

# East Area Rapist

6/15/81

# When Terror Reigned

By Thom Akeman  
See Staff Writer

He emerged from a drainage ditch in Rancho Cordova. And within a year, he was one of the most feared men in Sacramento County. A slight man, some said. Athletically built, some said. Tall maybe, or just average in height. Blood hair. Or brown. Blue eyes or hazel.

A teenager, maybe. Or a middle-aged man.

Little was certain, except that the man was terrifying.

And he held a community helplessness for long months in which the police were stymied, the traditional safeguards useless.

This one man prompted what is believed to have been the most intense manhunt in the county's history. He inspired vigilante-like patrols, attracted the attention of networks of neighbors, caused safety lock sales to quadruple, pushed the county's eastern suburbs to burn floodlights through the night and propelled hundreds of housewives into pistol training.

And then, just as abruptly as he had emerged, the East Area Rapist disappeared.

Nowhere the valley at first, to Stockton and Modesto. Then to Davis, into the Bay area. Concord, San Ramon, Danville, Fremont, Walnut Creek.

The East Area Rapist may have last attacked in Santa Barbara in 1974, where a surgeon and girlfriend were killed by a rampaging intruder. Or he may have last struck in Cochin

Costa County, where two years ago a man awakened to stare at a skeletoned invader standing at the foot of his bed, peering on groves.

Detectives familiar with the psychopaths' terrifying pattern disagree on which was the last crime of the East Area Rapist. But they do agree, officially, that the sexual terrorist

## We'll never lose interest in this guy . . .

## He's very dangerous

who attacked a total of 45 women before that final crime has not struck for about two years.

So much time has passed, in fact, that the statute of limitations has expired on most of the crimes of the East Area Rapist.

Of the 30 attacks in Sacramento County — which included breaking into 30 homes, raping as many women, assaulting a dozen husbands and some children — only two possible kidnapping charges could be prosecuted if the rapist was caught today, according to sheriff's spokesman Bill Miller.

The three-year statute for rape, sex perversion, assault, robbery and burglary charges from the 30 attacks here has expired, Miller said. The last of those felony charges ran out April 14, on the third anniversary of the rapist's last attack in the Sacramento area.

Although there are a total of 11

East Area rapist cases elsewhere that are still within the three-year statute, Sacramento County could prosecute only the two possible kidnapping charges, which never expire.

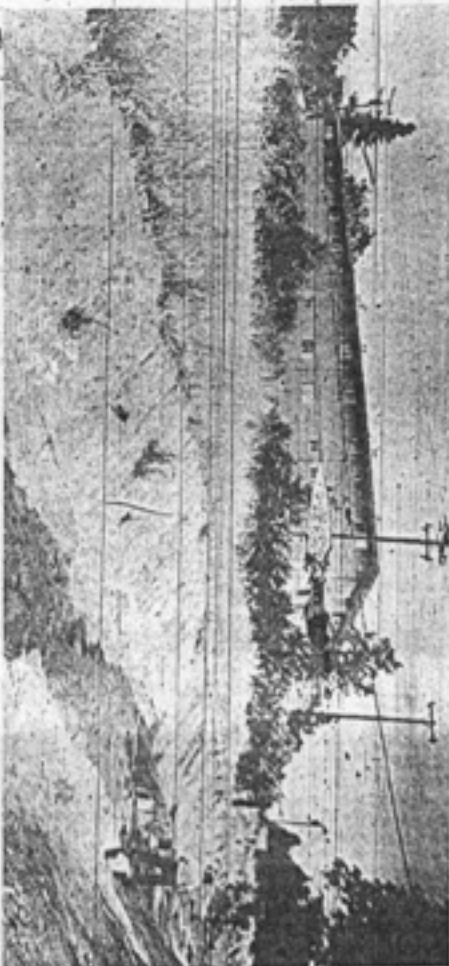
Those possible charges are from October and November 1976 — East Area rape cases Nov. 8 and 9 — when the sexual terrorist dragged his female victims from their homes to the drainage ditches behind them, Miller said.

The importance of drainage ditches eventually declined in East Area rape cases. But they were so central to the rapist's early attacks, sheriff's deputies established all-night stake outs of drainage ditches in the Rancho Cordova area to watch for a mysterious man traveling along them.

It was from one — a long, weed-lined ditch that winds behind the high fences of back yards, across fields, through orchards and into the American River — that the rapist emerged five years ago Thursday — June 18, 1976 — to commit his first terrifying attack.

In the early months, the sexual terrorist attacked women who were home alone, displaying an unwelcome ability to find victims whose husbands were out of town. The night he broke a year, he was breaking into homes in different suburbs like Carmichael, Fair Oaks and Orangevale and confronting married couples. Eventually, the rapist sought out teenage girls.

The East Area Rapist was known to have physically injured only two of his victims — a Sacramento



Out of this Rancho Cordova drainage ditch crowded the East Area Rapist.

