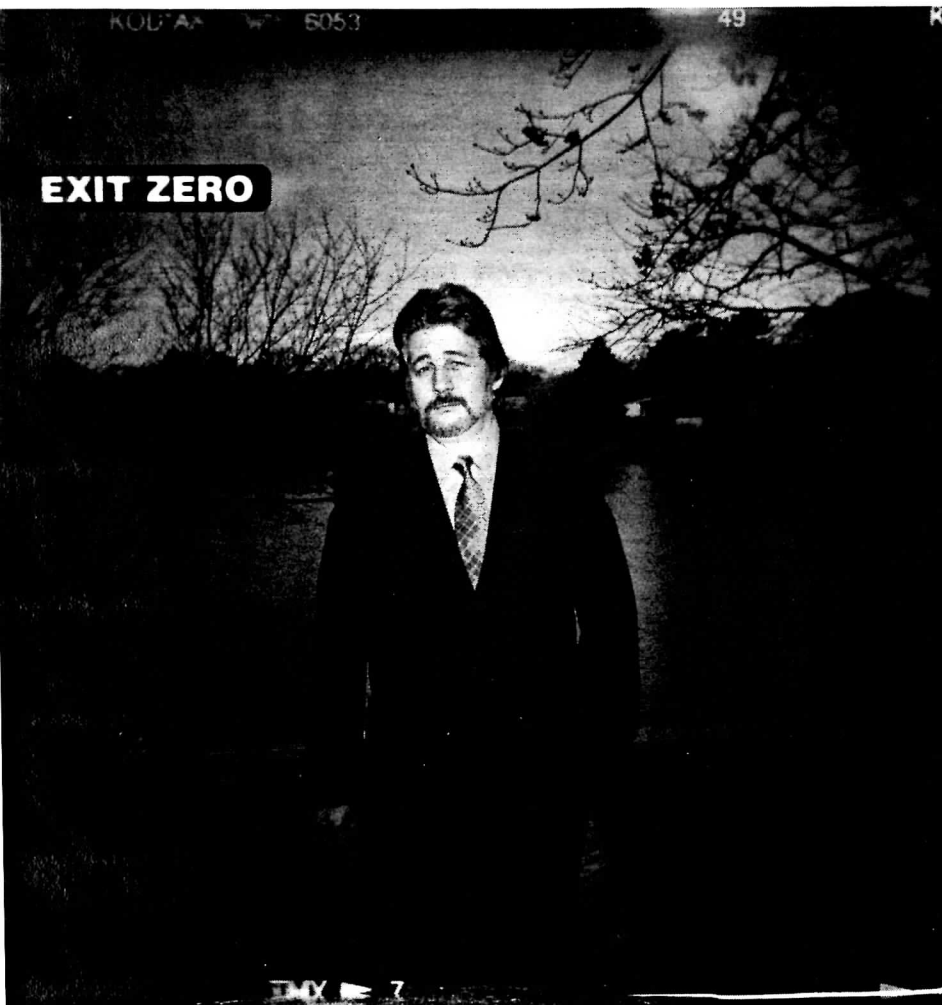


The shoot makes the man



Kieran Crowley takes aim at the serial killer du jour by Bill Jensen

Kieran Crowley sits at his desk ready to compose a letter to Joel Rifkin, Long Island's most recently notorious serial killer. As the *New York Post's* corpse-collector aficionado, Crowley corresponds with his stars.

"It's always strange writing a businesslike letter to a serial killer or mass murderer," Crowley jokes, typing at an imaginary keyboard. "Dear Mr. Rifkin..."

I spoke with the reporter in his basement, the *Post's* unofficial Long Island Bureau, an office he calls "the shrine to crime." His man-of-the-moment is Heriberto "Eddie" Seda, the man cops call the Zodiac Killer, who is accused of stalking the streets of Brooklyn and Queens under the stars, killing three victims and wounding

five. Seda is to be tried next year for the slayings in Queens, which are detailed in Crowley's recent book *Sleep My Little Dead: The True Story of the Zodiac Killer* (St. Martin's Press, \$5.99). This is an edited transcript of our conversation.

