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MAURY Terry

The broken wall of my apartment was only knocked in several days before I got arrested. I'm quite certain that any police detective active will confirm to you that there were still numerous pieces of plaster chips on my rug before the hole.

All this may seem unimportant to many and maybe unimportant to you. However, this clearly points to advance planning and, of course, where office hours. Even if the police found only all their could do is shake up their fists at me and laugh at my being clever, but it wasn't all my idea and I'm certain you know this.

If you would like to, send back the form which I enclose separately.

Sincerely,
David Berkowitz

Letter from Berkowitz received by reporter Maury Terry, telling how his apartment was defaced

Does the evidence support Berkowitz?

The tangled web that is the Son of Sam case began to unravel slowly a short time after David Berkowitz's arrest on Aug. 10, 1977, after the biggest and most expensive manhunt in New York history involving more than 3000 detectives and costing millions of taxpayer dollars.

Looking back to that period, Berkowitz says, "Everybody wanted me dead. Die Berkowitz, die they all said. Nobody wanted to look for the truth. But now things are different, although surely it was covered up and dumped then. Now the police in New York are right back where they started in 1977. . . . The evidence (of a conspiracy) is so strong and overwhelming that only an idiot could ignore it or walk away from it now."

At the time of his arrest, in 1977, Berkowitz said he committed all the crimes at the command of demons, who were allegedly headed by his imaginary "master" — his elderly Yonkers neighbor, Sam Carr.

The case of John Carr

The first indication that Berkowitz had not acted alone came from a letter received in June, 1977, by the newspaper columnist Jimmy Breslin. That letter, signed by "Son of Sam," used the phrase "John Wheelies, rapist and suffocator of young girls," as an alias for the killer. These newspapers learned that the alias was the nickname of a real person — John Carr, son of Sam Carr.

—In Minot, N.D., where in 1976 he had finished a 12-year hitch in the Air Force, Carr told his therapist and friends he was acquainted with Berkowitz, had intimate knowledge of the "Son of Sam" murders and would be "tried in the electric chair" if New York authorities caught up with him. He told several people he was hiding out to avoid being questioned in the case.

—Carr bore a close resemblance to the long-haired man depicted in police sketches of Son of Sam and he was known to be in New York at the time of at least three shootings, including those where the killer's description matched his. Carr was also left-handed, at one shooting, the assailant was described as fleeing with the gun in his left hand.

—Police and other sources say Carr was known to have driven a yellow Volkswagen similar to the one chased by a witness at one of the New York City murder scenes. Another source says the car was not registered to Carr. Berkowitz, in 1976, drove a yellow or beige Volkswagen for two months, although his only registered vehicle was a Ford Galaxie.

—Carr also told North Dakota acquaintances of belonging to a satanic cult in Yonkers, and his Dakota friends provided explicit details of his cult activities, including the sacrifice of animals and the drinking of blood and urine during rituals. And Carr himself had admitted his cult involvement to a police officer.

One friend, Phil Falcon, said Carr told him he belonged to a large, violent cult in Yonkers whose sacrifices "went all the way." Falcon said Carr told him the group met indoors and outdoors near the Carr home in a North Dakota ritual that Falcon said he witnessed, Carr and a friend had cut the throat of an animal and

But after interviews with the prosecution psychiatrist, David Abrahamson, Berkowitz abandoned a planned insanity defense. Abrahamson pronounced the demon story a fake and said Berkowitz was competent to stand trial. Berkowitz then admitted he had concocted the demon story, and subsequently pleaded guilty to the shootings and avoided a trial.

He was sentenced to a total of 315 years in prison on June 12, 1978. Since then, evidence has surfaced to support Berkowitz's current statements that he did not act alone. Much of this evidence was developed before Berkowitz ever wrote any of the prison letters in which he speaks of accomplices on the scenes of the 44 caliber killings, and other elements focus on Berkowitz's friends, apartment and activities in Westchester. Each is examined below.

—Carr left his family home in Yonkers in August, 1977, just days before Berkowitz's arrest and returned to Minot. Carr was watching television with his girlfriend when the news of Berkowitz's arrest was broadcast. She said he appeared unsurprised and resigned to that development.

—A North Dakota friend says that after Berkowitz's arrest, Carr repeatedly drew an occult symbol — one used in the Son of Sam letters — on the back of a phone directory.

—Carr's girlfriend says that in a letter he wrote in North Dakota, Carr used phrases that were nearly identical to ones later found in a Son of Sam note found in Berkowitz's apartment. And his therapist said Carr described Berkowitz's apartment in detail, according to a police report.

