

# ✓ *Capitola Mall Murder* Tragic end for a 'super person'

## Capitola murder victim just wanted to live an independent, no-fuss life

By STEVE PEREZ  
Sentinel staff writer

*9-2-90*  
SANTA CRUZ — Emily Shaw was a private person who wanted no public notice of her passing.

But the way the energetic and well-dressed 78-year-old woman died — at the hands of an apparent stranger bent on robbery last Monday in the parking lot of the Capitola Mall — made that virtually impossible.

As the search for her as-yet-unidentified killer continues, family and friends remember Emily Shaw as an independent, yet cautious,

person.

Self-sufficient, sweet, active, elegant, efficient, yet also somewhat of a loner. Those are the words people used when asked to describe her.

"She wouldn't hurt a fly, she was just a super person," said Frank Lima, a resident of Villa Nueva on Dakota Street where Shaw lived for the last 16 years.

It would have been difficult for Emily Shaw to hurt someone if she had wanted to. No more than 5 feet tall, she was getting to be quite frail because of her age. Her head and hands trembled slightly be-

cause of the onset of Parkinson's disease a few years ago, friends said.

Neighbors recalled her as active on the Villa's board of directors years ago and someone who was always willing to help.

On March 17, Shaw cooked all the corned beef and cabbage for the Villa's Irish dinner.

Her daughter, Ann Haber of Santa Cruz, described Shaw as a dotting grandmother and independent woman who made it plain several times, in writing, that no fuss be made when she died, despite her having been a Santa Cruz resident

since 1960.

"I have mixed feelings about this," she said, when contacted by a reporter for this story. "Even though my mother was an outgoing person, in fact, in her written and verbal statements (about her funeral arrangements), she specifically requested that no obituary be put in the paper and no mention of services be made.

"And I accept that, I grew up with this and have a lot of respect for her desires."

But, Haber said, she also realized her mother was well known by those who lived in the 48-unit,

high-rise condominium complex — the sort of place where everyone knows and looks out for everyone else.

Haber also said she appreciated the outpouring of sympathy from both those who knew her and outraged strangers who have also come forward with clues and descriptions of the suspect.

Because she was a widower — her husband, Dr. Arthur Septimus Shaw, died in 1967 — and independent, police seeking to reconstruct the last hours of her life said they were were at somewhat of a loss.

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**Emily Shaw**

Her murderer is still at large

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Her daughter was her only local surviving relative. One sister lives in Lathrop, the other Los Angeles. Capitola Police Chief Donald Branton said no one who knew her well saw her on Monday.

"Apparently she was a very self-sufficient senior," he said.

It wasn't until Wednesday — two full days after her highly publicized murder — that they learned the woman had exchanged jewelry at Gottschalks one or two hours before she was found by passersby being held by an apparent stranger around 3:15 p.m.

The well-dressed young man, struggling to place the Shaw in the back seat of her Honda, declined assistance when asked if she needed medical attention.

Described as 18- to 21-years-old, 6 feet, 1 inch tall, 165 pounds, with blond hair and blue eyes, the suspect ran away and has thus far frustrated law enforcement authorities in their attempts to locate him, despite a full-scale search immediately following the attack.

Police are calling it a "crime of opportunity."

Investigators believe the young man waited in the lower level of a parking structure that was within plain view of the Gottschalks entrance for some time, looking for someone to rob when no one was watching.

She probably did not even see her attacker, police said.

Emily Shaw never made it to a planned dinner at her daughter's home that evening, dying at Dominican Hospital without ever regaining consciousness after a single blow to the back of her head with a blunt object.

Elsie Agrella, 75, an 11-year Villa Nueva resident, may have been among the last friends to talk to Shaw when she paid a visit to the woman's sixth-floor home Sunday afternoon.

"I came in to find out how she was feeling," Agrella said, explaining Shaw had declined an invitation to visit earlier in the week because of severe migraine headaches.

The two shared a common interest in sewing, Agrella said, so she sat in the living room of her neighbor's well-furnished apartment and made small talk while Shaw worked on a dress on the kitchen table.

