

.44 Killer Wounds 12th and 13th Victims



Associated Press

Stacy Moskowitz, 20, being carried into Kings County Hospital after she and Robert Violante were wounded

By ROBERT D. McFADDEN

With massive police patrols focused elsewhere in the city, the killer who calls himself "Son of Sam" shot and critically wounded a young couple early yesterday as they sat in a car parked on the Brooklyn waterfront a mile south of the glittering lights of the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge.

At midafternoon yesterday, more than 12 hours after the shootings, Police Department ballistics experts confirmed that the attack had been carried out with the same .44-caliber revolver that had been used to kill five young people and wound six others in seven incidents during the last year.

The killer's strike yesterday had the earmarks of a deadly cat-and-mouse game with the police. It came two days after the anniversary of his first murder, an anniversary that was marked by increased patrols, wide publicity and spreading public fears. And it came for the first time in Brooklyn, more than 10 miles from his previous attacks, which were clustered in northern Queens and

He Strikes in Brooklyn for the First Time

the east Bronx—where the weekend's patrols were concentrated.

Throughout the weekend in many parts of the city, people spoke to—and warned—one another about the killer stalking the streets, seemingly able to strike at will. Such warnings had been made to both of the victims in this, the killer's eighth attack.

According to witnesses—the police said at least two persons and possibly many more saw the attack—the killer this time emerged from the shadows of a nearby park into the faint light of a full moon and walked up behind the couple's car at Shore Parkway and Bay 14th Street in the Bath Beach section about 2:50 A.M.

The couple, Robert Violante, a 20-year-old clothing store salesman, of 1972 Bay Ridge Parkway in Bensonhurst, and Stacy Moskowitz, 20, a secretary, of 1740 East Fifth Street in Flatbush, were on their

first date and had attended a movie before stopping near Dyker Beach Park on a lane known as a local trysting place.

They did not see the gunman approach, but witnesses, including a man who watched it all through the rear-view mirror of his car, said the assailant crouched, aimed with both hands and fired four shots through the open window on the passenger side.

Each victim was shot in the head, Mr. Violante once and Miss Moskowitz twice. Mr. Violante sounded his car horn to attract help and witnesses said he staggered out, screaming: "Help me! Don't let me die!"

The assailant, meantime, was said to have walked away calmly, across a street, past a playground and into the park, vanishing near the spot where he had appeared.

Some witnesses said that a yellow Volkswagen was seen leaving the area shortly after the shooting. A police contingency plan dubbed Code 44 was put into effect immediately after the shooting

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Pat Violante, right, turning for a moment as he guides his wife into waiting room at hospital in which his son lay critically wounded. Hospital administrator is at center and members of Stacy Moskowitz's family are at left.

.44 Killer Wounds 12th and 13th Victims, in Brooklyn

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was reported. Police patrols saturated the Bath Beach area and halted lone male motorists, but the effort proved futile.

The victims were taken to Coney Island Hospital and then transferred to Kings County Hospital Center, where both underwent extensive operations.

Doctors later said that Miss Moskowitz had suffered brain damage from a bullet that passed through her head and lodged in her neck, and they listed her chances of survival at 50 percent. Mr. Violante's survival chances were said to be better, but a bullet that passed through his head destroyed his left eye and damaged his right eye, his doctors said.

One bullet fired in the attack had lodged in the car's steering column, but the fragment was too badly mangled for ballistics experts to say definitely that it had come from the .44-caliber killer's gun. So it was not until surgeons removed a nearly whole bullet from Miss Moskowitz's neck that the police could conclusively state that the "Son of Sam" had struck again.

But even before that bullet was analyzed, Chief of Detectives John F. Keenan and other police officials had said they were nearly certain that the attack had been mounted by the psychopath who has become the object of one of the biggest manhunts in the city's history.

The pattern of the crime seemed to fit—a gun assault in the early morning hours of a weekend on a young woman with long hair seated in a car with a friend.

Specifically, the number of shots fired seemed to fit—"Son of Sam" had, in each of his seven previous assaults, fired four shots from his five-round, .44-caliber Charter Arms Bulldog revolver.

Assailant Fits Description

The description of the assailant also seemed to fit—a man in his 20's, 5 feet 7 to 5 feet 10 inches tall, of medium build and dressed casually in dungarees and a gray shirt with the sleeves rolled up.

