

TERROR IN SACRAMENTO

5/22/78

“... Rape. The word soon preoccupied the psyches of Sacramento’s East Area residents. They bought guns. They triple-locked their doors . . .”

We will call her Marisa. A bright, vivacious woman in her late twenties. Marisa is attractive; there is a kind of wholesome, outdoorsy freshness about her. She’s tall, trim, well built. And she dresses well. Nothing particularly showy or fancy, but tasteful.

Her story begins on a cold, foggy Friday night. Being a divorcee, she was home alone with her two small children. Out of habit more than anything else, she made a quick bedtime check of all the doors. One of the kids had left the sliding glass door open. She locked it and went to sleep.

Like the majority of women in Sacramento’s upper-middle-class East Area, the possibility of rape, especially in her own home, seemed remote. “I never ever considered that I could be a victim,” she recalls.

By 2 A.M. Marisa found herself awake. She felt uneasy. She was wide awake now. She rolled her head over and glanced up. There he stood in her bedroom doorway—a face consisting only of dark slits in a ski mask; a gun pointed at her; a gleam of a butcher knife; a quick, terrifying glimpse.

For an instant, Marisa couldn’t put the pieces together. Her mind refused to believe what was happening.

The shock of his presence left her paralyzed. Within seconds the intruder was on top of her, the tip of the butcher knife pressing at her throat.

“Don’t move and don’t say a word, or I’ll blow your brains out. Do you hear me?”

“Yes, but . . .”

He cut off her words with his continuous threatening whisper. “Shut up!”

“What do you . . .”

“Shut up! Do you want your throat slit?”

“I don’t . . .”

“Shut up!”

He pressed the knife harder against her throat.

Quickly he tied her hands behind her back as she lay on her stomach. “I’m not going to hurt you. All I want is money.”

But his words did not reassure her. The thought passed through her mind that he could be the East Area Rapist—the “EAR,” they called him. She wasn’t sure though. He then began tying her

Marisa became increasingly confused—and frightened. But she tried not to show her fear. “At that point, I felt that if I let go with all the feelings and the fear that was inside of me, I would go totally nuts. That’s how strong the feeling was right then. I think I would have become hysterical.” Just hang in there, she kept repeating to herself, and it will be okay; it will be over soon.

But it was not over soon. He made a few brusque comments; it became apparent that he had followed her most of the day. Perhaps several days—or even weeks. He knew she had gone to a friend’s house that evening, that she worked a split shift on Fridays, her typical Friday schedule; he seemed to know it all.

He left the room for a while, and occasionally Marisa would hear sounds.

But for the most part, he was silent. She would wait. Minutes would pass.

Then he was there again, as silently as he had left. Another threat. Another jab of his knife in her back. He was gone. Again she would wait.

He soon returned, this time muttering to himself: “Now I have to blindfold you; if you see me, I’ll have to kill you,” almost as if he were reminding himself of the rules to a game.

He proceeded to wrap up almost her entire head. The wrap was so tight it flattened her nose, and the gag prevented her from breathing through her mouth. She started to panic. He put his hand in front of her nose. The panic grew; Marisa was sure he was suffocating her. Then she felt the opening under her nostrils had been enlarged. She was grateful for the air.

Soon after, Marisa began sizing him up. Something told her he was young, mid-twenties perhaps. Something told her he really didn’t want to hurt her. His



feet. If he is a rapist, why tie the feet? The murder scene from *In Cold Blood* flashed into her mind: The two men had carefully bound the victims before their slaughter. “I had no idea who he was, or what he really wanted,” Marisa recalls.

“Now don’t make a move,” he said in his rapid, monotone whisper, “or I’ll kill you—and everything in this house.”

The children. He knew he had this psychological edge. Until that moment her mind had been racing: How can I trick him? How can I get out of this? But as soon as he threatened the children, such risky thoughts disappeared.

