

# [David to him. although well-intentioned on the](https://assignbuster.com/david-to-him-although-well-intentioned-on-the/)

[Family](https://assignbuster.com/essay-subjects/family/), [Marriage](https://assignbuster.com/essay-subjects/family/marriage/)

DavidRichard Berkowitz, also known as The Son of Sam, is an American serial killerwho terrorized New York City in the mid-1970’s with a murder spree that claimedthe lives of six people, and injured eight.

Arrested in 1977, he is now known as one of the most notorious serialkillers New York City has ever seen. Berkowitz’s parents, ElizabethBroder and Tony Falco, were impoverished Jewish couple living in New York City.  Tony unfortunately left Elizabeth and theirdaughter Roslyn, several years into their marriage for another woman, andElizabeth began having an affair with Joseph Klineman.  Klineman was a married man with threechildren, so when Elizabeth told him she was pregnant, he threatened to leaveher unless she put the child up for adoption. Berkowitz was born Richard David Falco on June 1, 1953.  When he was 3 days old, he was adopted byPearl and Nathan Berkowitz, and renamed David Richard Berkowitz.  Pearl and Nathan doted on their only child, and tried to create a nice life for him, despite making a modest income througha hardware store in the Bronx. When he was very young, his parentstold him at the advice of the social services worker, that Berkowitz’sbiological mother had died giving birth to him.

Although well-intentioned on the part of his parents, Berkowitz laterharbored a great amount of guilt and anger on the subject.  RESEARCH ON ADOPTION.  Unfortunately, Berkowitz’s mother died ofbreast cancer when he was fourteen, which resulted in a bout of depression, aswell as frustrations associated with his new step-mother. RESEARCH ON MATERNALDEATH. In an attempt to gain some distancefrom his disrupted family life, Berkowitz joined the United States Army, wherehe served in South Korea as an expert marksman. Following four years of service and an honorable discharge in 1974, Berkowitz attempted to locate his birth mother.

Upon locating her, the two met after nearly 21 years of separation inMay of 1975.  Their meeting did not meetBerkowitz’s high expectations, and he left feeling disappointed and upset.  His mother had told him that he was a productof an affair, and was essentially put up for adoption because he was unwantedby his father, and was essentially an accident. So, at a time when he should have been replacing those feelings of guiltfor supposedly being the reason for his mother’s death, those feelings werereplaced with anger.

This event couldhave caused a great internal crisis for Berkowitz, as he could have beenfeeling dejected by his birth father, abandoned by his birth mother, mourningover the loss of his adopted mother, and replaced in his adopted father’s eyesby his new wife.  Overall, Berkowitzcould have been experiencing a lack of a sense of place, and a loss of hisskewed sense of identity.  Berkowitzattempted to maintain a relationship with his birth mother, as well as hishalf-sister Roslyn, but he eventually found it to be overwhelming and cut offcontact.

On Christmas Eve in 1975, aboutseven months after first meeting his mother, Berkowitz attempted to kill twowomen, Michelle Forman and another who was never identified, by stabbing themwith a hunting knife; although wounded, both women survived.  Realizing that the weapon he chose wasineffective at achieving the goal of murder, he switched to using a . 44 caliberBulldog revolver.  Berkowitz moved fromhis house in New Rochelle to an apartment in Yonkers, next door to hisneighbor, Sam Carr.  The following year, on July 29, 1976, Berkowitz shot Donna Lauria and Jody Valenti in their carparked in the Bronx.

Lauria was killedinstantly, and Valenti survived a bullet wound in her thigh.  Valenti recalled that she did not know theshooter, but gave the police a description. Later that year, on October 23, 1976, Berkowitz shot Carl Denaro andRosemary Keenan as they sat in their parked car in Flushing, Queens.  Although Denaro was shot in the head, hesurvived and now has a metal plate in his skull.

Keenan escaped with only superficialinjuries.  The bullet inside Denaro’shead was too damaged to analyze and successfully link to a specific weapon.  That, plus the different jurisdictions inwhich the first two shootings occurred, resulted in the police failing toconnect the two incidents.            The following month on November 27, 1976, Donna DeMasi and Joanne Lomino were shot in Bellerose, Queens on theirfront porch.

