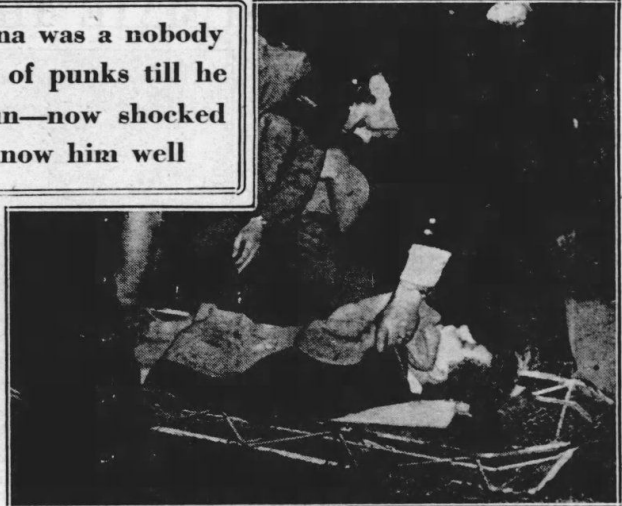




Frank Santana was a nobody in the world of punks till he fired that gun—now shocked millions know him well

(NEWS photos by Alan Aaronson)

A solemn Frankie Santana eyes familiar pistol This time it's in the hand of a prosecutor whose objective is execution of a slayer.



Police remove body of murder victim William Blankenship Jr., who met death on way to movie.

# Biography of a Teen-Age KILLER



(NEWS photo by Al Amy)

William Blankenship Jr.

It is possible that you have no such problem in your community as Juvenile Delinquency. Possible, but highly improbable. J. D. is affecting the smallest localities, is definitely on the increase, and civic authorities are finally aroused. Kermit Jaediker has written a straightforward account of a recent N. Y. City outbreak of this national sickness that will give you pause for thought.

By KERMIT JAEDIKER

THIS is in the nature of a success story, the story of a self-made punk. His name is Frank Santana and he's 17 years old. Most people said Frankie would never amount to much. In school, all he did was flunk. As a boxer, all he did was lose. Even as a punk, a street gangster, he was a flop. But now he's clicked. Really clicked. He shot a 15-year-old boy through the heart and people who never gave him a tumble, who treated him like dirt, are all talking about him, in terror, with a sickness at the pit of the stomach, but that's not important. What counts is that they're talking. They're aware of him.

Even the Golden Guineas, one of the toughest mobs in the Bronx, look up to Frankie with respect. And that's something.

As in the case of all self-made men, Frankie's rise to the top was slow and dogged. He reached high school—how, nobody knows—but he never could get out of the freshman class. He was a freshman four times straight. He saw other kids, who started school with him, graduate. But Frankie just stayed on his little freshman treadmill.

He couldn't help being backward, but he might have tried a bit. He never looked at a book, unless a teacher was standing over him. School was just a sharp pain to Frank. Whenever he went to school, something happened to him. Made him clam up. Teachers said he was "very quiet" and he was. So was nitroglycerine.

Frankie finally solved the school problem by playing hooky. One official of Haaren High, which Frank attended, if one will excuse the expression, described

the boy as probably "the worst truant in the school's history."

"In this term alone," the official said, "he has been absent 33 out of 60 school days. That's about his average rate of absence over the last two years. And even when he came to school, he cut most of his classes."

### Becomes Tarzan Outdoors

Meek and mild inside school, Frankie opened up like a flower once he was outside. He pulled back his thin shoulders and walked with a swagger. "Call me Tarzan," he told the few boys who were his friends, and they called him Tarzan, not because he had ordered them to, but because it amused them.

"Some day," he'd tell them, "I'm gonna be heavyweight champ of the world." They had all they could do to keep from busting out laughing. He had trouble making 126 pounds. He fought in the Police Athletic League. In his first two tournaments, he was licked both times. That didn't faze him. He hitched up his trunks and said, "Wait'll I get in there next time. I'll kill 'em."

The only one who believed he'd ever win at anything was his mother, Adelina Santana. But then she seldom heard of his failures. He covered them up with lies—he was pretty good at a snow job—and she would beam and even boast to the

neighbors of her smart, two-fisted Frankie.

Mrs. Santana was a poor woman, a widow. She came from Puerto Rico. She was on relief, because she was ill. She and her three sons lived in a dirty five-room flat at 696 Eagle Ave., Bronx, which they shared with two other families. But poverty is not the explanation for Frankie. There were other youngsters in the neighborhood, but they weren't punks.

Frankie belonged to a teen-age mob called the Navajos. They always were having street fights. Frankie began lugging a pistol. He explained he was afraid to use his fists in a street brawl because he might damage them so badly he couldn't fight in the ring. He wasn't kidding anyone. He was a bum with his fists. But if he had the guts to use a gun, that was okay with the Navajos. They'd wait and see.

One day Frankie ran afoul of some Golden Guineas, who currently were feuding with the Navajos. Seemed both gangs sported black leather jackets with yellow trimming and a picture of an Indian on the back. The Golden Guineas didn't like that. They felt something like the lady who buys herself a new hat and then sees a neighbor with the identical chapeau.

The moment they spotted Frankie, they pounced on him and started to rip off the jacket. But Frankie broke free and fled.



(NEWS photo by Al Amy)

A caged Tarzan shares cell with Ralph Falcon, 16 (r.), a member of the Navajo teen gang rounded up as sequel to senseless street killing.

He didn't have his gun. He had handed it to the Navajos' leader, a 14-year-old nicknamed "Superman," to hold for him. Frankie may have been a pinhead in school, but he was pretty bright in other matters. With the nosey cops always stopping young thugs and frisking them, it was dumb to carry a firearm.

Frankie told his fellow Navajos about the humiliation he had just suffered, and they vowed vengeance. The Golden Guineas were a big mob, so the Navajos got reinforcements, from a friendly gang called the Enchanters. Then they proceeded, on foot and on bicycles into the territory of their hated rivals and waited.

Along came two boys, William Blankenship Jr., a 15-year-old sophomore and football player at Mount St. Michael High School, and a pal of his, Salvatore Siciliano, also 15. They weren't gangsters. They were two decent kids, on their way to a movie.

Superman, as leader of the Navajos, took the initiative. He strutted up to William and demanded, "You a Golden Guinea?"

"No," said William. Superman whipped out Frankie's gun and pointed it.

William declined to be intimidated. He said, "Don't point that at me."

Superman, apparently convinced this wasn't a Golden Guinea, started to put the gun away, but Frankie seized it, crying: "Don't chicken out!"

Frankie's big moment had come. Success was in the clutch of his hand. He swung the gun on William and fired and William fell dead and the gang scattered. For the first time in his life, Frankie felt big. He'd gotten somewhere. All his failures had floated away in gunsmoke.

The cops, armed with a good description of the black-jacketed Navajos, rounded up most of the gang, including Frankie and Superman. Frankie quickly, almost proudly, confessed and was charged with murder. Ralph Falcon, 16, was charged with rioting. Eleven others were booked as juvenile delinquents because they were under 16.

The murder gun, a .32, was found hidden in a toilet tank in Frankie's home. Police also ran across a pair of brass knuckles.

Outside the Wakefield police station, (Continued on page 21, col. 1)