In his last previous assault, on June 26, the killer shot and wounded another couple sitting in a parked car in Bayside, Queens, after they had left a nearby discotheque. Despite the efforts of a special task force of 70 detectives who have worked on the case full time since April, the police have conceded mounting frustrations and a dearth of leads in recent days.

At 11 o'clock last night, Mayor Beame told Police Commissioner Michael J. Codd to assign 100 more policemen to the case.

Expectations that the killer would strike again ran high on Friday, the anniversary of the July 29, 1976, killing of 18-year-old Donna Lauria, his first victim, as she sat with a girlfriend in a car in the Bronx.

In one of two taunting notes written in recent months—one to the police and one to Jimmy Breslin, the columnist—the killer asked: "What will you have for July 29? You must not forget Donna Lauria... [the killer's first victim] She was a very very sweet girl, but Sam's a thirsty lad and he won't let me stop killing until he gets his fill of blood."

Amid mounting tensions in the city, many women pinned up their long hair

or passed up offers of weekend dates in town, and the police mobilized hundreds of officers in plain clothes for street patrols, and decoy operations focused heavily in areas where the killer had struck before.

A detective in the 62d Precinct, which covers the Brooklyn area where "Son of Sam" attacked yesterday, said that an anonymous caller last week had warned of an approaching strike in Coney Island, and that extra patrols also were assigned in that area.

There were no extra patrols in the area where the shooting took place.

The date that was to end in tragedy began, according to the police, with a movie in Brooklyn. However, a friend of the Moskowitz family said the couple may have spent the early part of the evening in a discotheque called Jasmines, on Third Avenue in Brooklyn.

Mr. Violante's father, Pasquale, said that he had warned his son before the date about the danger of the killer on the loose. "I told him to stay out of Queens," he said in an interview at Kings County Medical Center. "O.K., dad," he quoted his son as having said. "I'll hang around in Brooklyn."

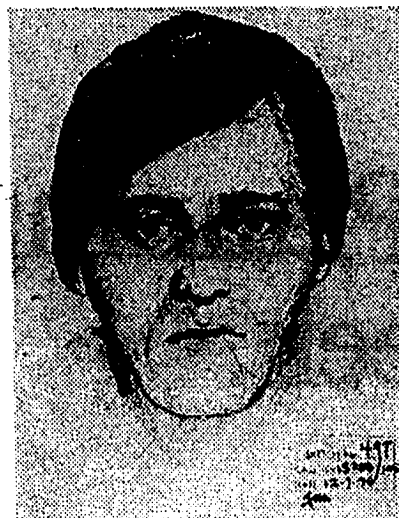
Another visitor at the hospital, Anthony Robinson, a 20-year-old auto mechanic who had formerly been engaged to Miss Moskowitz, said:

"I told her I don't know how many times to be careful. I talked to her about it [the killer], and she said she would be careful."

The police said it was uncertain what time the couple had parked at Shore Parkway and Bay 14th Street in Mr. Violante's brown, 1968 Buick. They stopped under a street light, and there were other parked cars with couples in the area, a quiet spot with little traffic, situated right off the busy Belt Parkway.

A vine-covered chain-link fence separated the parked couple from a view of Gravesend Bay and the necklace of bridge lights arcing across the Narrows of New York Harbor from Fort Hamilton in Brooklyn to Staten Island.

According to the police, about 10 minutes before the shootings, Mr. Violante and Miss Moskowitz got out and took



Police sketch made last year that was identified yesterday by woman who said it resembled man she saw running from scene of shooting.

a stroll under the full moon on a footpath and an esplanade overlooking the water. They were said to have returned to the car just before the marauder walked out of the wooded Dyker Beach Park and approached them from behind as they sat talking.

At least two witnesses, and possibly more, saw parts or all of the ensuing shooting, though some of them did not come forward after the incident and were being asked to do so by the police.

"The area wasn't deserted by any means," one investigator explained. "One guy saw the entire thing through the rear-view mirror of his car. He was parked in front of the couple. And the couple shot was sitting underneath a street light."

Miss Moskowitz was shot twice, doctors said later. One bullet grazed the top of her scalp and apparently did not inflict a serious wound. The second crashed into the back of her skull, passed through a portion of her brain and lodged in the back of her neck. Brain damage was also inflicted by bone splinters.

Mr. Violante was struck once by a bullet that entered just behind his left eye, passed above the bridge of the nose and exited just above the right eye. The bullet shattered his left eye and inflicted some damage to the right eye.

