

WOMAN VICTIM DIES AS OVER 300 OFFICERS HUNT FOR .44 GUNMAN

Condition of Young Man Is Stable —He Told the Police of Seeing Man Who Shot Him

By PETER KIHSS

Stacy Moskowitz died in Kings County Hospital Center late yesterday, 38 hours after she and a 20-year-old male companion were shot early Sunday by the so-called .44-caliber revolver killer who has adopted the name "Son of Sam."

Her death came three hours after the Chief of Detectives, John L. Keenan announced that more than 300 detectives and other members of the police force, an increase from 180 before last weekend, had been thrown into New York's City's hunt for the gunman.

Miss Moskowitz, who was 20 years old, died at 5:22 P.M. of swelling of the brain stem. "She would have been a vegetable had she survived," Dr. William Shuchart, chairman of the hospital's department of neurosurgery, reported. Her heart had stopped "at least a half a dozen times" during the day.

Youth's Condition Stable

Miss Moskowitz's mother, Neysa, told newsmen at the hospital that "she loved life, and she wouldn't have wanted to live that way." Of the killer, whose death toll has now reached six, Mrs. Moskowitz exclaimed:

"I hope he suffers the rest of his life. I hope he eats his heart out with a cancer. I would die to see this man punished."

Robert Violante, the young man with whom Miss Moskowitz, a secretary, had been on their first date, was reported to be in stable condition. "He told police he saw the person who shot him," according to Dr. Jeffrey Freedman, the hospital's director of ophthalmology.

Identification a Problem

"I don't know if he can identify him since we don't know if he'll be able to see," Dr. Freedman reported. Mr. Violante's left eye had been shattered and was removed, and the ophthalmologist said "it could take three months" to know how much sight his wounded right eye might regain.

In a news conference at the 109th Precinct station house in Flushing, Queens, Chief Keenan said witnesses who had seen the Sunday shooting had described the attacker as white, between 25 and 35 years of age, 5 feet 7 to 5 feet 10 inches tall, with a stocky build.

The detective chief said the man had worn "blue denim pants with a gray long-sleeve shirt, sleeves rolled up or a denim jacket worn outside the pants." He called on women who might have noted a friend or relative wearing such clothes Saturday night or Sunday morning to telephone a special police number, 844-0999. He said he was directing his appeal at women because they were particularly observing of clothing.

Wearing of Wig Possible

The gunman, Chief Keenan said, is reported to have "light, disheveled hair," but he suggested that this might possibly be a wig. Chief Keenan said there had been other descriptions of hair in previous shootings, one witness remembering straight hair combed sideways and another reporting bushy hair.

Sunday's shooting of Miss Moskowitz and Mr. Violante—at about 2:50 A. M. just after they had entered their car at Shore Parkway and Bay 14th Street after gazing at the virtually full moon over Gravesend Bay—was the eighth attributed to Son of Sam.

In the earlier instances, which were in the East Bronx and Northern Queens, five young people were killed and six wounded in a rampage that started July 29, 1976. Thirty-one bullets or parts of bullets have been recovered, with police ballistics reports that all came from the same gun.

Chief Keenan said he did not think reports of a yellow Volkswagen as a possible car used by the gunman early Sunday were "generally significant." Without explaining why the police were downplaying the reports, he added that

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Jerome and Neysa Moskowitz talking with newsmen at Kings County Hospital yesterday after their daughter had died.

Woman Dies; Police Increase Search for .44 Killer

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checkups on a number of cars of varying makes, color and types were being made with the help of the State Department of Motor Vehicles.

An original 50-member special homicide task force under Deputy Inspector Timothy J. Dowd has been gradually increased in size. The latest buildup means 75 detectives will be on investigations and 225 other officers in uniform or civilian clothes on patrol, Chief Keenan

At City Hall, Mayor Beame said he had directed Police Commissioner Michael J. Codd to add 100 more members of the police force to the search. "If he needs more, he'll have them," Mr. Beame said.

The Mayor said that the manhunt had "top priority," and that all city resources were at Commissioner Codd's disposal.

