

Local

Son of Sam a mystery to neighbors

By DAVID COPITHORNE
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Staff Writers

David Berkowitz was a loner, according to his neighbors.

He lived by himself in a \$238-a-month studio apartment on the top floor of 35 Pine St. in Yonkers, a seven-story building overlooking the Hudson River. He seldom appeared in public and spoke to few people.

"We never saw the guy and we couldn't tell you what he looked like," one neighboring resident said Wednesday night upon learning the mysterious man in Apartment 7E was believed by police to be the .44-caliber killer, "Son of Sam."

Some residents said the 24-year-old postal worker never said hello. Others said he was cordial but aloof. None said they knew him well.

Phyllis Powell, who lives on the fourth floor, saw him recently in the building's laundry room. "He peeked in at me. He had a load of clothes, but he didn't wash them. He just walked out. My impression of him was that he was pretty weird."

But the woman who lives across the hall from him didn't find him strange. "He also spoke to me and said hello, and how are you doing," said Joanne Resto. "He worked at night. He'd leave at about 4:30 p.m. and get in very late."

But Ms. Resto said she wasn't sure just what kind of postal job Berkowitz went to. "He told my brother he was a security guard," she said.

His next-door neighbor, Edna Williams, said she barely ever heard a sound from his rooms, and that few friends appeared to visit him there.

But once, about a month ago, at 5 a.m., she heard a loud banging noise against the wall that divides their apartments. She said the next morning she got up and noticed a crack in the wall. "I was afraid, but I never bothered to tell anyone," she said.



Police take Son of Sam suspect into New York City headquarters

After he was arrested Wednesday night, police scoured the apartment for clues. They pulled what appeared to be an Oriental tapestry over a bedroom window to block outside views.

Berkowitz's small apartment was dominated by a stereo system and a number of bookcases, and record albums and books were strewn about the yellow shag rug Wednesday night. The single mattress that apparently served Berkowitz as a bed lay stripped in a corner. A bottle of liquor stood on the kitchen countertop.

Berkowitz rented the apartment in April, 1976, three months before Son of Sam killed the first of his six victims. He signed a two-year lease that was scheduled to expire in March, 1978.

The building's rental agent, Venus Balducci, said Berkowitz always paid his rent on time.

Most residents were surprised when they heard police believe Berkowitz is the Son of Sam. Many were shocked. "I just broke down and cried," one resident said.

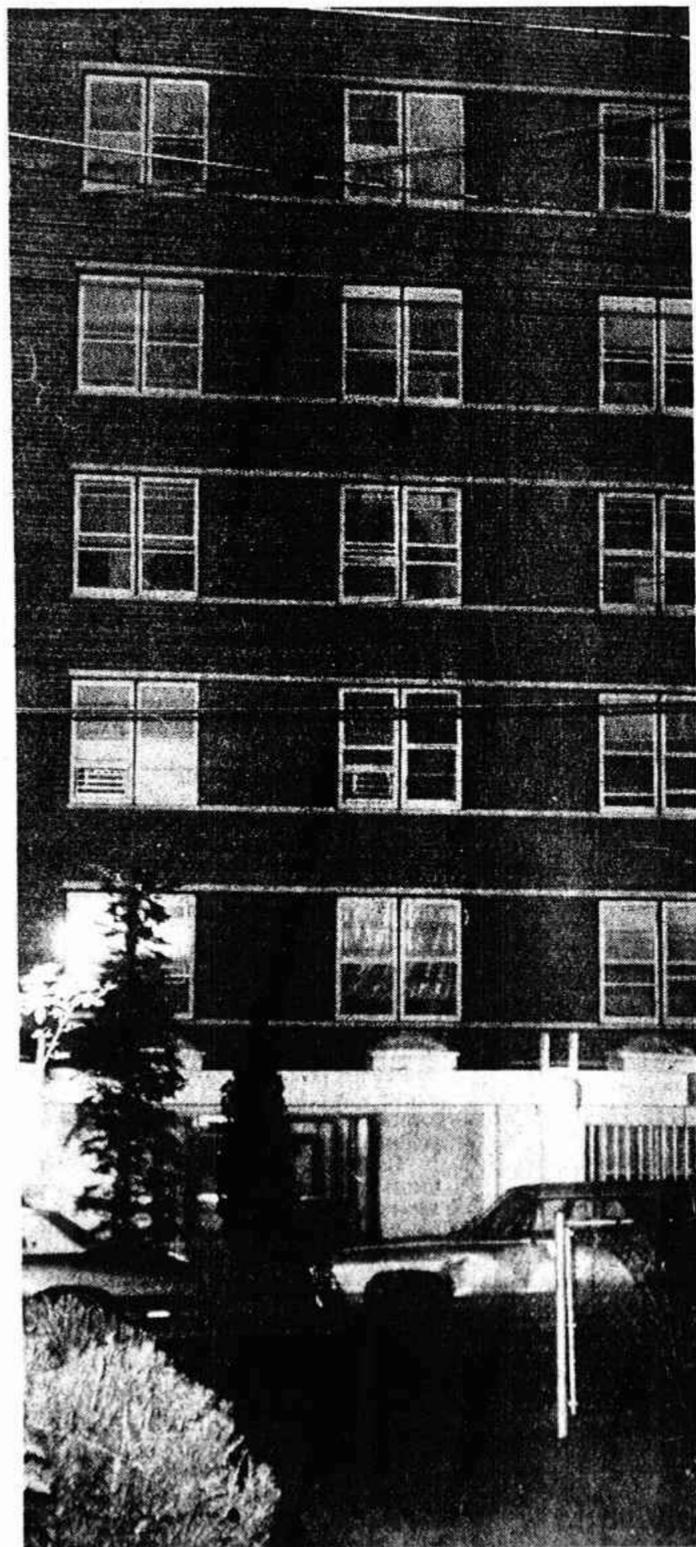
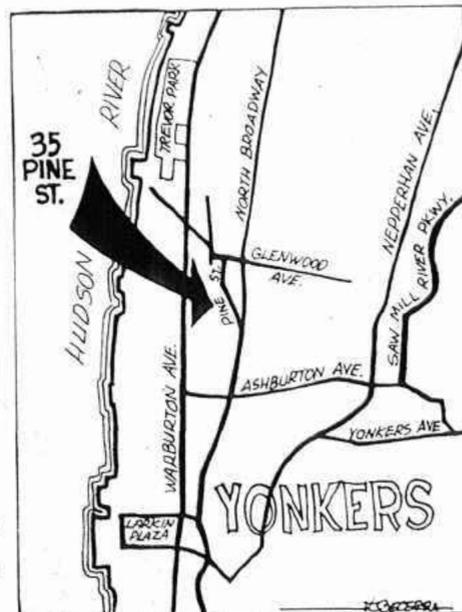
Frankie Resto, who has been a newspaper carrier in the building for two years, lives only two doors down the hall from the suspected killer.

