

Manhattan accountant probed as possible 'Sam' link

Last of a series
By M.J. ZUCKERMAN
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Staff Writers

A Manhattan accountant is being investigated by Queens prosecutors as a possible accomplice in the "Son of Sam" murders.

The suspect, described by authorities as being involved in witchcraft, has been linked in the case by his associations with key figures in the probe, including David Berkowitz and John Carr, and his strong resemblance to early police sketches of "Son of Sam."

While the evidence against this suspect remains circumstantial, investigators say

information tying him to key "events and situations" connected to the killings "cannot be summarily disregarded."

Authorities regard the Nassau County man as the leader of a Queens-based Satanic cult that may be linked to a Yonkers cult suspected of being at the center of the killings.

The suspect — his name withheld here because he has not been charged with any crime — also was described as a suspect in the murders by Bronx police during their aborted, two-month probe into "Son of Sam" accusations theories last year.

Gonnett Westchester Newspapers has observed near the site of the Christina Freund shooting in Forest Hills.

department reports from that Bronx investigation.

The reports, written between August 31, 1979 and October 22, 1979, by New York City Police Capt. John W. Flancker, then commanding officer of the Seventh Detachment, are concluded by saying this about the suspect:

— He bears a "remarkable resemblance" to one of the sketches of the "Son of Sam" — a sketch "several witnesses and potential victims identified as a suspect in the shootings."

— "He owned a small green auto believed to be similar to the one which was observed near the site of the Christina Freund shooting in Forest Hills."

— "He lived near the scene of two of the shootings."

— His photograph has been identified by individuals associated with the late John Carr as being a friend who visited Carr in North Dakota on a number of occasions. Carr, who is also suspected of having been involved in the killings, kept a picture of the suspect in his wallet, his associates say. That picture was missing from the wallet when Carr was found dead in 1978, police say.

— He worked in the same building in lower Manhattan as Christina Freund, who was killed in the fourth "Son of Sam" shooting on Jan. 30, 1977.

The information contained in the reports

not only pinpoints a possible accomplice, but also raises the possibility that some of the "Son of Sam" victims may not have been selected at random, as Berkowitz said in confessing to the six murders, but rather were carefully chosen targets.

In addition to the accountant possibly being acquainted with at least one of the victims (Freund) and living near the scene of two shootings, the Bronx report states, "We have a statement that John Carr knew some of the victims." That statement has not been substantiated, according to a source close to the investigation.

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Sting arrest

Charged this morning in the "sting" operation was John Mason of 292 Riverdale Ave., Yonkers, right, who is being led by a Westchester County Police officer. He is charged with criminal possession of stolen property. —Staff Photo by Robert Deutch.

Stolen goods ring gets 'stung' by county police

By M.J. ZUCKERMAN
Staff Writer

A classic, 11-month "sting" operation came to a climax in southern Westchester this morning with pre-dawn raids, in which police sought to arrest 43 people who sold \$1.25 million worth of stolen goods to detectives posing as gangsters.

Since opening their Pelham storefront offices in November 1979, seven Westchester County Police Department undercover detectives, posing as street hoodlums and high ranking members of La Cosa Nostra, succeeded in purchasing goods ranging from social security checks to tractor trailer trucks.

At any time during the operation, police officials said, as many as 50 officers may have been involved in "Operation Yellow Jacket," performing such tasks as tracing the identities of car thieves, running ballistics tests on stolen

guns or processing video tapes of the transactions.

The operation was at 153 Fifth Ave., Pelham, under the name of D.A.N. Distributing, electronic components, sales and services. The initials stood for the names of three detectives working on the case.

The operation was funded by a \$200,000 Federal Law Enforcement Assistance Administration grant won by the county in July, 1979. Only \$25,000 of the grant money was spent on purchasing stolen goods. Some of the money went to renting office space, preparing the offices for the "sting" and purchasing sophisticated video and tape recording equipment, but a "large portion" was not spent.

A team of 80 Westchester County Police officers gathered at the Westchester County Fire Training Center, at the

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The Sting

Charged with criminal possession of stolen property is Jeffery Whitney of Yonkers, left, shortly after his arrest this morning by

Westchester County Police who swooped down on 43 suspects in a pre-dawn raid. —Staff Photo by Robert Deutch.