He then tore up a towel and tried to gag her. Marisa resisted slightly. He quickly became agitated. “Do you want me to blow your brains out? I’ll kill everything in this house.” That constant reminder, plus the timbre of his voice, made her immediately obey.

“Do you want to die?” She started to answer his question, but as usual he abruptly interrupted: “Shut up!”

“... The rapist's next target was from one of East Area's wealthiest neighborhoods. Important people began ringing important phones...”

behavior was carefully controlled—almost programmed—as though he had to follow the plan as much as she did. But there was also a tension in him—not part of the plan—which, she felt, could explode into violence at a moment's notice.

He continued rifling through her drawers, closets, with almost a desperate sense of purpose. Though Marisa could not see his activity, she could hear his constant, frenetic search. “You must have more money than this,” he said, referring to the few bills she had in her purse. Again she felt the knife blade pressing firmly into her back. “No, that's all,” she mumbled through the gag. Her immediate thought: What if he kills me because I don't have enough money?

“If I find any more money around here, you're dead. Do you feel this butcher knife?” He pressed it harder until Marisa felt sure it would slip through her ribs.

Again he was gone.

Marisa waited, hoping at last he would leave. Please, please, don't come back.

“You moved. I'll slit your throat if you move again,” came the harsh

whisper through the darkness. He seemed on the edge of his control again. After feeling the secure bindings, however, he calmed down, sat on the foot of the bed, quickly flipping through a book. (Later Marisa learned he had taken out a picture from her photo album—a shot of her in a bikini. Weeks afterwards, she found it in the living room, tossed behind some furniture.)

His routine continued—in and out of the room, more threats, rummaging—for at least two and a half hours. By this time, Marisa was becoming physically and emotionally drained. He grabbed and flopped her over. He threw her over with such force she bounced off the bed. Completely helpless to brace the fall, she landed full-force on her head.

Quickly he threw her back onto the bed and untied her feet. With one strong pull, the nightgown was torn from her body. “You've seen that sort of thing in movies and on TV,” Marisa says, “but you can't imagine the terrible feeling

when it really happens.” In a minute it was over. She lay shivering in the early-morning chill. He said nothing. But after re-tying her feet, his routine of terror continued for about a half-hour more. Almost three hours in all.

After many minutes Marisa felt certain, at last, that he was gone. She braced herself against the bedpost, wiggled to her feet, and managed to slip the blindfold off using the top of the post. She stood there dazed and in shock.

Finally, she collapsed on the floor and waited. She was glad that somehow her young children had slept through it all.

When the pain of the bindings became almost more than she could bare, Marisa noticed a crack of sunlight. Slowly, painfully, she made her way to

at its peak.

Even law-enforcement officials, often laconic about such matters, concede the EAR has affected this area more than any other criminal in memory. “I don't think there has been any offense or series of offenses,” says Sergeant Jim Bevins, an EAR task-force detective, “that has generated more buying of [home] locks and handguns in Sacramento County.”

Indeed, Sacramento County residents purchased 5,000 more handguns in 1977 than in the previous year.

Locks and handguns, however, tell only part of the story. By late May 1977, after the EAR had struck seven times within seven weeks—23 times in all—many East Area residents had adopted a

state-of-seige mentality. More than 300 CB-ing citizens mobilized and began cruising the streets in an effort to help law officers. Utility meter-readers, early-morning joggers and newspaper boys quickly learned to proceed with caution in the jittery East Area.

And there were reports of all-night vigils; people sitting in their living rooms, rifles in their laps—watch-

