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Gruesome Details On Tape At Trial

BY TOM HONIG

— Sentinel Staff Writer

"When I walked into the courtroom I could just feel the tension."

So remarked Asst. Dist. Atty. John Bohrer after Wednesday afternoon's session of the Edmund Kemper murder trial. Bohrer, who attended the court session as an observer, was one of dozens of spectators who sat silently and listened to a tape-recorded conversation between Kemper and lawmen in which the defendant outlined six cold murders in gruesome, explicit detail.

As Kemper's tape recorded voice droned on, telling investigators exactly how he killed six young women since May of 1972, not a whisper emerged from the spectator section of the courtroom. Some sat

with mouths agape; others remained rigid, one or both arms supporting their heads. One young woman was unable to keep an occasional tear from running down her cheek.

Kemper's description began with the Anita Luchessa and Mary Ann Pesce slayings on May 7, 1972. "I asked them a few questions and determined to my satisfaction that they were not familiar with the area," he began.

"I didn't really make much of an effort to deceive them because they were terribly naive."

From that point, Kemper detailed the kidnapping and finally the stabbing of the two victims.

(At this point, the reader should be cautioned that several

gruesome details follow.)

He remembered every detail of the crimes, as well as accurate physical descriptions of the young women. Referring to Miss Pesce, he said, "I was really quite struck with her personality and looks and there was almost a reverence there."

"I heard one news comment that she was a Camarillo girl, so I went down to L.A. (after the slaying) and checked out Camarillo and only found one Pesce in the phone book and that was a Gabriel Pesce. (So I) went up by that neighborhood, in fact right by the house."

Miss Pesce and her companion were beheaded and discarded in the Loma Prieta area, according to the tape.

The next victim was 15-year-old Aiko Koo of Berkeley. "That was the first time I ever dissected a body and that was then, after I had broken my arm and that was why I did it, because I couldn't carry her all the way."

Part of her body was disposed of in Alameda County, and part above Boulder Creek, Kemper indicated. He said he killed her by taping her mouth closed and then pinching her nostrils. "She was sexually assaulted after death," he added.

This murder occurred on Sept. 14, 1972, Kemper said. "Two days later, I had two psychiatrists examinations to get my juvenile record sealed." Listed on his juvenile record was the fact that he had killed his grandparents when he was 15.

"Cynthia Schall was the next one," Kemper went on. "That happened the night I bought a .22 Ruger automatic pistol with a six inch barrel. And that night I killed her. Not so much to celebrate, but I had been eagerly awaiting that gun."

He said he bought the gun at Valley Sport shop in Watsonville.

He picked up Miss Schall on

Nixon Watergate Conference Off

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Nixon, preoccupied with developments in the Middle East, postponed today until sometime Friday a television-radio news conference that had been scheduled for tonight.

Deputy Press Secretary Gerald L. Warren said Nixon was concentrating so thoroughly on the Middle East crisis that he decided to postpone the session scheduled for 9 p.m. EDT. No time was set for the Friday news conference.

Nixon had been certain to face questioning about the possible appointment of a new special prosecutor to succeed the ousted Archibald Cox, particularly in view of his reversal of a weekend stand against surrendering White House tapes to U.S. District Judge John J. Sirica.

Nixon, it was understood, did

not want to hold the scheduled news conference today because he did not want to be fielding Watergate-related questions at a session that could well have been dominated by concern about developments in the Middle East.

Strong bipartisan support has developed in Congress for the naming of another prosecutor who would be independent of the executive branch. And Acting Atty. Gen. Robert H. Bork, who fired Cox at Nixon's order, told newsmen Tuesday the thought "has crossed my mind" that he should consider making such an appointment.

Bork, who had been solicitor general, became acting attorney general when Elliot L. Richardson resigned, and his deputy, William D. Ruckelshaus, was fired. Both refused to fire Cox.

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Gruesome Slaying Details Revealed At Kemper Trial

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Mission Street. "In that vicinity, I had been up cruising around the campus and I'd picked up three different girls, two of them together, that were possibilities, but I canceled those out because there were too many people standing around that possibly knew them when they got in. But all the other conditions were perfect. It had been drizzling, it had been raining real hard and people were getting any ride they could get and windows were fogging up... But I had given up on those other two and I was kind of uptight about it and driving down the street I spotted her standing out there with her thumb out."

The young woman with her thumb out was Cynthia Schall. After driving her to the Watsonville area, he forced her to get in the trunk. Later, near Corralitos, he shot her.

He took her to his mother's house in Aptos and dumped her in the closet. He dismembered her in the bathtub the next morning, after having sexual intercourse with her.

He discarded her clothing in an Alameda laundromat, putting them into a dryer and putting in "about four dimes worth and (putting) it on full hot, figuring it would ruin the coat."