Partial list of suspects

Here is a partial list of those arrested in the "sting" operation by Westchester County Police this morning and the charges placed against them:

— Dennis Johnson of 557 Schroeder St., Yonkers, criminal possession of stolen property.

— William Lewis of the Yonkers Motor Inn, criminal possession of stolen property third degree, criminal possession of a weapon.

— John Mason of 292 Riverdale Ave., Yonkers, criminal possession of stolen property, first and second degree.

— Linda Rummy of the Wadhwa Hotel,

Yonkers, criminal possession of stolen property, second degree.

— Reggie Allison of 413 Prescott St., Yonkers, criminal possession first and second degree.

— Terry Allison of 168 Stanley Ave., Yonkers, criminal possession first and second degree.

— Jeffery Whitney of 204 Riverdale Ave., Yonkers, criminal possession, first degree.

— Kenneth Whitney, no address available.

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Inside

Lifestyles I Some kinds of soup must be cooked slowly to bring out all the flavor of their ingredients, but many good-tasting, nourishing soups can be prepared easily and quickly at the last minute. See page B1.

Lifestyles II The classic, conservative tradition has resurfaced in men's clothing, and now every man can have the look of success. Focus on Fashion looks at the fall and winter men's clothing scene. See page D1.

World/Nation Hoping to defuse continuing criticism of his opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment, Ronald Reagan pledged faithfully Tuesday to appoint a woman to the Supreme Court if he is elected president. See page A8.

Sports The New York Knicks embarrassed the Philadelphia 76ers Tuesday night to continue their successful start in the 1980-81 NBA season. In the National Hockey League, the New York Islanders and St. Louis Blues tied, 3-3. See page C8.

Weather Considerable cloudiness today through Thursday, not as cool today, high 55 to 60. Milder tonight and Thursday, low tonight in the mid 40s, high Thursday 60 to 65. Partly cloudy and mild Friday. Details on page A2.

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Iraqis extend ring around big oil refinery

BASRA, Iraq (AP) — Iraqi forces extended their siege ring north and east of Abadan, leaving only one highway open into the Iranian oil refinery city, and an Iraqi field commander said his advancing troops and armor were only three or four miles from the city overlooking the Shatt al-Arab estuary.

A lieutenant colonel commanding the Iraqi troops north of Abadan told Western reporters touring the front Tuesday the infantry and armored forces that crossed the Karun River last weekend had advanced 11 to 15 miles, pushing a siege arc to the north and east of Abadan and cutting its highways, railroads and pipelines to most of oil-rich Khuzestan Province and to Tehran, the Iranian capital 300 miles to the northeast.

Only one road was reported still open into Abadan, the highway on the east to the oil fields on the northeast coast of the Persian Gulf. There were unconfirmed reports that Iran was sending reinforcements including heavy artillery over this route. But no heavy or effective Iranian shelling was seen Tuesday by the reporters touring the Iraqi side of the battlefield.

An Iraqi communique late Tuesday night claimed Iraqi forces had cut the pipeline between the eastern fields and Abadan. The pipeline presumably was already shut down since Iraqi shelling and air attacks set the Abadan refinery afire and stopped its operations early in the 14-day-old war for control of the

Abscam tapes make TV drama



FBI agent discusses payment with Myers, Errichetti and Weinberg

Police arrest suspect in slaying of lawyer

By PETER JOHNSON
Staff Writer

A 32-year-old Brooklyn man was arrested Tuesday and charged with savagely beating a "no-frills" divorce lawyer to death in a toilet stall in a White Plains office building 13 months ago.

Edward Gaweda, of 455 49th St. was charged with second-degree murder in

connection with the death of 68-year-old Frank Melville who, at midday on Sept. 18, 1978, was reportedly beaten on the head in his second-floor office lavatory at 2 Williams St. He died six days after the attack.

Gaweda, who is employed as a me-

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By TONY MAURO
Gonnett News Service

WASHINGTON — The picture quality was poor, and the camera positions static, but as realistic drama, it couldn't be beaten.

