

Kemper Friends React In Shocked Disbelief

Kemper, Edmund

FRIENDS of confessed slayer Edmund Kemper, 24, streamed into the sheriff's department Tuesday to tell detectives of their disbelief that their 6-foot-9, 280 pound friend could be involved with the two latest Santa Cruz area murders.

Many of the nearly 20 friends who talked to detectives were aware that nine years ago Kemper confessed to killing his grandparents in North Folk, Calif.

Records indicate that in 1965, Kemper admitted shooting his grandmother as she was sitting at her typewriter and also stabbing her with a kitchen knife.

When his grandfather came upon the scene, Kemper said he shot him in the back of the head. He then reported the crimes to the local sheriff.

One friend interviewed by authorities Tuesday said Kemper "wasn't proud" of the killings, but he wanted to let people know what was in his past.

Following the murder confession, the 15-year-old Kemper was sent to Atascadero State Mental Hospital, where he remained through 1970, authorities said. After his release from there, he reportedly spent a couple months at the California Youth Authority.

In March of 1970, records show, he went to work as a laborer at the Green Giant Corporation in Watsonville. He lasted there a couple of months, and then jumped around to other labor jobs. Most recently,

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Kemper Friends Shocked

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He worked for the state division of highways in Alameda. Detectives said he was on a leave of absence because of an injury on the job.

The portrait of Kemper described to investigators

Tuesday showed the man as friendly and slow fused. "He never focused on violence," a good friend noted.

What Kemper did focus on was his long - time hobby, motorcycle riding. In connection with this interest, he expressed a desire to get into law enforcement, especially the highway patrol. But at 6 - 9, he was over the maximum height requirement.

His motorcycle riding did cause him some problems. In February of 1971, he filed suit in Santa Cruz Superior Court asking for damages which resulted from a motorcycle collision.

In the suit, he asked for \$45,000 in damages from Irene Moulton Withrow, for injuries sustained in a collision involving her car and his cycle in November of 1970.

Among other injuries, Kemper claimed he sustained a skull fracture and a concussion, which resulted in swelling and flushing of the face. He also complained of "giddiness at times."

The suit was settled out of court Dec. 9, 1971.

Another friend told sheriff's deputies he had spent much of last Saturday with Kemper. He said he met him about 11 a.m., and they spent the next few hours just "riding around."

They stopped briefly at Kemper's apartment at 609A Ord St. Kemper told his friend his mother was out shopping with a friend.

Then, Saturday night, the two

men met with other friends at the Jury Room bar on Ocean Street, where they stayed until after midnight.

"He seemed a little quieter than usual Saturday night," one man told investigators. But he added he didn't seem extremely upset about anything.

Sheriff Doug James reported Tuesday that the two slain women were killed prior to Sunday.

Kemper's friends reacted with further disbelief to reports coming out of Colorado that he claims he killed six women in the Santa Cruz area.

"To his friends knowledge," said an investigator, "not only wasn't he violent, he never picked up hitchhikers."

Friends also reported to detectives that Kemper has a fiancée living in Turlock, but her identity has not been established.

Judge To Rule On Wilder Suit

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other issue recently," said Judge Brauer. "If you read The Sentinel, you probably will see more articles on it than on any other issue. It was probably the most single important issue in the recent city council elections."

Swimmers Save Downed Pilots