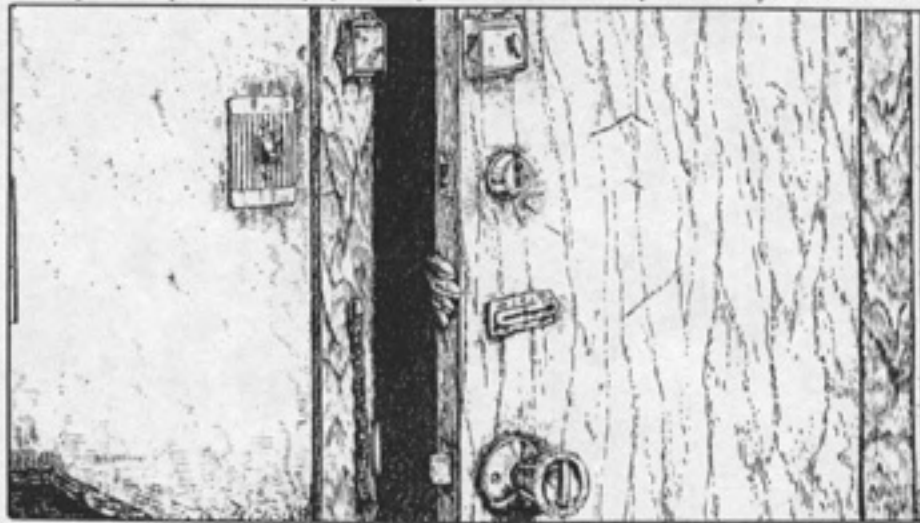
ing. “I almost blew my son away when he got up in the middle of the night,” remembers a resident. “It was a terrible period for us all.”

Some other residents reportedly slept with loaded .45s; at least one person slept with one loaded—in his hand.

To be sure, there have been other, more prolific rapists—even in Sacramento County. The so-called Early-Morning Rapist, who attacked at least 36 women over a several-year period ending in 1976—and was never caught—attracted little public attention. And there have been, of course, more sadistic rapists; the EAR, to date, has not killed or mutilated any of his victims.

So the question remains: Why did he attract so much attention? Why, at one point, were network TV news crews jetting into Sacramento to report on a profound panic the EAR had generated in a once sedate California community?

It began in September, 1976.



the front door. Trying to unlock it, Marisa realized her attacker had left it open. She gave it a push. Maybe he's still out there, watching? The thought made her hesitate. But almost immediately all the horror of the night overwhelmed her.

Uncontrollably, Marisa screamed.

Marisa is not one victim; she is several. Because of fear, no one victim wanted her story told. As one of them put it: “I'm afraid of him being out there. Talking about him like this, whether irrational or not, I keep thinking he knows. . . . Sometimes now, I'll be walking around at home . . . and I just wonder if somebody is out there—watching me.”

Thirty-three women. So far. Those are, at this writing, the East Area Rapist statistics. But this is not only a story of 33 victims; it is a story of a victimized community. Hysteria is not too strong a word to use to describe the mood here last spring, when the EAR activity was

Rumors were on the rise in Sacramento's East Area. Residents were hearing strange, sordid stories about a man who, in the past year, had been terrorizing and raping women in the middle of the night while they were alone in their homes. Shocking stuff for Sacramento's suburbia.

Rumors grew, as they so often do, to proportions well beyond fact. Scary rumors. People started scanning the local papers and turning on their dinnertime TV news, looking for something to deny or substantiate the stories. Nothing.

Why was the local press not covering it? A good question, many Sacramento reporters concede in retrospect. "We [the press] started hearing about the EAR in September of '76, from people calling us up," remembers a Sacramento newspaper reporter who has covered the case. "In fact, the wife of our editor had heard about it, because she lives out in that neighborhood, and people were really upset about it. So I called the Sacramento Sheriff's Department to ask about it."

Yes, the sheriff's department said, there had been four or five rapes in that area attributed to one man. But all the local news agencies were being asked to "please sit on it" for a while. The reason? Fulfilling the public's "right to know" in this case, the sheriff said, would only jeopardize the quiet operation they had going to catch the man. Press coverage, the sheriff's department felt, would only drive the rapist underground.

Looking back on it, some officials say they do not recall having asked local news agencies, in those early days, to withhold reports. But when asked, sheriff's assistant Bill Miller admits, "Yeah, we were able to keep a lid on it for a while. Once it was publicized, we knew he would spread out, and that's just what he did."