The FBI's Abscam videotapes debuted on network television Tuesday night, revealing to the public what jurors saw before they found Congressman Michael Myers and three others guilty on federal bribery charges in the so-called Abscam sting operation.

Sitting in a plush room in Philadelphia's Barclay Hotel, Myers is seen boasting about his influence and arguing for more bribe money with men he believed to be representatives of an Arab sheik but who in actuality were FBI agents. A single, fixed, hidden camera, captured the conversation.

With the swaggering self-confidence of a Martin Brodsky, Myers tells his audience about his powers with members of the Philadelphia City Council. "These we can't handle, we can buy," he says. And to deal with the Mafia, he says, "Take my advice... keep it very quiet."

In another setting, he utters his most famous line, as the agents nod in agreement: "Money talks in this business, bull — walks. It works the same way down in Washington."

The furry excerpts from the 3½ hours of trial tapes represented the first — and probably not the last — time in history that videotapes used in evidence in a federal trial were released for broadcast.

BERKOWITZ

Continued from page one

Prompted by reports from Det. Henry Ciotoli, a 17-year police veteran who began investigating the accountant's ties to the "Son of Sam" murders on his own time in August 1979, Capt. Plankner wrote to his superiors on Aug. 31, 1979, seeking authorization to proceed with an official, confidential probe of the "Son of Sam" case.

His memo to the commanding officer of the Bronx Detective Area states: "(It) appears that we will be able to draw an association with (the suspect), Berkowitz and Carr. This would raise the possibility that Berkowitz did not act independently or operate alone as previously believed.

"I fully realize the implications and ramifications of this report and I also understand the need for discretion in this matter. However, I do believe that we must pursue this investigation to the point where we have eliminated any element of conjecture."

Capt. Plankner quickly won temporary approval to proceed with the confidential investigation.

However, seven weeks later, the investigation was floundering after it was revealed that the probe had been predicated on information provided by a woman police deemed an "unreliable source."

On Oct. 22, 1979, Plankner, wrote to his superiors, telling them that Ciotoli's original source — who had identified the suspect as being in Queens with Berkowitz on Aug. 8, 1977, two days before Berkowitz's arrest — lacked credibility.

However, Plankner emphasized that the probe had borne fruit independent of the tainted source and should continue.



"Despite this reversal, we have developed information and circumstances that almost demand resolution. I believe that this investigation should be continued if only for the sake of being able to say the Department has never ignored or overlooked any information connected with the 'Son of Sam' killings.

To date, we have no hard evidence to support the (claims of Carr's friends and associates) and I am not completely comfortable with statements obtained by police officers in North Dakota. However, I do believe that a thorough investigation by members of this department could either prove or disprove the possibility that (the suspect), John Carr and Berkowitz were associates in the "Son of Sam" case.

But despite his urgings, Capt. Plankner's last request was denied. The officially sanctioned investigation was terminated after eight weeks of work.

Det. Ciotoli was shortly brought up on disciplinary charges stemming from his refusal to divulge the name of his original source and for working with a newspaper reporter during the investigation.

The charges against Ciotoli were heard before a department trial officer this past spring. At the hearing, Ciotoli's original source, identified as Veronica Leunken of Queens, was described as a religious fanatic.

Ciotoli said he resisted revealing her name to his superiors for fear of discrediting the probe. And, he said, he worked with the newspaper reporter because the reporter was a source of valuable information.

Plankner has said he can not comment on the probe at least until a final determination is reached in the case. A ruling is expected within a week, according to a police department spokesman.

At almost the same time that the Bronx Detective Attorney's office re-opened a probe of the "Son of Sam" case, in beginning the probe, spokesmen for Queens District Attorney John Santucci cited a series of articles by Gannett Westchester Newspapers that detailed the probability that Berkowitz was not the lone "Son of Sam" killer. Queens authorities have limited their official

comments to saying "the case remains open and active."

However, sources close to the investigation have confirmed that among the major subjects of that probe are the possible involvement of the Manhattan accountant and as many as 10 other people in the murders; the possibility that the victims were specifically targeted for death; and the claim that Berkowitz may have been set up to appear as a lone killer.

Most significantly, although the investigation is active, there has not been sufficient evidence established to empanel a grand jury.

