

Richard kuklinski: the iceman



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

INTRODUCTION

At 7: 00 he his awoke by the sound of his alarm clock. It was time to get his children ready for school. Richard Kuklinski walks down the staircase and sees his lovely family around the kitchen table. He kisses his wife Barbara on the cheek and continues to say good morning to his three children Merrick, Christin, and Dwayne.

After getting ready, he drops his children off at their prestigious private schools and is off to work. To an outsider, it may seem that Richard has always lived an ordinary life. But little did they know, he was a deadly and notorious murderer. He thought of killing as a hobby and had absolutely no remorse for the horrible and cruel deaths he caused.

II. FACTUAL BACKGROUND

A. Early Life

Richard had a horrific childhood. He was born at 222 Third Street in Jersey City, New Jersey, to a Polish family and was destined to live a hard and lonely life. His family was poor and highly dysfunctional. His father, Stanley Kuklinski, was a horrible, abusive father that Richard would only grow to hate. His mother, Anna, had no emotional attachment to any of her children at all.

Violence was a daily occurrence in the Kuklinski household. Stanley would beat Anna and her children until they bled, and the gangs of the neighborhood were always causing fights with Richard. When Richard was just five years old, Stanley beat his older brother, Florian, to death. Richard

vowed that he would one day kill his father and make him suffer the way he had suffered his whole life.

Richard's life was an uphill battle as he grew older. He was constantly teased at school and beaten up by boys in the town. He was forced to steal for food and many nights he went to bed hungry. He began stealing cars at the age of thirteen and found his only joy in life by reading crime magazines that he stole weekly. Inside, he was very lonely and grew up never knowing what love and friendship really meant.

He was constantly tormented by a gang called “ the project boys” and never had the courage to fight back, till one day when the fire in his eyes took over. Richard decided to go for the head of the gang, Charley Lane. He hated Charley almost as much as he hated his father and decided to grab a bat and hunt him down. When Richard finally found Charley he struck him in the head without hesitation.

He went down like a ton of bricks and Richard became nervous. He checked for a pulse and there was none. He decided to throw Charley's dead body in a pond under the Pulaski Skyway. Richard had killed for the first time at age thirteen. He felt powerful and invincible. He realized he liked killing.

B. The Coming Up Roses

Richard then developed vicious pastimes. He took great joy in the killing of animals. He would tie two cat's tails together and hang them over a telephone wire and watch them claw each other to death. He also liked to put stray cats in the incinerator and watch them burn to death. A strong rage grew inside Richard and he yearned to kill more and more.

He went from a weak, little boy to a dangerous man in just a few days.

Richard was very eager to fight and often picked violent fights with men in bars. He was dangerous, willing to stab or beat anyone in his way. Word spread about his fearlessness and a gang called the Coming Up Roses was looking to invite him in. Richard gladly accepted and the five boys began to terrorize the city's streets.

The second man Richard killed was a cop named Doyle. He was very rowdy and a “loud-mouth,” Richard's two least favorite qualities. The two men began fighting and Richard decided to leave the bar and wait for Doyle outside. Richard unnoticeably followed him to his car, where Doyle passed out drunk. This was Richard's golden opportunity. He bought a quart of gasoline and poured it all over the car. Then, he lit a match from a safe distance and threw it on Doyle's lap. Richard laughed as the car exploded and Doyle burned to death. The police investigated Doyle's murder but found no suspects.

The Coming Up Roses gang began committing more and more crimes and had accumulated a variety of guns, knives, and explosives. They began to receive attention from the De Cavalcantes, the most notorious mob family in New Jersey. A “made man” in the family, Carmine Genovese (also known as ‘Meatball’) decided to approach the gang. He had them over for dinner and asked them if they would be interested in killing a man for him. The gang agreed and gang member John Wheeler decided to be the gunman.

The gang drove to Lincoln Park where the mark lived and saw him getting into his car. When it was time to shoot John became nervous and froze.

Richard immediately took the gun and shot the mark in the head, driving away as if nothing happened. Meatball was impressed and began to give the gang a lot of work.

They received a lot of money and began killing more and more. Richard decided to move out of his mother's house and live with his new girlfriend Linda. Richard had grown to become very handsome and was towering over six feet tall. Linda was twenty five years old and liked Richard until he began beating her. Then she just began to fear him.

Richard began to love killing people and the idea of “ being able to decide when a man's life ends.” He would walk through Manhattan and shoot the homeless men for fun. He killed them brutally: knives jammed into the brain, slitting the throat, tying a rope around their neck and hanging them off of his shoulder as if he was a tree. The police never suspected him of anything, and thought these bums were just killing each other.

Richard was now a serial killer at only eighteen years old. One day, Albert Parenti, another made man in the mob and a friend of Carmine Genovese, approached Richard. He told him that two of his gang members, John Wheeler and Jack Dubrowsi, held up a mafia poker game and now had to die. He wanted Richard to do the job. Richard knew if he did not kill his two friends he would be killed himself, so he accepted the job and killed his two best friends.