It is not that unusual for law enforcement agencies, in such circumstances, to ask local press to cooperate. Sometimes the papers do; sometimes they don't.

"Sure it bothered us not to report it," continues the newspaper reporter. "But you also don't want to blow the case for them. And at that time it wasn't that big a story."

Local press people agreed, then, to "sit on it." The sheriff's department quietly went about its operation. And

the EAR quietly raped four more women; three of the attacks were within a two-week period. Rumors went wild.

That was in October, 1976. To calm nerves, several unpublicized, informal gatherings with sheriff's deputies were held in the homes of some East Area neighborhoods. The homes were overflowing; people came to hear about the rapist. Still no press.

Some say the EAR knew what he was doing: He wanted headlines and knew how to get them, news blackout be damned. Unlike the Early-Morning Rapist, who attacked middle- to lower-income, usually single women and received scant attention—"I filed the stories," says a reporter. "But the editors just weren't interested in them"—the EAR generally chose a different kind of victim. In fact, his next target was from one of East Area's wealthiest sections, Del Dayo. Important people began ringing important phones. And, eventually,

which could not be ignored.

When it became publicly known, however, that there had been a news blackout, many interpreted that to be a validation of the horror stories; a crime spree so lurid it couldn't be reported. The blackout apparently provided fertile ground for the fear to grow.

"Looking back on it, I feel like a fool," admitted a local reporter. "We sat on this story for two months so they could catch this guy, who a year and a half later they still haven't caught."

Shortly after his activities hit the press, he struck again. Dramatic pause. Then again, in mid-December—his pace maximizing the build-up of tension.

Two more attacks in January, five days apart. By this time, many hardware stores' supplies of deadbolt locks and intricate burglar-alarm systems were depleted. Guns, too, disappeared from the shelves. ("People were just scrounging for them," remembers Diana Fligge,

a sporting-goods store owner. "We'd start to show them one and they'd say, 'I don't care what it looks like, just give it to me.'")

The East Area locked up tight—and waited.

In early February, the sheriff's department proudly displayed—like a trophy from The Great Hunt—a man they suspected as being the EAR. And the East Area slept better than it had for

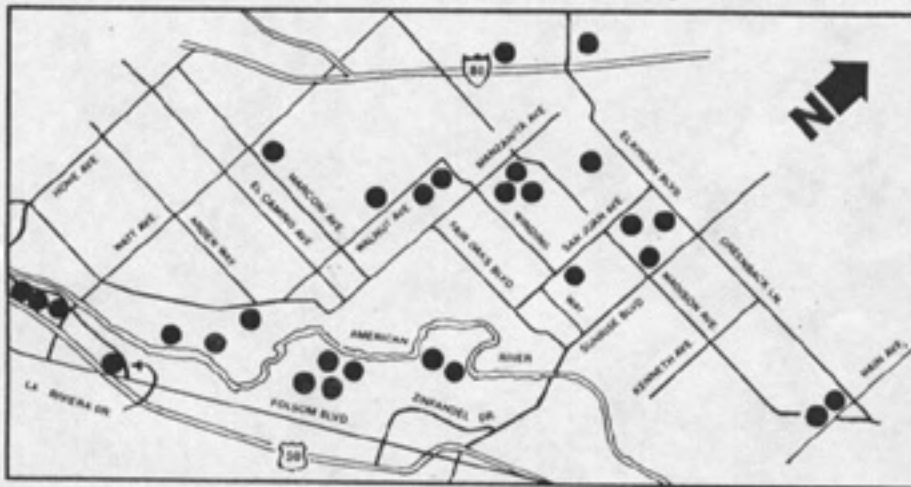
several months, only to wake up on February 7 and learn the EAR had struck again. Number fifteen (though months later authorities renumbered it thirteen). And then twice again in March.