Berkowitz always paid his bill, Resto said. "If he missed a week," he added, "he would put the money in an envelope and stick it under my door. He was a good tipper, too."

"If I met him in the hall, he'd say hello to me and ask me how the paper business was," Resto recalled.

Berkowitz told the boy, as he apparently told most of his neighbors, that he worked as a security guard.

Where suspect
was arrested



The apartments at 35 Pine St., the suspect's home



Crowd mulls outside suspect's apartment building

Neighbors could see that something was up

By DAVID COPITHORNE
Staff Writer

By Wednesday afternoon, so many police were staking out the apartment house at 35 Pine St. in Yonkers that residents of the neighborhood couldn't help noticing. "I was wondering what was up," said Jacqueline Wallace of 119 Glenwood Ave., which looks out on Pine Street.

When she and a number of other residents in the area saw a horde of plainclothes policemen converge on a light-colored Ford, they found out what was up — the arrest of the man police believe to be "Son of Sam."

"They had cars parked at both ends of the street. All of a sudden, they were running toward him with their guns drawn. He just stood there," Ms. Wallace said.

At least 15 police surrounded David Berkowitz, who was arrested and whisked off to Yonkers police headquarters.

"He didn't put up any resistance," said Betty Anderson, who also lives in the apartment house at 119 Glenwood Ave. "He just looked straight ahead. He didn't have any expression on his face. When he got arrested, he didn't even look down."

Others said they later saw police remove two duffel bags from the car. "You could see the gun butts sticking out of one

of the sacks," one man said. "A machine gun, handguns — it was an arsenal."

It didn't take long for the crowds to grow. Tenants poured out of the building at 35 Pine St., where Berkowitz lives. The five-year-old building, which suffered deterioration shortly after it was built has been recently renovated by DHI Enterprises, Inc. It is an integrated building in an integrated North Yonkers neighborhood overlooking the Hudson.

Inside, newsmen and onlookers crowded the thickly-carpeted hall outside apartment 7-E, where Berkowitz lives. Others lounged around the plush lobby of the building. Outside the front door, cabbies offered rides to police headquarters in Manhattan, where the suspect had been taken.

As New York City police inside searched the apartment from top to bottom, outside they dusted Berkowitz's car for fingerprints and searched it for other clues.

Hundreds of people milled around Pine Street, while Yonkers police kept the crowds away from the car.

Well into the early hours of the morning, people still were crowded around transistor radios outside 35 Pine St., listening to all-news stations blare reports of the arrest of their neighbor.



Police examine Berkowitz apartment

