

Rapist's reign of terror has Sacramento in a panic

By Dennis J. Opatrny
Examiner Capitol Bureau

SACRAMENTO — A rapist cursed with "inadequate endowment" has Sacramento suburbanites shivering in terror.

Some have formed vigilante-like groups to patrol their neighborhoods in pickups and four-wheel-drive vehicles equipped with CB radios.

Others have contributed money for a \$10,000 reward for his capture, while the Sacramento Bee posted an additional \$15,000 for information leading to his arrest and conviction.

Hardware stores' stocks of heavy-duty locks, burglar alarms and guns are nearly depleted by residents fortifying their homes.



SACRAMENTO RAPIST
A composite view

Many families began buying large, vicious dogs since word spread that none of the 23 victims owned such animals.

One woman, who could no longer endure the fear, met her husband at the door with packed suitcases and demanded they stay at a motel until the rapist is caught. They're still at the motel.

Single women are changing their patterns of behavior by departing and arriving home at different hours and inviting male friends to spend more time with them.

And despite the rising costs of energy nearly every house keeps its porch light on all night, while others are using or installing flood lights for backyards.

So far, none of the extreme or intense measures has paid off, except that some residents of East Sacramento are perhaps sleeping again.

Law enforcement agencies, trying to keep panic in the neighborhoods down and trust in them up, are running a controlled investigation and releasing selected bits of information.

They've asked local newspapers and radio and television stations not to speculate about the case or spread the rumors that inevitably arise.

Sacramento County Sheriff Duane Lowe, seldom bashful before TV cameras, has remained secluded.

Lowe turned over the job of keeping contact with the public through the news media to an assistant, Bill Miller, who has been patient, cooperative but at times reluctant to say too much.

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Lowe turned over the job of keeping contact with the public through the news media to an assistant, Bill Miller, who has been patient, cooperative but at times reluctant to say too much.

He feels that too much detail, particularly about how the rapist goes about his business, will only entice imitators and confuse the investigation.

But the reticence brings with it a rumor-mongering public that fears the worst and verbalizes its terror with whispered details about the rapist's modus operandi.

The widest-spread and most recurring rumor Miller has to deny is that mutilations occur during the rapes.

"I'll tell you right off," he said during an interview last week. "we have not withheld anything. There have been no mutilations.

"Our policy is to withhold information that would help the suspect," Miller added.

The rapist has operated in roughly a 10-mile corridor following the American River in unincorporated areas such as Citrus Heights, Orangevale, Carmichael and Fair Oaks, where most homes are owned by upper middle income wage earners.

Since his attacks have been concentrated in that part of the county, he has been dubbed the "East Area Rapist," but investigators don't know for sure whether he lives nearby, drives to his victim's homes, perhaps pedals a bike or walks.

He always wears a ski mask, but not the same one. He wears gloves. He strikes in the later evening or early morning hours.

He has the precision of a diamond cutter. Police and psychological experts are baffled as to his occupation because his planning indicates he targets his victims rather than selecting them at random.

A source close to one 19-year-old victim said the most disturbing element of the rape was that the man called her by her first name, yet she could not recognize the voice.

When the rapist last week threatened to kill a victim or her husband, Miller said the sheriff's office decided to issue a psychological profile and composite drawing of the suspect.

However, he was circumspect in explaining how a drawing could be made of a man's face so one presumably has seen without a ski mask.

Miller responded that because the rapist wears different masks that expose different parts of his face, various victims have contributed bits of description.

The one salient description by all victims, investigators stressed, was that the man possessed "inadequate endowment," which Sheriff Deputy Fred Reese later clarified as a "small penis."