Mr. Beame said additional policemen would be hired shortly, and "I'll get into that in the next few days."

There is still a mystery about the killer's motivation, Chief Keenan said. But from the latest incident, "What may be significant are the articles of clothing," the detective commander added, appealing for descriptions to be widely publicized.

So far the gunman has apparently fired not more than four bullets in any incident from his five-round Charter Arms Bulldog .44 caliber revolver. Experts said he could be keeping a last bullet, but more likely was leaving empty the chamber under the firing pin—a safety measure to prevent the gun's going off accidentally from any sudden jar or forward push while being carried.

He has been pictured as firing two-handed from a crouch—a technique taught to the police and some other law-enforcement agents. This is to aid accuracy, but also to cope with a heavy recoil from the .44 caliber weapon, which has a large bullet with slow velocity that tends to keep it within a victim's body.

The so-called "Son of Sam" appears to be a skilled marksman, hitting his victims at night when it is difficult to use the revolver's sights.

In tracking the 28,000 Bulldog revolvers manufactured by the Charter Arms Corporation of Bridgeport, Conn., Deputy Police Commissioner Francis J. McLoughlin said "three or four dozen" members of the Police Department and suburban forces had been found to own them. But investigators have cleared those of any involvement, he said.

The police task force has also cleared a dozen people who had seemed to be the most likely suspects, Chief Keenan said. They were kept under surveillance over the weekend. Asked at his news conference yesterday whether this was a setback for the task force, Chief Keenan said:

"No, that is a help to us. We no longer have to worry about them."

Both Miss Moskowitz and Mr. Violante were shot in the head. Neurosurgeons worked for eight hours trying to save Miss Moskowitz's life Sunday morning and afternoon, removing part of her brain, and renewed surgery during the night in efforts to reduce swelling of the brain.

"Everything known to neurosurgeons has been done in an attempt to save her," Ira C. Clark, executive director of Kings County Hospital Center, said yesterday morning. At 4:15 P.M., Dr. Shuchart told newsmen "the only thing that is working is her heart, and that has stopped a number of times, at least half a dozen times."

"Her brain is in a tight little compartment," Dr. Shuchart said. "The brain stem is swollen. There is no way to give her more room. Her chance for recovery is essentially zero. It's an irrational business. From a medical standpoint we feel helpless."

Efforts to Save Life

Miss Moskowitz was resuscitated and maintained in a respirator after her heart first stopped at 10:18 A.M. yesterday. Her family was at the hospital. The family rabbi, Rabbi Corey Goldstein, arrived after her death.

Her father, Jerome Moskowitz, said: "I lost a daughter whom I loved very much, but I found there are a lot of fine people in the world." He voiced thanks to the hospital physicians and administrators for "deep consideration for us," and then breaking down, he said his daughter was "very dear to me, a great kid."

Mr. Violante was "alert, lucid, stable and talking" yesterday morning, and spent some time with his parents, Mr. Clark, the hospital director, said. The ophthalmologist, Dr. Freedman, said the young man had even voiced regrets about missing the first day of a new job yesterday.

At least most of yesterday, Mr. Violante reportedly did not know about Miss Moskowitz's condition. In his own case, there had been bullet fragments in both eyes, and Dr. Freedman said it would take time for hemorrhaging to cease to enable seeing what damage there was to the retina. There was no clinical evidence of brain damage, Dr. Freedman said.

Chief Keenan said the city's manhunt has had help from agencies in New York State, including the police and the Mental Hygiene and Motor Vehicles Departments; Connecticut, Nassau and Suffolk counties, New Jersey, Vermont and the Federal Government.

The Treasury Department's Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms said it mailed out on July 29 to every one of 165,000 federally licensed firearms dealers a circular with an artist's sketch and

other data about the killer, asking for reports on sales of the snub-nosed Bulldog revolver.

A spokesman noted that a private individual could also have lawfully sold such a weapon to another person living in the same state, and appealed to any one who had made such a sale or lost such a gun to report the case.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation's New York office said that "in cooperation with the New York City Police Department we are assisting in coverage of out of state leads in contacting sources who might be in a position to give information of value."