

The Ice Man: Confessions of a Mafia Contract Killer

by Philip Carlo

Chapter 23 - Murder Runs in the Family

The dog had a broken leg and was in shock, shaking and trembling and barking nonstop in the yard of a building on Jersey City's Central Avenue, number 438. It was 12:30 A.M., September 16, 1970, and the dog was disturbing people trying to sleep. The dog belonged to Pamela Dial, a twelve-year-old girl, small for her age and thin. Pamela had black hair and large, round, dark eyes. She was a straight-A student at nearby St. Anne's Parochial School. She lived at 9 Bleeker Street with her mother and father and brothers John and Robert, just around the corner from Central Avenue, the block on which lived Joseph and Anna Kuklinski.

Pamela loved her dog, Lady, a little black-and-white mutt. They were always together; wherever Pam went, the dog was with her, wagging its tail and unusually attentive to Pamela.

Earlier, near eleven o'clock that fateful Tuesday night, Pamela had left the house looking for her dog. She had not finished her homework yet; it was still spread out on her bed. Nor did she tell her family she was going out to find Lady. Her parents were watching the eleven o'clock news when she left and didn't even know she'd gone.

Pamela did find her dog and was walking home when she ran into Joseph Kuklinski.

Joseph and Pam knew each other from the neighborhood. Joseph was tall and handsome, thin and muscular, had glistening long blond hair, a Fu Manchu mustache. He was now twenty-five years old. The two talked. Joseph asked Pamela if she'd like to be alone with him. Not knowing exactly what he had in mind, she innocently said okay and followed Joseph Kuklinski into a four-story building, 438 Central Avenue, and up to the roof. Joseph lived at 434 Central Avenue with his mother, just two buildings away. Joseph had used the roofs along Central Avenue for sexual liaisons many times over the years, with both girlfriends and boyfriends. Pamela had no idea of what Joseph was after. He was known in the neighborhood as Cowboy Joe, and she thought he was cute. She liked the idea that he paid attention to her, that he wanted to be alone with her. Unaware of the demons inside of Joseph Kuklinski's head, Pamela willingly went up to the roof.

Joseph had been drinking, was buzzed, smelled of alcohol. On the roof he quickly came to the point and tried to have sex with Pam. She refused. He wouldn't take no for an answer. He forced himself on her, sodomized her, then choked her to death; all the while, little Lady was barking like mad. Joseph tried to catch the dog but couldn't.

When Joseph was finished with Pamela, he picked up her lifeless body as if it were a rag doll and tossed her off the roof. She hit the cement backyard of 438 Central Avenue with a meaty, bone-breaking thud. Joseph then managed to catch the dog and tossed it off the roof too. The hapless animal landed near Pamela, and its legs and several ribs broke. Lady crawled to Pamela's lifeless body and began to cry, then howl and bark nonstop. People called the police

to complain about the insistent barking and howling. A squad car was dispatched. The police discovered Pamela Dial's lifeless, broken body.

The murder of a child, even in rough-and-tumble Jersey City, was a rare event, an outrage. Early that morning every available detective and uniformed cop in Jersey City was looking for Pamela's killer, canvassing the neighborhood, knocking on doors, stopping people driving by. Detectives soon learned that Pamela had been seen talking to Joseph Kuklinski the night before. When detective Sergeant Ben Riccardi came knocking on the Kuklinskis' door, Joseph was still sleeping and hung over. When he was taken to the police station and threatened by angry Jersey City detectives, he admitted what he'd done.

"I threw her off the roof," he said. With that Joseph was roughly handcuffed and placed under arrest.

Later that day, Anna Kuklinski called Richard and told him how Joseph had been arrested for the killing of a twelve-year-old girl. This bowled Richard over. He couldn't conceive of his brother doing such a thing. It had to be some kind of mistake. As much as Richard wanted nothing to do with his mother, he hurried to Jersey City. Just the day before, Richard had gone to see Joseph. He'd waited in a bar on Central Avenue for Joseph, but Joe hadn't shown up. Richard had known that Joseph was home, out of work, but he hadn't knocked on the door to get his brother, because he didn't want to see his mother; he had grown to despise Anna to that degree. The few times she had come to his home, Anna always tried to instigate trouble with Barbara, who also grew to loathe Anna, but tolerated her. Barbara had no choice; she was Richard's mother, after all.

My mother was cancer; she slowly killed whatever she touched, Richard recently said.

At first Richard was willing to try and help Joseph, get him a lawyer. He found his younger brother at the Jersey City jail, and Joseph readily admitted to Richard that he had raped and killed the girl and thrown her and her dog off the roof.

"Why the f... would you do such a thing?" Richard demanded, so angry he wanted to beat his brother, beat him to death. Richard had two daughters, and the thought of someone doing that to either of them left him cold and empty inside—outraged.

"Because," Joseph said, "she wanted it."

With that Richard stood up and walked away; he would never talk to his brother Joseph again.

That day I washed my hands of him, wanted nothing to do with him anymore. As far as I was concerned, I didn't have a brother. I didn't have a family. To hell with them all...

Within several months Joseph Kuklinski was convicted of Pam Dial's murder, given a life sentence, and sent to the Trenton State Prison. As far as Richard was concerned he had no brother. No mother. No sister. No family.