Investigators believe they have gone as far as they can with the information they have uncovered to date and now are involved in what amounts to a waiting game, hoping a witness will come forward with evidence substantiating their theories about accomplices.

Immediately after re-opening his investigation, Santucci appointed two assistant district attorneys and six investigators to work full-time on the probe. During their first few months, investigators concentrated their efforts in Yonkers, where Berkowitz had lived, but the probe quickly spread throughout the country.

Towns of little notoriety, such as Minot, N.D. and Beaumont, Texas — where Carr's ex-wife lives, several miles from where Berkowitz obtained his 44-caliber revolver — have come under close examination.

Extensive coast-to-coast telephone interviews have been conducted and investigators have flown around the country in connection between Berkowitz, satanic cults and West Coast murders have surfaced.

Having compiled hundreds of reports, interviewed and re-interviewed suspects and the families of suspects, the probe is now being directed by an assistant district attorney, who is carrying the probe as a high priority in his caseload. Four investigators continue to work on the case full-time, following up new leads as they develop.

Unanswered questions...

When discussing the "Son of Sam" case, investigators close to probes repeatedly strike an analogy between the 1975-1977 murder spree and the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

As in the case of Lee Harvey Oswald, investigators say, there are too many contradictions of fact and too many unanswered questions in the case of David R. Berkowitz, suggesting there was more than one triggerman.

And, as was the case when investigators began seeking out Oswald's associates, many of those directly or indirectly related to the Berkowitz case have turned up dead.

The following incidents have occurred involving those linked to the case:

— John Carr, a friend of Berkowitz and a suspect in the killings, was found dead in his Minot, N.D., apartment on Feb. 16, 1978, a 30-30 rifle bullet in his head. His death was initially ruled a suicide but is now being probed as a possible murder.

Police say Carr's actions during the days before his death conflict with those of a man contemplating suicide (he opened bank accounts and rented a motel office box) and say a reconstruction of the shooting scene revealed several important discrepancies (his body should have landed on the bed, not on the floor, and the rifle should have been underneath him, not lying on top of his leg).

As North Dakota police investigator Lt. Terry Gardner says, "We have a motive for both murder and suicide. Murder to silence him and suicide because important discrepancies (his body should have landed on the bed, not on the floor, and the rifle should have been underneath him, not lying on top of his leg).

As North Dakota police investigator Lt. Terry Gardner says, "We have a motive for both murder and suicide. Murder to silence him and suicide because he knew he was wanted (by New York authorities) for questioning."

— Michael Carr, the other son of Sam Carr, died in an auto wreck in Manhattan last fall. Although Carr was known to abstain from alcohol, an autopsy found he was drunk at the time of the accident. He had recently received word that a new "Son of Sam" investigation was under way and that he was a subject of that investigation.

— Howard Weiss, a now-known acquaintance of Berkowitz and suspected of being involved in the cult that apparently was at the center of the "Son of Sam" killings, was murdered in New York City. Weiss was friendly with a former Yonkers police officer who was acquainted with John and Michael Carr's sister, Wendy. The former Yonkers officer is also suspected of having ties to the cult, and provides, through Weiss, a direct link between Berkowitz and the Carr family. The ex-police man also owned a .44-caliber Balling revolver — an ad Berkowitz.

— John "T," a close friend of John Carr with connections to the North Dakota cult, attempted suicide shortly after being questioned by police when the case was reopened. He left a note that read, in part, "Believe in God."

— Jerry Berg, a close friend of John Carr in North Dakota and an occult devotee, was crushed to death by a falling tree while chopping wood last winter. At this time, his death is officially termed "accidental," yet authorities suspect foul play.

— Marlene "C," a young woman with ties to John Carr and the North Dakota cult, escaped injury when her car was run off the road shortly after she was questioned by police at the time the "Son of Sam" case was re-opened. The incident occurred the same day Michael Carr died.

— Terry Gardner, a North Dakota police lieutenant working the Carr case, was unharmed by sniper fire just days after interrogating acquaintances of John Carr when the case was re-opened last fall.

— Jack Graham, a reporter for the Minot, N.D., Daily News probing John Carr's occult activities in North Dakota, was killed in a car crash last month. His death has been termed an "apparent accident."

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