Linda became pregnant and Richard decided to marry her at City Hall, but Richard knew he did not love her. He had no emotional attachment to her or their child at all. Though he continued to commit various crimes, Richard's

business was slow. His boss, Genovese, was sent to jail and Richard was forced to search for new contracts. He contemplated killing his father, but Richard says “ he could never find him.” On strange detail in all of Richard’s killings was that he would take any contract except killing a woman or a child. He said that “ anyone who does doesn’t deserve to live.”

III. KUKLINSKI’S KILLINGS

A. A Contract Killer

After he was released from jail, Genovese became Richard’s mentor. Richard was now a genuine mafia contract killer, making a living by killing “ marks” for the mafia. Genovese gave him many brutal jobs and paid Richard to commit several murders. His first few killings from Genovese included a man in Chicago named Anthony De Peti for not being on time with his payments, a Cop named Jim O’Brian for tricking Richard into delivering heroine, and a mob boss named Arthur De Gillio.

Genovese also asked for some special requests during the killings, for example, he specifically told Richard that after killing Arthur De Gillio he must “ take all of his credit cards and shove them up his a**.” He was also told to break bones one by one to ensure the most pain in the victims.

Richard’s killing empire expanded and he became affiliated with other mob families, such as the Ponti family from New Jersey, and the New York crime families. Because of his Polish ancestry, he was never able to become a made man in he mob, so he worked as an independent contact killer for all mob families. He was well-connected through Genovese and was raking in

the money. Until one day, Genovese was shot. The murder remained unsolved and Richard was left to fend for himself.

B. Barbara

The contracts were no longer “rolling in” and he was forced to take a job at a trucking company. There, he met Barbara Pedrici, a beautiful Italian woman. She was 18 years old and Richard was now 26. They began talking and their boss became angry, knowing Richard was dangerous. He decided to fire him to protect Barbara. Unfortunately, his plan backfired. Richard asked Barbara out on a date and immediately fell in love with her, but he was still married to Linda.

Fond of Richard, Barbara was angry that he was still married and he decided to get a divorce. They began seeing each other everyday and Barbara began feeling trapped by their relationship. Richard became violent and she was too afraid to break-up with him because she thought he would kill her. She soon became pregnant and Richard and Barbara married.

Barbara knew he was violent but had no idea of his many brutal killings. He decided to try and stay away from crime, in order to protect his family. But for Richard, this proved too difficult. Barbara’s uncle gave Richard a job in film lab, where he began pirating videos and eventually got into the pornography industry. He teamed up with his co-workers Paul Rothenburg and Anthony Argila, who were supposedly “connected” to the mob.

Richard owed them a lot of money and it didn’t seem as if he would pay it back soon. Argila and Rothenburg became angry and decided to call their

friend Roy DeMeo. Roy DeMeo was a “murder machine” and a *picciotto* in the Gambino crime family.

C. Roy DeMeo

One August day in 1973, DeMeo found Richard and confronted him about the money he owed his two partners. Richard, unaware of who DeMeo was and his mafia connections, gave him an attitude and told him to mind his own business. DeMeo left and returned minutes later with his “killing team,” Joe Guglielmo, Anthony Senter, and Joey Testa. Richard was surrounded with guns pointing at his head. He was armed of course but knew these men were for real. If he killed them, the mafia would kill him and his family. The four men knocked Richard down almost to a state of unconsciousness.

Richard said, “they beat me good, but I knew if I fought back they’d kill me in an instant, so I just took it.” DeMeo realized Richard had a gun and admired that he didn’t use it. He took it as a sign of respect and courage. DeMeo and Richard talked over dinner at the Gemini Lounge in Brooklyn, a popular mafia hotspot. Both apologized and DeMeo said he would like to do business with Richard. In essence, this event was Richard’s rebirth. He was able to quit his job at the film lab and survive on killing.

He was making up to \$40, 000 for each mark he murdered. He would also enjoy making them suffer before their death and being able to kill them up close, so he could see the look in their eyes as they died. DeMeo and Richard were a murder dream team and they made the leader of the Gambino family, Paul Castellano, very happy. Paul also promoted DeMeo to a *sgarrista*

, and gave him more and more power in the family. As DeMeo's premiere killer, this in turn gave Richard more power.

His deaths were notorious in the mafia families, and his methods of killing were brilliant and gruesome. He always knew where to hide the bodies and was never a suspect in any case. By this time, Richard had three children: Merrick, Christian, and Dwayne. No one knew about his business and he was well liked around the neighborhood. He seemed like an ordinary family man that would never hurt a fly.

In most of the murders he committed, Richard never even knew the victims name. He only knew one thing – that they must die, and this was a good enough reason for Richard. Some of his most famous murders were: Richard Hoffman, Gary Smith, Paul Rothenburg, and Henry Marino. He also started to use poison to kill his victims and always carried around his favorite poison with him, cyanide.