Though some specific details of his MO varied with each case, it was basically always the same at this point: His victims were either single, or by almost uncanny coincidence, the husband happened to be away. Sometimes children and dogs were present. No matter. The EAR seemed to be unruffled by neither. He tied up the children or, more recently, just let them sleep. As for dogs, the EAR had been known to enter the home so quietly that, once in, the pets observed him with a quiet indifference. When confronted with noisy ones, he had managed to subdue them.

He almost always struck single-unit homes, rather than apartments where walls are thin.

His victims were never over 40.

Means of entry during his early at-



East Area: The rapist has struck where indicated. Four attacks were outside the map area.

local law-enforcement agencies had at least twenty full-time investigators assigned to the case, yet no such effort was made to catch the Early-Morning Rapist. "People with a little clout were saying, 'Hey, this is happening to our world,'" explains a sheriff's department source. "That's when it hits home . . . then we feel the pressure."

To be sure, the new rapist, unlike the Early-Morning Rapist, had guaranteed himself a prominent spot in the public eye. "There's a lot of money out in Del Dayo," observes another newspaper reporter. "Our editor lives out there. And, you know, when the EAR hit there, the shit hit the fan. That's when he took a personal interest in it. Then it became top news—front-page stuff."

Finally, after a public meeting attended by sheriff's deputies and several hundred panicky Del Dayo residents, local news agencies broke the blackout in early November. The hysteria in itself, they decided, was an important story

“... May, 1977. The worst time for the East Area. The rapist hit five times. An almost surreal atmosphere of panic pervaded the community . . .”

tacks was most often through an unlocked door or window, though at least some of his victims considered themselves generally cautious.

For added precaution, the EAR wore gloves and some kind of mask, usually a ski mask, though he was often astride the woman and had her blindfolded before she had a chance to look.

His first attack in April, 1977, was different: A man was with the victim. New twist to MO: He shined a flashlight in the faces of the sleeping couple, or used some other abrupt means to wake them up. The woman was ordered to tie up the man; then she was taken to another room, bound—usually to a chair—gagged and blindfolded. A couple of dishes were placed on the man's back, and he was told that if even the slightest rattle were heard, his wife, or “everything in the house,” would be dead. This was the basic pattern for thirteen subsequent attacks.

At this point the press became keenly aware of the EAR's sensitivity to its words. Many stories emphasized that he had not been hitting with men present.

Would a sick mind interpret this as a challenge? Perhaps. “That's what led the media to be really conscious of the effect we might have on him,” a reporter explains. “So we didn't want to taunt him in any kind of way. Of course, you don't want to appear like you're cooperating too much with the police; but no one wants to write a story which precipitates another attack. . . .”

May, 1977. The worst time for the East Area. An almost surreal atmosphere of panic pervaded the community.

The rapist hit five times. Two of the attacks were within 48 hours of each other. He became bolder during these attacks. More threatening.

On May 17, the fourth attack for that month, his bravado took a macabre twist: He told his victim he would kill two people on his next foray if he heard any mention of this attack in the press. To the husband, however, he contradicted himself and said he would kill if he did *not* make headlines.

The sheriff's response, after only hearing the woman's report, was to ask local news agencies to withhold the

murder-threat reports. Later, after hearing the husband's account, a news conference was called. Officials had decided to show some of their cards: They said that the EAR, according to victims' reports, possessed inadequate endowment (read: small penis); this, they believed, had put him in a homosexual panic (read: one who fears being gay and, therefore, performs desperate acts to compensate). Moreover, he was probably a paranoid schizophrenic, raised by a domineering mother and a weak father, in a middle- to upper-middle-class home.

Also, for the first time, the sheriff's department released its artist's conception of the rapist.

As it happened, this sudden openness by the sheriff's department came at a time when the public wanted—desperately needed—reassurance through hard evidence to show that the department was doing its job, and they pressured both the press and the sheriff's department to give it to them. The department (and the press) obliged: small penis, homosexual panic, a recognizable por-

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trait. Great stuff. And, for the time, they placated a demanding public.

