

# Trust Healy's crime stats more than our own eyes?

**L**ast month, Jersey City Mayor Jerramiah T. Healy and several other elected officials railed against New York Post columnist Phil Mushnick, who took cable sports network ESPN to task for setting a 9 p.m. starting time of a televised basketball game at St. Peter's College featuring St. Anthony High School of Jersey City.

In his column, Mushnick characterized Jersey City as a "tough town after dark," and wondered if the ESPN executives would have risked their own children's safety on the streets of Jersey City after dark. The game ended at 10:15 p.m.

In a written response to Mushnick's column, Healy called his city safe and branded the columnist's remarks as "a gratuitous defamation of our great city." Healy also took issue with the 2005 crime statistics Mushnick quoted to bolster his point.

Healy cited more recent crime stats that show a dramatic decrease in crime. "We think Phil should come over (to Jersey City) and we will show him all of the good spots the city has to offer," the mayor's said in his own letter.

There are undoubtedly "good spots," in Jersey City, especially in the revitalized Downtown or along its waterfront; and, of course, city officials are expected to be cheerleaders for their municipalities.

But would the mayor be willing — without the police escort that often travels with him in the city — to give Mushnick a nocturnal tour of certain neighborhoods, say for instance

## MORGAN'S CORNER

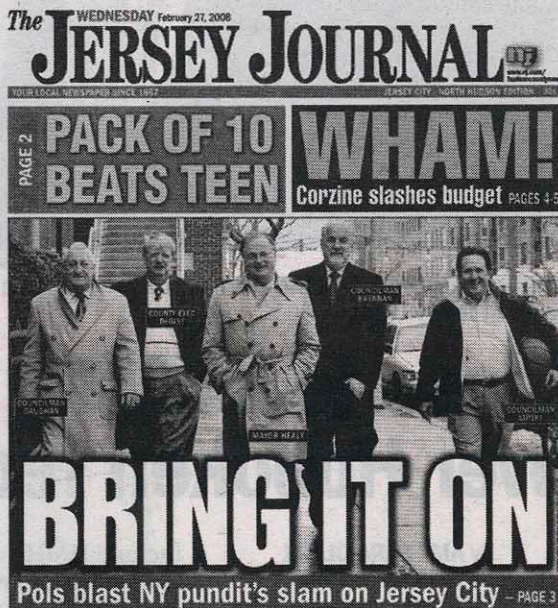


**Earl Morgan**

Lexington and Bergen avenues, Randolph and Carteret avenues, or Rose and Rutgers avenues? Perhaps he could take Mushnick on a night stroll through the Booker T. Washington or Montgomery Gardens public housing complexes, again with no police in tow.

Those areas, along with others, are cited by police as "crime hot spots." They could also be neighborhoods where youngsters who attended the St. Anthony game live. As for the drop in crime, perhaps the mayor should ask the Jersey City deliveryman who was beaten with a baseball bat while making a \$19.95 delivery a few weeks ago his opinion of the declining crime figures in Jersey City?

I have been to many community meetings where police and city officials rattle off numbers that they say prove there's a



**THE JERSEY JOURNAL'S** cover when Jersey City Mayor Jerramiah T. Healy and other officials protested a column by the New York Post's Phil Mushnick.

downturn in crime. The audience at these community conclaves, especially those held in the Bethune Community Center on Martin Luther King Drive, sit and stare in silent astonishment while their elected representatives stand before them quoting statistics.

Their city fathers seem to be telling them not to believe their own eyes or experience, but rest easy knowing the city has announced that crime in their neighborhoods is dropping.

Our city leaders fail to realize that residents don't feel any safer. What they feel is anger, despair and frustration at the people they voted into office and just how out of touch they are.