Through his business, Richard met another contract killer, Robert Pronge. Richard said, “ The two most dangerous men I ever met in my life were Roy DeMeo and Bob Pronge. Pronge was a complete psychopath. At least Roy had some semblance of being normal, but Pronge was way out there... dangerous beyond belief - far more dangerous than Roy.” Robert Pronge drove a Mister Softee truck, which according to Richard was “ purely brilliant.” They became good friends and acted as if they had known each other for years. Together, they came up with diabolical ways of committing murders and making their victims suffer.

This led Richard to his next murder. He had stalked the mark for weeks and finally attacked. He used a tazer gun and then continued to tie his hands and feet. He took the man and headed to the woods in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. He took the mark to a cave filled with vicious rats and secured him to the floor. He took his knife out of his sock and began to cut his face, arms, and legs - just enough for the rats to smell the blood. Richard set up a video camera and left as if nothing ever happened.

Two days later he returned to the cave and saw only stained leaves where the man was. He picked up his video camera and watched the video. He saw the rats flock to the victim and cover his entire body. He watched them rip off his flesh and eat them alive. He felt no remorse for the victim and decided to take the tape to DeMeo and the DeCavalcante captain who had ordered the job. They loved it and praised Richard for his work. They told him " if he was Italian they would sponsor him [to be inducted into the mafia] in a minute."

D. " *The Bigger They Are, The Harder They Fall* "

Shortly After, Richard received the most important murder contract of his life - the killing of Carmine Galante, the head of the Bonanno family. He was " out of control" and killed nine Genovese sggaristas. Every mafia family plotted and worked together to plan his downfall. DeMeo knew this would be a great opportunity for himself and Richard so he made sure the plot was flawless. Of course, everything went perfectly as planned and Galante had two bullets in his head thanks to Richard.

This infamous murder introduced Richard to more and more connections. He was now receiving contracts from Sammy “ the Bull” Gravano, underboss of the Gambino family and original friend to John Gotti. Gravano now had a special piece of work to do and he knew Richard Kuklinski was the man for the job. They met in a small parking lot and Gravano told him the mark’s name was Peter Calabro from Saddle River, New Jersey. For Richard this was just another day another job and he completed the murder successfully on March 14, 1980. Afterwards, Richard found out Peter was cop and never trusted Gravano again.

Richard became well respected in the Gambino family and became friends with the Gotti family. On March 18, John Gotti’s youngest son, Frank, was killed by a car driven by John Favara. Nervous, John kept driving and went to his home shocked and afraid. He knew his life was now over. He had just dug his own grave. Richard, the Gotti family, and a few other accomplices were sent to capture Favara and tortured him to death. They then stuffed his dead body into a Fifty-five gallon drum.

IV. THE POLICE INVESTIGATION

A. The Iceman

Richard longed to create his own mafia and started his own breaking and entering gang. His partners consisted of Al Rinke, Gary Smith, Danny Deppner, and Percy House. This gang became a very important part of Richard’s life and ultimately would help cause his downfall.

With the help of his gang, Richard received his nickname – The Iceman.

Richard called his only life-long friend Phil Solimene to help him with murder

of Louis Masgay. He had come up with the brilliant plan of freezing the body to slow the decomposition. By preserving the body it would then be impossible to trace back to the actual time of death. Solimene and Richard took his body and dumped it in an ice cold well in North Bergen.

Though this seemed like a normal murder to Richard, it would have severe consequences. Solimemene had a big mouth and told Richard's gang about the murder. They in turn told their wives and friends who told their wives and friends. Richard's secrets had finally leaked out after almost 40 years.

Pat Kane was a young state trooper and was deeply devoted to his new job. He was honest, forthright, and willing to put anyone behind bars who deserved it. In October of 1982, his boss called him to his office. There were over a hundred burglaries in northern New Jersey and one burglar in the gang had been captured. It was now Kane's job to talk to him and see if his information is true.

The captured burglar was Al Rinke, and he gladly named all of his accomplices in order to save himself. He told them his accomplices were Danny, Deppner, Gary Smith, Percy House, and Big Rich. He was not sure of Richard's last name and did not know where he lived. Richard had always made it a point to keep all of his information a secret. Kane asked Rink to point out all the homes they robbed and Rinke willingly obeyed.

By the end of their conversation, Kane had completed an indictment with 153 charges against the gang members. He watched the homes of Deppner and Smith but they had never returned. He realized this hunt for the gang would be very difficult and devoted all his time to finding them.

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Meanwhile, Richard was still doing well. He had completed fifteen murder contracts in the last month and his record was still as clear as crystal. He bough a garage-warehouse in North Bergen and an entire truckload of fifty-five gallon drums to store his victims. He started dismembering the bodies and tearing them apart at the joints. He liked this method and enjoyed leaving traces of a body all around New Jersey.