Only later, months later, when panic had subsided, did the public learn some—but not all—of the facts behind those earlier "facts." The "sexually under-endowed" pronouncement was almost jokingly dismissed by Detective Carol Daly at a public meeting: "After talking with sources at the office, I understand that he [the EAR] is average." So much, too, she conceded, for the homosexual panic theory.

And what about the rest of the psychological profile? One does not have to study beyond Psychology 1A to know it is the standard, vague paranoid schizophrenic line tacked under most sketches of a rapist-at-large. Always the mealy-mouthed dad; always the castrating mom. Was it partly a gambit to taunt the EAR by poking at psychological sore spots which would fluster him into becoming careless? Several informed sources say this was part of it. When asked, however, Bevins would not say. "We [Bevins and Daly] had nothing to do with the release of that information," he declared flatly. "And we do not stand behind the release of it."

As for the artist's conception of the EAR, often loosely referred to as a "composite," the department has not publicly said what has been known for some time: "That picture is worthless," admitted Miller, whose office was responsible for issuing that piece of information. "Well, let me change that," he later added. "It's more for elimination purposes and not for identification."

Why? Because no one has ever seen the EAR without his mask on; and only one victim was able to catch a glimpse of his features through the mask's holes.

General data that had been released earlier had described him as a white male, nineteen to 30 years old, and five feet, eight inches to five feet, ten inches tall.

The sheriff's department switchboard was ablaze; by evening more than 5,500 calls had come through—3,000 more than usual. And nearly everyone, it seemed, "knew" him.

The majority of the calls, as expected, proved fruitless. Then, too, a few women called reporting that they had been raped and described the attacks exactly as publicized by the press. Sick women. Lonely women. But all reports and possible leads had to be investigated nonetheless, thus adding hundreds of extra man-hours to investigators' work.

The night of May 18 people across the nation could turn on their evening news and hear about Sacramento's EAR. Few East Area residents slept soundly. Neighborhoods were lit up like midday; all patrols were massively beefed up; the incessant

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"... 'Thank God he's moved to Stockton' could be heard everywhere—except in Stockton . . ."

staccato of a surveillance helicopter constantly reminded residents of the incubus threatening a tense, weary community. Finally morning came, and the news was good: The EAR had not struck.

Fear and anger then spilled over into an unprecedented community response: Two local businessmen formed the grassroots EARS Patrol. More than 300 men attended a mass rally and, with CBs and EARS-Patrol stickers on their cars, they began cruising the streets. Though patrol leaders said all volunteers were screened to ensure that no one was carrying a gun, some people called the group "crazy, CB-ing vigilantes," and dismissed them as merely "bounty hunters"; the publicized reward, by this time, was up to \$25,000.

For eleven days, the EAR was inactive. But sheriff's department deputies, police and highway patrolmen continued to spend hundreds of off-duty hours keeping watch, thus prompting Police Chief Jack Kearns to say: "It's the first time in 21 years I've seen so many policemen dedicated to a case on their own time."

May 28, another attack. This time, some said, there was a message in his method: He struck in south Sacramento, many miles from the East Area, and only a few blocks from the most prominent EARS Patrol-leader's office. "He knew where he was hitting," sheriff's assistant Miller believes. Says another observer: "Personally, I think the EAR was laughing himself silly over the EARS Patrol."

That attack for many, however, had deeper, more distressing import: The community was helpless to stop him. Here, with all-out efforts of the law-enforcement agencies, citizens were still not protected.

Some felt it was time to seek help from powers beyond. The week of June 12 became a citywide convocation "imploping our God to rid Sacramento of the terror and anxiety of the EAR," said the Reverend Franklin Stover, the EARS Patrol's spiritual shepherd, in an unprecedented plea. Mainly, he explained they were praying for the attacks to stop, "preferably by reason of conversion and salvation of the rapist." Countless residents prayed. And fast. By the end of summer, believers felt a sense of deliverance; the EAR had not attacked for more than three months.

The community began to forget.

