

BERKOWITZ FACING SENTENCING TODAY

Penalty Allows Parole in 30 Years —He Could Make Statement

By ANNA QUINDLEN

David R. Berkowitz will be sentenced today on all charges stemming from the yearlong shooting rampage known as the "Son of Sam" murders.

The 24-year-old former postal clerk, who admitted killing six young people and wounding seven others with a .44-caliber revolver, faces maximum concurrent sentences of 25 years to life on all six counts of murder. The law mandates that his cumulative sentence cannot exceed 30 years to life imprisonment. He will be eligible for parole in 30 years.

The same courtroom in State Supreme Court in Brooklyn where Mr. Berkowitz pleaded guilty two weeks ago will be the scene for his sentencing by the three justices who accepted his pleas then.

The proceedings today—before Justices Joseph R. Corso of Brooklyn, William Kapelman of the Bronx, and Nicholas Tsoucalas of Queens—could be as speedy and mundane as those two weeks ago, during which Mr. Berkowitz said with no emotion and little embellishment that he was guilty of the shootings.

Could Raise Questions

However, the defendant will be allowed to make a statement during the proceedings if he chooses. Last year Mr. Berkowitz had indicated that he wanted to warn the world of the evil demons that had ordered him to kill the five young women and a man in the three boroughs.

If he made such a statement today, it would again raise questions of his sanity and the wisdom of accepting a guilty plea from a man who believed he was possessed. Mr. Berkowitz's lawyers, Ira Jultak and Leon Stern, said that they had repeatedly urged him to plead not guilty by reason of insanity, but that their client had refused. He has reportedly become a born-again Christian and has told them he wants to pay for his sins.

Although adjudged competent last month to stand trial, Mr. Berkowitz could nevertheless serve time in a hospital rather than a prison. After sentencing, he will probably be turned over to state corrections officials, and will be examined by psychiatrists during his first weeks in prison. He could be committed to a psychiatric hospital until cured, then returned to prison to serve out the remainder of his sentence.