

A 4th Body Is Discovered in the Waters Off Queens

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Body

A body of an Asian man was pulled from the sea off Queens yesterday by the United States Coast Guard, the police said.

The Immigration and Naturalization Service said the body might be that of a passenger on the Golden Venture, one of 20 people believed to be missing from the immigrant-smuggling ship that ran aground off Rockaway Beach on June 6 with about 320 passengers.

The body was discovered in waters off Beach 124th Street, three miles east of the waters off Fort Tilden where the 150-foot freighter ran aground. It was the fourth body discovered last week in waters east of Fort Tilden. All four bodies were those of Asian men.

Passenger List Not Found

The immigration agency is not sure exactly how many people were on the ship when it ran aground. Investigators were unable to find a list of passengers, something that all ships are required to have, an agency spokeswoman, Rosemary LaGuardia, said.

Ms. LaGuardia said investigators were still interviewing the immigrants to determine whether any of the missing passengers might be members of the gang that arranged the smuggling operation. She said the figure of 20 believed to be missing was based interviews with the immigrants.

If the four bodies are determined to be from the freighter, it would bring the death toll from the grounding to 10. Since the grounding, the Coast Guard has been on the lookout for more victims, Petty Officer Chris O'Neil said.

Coast Guard officials say it is not unusual for bodies to remain submerged for days before resurfacing. Local currents may prevent the bodies from being washed farther out to sea.

The ship set out from Bangkok, Thailand, in March or April, sailed around the Cape of Good Hope and then headed north through the Atlantic to New York. The immigrants reportedly paid as much as \$30,000 each to make the clandestine trip to America.

After the Golden Venture failed to rendezvous with smaller boats, which were supposed to carry the passengers to land, the crew mutinied. The vessel struck a sandbar about 200 yards from the shore, and many passengers panicked and jumped into the surf.

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