Something changed after the summer of 1977. Panic eased. When the EAR reappeared then, in early September,

there was interest, but not hysteria. Perhaps because he hit in Stockton, a predominantly agricultural community some 40 miles south of Sacramento. "Thank God, he's moved to Stockton," could be heard everywhere—except in Stockton.

Even in October when he returned to his namesake's locale and struck three times, then once each month through January of this year, it was only a few news notches above ho-hum. "We've handled it differently recently," says a reporter. "There's a boredom that sets in. Also, there's a level of numbness. At first every woman thought, 'I'm going to be the next victim.' Then they weren't. So after a while, they started to realize that the odds were pretty slim that they would be attacked."

During this time, T-shirts (à la Son of Sam in New York) displaying the sheriff's department's sketch of the EAR were seen on a few East Areaans, with "Help us get him before he gets you" emblazoned on them. But Sacramento is not New York; sales were bad. The two college men who started the business eventually had to fold up their shirts.

No one is suggesting that another law-enforcement agency would fare any better. Statistically, multiple-rape cases are tough to crack. According to the FBI, rape has the second lowest clearance rate, or number of arrests made, in the field of violent crime. (In 1977, only 49 percent of the 184 reported rapes in Sacramento County were listed as cleared.)

Reason: A majority of crimes are solved either by clues left on the scene—blood, fingerprints, a weapon—or tips from people; criminals tend to brag. Fencing stolen items also helps in tracking down the crook.

Unless the woman knows her attacker or gets a good look at him, cops are left with little to go on. Rapists, unlike murderers, generally leave behind few clues. And usually there are no items to fence. As for tips, rarely does a man brag about a rape. The police can have task forces and covert operations, but actually apprehending a multiple rapist usually hinges on the rapist's own eventual blunder.

Yet cops are intrigued by the EAR; he always manages, they say, to keep his bases covered. "For this guy to keep going so long," says a police source, "with so many people after him, he's got to be smart. I've got to give him credit, and I think a lot of guys talking candidly

would say the same thing."

The EAR apparently knows how cops think, which makes many of them speculate privately that he must have had some military-police or law-enforcement training. For public comment, however, Sergeant Bevins was more circumspect, though he does concede the EAR "has knowledge and skills beyond the average rapist." Are law officers awed by his slick MO? Bevins responded carefully: "Let's say we're awed that we haven't been able to catch him. But I also feel he's been very lucky."

The EAR's recent attacks after a six-week hiatus may indicate he is again jockeying for attention, that large spot on the front page. And given his seeming potential, he just may succeed.

The sheriff's department has again asked local news agencies to cooperate by down-playing EAR stories and "they are cooperating very well," observes Bevins.

It's fairly safe to say that every major crime or crime wave has a political angle to it; the EAR case is no exception. And since the sheriff is an elected official, his department, understandably, has a heightened sensitivity to public image. Moreover, Sheriff Duane Lowe, a burly, no-nonsense, unusually voluble man who is up for re-election this June—his third term—has been conspicuously silent on the case. Miller dismisses the silence as typical for any ongoing rape investigation because "things might come out that are detrimental to the case." He says it is his, not Lowe's, responsibility to disseminate information to the press and public.

But others say a case as notorious as the EAR case, which remains unsolved, doesn't sit well with the public; and Lowe does not want to be the one to remind them of it.

"There's a joke around the office," says a sheriff's department source, "that if the EAR isn't caught before the election, he [Lowe] won't be re-elected."

The sheriff is running unopposed.

In fact, the task-force approach itself has political overtones. When the sheriff's department has a major case, or the public perceives it to be major, then an ad hoc task force is set up, pulling top detectives from other crime details. "To get the guy and be successful," explains a sheriff's department source, "you've got to get the manpower together. But, also, where there's such public interest, you've got to put on a show. Well, how shall I put it? Let's just say there's a little more public relations in this case than usual."