—A dead German shepherd dog was found in Yonkers and Carr home with its ear sliced off. In North Dakota, a friend of John Carr had a shepherd's ear mounted by a taxidermist; police have a receipt of the transaction. Although the ear was not from the same dog, investigators see a link in practices of the Minot and Yonkers cults.

—Berkowitz admits to knowing Carr personally, and says he "hated Carr."

On Jan. 31, 1978, Carr surprised his friends by announcing he was returning to Yonkers; he said he would not be back in Minot for six months. Back in New York, he spoke by phone with his girlfriend, telling her at one point that "the cops were hot on his trail and he had to get out of town." He flew back to Minot Feb. 14.

On Feb. 18, John Carr was found dead in Minot, N.D., his skull demolished by a rifle slug. His death, originally termed an apparent suicide, was later acknowledged to be a possible homicide, and is still under investigation.

"There are a lot of unanswered questions," says Terry Gardner, a lieutenant in the Ward County, N.D., sheriff's department. "I don't know what happened."

Please see CARR on page A8

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CARR

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partment. New York authorities who have investigated Carr's death point out that:

—Carr's body was found face down on the floor of his girlfriend's bedroom, parallel to the bed, the rifle on top of his legs. If he had committed suicide, his body would probably have been thrown back on to bed. If he fell to the floor, the rifle should have been beneath, not on top of, his legs.

—There were no fingerprints on the rifle or shell casings.

—Carr did not appear despondent, had discussed possible marriage with his girlfriend, opened two bank accounts and rented a post office box for six months.

—The scene of his death — with the front door unatched and dishes partly washed in the sink, was not consistent with suicide.

—Carr had feared for his life, according to friends in Minot, and had said a man from New York was whom he feared. He had carried a photo of that man in his wallet, according to friends. The photo was not found on his body.



John Carr?
Photo at left, off TV monitor, shows John Carr in North Dakota. Evidence



suggests he may be the Son of Sam suspect in the police sketch at right.

The 'topsy-turvy' Yonkers apartment

Just days before his arrest, writes Berkowitz, he and other members of the Son of Sam cult set in motion a careful plan to depict Berkowitz as a lone, deranged assassin. It was feared Berkowitz was about to be captured the week before, his car had received a parking ticket at the scene of the Stacy Moskowitz murder — a ticket police could use to trace him.

On Aug. 10, 1977, arresting officers found Berkowitz's apartment a shambles, with bizarre graffiti, a hole punched in one wall, little furniture, and books, magazines and incriminating writings scattered about. It was, Berkowitz says, a hoax.

He writes: "I will tell you now and quite personally that all the things which people saw — the strange writing on the wall, the topsy-turvy apartment with the letters and books scattered about, the broken wall, etc. . . . was all by deliberate design. It was a deliberate act. It was set up this way as a means of feigning insanity."

"The broken wall of my apartment was only knocked in several days before I got arrested. I'm quite certain that any police detective will confirm to you that there were still numerous pieces of plaster chips on my rug below the hole."

Blow-ups of unleased police photos of the apartment do show plaster chips still on the rug, as Berkowitz says. A neighbor recalled hearing the sound of the wall being punched at about 5 a.m. one morning shortly

before the arrest; a crack in her own wall reminds her of the incident.

Berkowitz continues: "As for the scrawls on the walls, if I recall correctly, they were done in red magic marker. But if you notice, all those markings were very much alike. Why? Because they were only written on the walls (all at once) within several days before my arrest."

Official sources say the markings were all in the same style, and they appeared to have been applied just before the arrest. One source said a brown paper bag smeared with red magic marker was found in the apartment, suggesting that an attempt may have been made to "age" the writing on the walls by rubbing with the bag.

Other writings in the apartment are also suspicious. Sources cite an incriminating note that had a 1977 date crossed out and a new date, from December 1976, written over it. And Berkowitz's personal address book, found in the apartment, contained a number of strange entries, such as "Sam's Secret Satanic Service," "The Master" and "FALN Secret Meeting Place."

These entries — and no others — were written with a green soft-tip pen, all in a haphazard fashion in the first nine pages of the otherwise neat book. A source close to the case says, "There's no question they were all done at the same time and were added to an address book that had been well-organized, neat and normal before."

Additionally, FALN, the Puerto Rican

terrorist group, had not been in the headlines for some time until early August, 1977, when a major bombing occurred in Manhattan. Sources suggest the FALN would have been conspicuously apparent to Berkowitz at that time.

Furniture that Berkowitz is now known to have owned was not in the apartment when he was arrested. This included a large bureau, a stereo speaker and tape recorder and other items.

