

Canarsie Digest

12/06/2006

Angels Join Hunt For Serial Killer

As an area family mourned the death of Canarsie native Kim Raffo last week, another Canarsie native is joining the search to find the serial killer who reveled in taking her life.

Radio host and Guardian Angels founder Curtis Sliwa said last week that he has organized a team to go to the underbelly of Atlantic City and try to find the person responsible for murdering Raffo and three other women.

"We're there around the clock, patrolling for illicit activities and any information about this case," Sliwa told this paper last week.

Police said that Raffo, 35, who grew up in Canarsie and Starrett City before moving to Florida 17 years ago, was strangled with a rope and discarded in a muddy ditch behind a hot-sheet hotel on Black Horse Pike in Egg Harbor Township, a known hooker stroll in the outskirts of Atlantic City.

"The people in this area are of two minds," said Sliwa, who said that New York Guardian Angels members are joining Pennsylvania Guardian Angels members in the search. "They don't want to snitch, but they know that this is the risk that they take."

Hoping that those who reside on the shadowy side of civilization would be more apt to talk to Guardian Angels than the police, Sliwa's members are leafleting the area, looking for information that they would in turn pass on to the authorities.

While investigators have identified her as a prostitute, her father and grandparents still living in Starrett City remember Raffo as a beautiful, nurturing woman that aspired to be a chef at an Atlantic City casino.

Friends at her new home in Atlantic City said that Raffo had kicked a drug habit that had led her to a life of prostitution and was trying to get her life back.

Her remains were found on November 20. She was last seen the day earlier having something to eat at a diner where prostitutes frequent.

Raffo's estranged husband, Hugh Auslander, has spent the last week looking for any information about Kim's killer.



He has even set up a small memorial near the site where his wife was found, according to the Daily News.

In interviews, he said that his marriage to Raffo broke up about six years ago when she reportedly left him for another man she met at a culinary school.

Raffo followed her new paramour to Atlantic City, where she reportedly fell into the world of drugs, addiction and, finally, prostitution, according to published accounts.

“I still love her very much. She’s a good girl who got caught up in some bad stuff,” Auslander told reporters. “But in her heart, she’s a good person.”

Family members said last week that they plan two services for the slain woman – one in Canarsie and one in Florida, where Kim’s mother and sister live.

As of this writing, cops have identified the other three women found in the ditch with Raffo, but have yet to identify a possible suspect.