See photo by Lenah Hu

woman who suffered major cuts from the rapist's knife and a Davis woman who was beaten into submission.

The rapist was less interested in physical violence — and sex — than in sexual torment and controlling his victims, some victims and detectives said at the time.

"He thrives on terror," one of the rapist's victims said in an interview. "The sex is secondary, not sexual."

During his typical invasion, the rapist would awaken a couple by shining a bright flashlight into their faces. The masked intruder displayed both a gun and a knife, then supervised as the woman tied up her husband, leaving him face down in bed. The rapist attacked couples on the husband's back, warned he would kill the woman if he heard so much as a rattle, then led the woman into another room and tied her into a chair.

The rapist then toyed with his victims for as long as three hours, threatening to kill and mutilate their mates while he whispered an end-

less series of foul-mouthed questions he wouldn't allow time to answer. The rapist also searched the house, usually ignoring valuables in favor of trinkets for apparent souvenirs. He slipped silently in and out of the rooms, just held his bandaged victims, giving no notice of his presence until he wanted to — or until a terrified victim tried to move or call out.

At some point in the night of terror, the rapist undressed the woman, subjected her to a brief sexual attack and relied her. And by dawn, he was gone.

On his forays, the rapist ignored floodlights, bypassed guard dogs, went through alarm systems and circumvented some sophisticated locks to get to his victims.

Such intrusion still is shocking — and word of the rapist's mind-control routine — quickly caused a near-panic "throughout the East Area.

Gun sales soared and there was a rash on purchasing large dogs, floodlights, burglar alarms and other standard security devices.

More than 130 women a month signed up for the \$18 pistol training class offered through the McClellan Rod & Gun Club in Rancho Cordova. Hal Glaze recalled the recent interview. Glaze, who was geared for about a fifth last many students, added extra handgun classes during the reign of the rapist, he said.

In the rapist's most active period — spring 1977 — Brown's Hardware on Auburn Boulevard sold 400 dead-bolt locks during three months in which the store expected to sell 200, according to Helga Sigrist, wife of the president. "We had one man doing nothing but driving around buying out the warehouses," Sigrist recalled. "My husband and I got nothing but key locks day after day." It was a terrible way to get more business.

In addition to the dracoitic, Brown's sold 639 other door locks and a total of 2,000 locks for sliding windows during the three-month period, Sigrist said.

At nearby Trip Fabrics, customers

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# Social Security

## A Floor On Which To Construct Retirement

The Social Security machine can't keep it running. This is the second in a three-part series on the "Social Security" machine.

Finally, after sitting idly for taxless minutes, the waiting ends for one. Ruling from a panel, the IRS is set to a "border" where a

Administration officers serving Sacramento County and nine other counties in the surrounding area. The six officers serve about 100,000

"We go from bankers to lawyers to shoe-shine boys," said Zacker. "Most people have had a lifetime of checks and are usually at the highest



gram — providing hot meals at area centers and in a recipient's home — as well as other senior aid services, as an adjunct to Social Security.

Zacker said the most people begin using Social Security at age 62 when filing for early retirement. He reported receiving a "rush of phone calls" from that group after the Reagan administration's proposed Social Security cuts were released.

Although data is inconclusive, Zacker said changes in the Social Security early retirement provision will force a rush of early retirements among those workers seeking 80 percent of their benefits at age

a marriage certificate, when it applies. If 62 or older, and filing for retirement benefits, an applicant is automatically enrolled in Medicare, Zacker said.

Persons wishing to apply for retirement can do so three months before they plan to stop working. Social Security administrators recommend that anyone 65 or older come in and file for Medicare.

When the necessary paper work is completed, information is fed into a massive coast-to-coast data system. If all is correct, an applicant can expect a first check within two weeks.

## Rapist

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frequently lined up three or four deep to wait for hard-to-break acrylic to be cut to the size of their windows, assistant manager Dee Liles said.

While fear was rampant, about 400 persons with Citizens' Band radios in their cars volunteered for all-night rapist patrols through the East Area. Dr. James W. Gilmartin, a dentist who organized the patrol, said the group hoped to either catch the rapist or pressure him out of the area. "It seems we did," Gilmartin said recently.

He said the unique patrol, which lasted three to four months in 1977, was formed because of the magnitude of the terror.

With the arming of the East Area, the hyped security consciousness, the citizens' patrols and the stepped-up police efforts, burglars were so chilled the county's burglary rate dropped 14 percent at the peak of the rapist's rampage.

"There was one weekend particularly when the (burglary) rate (in the East Area) went down to almost zero," sheriff's spokesman Miller recalled. "Burglars were obviously afraid of being shot."

Alas, the impact the East Area Rapist and his effect had on the burglary rate was only temporary, the charts show.

The regional preoccupation with the rapist was only temporary too, with little more than cursory interest lingering after the sexual terrorist moved on to other places.

