

Deliveryman, missing since Friday, found in stuck elevator

By TOM HAYS
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — A deliveryman who vanished after taking Chinese food to a Bronx high-rise apartment building was found alive Tuesday after apparently spending more than three days trapped in an elevator that had become stuck between floors.

Ming Kuang Chen, 35, had been the subject of a widespread search after he failed to return to his restaurant Friday night with \$200 in receipts, prompting speculation that he was the victim of armed bandits or some other urban horror.

But the disappearing deliveryman emerged Tuesday with a mean thirst and a tale of survival. He was pulled out at about 5 a.m. Tuesday by firefighters responding to an emergency call at the high-rise.

"Thanks for everyone caring about me," Chen said afterward in an interview with ETTV, a Taiwan-based news network. "I'm fine now."

Chen had no food or water throughout his ordeal. He was

given water at the scene before being taken to Montefiore Medical Center, where he was treated for minor dehydration and ate an apple, cereal and a roll. "He was in very good condition," said hospital spokesman Steve Osborne.

Authorities were questioning why police officers and the building's private security force found no sign of Chen, who claimed he had repeatedly cried out and pushed an alarm button in the elevator. And authorities had conducted a door-to-door canvass of the apartment complex over the weekend in search of Chen.

"I tried to knock (down) the door and kept screaming for help, but no response," Chen said in the television interview. "During the time I was stuck in the elevator, I just kept sleeping because I don't know what else to do."

Chen was last seen about 8:30 p.m. Friday after making three deliveries at the same apartment complex. He later told police through a translator that he had entered an elevator on the 32nd floor of a 38-story building when it

plunged down and became stuck between the third and fourth floors.

Chen, a native of China who speaks little English, apparently tried to tell rescuers how long he had been trapped by circling his watch dial with his finger numerous times, said Fire Department spokesman Charlie Markey.

An investigation determined that the security camera and alarm system in the elevator were working. But security officers told police they never heard nor saw Chen until Tuesday. Authorities showed up at the building Tuesday after firefighters got a call that an elevator was stuck.

Even maintenance workers who were called to check out the disabled elevator on Monday missed Chen, police said.

Those questions aside, Mayor Michael Bloomberg marveled at Chen's good luck.

"If they were there and they searched and they didn't find him, thank God it turned out that he's OK," the mayor said. "I think we should all be thankful that the man's alive."



Kuan Ming Chen, who works delivering Chinese food, speaks at a news conference in New York on Tuesday. Chen, who vanished after taking Chinese food to a Bronx apartment complex, was found alive Tuesday after apparently spending four days trapped in an elevator that had become stuck between floors.

VIORÉL FLORESCU/
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Early results show Kansas voters might approve gay marriage ban

By JOHN HANNA
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

TOPEKA, Kan. — Voters in Kansas overwhelmingly approved a constitutional amendment Tuesday banning same-sex couples from marrying or entering into civil unions.

With more than half of precincts reporting, 298,647 votes, or 70 percent, were cast in favor of a constitutional amendment, with 128,366, or 30 percent, opposed.

Gay marriage is already banned under Kansas law, and the law is not being challenged. But supporters of the ballot measure said the ban must be in the Kansas Constitution to insulate it from legal challenge.

Most voters appeared to brush

aside critics' arguments that the amendment could have unexpected consequences, such as preventing companies from offering health benefits to employees' partners, gay or heterosexual.

"The way marriage is in the Bible, God says it's between man and woman," said Sharon Kent, 58, of the Kansas City suburb of Mission. "I don't have a problem with gays being together, living together, but I have a problem with them getting married."

Matt Foreman, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, said the vote was not surprising, given results in other states.

"What is appalling is the continued silence and inaction of

people of faith and people of goodwill to speak out, to stand up to this wave of attacks against gay people," he said.

The Rev. Terry Fox, senior pastor at Wichita's Immanuel Baptist Church and a leader of the campaign for the proposal, said he expects opponents to challenge the amendment in court, though he is confident it will stand up.

"We always felt like if Kansans were given an opportunity to vote, they would vote strongly to protect marriage and defend marriage in the way it has traditionally been defined," Fox said. "The real winner here was marriage itself."

Republican state Attorney General Phill Kline had said the amendment was "an unfortunate, necessary reaction to activist courts.

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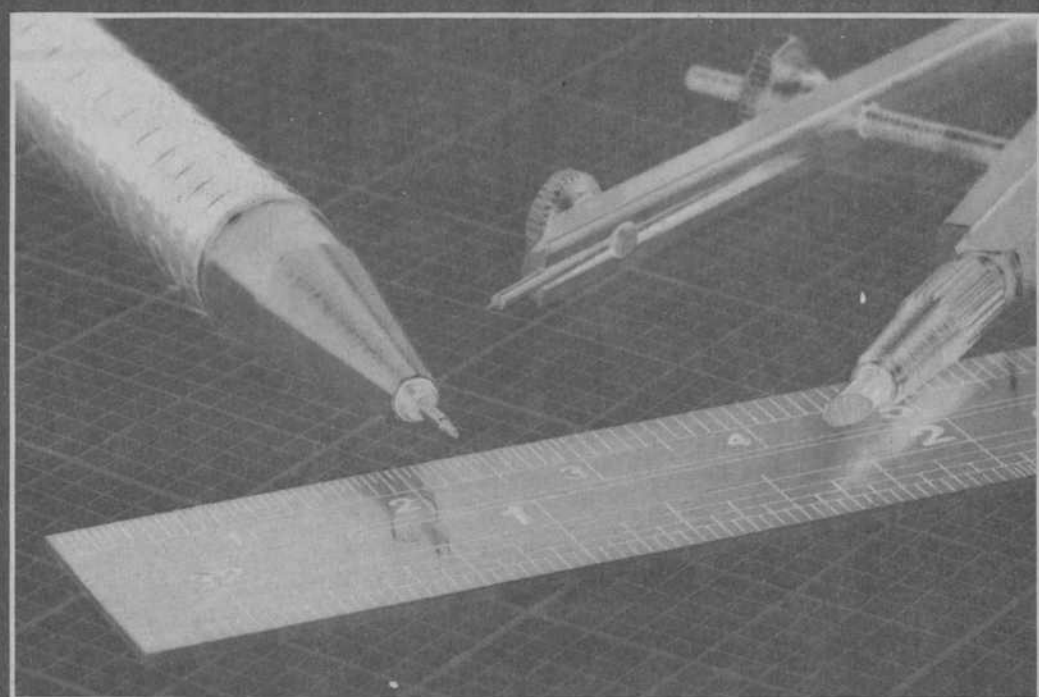


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