

Berkowitz's Chaplain Was a Victim's Rabbi

The rabbi who presided at the funeral of Stacy Moskowitz, acting in his post as the Jewish chaplain at Kings County Hospital, on Thursday interviewed the man accused of killing her.

Rabbi Solomon B. Shapiro of Congregation B'nai Abraham said that the suspect, David Berkowitz, generally declined to answer his questions, but told him he "was glad that a rabbi came to see him."

The rabbi said yesterday that when he asked Mr. Berkowitz about his bar mitzvah "he drew a blank, he didn't answer, he sort of withdrew."

"I asked him if he had anything to say or did he want to pray and he said, 'no,'" the rabbi said.

"I tried to establish a rapport with him," he continued, "I didn't want to close the door to future conversations by pushing too hard."

Asked about his impression of the suspect in the brief meeting in his hospital room, Rabbi Shapiro replied: "I'm not a psychiatrist. If I saw him on the street I'd say he was a normal introvert."