

EX-LANLADY ASSERTS SHE KNEW IT WAS HE

Contents She Told New Rochelle Police as Early as June 10 About Her Suspicions

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NEW ROCHELLE, N.Y., Aug. 12—A woman who rented a room in her home to David R. Berkowitz, more than a year ago said today that she was certain as early as June 10 that her former tenant was the .44-caliber killer.

In an interview at her home, the woman, Nann Cassara, recounted how she had come to the conclusion that the neat, quiet and untalkative young tenant might be the "Son of Sam." She told how she had discussed Mr. Berkowitz with the New Rochelle police in June and had tried to tell the police in Yonkers last week that she believed the man was Son of Sam.

The 63-year-old woman, sitting with her daughter-in-law and several of her grandchildren, said that Mr. Berkowitz, who had been her tenant on Cologni Avenue from February to April 1976, had left the Cassara home in a huff. As in the case of Sam Carr, the 64-year-old Yonkers neighbor who has been identified by the police as the "Sam" of Mr. Berkowitz's obsession, a dog had been involved.

The barking of the Cassara dog seemed to have driven Mr. Berkowitz from his rented room, according to his former landlady.

Carr's Life Threatened

The black Labrador retriever owned by Mr. Carr had been the target of abuse from Mr. Berkowitz, the dog's owner said yesterday. It was through that dog, named Harvey, the suspect reportedly told the police, that he got his "messages" to kill.

A third dog was introduced into the account in Yonkers today when police sources said that a dog had been shot last Christmas in a wooded area near the apartment house where Mr. Berkowitz lived. When Mr. Carr reported in April that his dog had been shot in the leg, the police began to link the two incidents.

Mrs. Cassara said that over a year after Mr. Berkowitz had left her home, a strange get-well card to her husband arrived in the mail, signed "Sam & Francis"—presumably Sam and Frances Carr. She had never met the Carrs and no one in her family was sick. The Cassaras contacted the Carrs, and Mrs. Cassara compared her card with two anonymous letters the Yonkers family had received complaining about Mr. Carr's dog and threatening the man's life.

"The night we came from visiting the Carrs, we connected Berkowitz," Mrs. Cassara said yesterday, sitting in the living room of her home at 174 Coligni Avenue.

"My son was reading the letter and he's the one who remembered him [Mr. Berkowitz] living in the house." Mrs. Cassara's was referring to her son Stephen, who is 19.

"It came together when the killings occurred and Son of Sam was in the news," Mrs. Cassara said.

Mrs. Cassara said Mr. Carr told her that by June 10 he had given the Yonkers police all the information he had about the shooting of his dog and the letters, as well as the license-plate number of the car that the man who shot his dog had got into. He advised her, too, to contact the police, she said.

According to Mrs. Cassara, she kept to herself the suspicion that Mr. Berkowitz was Son of Sam—giving the New Rochelle police only the man's identity and her belief that he had written all the unusual communications that the Carrs and Cassaras had received.

But last week, she said, she attempted to report to the Yonkers police her conviction that her former tenant was Son of Sam, only to be brushed aside.

'It Was a Yonkers Case'

William R. Hegarty, the Police Commissioner in New Rochelle, said the Police Department turned over the information it had received from Mrs. Cassara to the Yonkers Police Department.

"From our point of view it was a Yonkers case," he said.

The Yonkers detective who had spoken with Mrs. Cassara said he could not comment on the case, but he added:

"I'm sorry she feels I brushed her off. I don't feel I did. I did an investigation, and all my records are in New York City."

Finally, last Saturday, according to the woman, the Yonkers Police Department called her back and said that they wanted to speak to her about her suspicions, and told her that her husband had been mentioned in a letter received by Craig Glassman, a downstairs neighbor of Mr. Berkowitz in Yonkers.

"We were out to get him, and Glassman had been stationed downstairs," she quoted the letter received by Mr. Glassman, an auxiliary deputy sheriff, as saying.

"I know that Cassaras and Carr are out to get me and they put you here," Mrs. Cassara asserted the letter to Glassman had said.

It had been a long and confusing year since David Berkowitz had first come to look at the Cassaras' apartment in February 1976.