"We were talking about sewing," she said. "She was very concerned about the awful headaches she's been getting and was talking about going to the doctor."

Earlier Sunday, Shaw had gone to Twin Lakes Baptist Church in Aptos and after a mid-morning service, to lunch with some friends.

Marilyn Jordahl, a church office

## ✓ Police narrowing down leads, names

By TOM LONG  
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9-2-90

CAPITOLA — Investigators here have interviewed more than a dozen witnesses who saw a man suspected of robbing and murdering a 78-year-old woman in the Capitola Mall parking lot Monday afternoon.

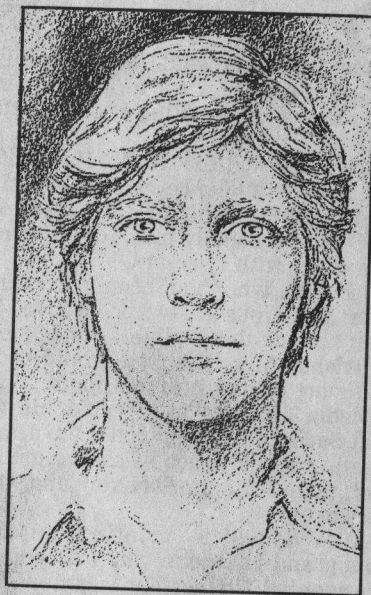
All the witnesses say they saw the suspect, described as 18 to 21 years old, either before or after the apparent attack on Emily Shaw, a Santa Cruz grandmother who had been shopping in Gottschalks Department Store.

"Unfortunately nobody saw the attack itself," said Capitola Police Chief Don Branton.

Branton said his force is working overtime through the weekend on the case. "We've got more than 100 names we've sifted through," Branton said. "We've got a couple of hot leads we're pursuing. We're narrowing it down."

Branton said there is very little disagreement as to the man's description among the witnesses, some of whom saw him trying to put Shaw into the back seat of her Honda Civic. The suspect is listed as 6 feet, 1 inch tall, 165 pounds, with blond hair and blue eyes.

According to Branton, evidence found in Shaw's car is being examined by the Department of Justice and the results are due next week. "They took



New sketch of suspect

the evidence to Sacramento where they can do some sophisticated tests," Branton said.

Shaw had apparently been beaten over the head with a piece of wood, according to investigators, and the suspect fled the parking lot after being seen. Shaw's purse has not been found and investigators say that since some witnesses saw the man hanging around the parking lot before he was seen with Shaw they suspect he was waiting for a robbery victim.

worker, remembered her as a faithful church goer, active in the church seniors group "Keenagers," women's ministries, and other church functions.

"She was a very sweet woman. Everybody loved her," she said. "Everyone is very shocked over this, and hurt because they did love her so much."

A memorial fund for the church's mission programs has been set up in Shaw's name, Jordahl said.

Agrella learned Shaw had died from someone in the Villa who had been contacted by Dominican Hospital Monday night looking for a way to reach Shaw's daughter. However, she told no one else in the complex until seeing it in the newspaper the next day.

"We all feel the loss, greatly," she said. "Just to see her empty parking space every day now is sad after all these years."

Shaw was a devoted grandmother, taking Haber's 12-year-old daughter on outings and Villa get-

togethers.

"She was a wonderful grandmother," Agrella said. "I'm a grandmother, too, and I often thought as I watched them together that I liked what she did. She took her to the park, kept her overnight and did all those things, and I'm sure she taught that granddaughter a lot."

Haber said her daughter is taking Shaw's death well but declined to give her name.

"They always spent a lot of time together. They were real friends," she said. "She (her daughter) always called her, her favorite girl."

Haber said that despite her mother's wish for privacy in death, she is hopeful people can learn from the tragedy, hopeful that people, no matter how cautious they believe they already are, will realize even well-dressed young men can do harm to the unwary.

She is also hopeful that people will remember her mother more for the way she lived, not the way she died.