DeMasi was only wounded, and Lomino was shot in the back which eventually rendered her paralyzed fromthe waist down.  Two months later onJanuary 30, 1977, Christine Freund and John Diel were shot in their car inQueens.  Although Diel survived, Freunddied later in the hospital.  It was inthis case that the police began to see a pattern emerging, and a possible linkto other cases.            A few months later on March 8, 1977, Virginia Voskerichian was shot walking home from school, a block away fromwhere Christine Freund was killed.

Virginia attempted to shield herself wither books, but the bullet passedthrough them and struck her in the head, which killed her instantly.  Two days later, the NYPD announced that thesame . 44 caliber Bulldog revolver had fired the shots that killed Lauria and Voskerichian, and that they suspected that the same gun had been used in othershootings.  By this point, the shootingswere all over the news and papers, and fear was spreading throughout the city.

One month later, on April 17, 1977, Berkowitz shot Alexander Esau and Valentina Suriani in their parked car in theBronx, only a few blocks away from where Lauria and Calenti were shot.  Sadly, Suriani died in the car, and Esau diedin the hospital.  In this instance, Berkowitz let a letter addressed to NYPD Captain Joseph Borrelli.  In this letter, written in uppercase letters, Berkowitz named himself the “ Son of Sam” for the first time.  In summary, the letter addressed the police’sinability to catch him, further taunts toward the police and their efforts, aswell as his motivation from someone called Sam to kill all the victims, andmany more in the future.

Numerouspsychologists and journalist speculated that numerous serial killers leavenotes to the police at the scenes of their crimes, and retain somegratification in the knowledge that they “ outsmarted” them or eluded theirgrasp.  Following the analysis of thisnote, psychiatrists released a psychological profile of the suspect in which hewas described as neurotic, and possible a paranoid schizophrenic, as well assuffering from demonic possession. A month later on May 30, 1977, JimmyBreslin, a writer for the Daily News, received a similar handwritten note.  Inthe note, the author mentioned Lauria, Captain Borrelli, and showed his supportfor the officers working the case by “ wishing them luck.”  The DailyNews then published an article urging the killer to surrender to thepolice. Again, a month later, on June 26, 1977, Berkowitz shot Sal Lupo and Judy Placido as they sat in their parked carin Queens.  Both people were injured, butnot killed.  Then, on July 31, 1977, twodays after the one-year anniversary of the first shooting, Stacy Moskowitz andRobert Violante were shot in their parked car in Bath Beach.

Moskowitz sadly died later in the hospital, and Violante lost vision in one eye, and partial vision in the other.  This crime produced the most witnesses, oneof which recalled a patrol officer ticketing cars near the scene.  Berkowitz’s yellow Ford Galaxie was one ofthe cars in the area that was ticketed, and he was investigated as asuspect.  During their investigation, thepolice noticed that Sam Carr was Berkowitz’s neighbor.  In fact, Carr had several complaints listedagainst Berkowitz for harassment, and suspicion of killing his dog, Harvey.

When Berkowitz initially moved to Yonkers, itwas in an attempt to get away from the overly noisy dogs near his previoushouse in New Rochelle.  Much to hismisfortune, Sam Carr’s dog was much the same as those he tried to escape from, and Berkowitz had sent numerous letters to Carr asking him to do somethingabout his dog, or he would take action.            On August 10, 1977, the policelocated Berkowitz’s car outside his apartment in Yonkers, with incriminatingevidence inside.  This evidence includedthings like a rifle, a bag full of ammunition, maps of the crime scenes, and aletter addressed to someone on the task force assigned to the case.  The police decided to wait for Berkowitz toexit his apartment, since they did not have a warrant to do so.  Berkowitz eventually exited the apartment, and got into his car, placed a brown paper bag with the . 44 caliber Bulldog onthe passenger’s seat, and the NYPD detectives promptly surrounded the car.

According to reports, Berkowitz supposedlysaid, “ Well, you’ve got me,” to which the detective asked, “ Who have I got?” Berkowitz replied, “ The Son of Sam.” Detective John Falotico was credited with his arrest.            Following his arrest, Berkowitz wasinterrogated for only thirty minutes, during which time he confessed to all ofthe shootings, credited his neighbor’s dog for inspiring him to kill, as thedog was possessed by a demon instructing Berkowitz to kill.  Due to this confession, Berkowitz wasexamined by three different psychologists, and found competent to stand trial, and subsequently plead guilty to the shootings. Berkowitz caused quite a scene at the sentencing hearing, when he gotinto a screaming match with Stacy Moskowitz’s mother, and attempted to jump outof the window in the courtroom.