"I never had very much furniture," Berkowitz writes. "But within a week before I got arrested I threw out the several good pieces I had. The furniture was loaded into a small van and deposited in front of the Salvation Army warehouse on Columbus Avenue in Mt. Vernon. . . . All this may seem unimportant to many and maybe even unimportant to you. However, this clearly points to advance planning, and of course, sanity."

Berkowitz was asked to provide more detail on the furniture movement; he responded with a detailed, accurate map showing where a van was rented at a Bronx gas station. His information about the station personnel, location, rental and deposit fees has been verified. His letters also show detailed knowledge of the Salvation Army warehouse.

Of Berkowitz's claims, sources close to the Queens district attorney's office say: "We can't disprove it. We think he's telling the truth."

Dead dogs in Yonkers

Dead German Shepherds, commonly used as occult sacrifices, were found throughout David Berkowitz's Plus Street neighborhood in Yonkers both before and after his arrest.

Berkowitz, in his prison letters, describes an aborted cult plan to obtain dogs for sacrifices by placing him in a position of responsibility at the Yonkers animal shelter. Berkowitz writes:

"At one time, I think around late 1976 or early 1977, I was supposed to get a job at the Yonkers animal shelter. . . . To show you how much I know, this place is a small one-story building. There is a yard attached and north of the main building in which the dogs are exercised in. Across the street (and this spoiled everything) there is a truck yard. Well, it was some type of yard with vehicles in it. The problem was with the guard who was there. A guard was present every 24 hours around the clock. Often, he sat in a chair right by the fence. When I went to the shelter the guard who was there was an older man . . . who wore glasses. . . ."

Berkowitz goes on to describe the characteristics of individual dogs, writing, "to prove authenticity I must show you that I possess some knowledge of certain things." His descriptions are confirmed by the shelter manager, Tony Catalano.

Berkowitz continues: "Without providing you with names (I'll never do this) I could safely tell you that I was going to supply dogs for obnoxious religious purposes. . . ."

He describes how he applied for a job, and how someone inside the shelter was to vouch for him.

"You see," he writes, "being that I was older than most of the other workers, the

idea was that I was going to quickly advance in responsibility and seniority. Soon I would have possessed many of the main and important keys. This was to let a few dogs out at night. I mean take them out. Of course this wasn't going to happen during business hours. This is where the problem was. That guard across the street sitting on his silly black wooden chair. . . . That guard would have busted us easy."

The shelter manager Catalano says, "His physical description of the guard is correct; his description of the shelter, inside and out, is correct, and his description of me and the former manager is right, too. Based on all of this, there's no doubt he was here day and night."

"Plus," Catalano says, "I and a couple of the workers at the time he was arrested all remembered seeing him here one day. We saw his picture in the paper and talked about it. We were convinced back then he'd been here."

Over the last two weeks, three more German Shepherds were found beheaded in Yonkers. One had its tail missing, and at least one had an ear sliced off. The dogs were found near the Yonkers, Ludlow and Glenwood railroad stations.

A dog skeleton was also reported found near the Ludlow station, surrounded by a circle of rocks — an occult circle used for sacrificial rites.

And at the Mount Vernon animal shelter, manager John Foote reports that three German Shepherds were stolen at night between late October and December of last year.

The scene of the crimes

As police investigated the series of shootings that became known as the Son of Sam murders, one thing was clear — no good description of a suspect held up for all the crimes. Official sources close to the case have expressed concern that the evidence against David Berkowitz as a lone killer was virtually non-existent. Berkowitz, who originally claimed to be the lone gunman, now says he was not alone.

Here is what is known about some of the .44-caliber cases:

—July 29, 1976. Murder of Donna Lauria and wounding of Jody Valente in the Bronx. Neighbors had noticed a "suspicious" intermediate-sized yellow car in the neighborhood, several hours before the shooting. Michael Lauria, Donna's father, saw a similar vehicle just five minutes before the

attack. Police later asked Berkowitz if he had followed the girls earlier in the evening, he said he had not.

—Nov. 37, 1976. Wounding of Joanne Lomino and Donna DiMasi in Queens. Both girls looked the assailant straight in the face before being shot; he had approached them, asking for directions before pulling his gun. Each victim described a lean gunman, about 160 pounds, with dark, piercing eyes and longish, straight, parted hair. Another witness saw the gunman escape holding the revolver in his left hand. Berkowitz, who is right-handed, weighed more than 200 pounds, is blue-eyed, with short, curly hair. John Carr matches the victims' description and is

Please see SCENE on page A9

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