At Kings County Medical Center, Dr. Jeffrey Freedman, a surgeon who operated on Mr. Violante, declined to offer a prognosis for the right eye, but described Mr. Violante's condition as "very stable." After an eight-hour operation, during which the bullet in Miss Moskowitz's neck was removed along with bone fragments from the brain, her condition was listed as critical.

Parents Meet at Hospital

The couple's parents, Jerome and Neysa Moskowitz, and Pasquale and Teresa Violante, met and talked briefly with one another at the hospital.

After the assailant's escape, which was described by witnesses as an almost casual retreat, the police yesterday appeared to be no closer to the identity of the gunman, whom they have called a "paranoid, neurotic, schizoid," and who seems to hate women.

Chief Keenan conceded "a great deal of frustration" and noted at a news conference that "the witnesses have been very poor, physical evidence is scant and we have no motive."

A number of bullet fragments, apparently from the slugs that struck the victims with full force, were found in Mr. Violante's car. One bullet, believed to be the one that had grazed Miss Moskowitz's scalp, was found lodged and mangled in the steering column and was of little use to ballistics experts the police said. A fourth bullet was believed to have missed the victims; it was not found in a search of the site.

One of the witnesses to yesterday's shooting picked out of a lineup of sketches a composite drawing of the killer-made up after the Nov. 27 shooting of two young women in Floral Park, Queens, one of whom remains paralyzed from the waist down.

The investigation gained ground in only one respect. A group of about a dozen suspects who had been under surveillance over the weekend were ruled out.



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List of Killer's Victims

Following is a list of the victims of the killer who calls himself "Son of Sam." The numbers conform to sites on the map above:

1. Eighteen-year-old Donna Lauria of 2860 Buhre Avenue in the Westchester Heights section of the Bronx was shot in the back and killed at about 1 A.M. on July 29, 1976 while sitting in a parked car outside her home. Jody Valenti, 19, of 1918 Hutchinson River Parkway was wounded in the left thigh as she sat in the car with Miss Lauria.

2. Carl Denaro, 20, was wounded in the head Oct. 23 as he sat in a parked car with Rosemary Keenan on 160th Street between 32d and 33d Avenues in Flushing, Queens. The injury required doctors to place a steel plate in his skull. Miss Keenan was uninjured.

3. Joanne Lomino, 18, of 83-31 262d Street, Bellerose, Queens, was shot in the back of the head at about 12:40 A.M. on Nov. 27, 1976 while sitting on the porch of her home with a friend. She is now paralyzed from the waist down. Donna DiMasi, 17, of 86-31 262d Street, Floral Park, Queens, was shot through the neck Nov. 27, 1976 while sitting on the porch with Miss Lomino.

4. Christine Freund, 26, of 58-18 Linden Street, Ridgewood, Queens, was shot to death at 12:30 A.M. last Jan. 30, as she sat in a parked car near the Long Island Rail Road station in Forest Hills, Queens. With her, and unhurt, was John Diel, 30.

5. Virginia Voskerichian, 19, of 69-11

Exeter Street, Forest Hills, Queens was shot to death at about 7:30 P.M. last March 8 as she walked in front of 4 Dartmouth Street on her way home from college. She was slain a half block from where Miss Freund was killed five weeks earlier.

6. Valentina Suriani, 18, of 1950 Hutchinson River Parkway in Baychester, the Bronx, and Alexander Esau, who lived with his father at 352 West 46th Street, were shot to death at 3 A.M. last April 17 as they sat in a parked car in front of 1878 Hutchinson River Parkway, near Miss Suriani's home.

7. Judy Placido, 17, of 2208 Wickham Avenue in the Pelham Bay section of the Bronx, was shot in the right temple, right shoulder and back of the neck as she sat in a parked car with Salvatore Lupo at 3:20 A.M. on June 26, 1977 outside 45-39 211th Street, Bayside, Queens. Mr. Lupo, whose address in Maspeth, Queens, was withheld by the police, was wounded in the right forearm.

8. Robert Violante, 20, of 1972 Bay Ridge Parkway in the Bensonhurst section of Brooklyn, was shot in the head at about 2:50 A.M. yesterday as he sat in a parked car with Stacy Moskowitz in a lovers' lane area near Dyker Beach Park in the Bath Beach section of Brooklyn. Mr. Violante was critically wounded. Miss Moskowitz, 20, of 1740 East Fifth Street in the Flatbush section of Brooklyn, was shot once in the head and also was critically wounded.