

The Police Sketch vs. the Suspect



The New York Times

Photos taken yesterday of David Berkowitz and the latest Police Department composite sketch, which was released on Tuesday.

As New Yorkers scoured the news photographs, searching for the kind of evil in the face of David Berkowitz that they have long expected to find in that of "Son of Sam," the .44-caliber killer, many found their thoughts returning to the four sketches of the killer that have been released in the last year by the police.

Why, it was repeatedly asked, did the composites not look more like the man who had been taken into custody?

One person has a metaphorical answer to that question. "If I give you a pinch of salt," he said with a sigh yesterday, "and say, 'Go bake me a cake—don't come back without a cake.' What are you going to do? You need other ingredients but you just don't have them."

The speaker was William F. McCormack, the police officer who drew the sketch of Son of Sam that was released three days ago and who was, he says, "doing the best I could with what I had."

"All I do," added the former illustrator who has done more than 1,500 composites since he became a police artist in 1972, "is take testimony from witnesses, except that instead of taking it in writing, I do it in pictorial form. If a witness tells me that a guy has a carrot growing out of his ear, I'm going to put that carrot in the picture."

Officer McCormack sighed again. He



The first sketch of the killer was released in July of 1976.

has had to do a lot of this kind of explaining since Mr. Berkowitz was arrested. The suspected .44-caliber killer is a young man whose hair alone bears a resemblance to the latest sketch, and whose plumpish face seemed the only link with the earlier drawings, done by another police artist.