



An officer stands guard on Atkins Ave. in East New York after five people were shot on the street over the weekend. Photo by Todd Maisel/Daily News

Block's steel nerves

BY MICHAEL LIPKIN
DAILY NEWS WRITER

'It happens,' teen says after 5 shot in 12 hrs.

IT TAKES more than a few shootings to faze this Brooklyn block.

Just days after five men were shot on the same block last weekend, residents of Atkins Ave. in East New York said they're used to violent crime.

"It's bad, but it happens," said Alicia Tony, 17, who lives on Atkins between New Lots Ave. and Hegeman Ave., where the shootings took place. "I'm still outside today."

The first shooting took place shortly after 2 a.m. Saturday, when shots were fired at a neighborhood party, killing one and injuring another.

Less than 12 hours later, three more men fell victim to a drive-by shooting.

From his stoop a few yards away, Ronnie Coates, 55, saw the car drive up the block and fire a

half dozen shots into a crowd of about 20 people.

"When they start shooting, I duck. I don't run, I duck," said Coates, who unloads trucks for a living. "If you live here long enough, you learn things like that."

Coates added that the shooting was nothing new on his block. Five years ago, a young man was shot right outside his front door. "They shoot up all the time around here," he said.

As bad as the shooting was, it wasn't uncommon for the street, said Cesar Catala, a 26-year-old construction worker who lives one block over on Atkins Ave.

"There's at least one shooting a week," Catala said. "When I come home at night, I take a cab. It's

not worth it, not worth your life."

Catala said he's seen robberies, shootings and prostitutes outside his house in recent months, adding: "There's always something going on."

There have been 69 shootings since January in the 75th Precinct, which includes the block on Atkins Ave. — 23% of all the shootings in Brooklyn North.

There have also been 13 murders in the 75th so far this year — one-fifth of all homicides in Brooklyn North. In the same period last year, there were 10 murders and 72 shootings in the precinct.

Despite the high numbers, po-

lice said there's always a silver lining. "Lucky for us, the perps still can't shoot straight or the numbers would be

worse," said a police source in the 75th Precinct.

Coates said there might be some, albeit short-lived, reaction to the shootings: The 10 or so children who usually play outside in the afternoons were missing

Monday.

"Their moms are keeping them in," he said. "Nobody's going to be on that corner for a while . . . but they'll be back after it dies down. They always come back."

With Alison Gendar

'There's at least one shooting a week'

Cesar Catala