized against diseases that pose a major public health threat, including measles, mumps and rubella. Schoolchildren are required to be vaccinated against many diseases, too.

The state doesn’t offer religious exemptions for vaccination requirements for schoolchildren or health-care workers and has argued it isn’t obligated to do so for the COVID-19 vaccine, either. Courts have agreed that states don’t have to offer a religious exemption for childhood immunization.

Students at colleges and universities, however, can be exempt from New York’s vaccine mandates if they hold “genuine and sincere religious beliefs, which are contrary to the practices herein required.”

When asked whether the health-care practitioners have received other vaccines, Crampton said the group isn’t “anti-vax” in general.

Hochul, a Democrat, said getting vaccinated is the “most beautiful way” for individuals in healing professions to demonstrate their passion and concern for others.

Seven other states besides New York don’t offer a religious exemption for school and childcare immunization requirements, according to the Immunization Action Coalition.



Reuvin Borhardt/Hamodia

Brooklyn DA Eric Gonzalez visits Boro Park before Sukkos.

## NY to Launch Effort to Train More School Bus Drivers

SARA MARCUS

**NEW YORK** – Amidst a national shortage of school bus drivers, New York Governor Kathy Hochul has announced measures to address the mounting crisis.

The state will expand new testing opportunities for commercial drivers license applicants and expediting the process for obtaining van and bus permits by removing the 14-day waiting period between the permit and road test. In the long-term, the state will revise the testing and training system, as well as expand recruitment for bus drivers.

The state will reach out to 550,000 CDL license holders, such as firefighters or police officers, or those who already have the training but are currently unemployed.

Schools are encouraged to offer

incentives for potential drivers such as signing and retention bonuses and expanding benefits, and can use federal funds to do so.

A 2019 study by the New York Association for Pupil Transportation found that 80% of school transportation directors were concerned by the lack of drivers, and the pandemic exacerbated the issue, according to the Associated Press.

“We are leaving no stone unturned to make sure schools have adequate bus service to bring students to school and back,” Hochul said in a statement. “I have directed state agencies to utilize creative approaches and use every tool at their disposal to help districts affected by the bus driver shortage, so we can bring in as many qualified bus drivers as possible as quickly as possible.”

## First Taxi Medallion Owners Receive Debt Relief

HAMODIA STAFF

**NEW YORK** – New York City has delivered nearly \$700,000 in relief for the first three owners to fully restructure their loans, and the Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC) is poised to close deals with 13 more owners by the end of September, which would result in as much as \$2.6 million in relief.

Mayor Bill de Blasio announced on Saturday that NYC’s \$65 million Medallion Relief Program (MRP), which could result in \$500 million of debt forgiveness for thousands of drivers, has begun delivering payments to medallion owners who are overwhelmed with debt. Nearly 800 medallion owners are in stages of renegotiations, a significant portion of

which will be completed by the end of 2021.

“Medallion owners have worked tirelessly to keep NYC moving, and they deserve economic justice to make manageable payments and retire with dignity,” said de Blasio.

The program will provide \$65 million in grants to economically distressed individual medallion owners, which includes \$20,000 as a down payment to restructure loan principals and set lower monthly payments, as well as up to \$9,000 for monthly debt relief payments.

Many owners will have over \$200,000 in debt forgiven, and loan payments reduced to about \$1,500 or less per month. Some will achieve total debt erasure through settlements.