

# Global Financier Plunges 44 Stories

NEW YORK (AP)—Eli M. Black, chairman of the billion-dollar United Brands conglomerate, jumped to his death Monday in a suicide plunge from the 44th floor of the Pan Am Building to a terraced section of Park Ave. that circles Grand Central Terminal.

Det. John Duffy said Black, dressed in a blue suit, smashed a nonopening window with his attache case, clambered over the sill and jumped.

"He definitely removed some of the broken glass before stepping out," said Duffy. "He apparently didn't want to cut himself."

Duffy said Black's wallet and a substantial sum of money were still on the body when it was found in the middle of the elevated roadway.

According to police, Black left no notes and they have been unable to question his family about possible motives.

Edward Gelsthrope, executive vice president of United Brands, said Black had been under severe business pressure and had been working 16 hours a day.

He said Black had assumed the "additional burdens" of coping with new banana taxes imposed by some Central American countries on the company's fruit division, a disastrous hurricane that ruined some crops and losses to United's meat packing division because of increased cattle-feeding costs.

"He had become severely depressed because of the tension," Gelsthrope said.

He said there were no business problems facing United Brands that have not been disclosed.

Police listed the death as a suicide. The financier, 53, headed a global business empire dealing in growing, shipping and selling food, but also controlling railroads, shipping lines and a telecommunications firm. He had 53,000 employees.

United Brands' twin bases are John Morrell & Co., headquartered in Chicago, and the United Fruit Co. Division in Boston.

Black, who began his adult career as a rabbi, was also a major business force in Britain, where he controlled the Fyffes Group; Belgium, BM,

Speers & Son; United Fruit Continental in the Netherlands; United Fruit, Japan; Clemente Jacques in Mexico; Compagnia Italiana della Frutta, Italy; Compania Numar, Costa Rica; Aceitera Corna, Nicaragua, and TRT Telecommunications operating throughout Latin America and in the United States.

He controlled A & W International, headquartered in California, Revere Sugar in Charlestown, Mass., and many other companies around the world.

A & W International is second only to McDonald's in the fast food business, and United's Chiquita brand is the world's biggest selling banana.

Black had been married for 29 years to the artist, Shirley Lubill, and they had two children, Leon David and Judith Ellen.

Alfred University in upstate New York, where Black had been a member of the board of trustees, said he was a rabbi serving small congregations before joining the Lehman Brothers banking firm.