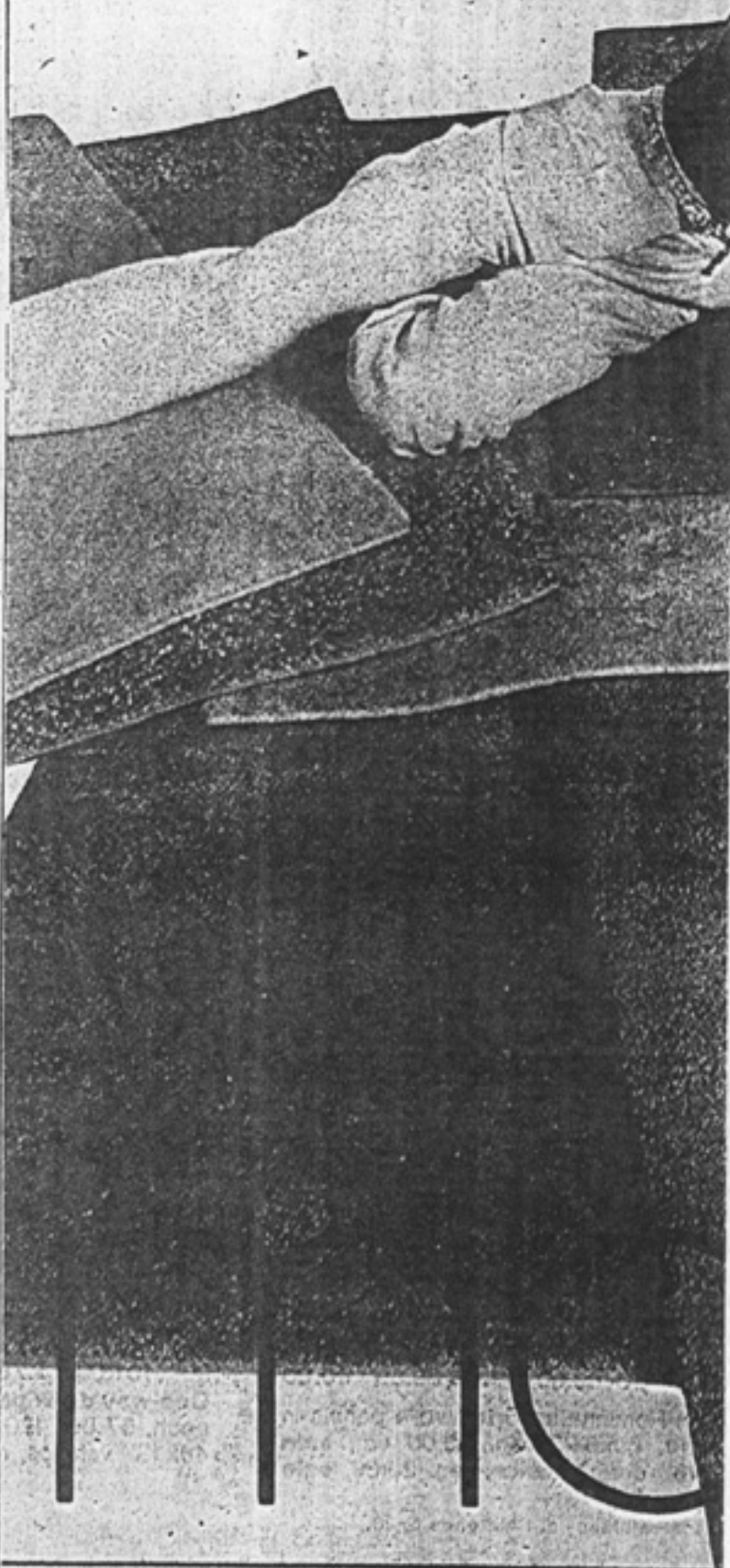
This, plus a psychological description of him as a "panic homosexual (one who fears being gay and acts out strenuously as a heterosexual to compensate) and a youngster raised by a "domineering" mother and "weak" father, were calculated announcements, Miller said.

"This may give us one of the keys that give us the man by his physical makeup," he said. "We're hoping there's some woman out there who'll be able to help us identify him with this information."

Additionally, some neighbor or relative may recognize a family with a son, mother and father who fit such a psychological pattern, he said.

Miller acknowledged that issuing such information, particularly the fact about the rapist's organ size, was a risk. It could trigger a frenzy of violent attacks or could embarrass him into seclusion.

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