The next killings involved two UCSC coeds, Rosalind Thorpe and Alice Liu. "That was the fifth of February and I'm not really sharp on the time," said Kemper.

He said it was around 8:30 p.m. when he picked up Rosalind Thorpe, who was hitchhiking around Merrill College. A short time later, with Miss Thorpe in the car, Kemper picked up Miss Liu.

"I noticed Miss Liu standing on the side. She saw us coming, threw out a big beautiful smile and stuck her thumb out very hopefully... I imagine she was a cautious hitchhiker and she always made sure of her ride before she got in, and we appeared to be a couple (Kemper and Miss Thorpe) and with that "A" tag on there, and a man and a woman, she didn't hesitate at all about getting in." (The

"A" tag refers to a UCSC parking sticker which Kemper's mother, an employee at the university, gave to her son.)

"I was mad that night," he said. "My mother and I had had a real tiff... I told her I was going to a movie and I jumped up and went straight up to the campus 'cause it was still early. I said the first girl that's halfway decent that I pick, I'm gonna blow her brains out. As it was, I improvised, it was two in a perfect situation."

While on the straight section of road overlooking the city of Santa Cruz, still on UCSC property, Kemper shot the young women. He dismembered their bodies, dumping their torsos in Alameda County, their heads in Pacifica.

After she was shot, Miss Lui was sexually molested, said Kemper.

Today, the tape recording continued, with Kemper's voice relating how and why he killed his mother and her best friend. "The murders were coming to a head. I felt; that I was going to be caught pretty soon for the killing of these girls or I was going to blow up and do something very open and get myself caught. I did not want my mother to know."

He said he hit her in the head with a hammer and slit her throat. Authorities found her a few days later, beheaded and her hand severed.

As for his mother's friend, Mrs. Sara Hallett, Kemper said he had to kill a friend of his mother's "as an excuse." In other words, Kemper said he had to provide a reasonable story for friends of his mother's to explain her absence. If she were away with a friend, Kemper reasoned, nobody would be concerned about her absence.

Kemper for the most part remained impassive throughout the playing of the tape. Late this morning, his attorney, Jim Jackson, hurriedly asked Judge Harry Brauer for a recess when Kemper became agitated. Reportedly, a woman in the spectator section, in an apparent attempt to upset the defendant,

moved her finger across her throat in a slashing motion.

Before the tape was played Wednesday, Kemper requested that he be removed from court, a request that was denied by Brauer.

On the tape, which was prepared less than a week following his arrest, Kemper showed concern about the ultimate playing of the tapes in open court. "It's an awfully touchy subject, you know, what happened and what didn't happen... Still, it's going to be awfully terrible for the family to have to listen to just because they are in court, you know. 'Cause I've heard of things like where certain tapes are played just in front of the judge or just in front of the jury as evidence, rather than just play it in front of the whole court... That starts to look like a whole arena, you know, and everybody is in there to hear all the gory details. That would get me very upset and I'd probably ask to leave the court. The judge would say 'No, you're going to sit there and listen.' Then I'd start throwing chairs and having a fit, scream on the floor and all that stuff."

Judge Removed By High Court

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—The California Supreme Court today, for the first time in its history, ordered a judge removed from the bench—Los Angeles Municipal Court Judge Leland W. Geiler.

He was ordered discharged from office for "willful misconduct in office and conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice that brings the judicial office in to disrepute."

The order, which is effective immediately, notes that Geiler's conduct does not amount to moral turpitude, dishonesty or corruption, and thus he will be permitted to practice law if otherwise qualified.

Mystery Surrounds S.J. Plane Crash

SAN JOSE (AP)—Four persons were killed and thousands of dollars in money scattered over the ground in the crash of a light plane here early today, authorities say.

Police said the victims were three adults and an infant, but their identities were not released.

Officers at the scene said they picked \$5,000 in paper bills off the ground and found a small cash box in the wreckage. They declined to speculate why the pilot might be carrying such a huge sum.

The aircraft, a Beechcraft Bonanza, crashed shortly after 3 a.m. in a field near Capitol Expressway and Vista Park Rd in southwest San Jose, police said. A wing was discovered on a

rooftop about 1,000 feet away. It caused no damage.

Air controllers said the pilot was attempting an instrument landing in low overcast and drizzle when it crashed about an equal distance from both Reid-Hillview and San Jose Municipal airports. Controllers said their last communication with the pilot was routine.

Controller said the pilot had been in contact with Red Bluff Airport, asking San Jose weather. He proceeded to San Jose under visual flight rules, then was cleared to land on runway 3-left under instrument rules, possibly in an attempt to get under some clouds. During his landing approach contact with San Jose tower was broken and the crash followed.