Q: The original Zodiac in California, other than Jack the Ripper, was probably the most famous serial killer that was never caught. Do you think this was one of the reasons that Seda allegedly chose to emulate him?

A: Eddie Seda's brilliant idea basically was, "If I pretend to be this guy, they'll think it's the California guy. I'll say I'm back and I'll get free murders. Cool!" Part of him believed that he was possessed by the spirit of the Zodiac killer of San Francisco. I think he really got into it...This is a guy who spent, essentially, eleven years in his room. He went out for errands and went to church on Sunday. After midnight, he went out prowling, looking for victims, a Peeping Tom pretending to be a commando...This guy worshiped weapons, and, in place of his sex drive, this is his libido.

Q: The Zodiac was shooting lonely old men walking home late at night.

A: Yeah, but he found defective people, people he decided were sinners: drinkers, drug users, the mentally ill. We can speculate on other motives, but this guy [Seda] yearned to be a commando, yearned to be brave, but in fact was a total coward.

Q: He's sort of like the putz of serial killers. He would shoot them, with only one shot, run away, then read in the morning paper that they didn't die.

A: After he was arrested and he was talking to cops, he said he was very angry that these people weren't dead. He was using one zip gun, which takes thirty seconds to reload. He didn't want to shoot again. His highest priority was to get away.

Q: Are there any rumblings about active serial killers in the area?

A: Oh, there are several. There are probably at least two working on Long Island. They're hooker-killers. In that line of work, they stick with the tried-and-true formula.

Q: With Rifkin, the general public didn't even know there was a serial killer operating until it was over.

A: Once they have tried out their act and got it down, they become so casual, so professional, that they are very, very difficult to catch. With hookers, until you have a body, you don't have a case...Take Robert Shulman, for example. He would [allegedly] take a hooker from Queens, bring her to his home in Hicksville, then have sex with them, kill them, chop them up and put them in bags...One was found in Westchester. He was driving them up there, but as things went on, he got lazy and he was dumping them

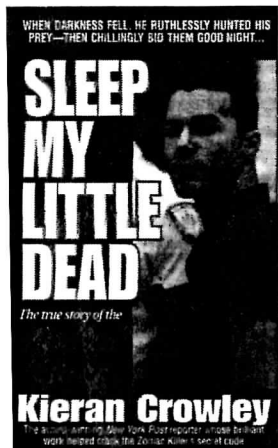
in Nassau. He got lazy, and that's good, because they tend to make more and more mistakes.

Q: That's what happened with Rifkin.

A: Yeah, he made it easy to be stopped. Important safety tip for serial killers: If you don't want to get caught, don't go around with DMV violations or missing plates when you've got a body in the back of your truck.

Q: The Colin Ferguson connection is one of the most astonishing facts in your book.

A: Colin Ferguson became a Zodiac suspect because of a hastily prepared police sketch. Ran on the front page of every newspaper. Thousands of calls came in. Swamped the cops with false leads. A woman called who worked on Long Island with a guy named Colin Ferguson. He was a well-groomed, intelligent, somewhat educated gentleman who was the most annoying person you will ever meet in your life. He essentially believes that everyone else other than him in the world has two things in common—they either should work for him and do whatever he says, or they're part of the plot against him. He looked just like the sketch. He not only was babbling about religion and white people, and the plot against him, and was so cantankerous and threatening to people, but he looked just like the sketch and took the LIRR stops within blocks of the East New York shootings...He had no arrest record. The cops found him in the INS database. Colin Ferguson annoyed the hell out of everyone in the island of Jamaica and then left there, so the INS had his fingerprints. He was eliminated and never questioned. The eerie thing was because NYPD asked for these fingerprints, the INS became interested in him. They began checking this man out. Colin Ferguson cited that at the top of his list of reasons for killing people on Dec. 7, 1993, in the LIRR massacre. He didn't have the gun then. It's one of those strange things; it's a creepy feeling. But cops are not psychic.



Making book on a putz.

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