Thejudge sentenced Berkowitz to 25-years-to-life for each murder, servedconsecutively at Attica Correctional Facility on June 12, 1978.  While in Attica, he was a victim of a brutalknife attack, which left him with a large gash in his neck form the front toback, which required upwards of fifty stiches to close.  Then, Berkowitz was moved to SullivanCorrectional Facility, and then again to Shawangunk Correctional Facility wherehe still is today.              This entire case is interesting fornumerous reasons.  Firstly, it isnotoriously remembered in the minds of New Yorkers, who recall widespread paniccovering the city at night.  Most womeneven took it upon themselves to change their haircut and color, or even by awig, so as to increase the chances of being targeted by the Son of Sam.

In hindsight, it is easy to see thatBerkowitz did have a pattern of victims he targeted.  They all, apart from Virginia Voskerichian, were attacked in pairs, and more often than not, involved a woman with long, dark hair.  Additionally, the attacksalso often involved couples seated in a parked car at night, which could havebeen Berkowitz’s way to approach them without being seen.  While in prison, Berkowitz told a fellowinmate that he attacked women kissing in cars in order to prevent otherillegitimate children from being born to suffer the way he did.

Surprisingly, a year later, Berkowitz announced that his confessions of being possessed by a demon were alie, and that he had committed these crimes of his own accord.  Then, to add more confusion to the pot, Berkowitz later claimed that he had carried out only three of the murders ofthe Son of Sam, and that the other killings were done by other members of asatanic cult, that he had joined prior to his arrest.  Specifically, he named two cult members, Johnand Michael Carr, who were sons of his neighbor, Sam Carr, but both sons hadrecently died.  Years later, the case wasreopened due to speculation that Berkowitz had not acted alone in all of theshootings, but the case remains suspended and unclosed to this day.

Numerous factors influenced the grimoutcome of David Berkowitz, which might not have as great of an effect as theydid in combination with each other.  Tobegin, Berkowitz was adopted.  Numerousstudies have shown that there really aren’t visible differences in thedevelopment of children who are adopted versus those who are not (ARTICLE), sothis alone was not the only driving force behind his actions.  What made his adoption so influential in hislife is the fact that he was put up for adoption as a result of being anaccidental pregnancy of his mother and her lover, Joseph Klineman.  From the beginning, Berkowitz could have feltthat he was unwanted by both of his birth parents.

This should have balanced out with hisadoptive parents filling the void his life, but unfortunately his adoptivemother passed away when he was only fourteen. As discussed earlier, maternal death can have \_\_\_\_\_ (ARTICLE).  He could have been left feeling abandoned byboth his mothers, which could have influenced is perception of women ingeneral, and impacted his motivation for killing.

To go further, there was really no mention ofany romantic relationships in Berkowitz’s life, which could have been a resultof his warped view of women from childhood, and also exacerbated his anger inthat he was not able to be successful in any form of relationship with anywoman.  Essentially, it is quite possiblethat Berkowitz was feeling invisible and insignificant to the world and hisfamily, which could have prompted him to act in ways that would force people tofocus on him.  For example, following hisarrest, the police found diary entries noting the time and place of hundreds offires he started throughout New York City prior to his first murder.  FIRE STARTING ARTICLE.            It is important to note that whilehe has been in prison, Berkowitz has converted to Christianity, and hasexpressed wishes to be called the Son of Hope, rather than the Son of Sam.

He has also not been involved in any violentincidents, aside from the knife attack on him in Attica, and has been describedas a model prisoner.  He even helps tocounsel troubled inmates through the prison ministry, and has continued hiseducation and graduated with honors from Sullivan Community College.  After his arrest, the New York Statelegislature enacted “ Son of Sam laws” which prohibit any criminal from financiallybenefitting from the publicity of their crimes, as numerous books andbiographies about David Berkowitz were written in response to his arrest.

Berkowitz has written his memoirs while inprison, as well as a book titled Son of Hope: The Prison Journals of David Berkowitz in 2006, for which he does not receiveprofit from.