

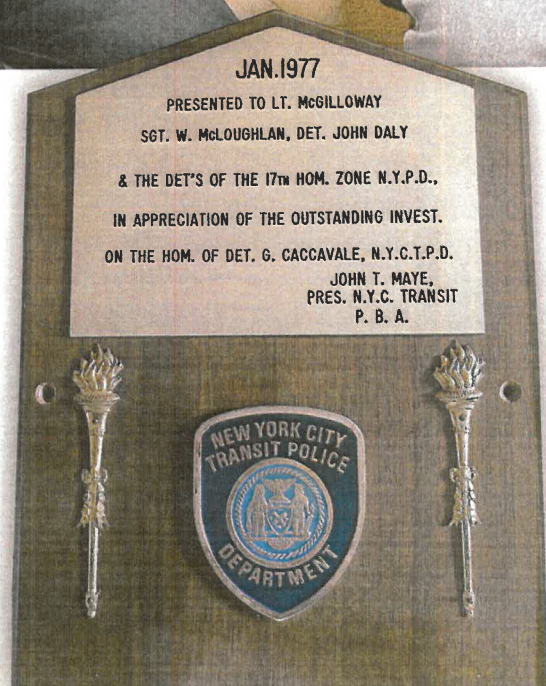
Someone to Call on Father's Day

Carla Caccavale, daughter of slain New York City Transit Det. George Caccavale, received an unusual message on Facebook one day. It was from retired NYPD Det. John Daly, who had seen news coverage that ran earlier in the year regarding the controversy over the sweatshirts Carla created to honor her father and raise money for the DEA's Widows' and Children's Fund. The school district in Pelham, New York, where Carla's children are enrolled, objected to the "thin blue line" police flag on the hoodies and banned school staff from wearing them. The debate that followed was covered in media outlets from the *New York Times*, to *Fox & Friends*, to NBC, to the cover of the civil service newspaper *The Chief*, to the *Daily Mail* in Great Britain.

But this wasn't a message solely about the sweatshirts. Daly had been the Detective who caught the homicide of Carla's father that had taken place at the Van Damm Check Cashing facility owned by Carla's mother Nancy. Her father, to support his wife and their two young children, was the driver for the company. Armed and clearly identified as a cop, Det. Caccavale had been gunned down during a robbery of the facility. The crooks got away with about \$35,000, and left another sack of cash in Caccavale's car.

Det. John Daly had joined the force in another era: in February of 1956, when Robert Wagner was Mayor and cops were summoned to a 10-13 by the sound of a silver whistle, the banging of a nightstick against the pavement, or from a public call box near the downed Officer. Daly had been promoted to Detective in August of 1964. And shortly after he was transferred from the 15th Homicide Zone to the 17th Homicide Zone, on June 26, 1976, a call came in about the robbery-homicide at 52-41 Van Dam Street in Long Island City.

At that time, no one knew that two of the four perps who committed the brazen robbery and murder were driven directly from the crime scene to the airport where they headed back to their home of Chicago, Illinois.





Daly and his colleagues suspected that the crime might have been committed by a client of the firm who knew Caccavale's routine, since the off-duty cop always delivered the cash. Caccavale would pull up in his car, and then walk out with his gun and money satchel in hand. It was an industrial area where factory workers routinely brought in their paychecks and clearly someone who knew that Det. Caccavale would be armed stood in waiting, ready to fire first.

The perps had driven in with a van, but were driven away by a fourth cohort. The van turned out to be rented with a stolen identification that belonged to a man in Brooklyn who had previously reported the theft of his wallet. He was able to give such an accurate description of the thief that when it was matched to a mug shot of a perp named Claude Holland, the Detectives thought it looked like Holland had posed live for the sketch.



John Daly, circa 1965

After confirming that Holland had rented the van, a call came in to the Detectives from a woman in Chicago who said she had been abused by her former husband and he had been in on the plot to rob the check cashing facility. She gave up all the information she knew about the scheme that was hatched by

Holland with her ex, a crook named Richard Payton and his cohort Percy Moore. She even knew that Caccavale had been killed with a .38.

Daly, his Sergeant, and another colleague flew to Chicago to meet with the informant. The Chicago PD dug out their files on the known perpetrators and kept an eye on them until the New York Investigators could amass enough evidence to put them under arrest. Back in New York, the fourth perp, the getaway driver, cut a deal with the prosecution, and with all

the evidence, including the testimony of Payton's ex-wife, eventually Holland, Payton and Moore received lengthy sentences of 25 years to life. Payton and Moore both died in prison. But Holland, who had committed several other heinous robbery-homicides in Illinois and Pennsylvania, is still incarcerated at age 83 at Adirondack Correctional Facility.

Daly earned second grade on April first, 1982, and first grade in February of 1988. Although he spent most of his career in the 106 Squad, he retired out of Detective Borough Manhattan in June of 1989. After a year with a private firm, and a year with the construction authority, Daly wound up spending five years as Chief Investigator of the Queens DA's Office, until he retired again in 1997. In 2004, he and his wife Sylvia moved to a condo in Virginia.

Seeing Carla on the news in the fall of 2020, Daly realized it was the baby girl he held in his arms during the time of the trial of the four perpetrators who had committed the murder of Det. George Caccavale. Carla was so happy to connect with the man who solved her father's homicide that, she admits, she cried the whole day after their first conversation.

With the help of her friend Karen Brown, she planned a trip to surprise Det. Daly with her father's memorial sweatshirts and a bag of goodies from the DEA store. She told Daly she was going down to his area of Virginia Beach for a vacation, but she really travelled all the way to the Chesapeake just to meet the man who had locked away her father's killers. Det. Daly gifted Carla with an assortment of vintage press clippings and memorabilia, including the plaque he received from the Transit Police honoring him and his colleagues for the work they did to solve her father's case. Carla plans to travel back down to Virginia to visit with Daly and his family again: this time for Daly's 89th birthday on September 12, 2021.

Carla, who was born on June 6, 1976 — only a few days before her father was murdered — summed up the emotional experience this way: "I've never had anyone to call on Father's Day. But now," she says, "I have someone to call."