

# Racial fights in Village

NEW YORK (UPI) — Washington Square, storied heart of Greenwich Village where nannies once took the air with the children of the rich, yesterday saw its fading reputation further tarnished by a gang of white toughs who set upon a group of black strollers with knives, chains and clubs.

Police said they could not come up with a motive for the apparently well-organized attack. No one was arrested.

Twelve blacks were wounded in the melee. Four of them were hospitalized, one man in critical condition with a fractured skull and another facing the possible loss of vision in one eye.

Police Capt. William Fortune speculated that the rampage might have been in retaliation for an assault on a white youth in the park earlier in the week, and there were numerous rumors among Washington Square residents of past racial conflict.

Fortune said he believed the youths involved in the attack were from the neighborhood, and he has denied reports of a possible gang war.

“Until we have some arrests, it’s difficult to say what’s behind this,” he said.

One detective said he had heard the attack had been provoked because a black man had hawked a bag of bad marijuana to a white youth. But he added, “We can’t confirm that one.”

According to witnesses, from 30 to 50 attackers in their teens and early 20’s streaked into the park at the foot of Fifth Avenue

about 8:15 p.m. and set upon the unsuspecting blacks with knives, chains, pipes, baseball bats and sticks. The attackers fled before police arrived.

“We have to assume it’s racial in nature at this point,” a police spokesman said. “Witnesses report white kids doing the swinging and all the victims are black.”

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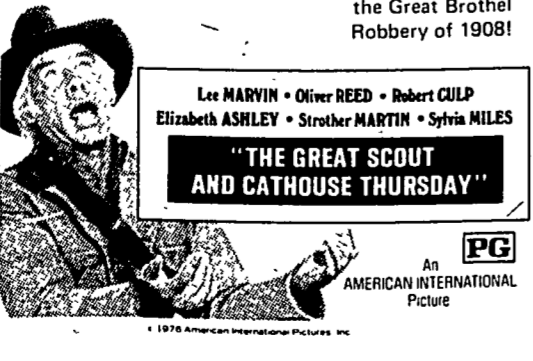
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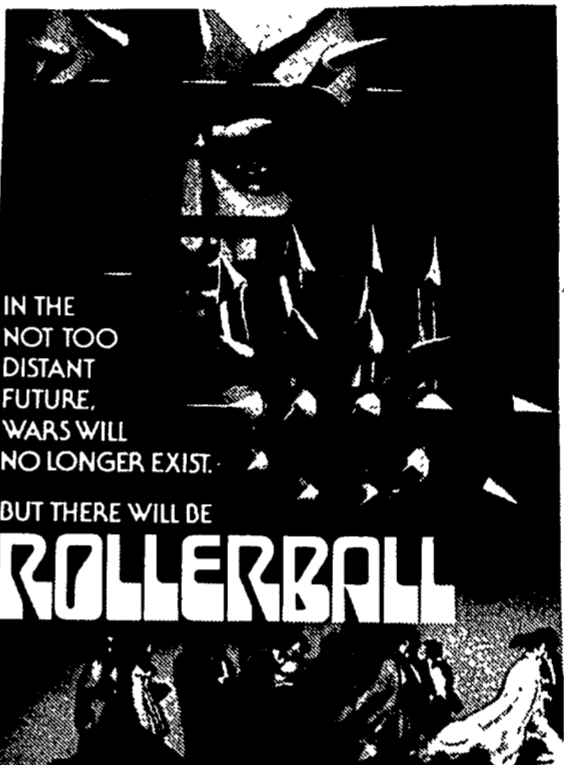
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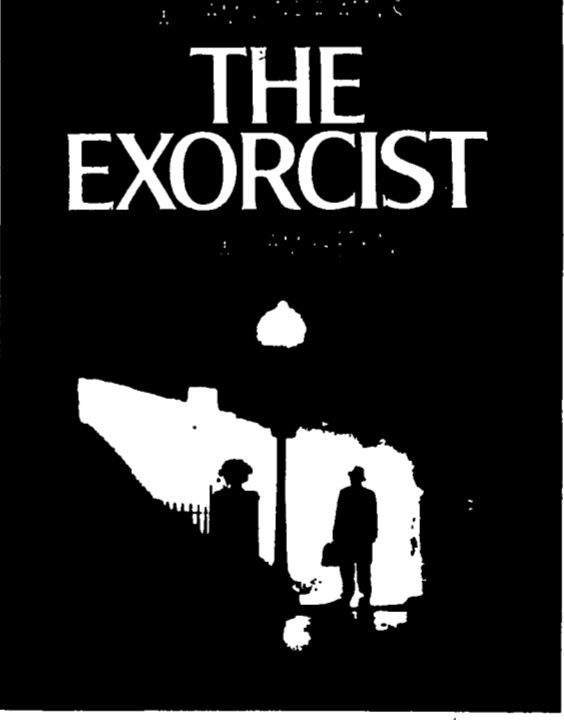


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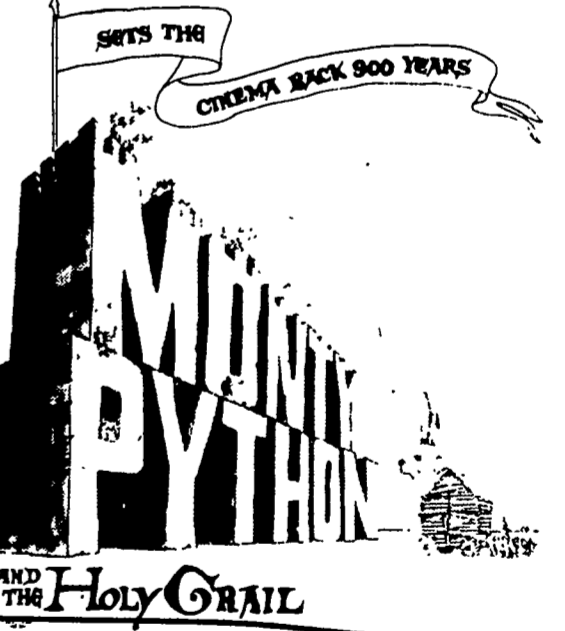


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