While he was active in his name-sake eastern Sacramento County, detectives who knew the rapist had "cased" at least some of his victims conducted painstaking interviews with the victims in an attempt to find common denominators. Details — down to the names of cashiers the victims had last dealt with in grocery stores — were placed on charts that wrapped around three walls of a squad room in the sheriff's office. But there were no common elements that would constitute a clue.

At one point in the massive investigation, exasperated detectives who believed the East Area Rapist was playing games with them and the news media called a press conference

to announce the East Area Rapist had a small penis. That led psychologists to speculate publicly the rapist may have been in a sexual panic caused by feelings of inadequacy.

"We had all sorts of things going, but none helped catch him," Miller mused recently.

With all the victims — as many as 100 in the 45 rapes, counting mates and children in the homes — no one ever saw the rapist's face clearly. When his victims weren't blindfolded, the rapist always wore a mask — usually a ski-mask, sometimes a stocking, once a leather mask. The only person known to have seen the rapist unmasked was a victim's neighbor, who saw the terrorist's face from the side in the dark.

In all, detectives checked the names of more than 5,000 men who were suggested as possible suspects for one reason or another. None of the names, however, ever endured as that of a strong suspect in the East Area rape cases.

As time passed and the trail cooled, there was less for police in the Sacramento area to do about the East Area Rapist. Eventually, Sheriff's Sgt. Jim Bevins, a robbery detective, became the only officer with an officially active file on the East Area Rapist. The case will remain open forever, if necessary, Miller explained. "We'll never lose interest in this guy," he said. "He's a very dangerous man."

In the end, though, stumped detectives know little more about the East Area Rapist than they did when he first emerged from the drainage ditch in Rancho Cordova.

Some believe the rapist is now dead, or, at least, away in prison.

But a half-dozen close calls — being seen in preparation once, being chased through a back yard once — may have scared the rapist into quitting while it was his choice.

An official explanation for the East Area Rapist's disappearance is nonexistent, Miller said. "There is no way of knowing," he explained. "Anything you say about him is going to be guesswork and your guess is as good as mine."

Blaine, 63, has been on full disability since 1973 when a bad back forced her to quit work as a housekeeper. Since then, she has had a series of physical ailments: high blood pressure, emphysema, heart trouble.

Through doctor's visits and hospital stays, Blaine says Social Security has picked up the tab. The latest bill was \$9,660 for heart surgery and hospitalization.

Snuffing out the long cigarettes she is fond of smoking, Blaine gave a visitor a tour of her bright apartment. She had a stocked pantry, a freezer filled with meats and frozen

necessities purchased on her \$402 monthly allotment.

Careful spending is the key, she maintained. And she learned by surviving the Depression and rearing two children on a welfare budget she was forced onto because of constant physical problems.

"You've got to learn to either pay cash, or go without," she said without flinching. "You just can't go out and buy the most expensive toilet paper, or the most expensive cuts of meat. Even with a bad-ticker I feel good. Money doesn't do anything."

## Dorsey

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receiving any aid for which they may be eligible.

With 18,000 recipients in her files, Dorsey has few idle minutes.

Like a mail carrier making the rounds, Dorsey's job carries its share of occupational hazards. She has deflected off her share of growling dogs and snapping geese. She has deflected insults hurled by disgruntled recipients. And she has been chased by a cane-wielding man in a convalescent hospital.

On this particular day, she made the rounds at some run-down hotels. Many of these recipients are the unlucky ones. Unlike those who live in high-rise apartments for the elderly, these hotel residents receive no government housing subsidy.

They are often without stove, refrigerator or running water. Their rent for one room — without laundry or linen service — is \$130 a month. The maximum allotment they can receive is \$465.

Oblivious to the scene, Dorsey maintained steady eye contact with an 88-year-old recipient. As she does with all other Social Security holders, Dorsey whips through a series of questions — some of which appear ludicrous to those questioned — in an attempt to verify each person's eligibility.

A sampling: "Do you have a savings account? How much money do you have in your pocket? Do you plan to work in the coming year? Are you related to the hotel owner? Do you have a safety deposit box? Do you plan to leave the country during the next year?" And on and on.

The recipient snickered through most of the session, answering most questions with a simple "no." No, he has no wife; no, he has no money for emergencies; no, he has no plans to work in the coming year.

"I'm 88," the man interjected at one point. "Work is over for me."

Of the traditions of the high sea passage — initiation into the Seafarers' Ancient Order of the Deep — that those who cross the equator and veterans are transformed from Shellbacks. Three of the oldest living

## 70-Year-Old Subsist On So

neath the apartment door. The gait is uneven and the sound of each step is mechanical. When the door opens, tall, gaunt 70-year-old Lawrence Emmons peers out, leaning on his walker.

Emmons, who lives alone in a one-room capital-area apartment, is recovering from a fractured hip. He is anxiously awaiting the day he can put the walker in a corner and forget about it. He would also like to cast aside his financial woes, but says his monthly \$422 Social Security check won't let him.

"It's tough to get by on Social

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