But has the sheriff's department gotten anywhere? No one knows. Yet, no one will deny the fact that it has made a herculean effort. It is estimated

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For Reservations: 931-1030
Dinner 5:30-11:00
Supper 11:00-12:00

“... But has the sheriff's department gotten anywhere in all this time? No one knows...”

that in 1977 there were more than 100,000 man-hours donated to the case by law officers on their own time.

Even the FBI and state Department of Justice (as well as numerous parapsychologists) have contributed their expertise.

But with all the analyzing and strategizing, the quietly known fact remains that reportedly, at least three times, the EAR has almost run out of luck. And that, law-enforcement sources say, is the break the task force is counting on.

The near-misses were painfully close: A woman was home alone with her young son. In the middle of the night the boy opened their sliding glass door to the backyard to let out their dog. Standing there, masked, was the EAR. The boy yelled to his mother. She picked up the phone by her bed and dialed the operator. It rang. And rang—countless times. But before anyone answered, the EAR had taken the phone out of her hand.

Another time a woman saw a man prowling around the house next door. She immediately made sure her own home was well secured, but didn't report it because she knew the neighbors were away. The rapist, however, apparently knew something the woman didn't know. The neighbors *did* return that night, only to be greeted by the EAR.

Then, too, another couple was asleep, when the man awoke, thinking he had heard a noise. He reached for a gun near the bed, then decided it was nothing and turned over to go back to sleep. Minutes later, the EAR was upon them.

So what is actually known about the EAR? Predictably, the purveyors of popular culture are asking the same question; already a Hollywood film producer is reportedly looking into movie prospects, while a large New York publishing house also has designs to profit from the subject. Undoubtedly, the rapist will be glamorized far beyond fact. Yet, the unglamorized facts are, perhaps, more telling.

There is a good possibility, sheriff's department sources say, that the EAR functions in some public capacity: a salesman, utilities man, public servant or the like. Not one of those fringe types. Several informed sources have pointed to another theory: There is strong evidence that the EAR is a part- or full-time Cal State University, Sacramento, student or faculty member. His attack dates seem to consistently coincide with CSUS sessions, often hitting just before or after school-vacation periods; more-

over, the areas he's hit the hardest are all along or very near the main access routes to the campus. He must be someone who is not suspect when he goes into these neighborhoods, because, in many cases, it is apparent that he has cased the homes, and there is strong evidence that he has even entered some of them beforehand. At least some victims reportedly have noticed a picture of themselves missing a couple of days, or weeks, before their attack. And, too, somehow he knows which homes have dogs he need not worry about, which room is the master bedroom, who is and is not at home... all things which point to a cool, methodical man.

The EAR also frequently chooses homes near an empty lot or open space: easy access for escape. In fact, several sources say that perhaps the EAR jogs to and from the scene, and perhaps has a car several blocks away. There is no question of his athletic prowess. He has managed to scale fences, a balcony and other obstacles with quiet ease.

What does all this say about him? “He's not crazy,” asserts a victim. “And the way he talks isn't strange, if you want to scare someone. He knows a lot about people, how they feel inside, and how they are going to react.”

There have even been moments—though very few—when he has shown a hint of human concern. One victim said he softly rubbed her tied, swollen fingers before leaving. In another, he tried consoling the woman's child as he tied up the crying girl. “It was almost like he was apologizing for what he was doing. It was strange,” recalls the victim.

The paradox, victims have said, is although his activity is strange, he seems “so normal”; though his hostility is intense, he is not an incoherent psychotic. “If anybody wanted to reach a goal,” a victim believes, “. . . and they went about it the same way he did, they would make it. He just has everything so well planned and well thought out. . . . It's a good plan to achieve any kind of goal. It's just that his goal is a bit weird.”

It all helps explain much of the reason why this man has captured the imagination and has panicked—even intrigued—so many people. He is not an aberration in the community; he is undoubtedly an accepted member of it.

“When this guy's caught,” concludes a sheriff's department source, “he's going to be someone's next-door neighbor. John Q. Smith, who, you know, probably goes to church on Sundays. . . . It's going to shock everybody.”