

Santa Cruz Sen

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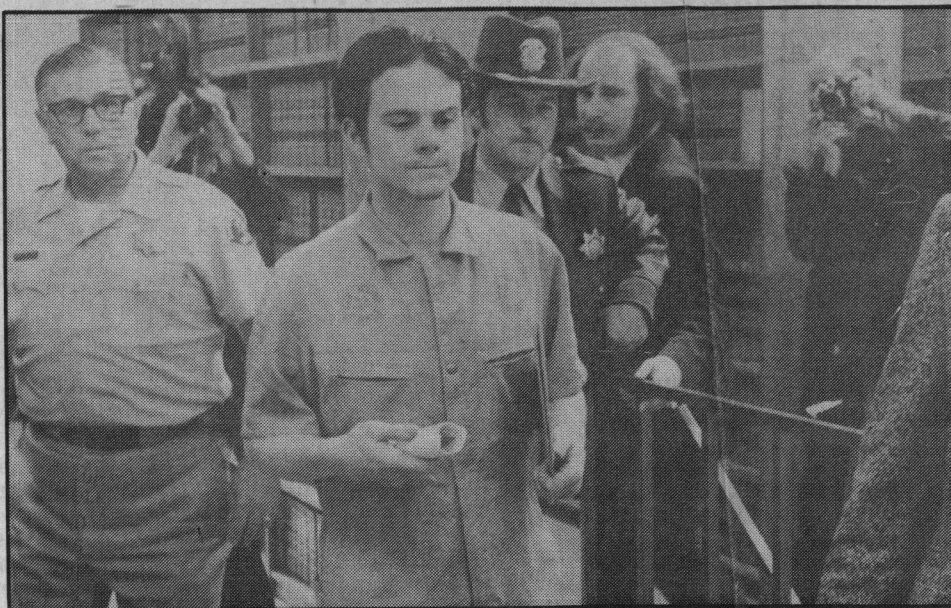
Monday, May 13, 1991

Santa Cruz, Calif.

A time of terror

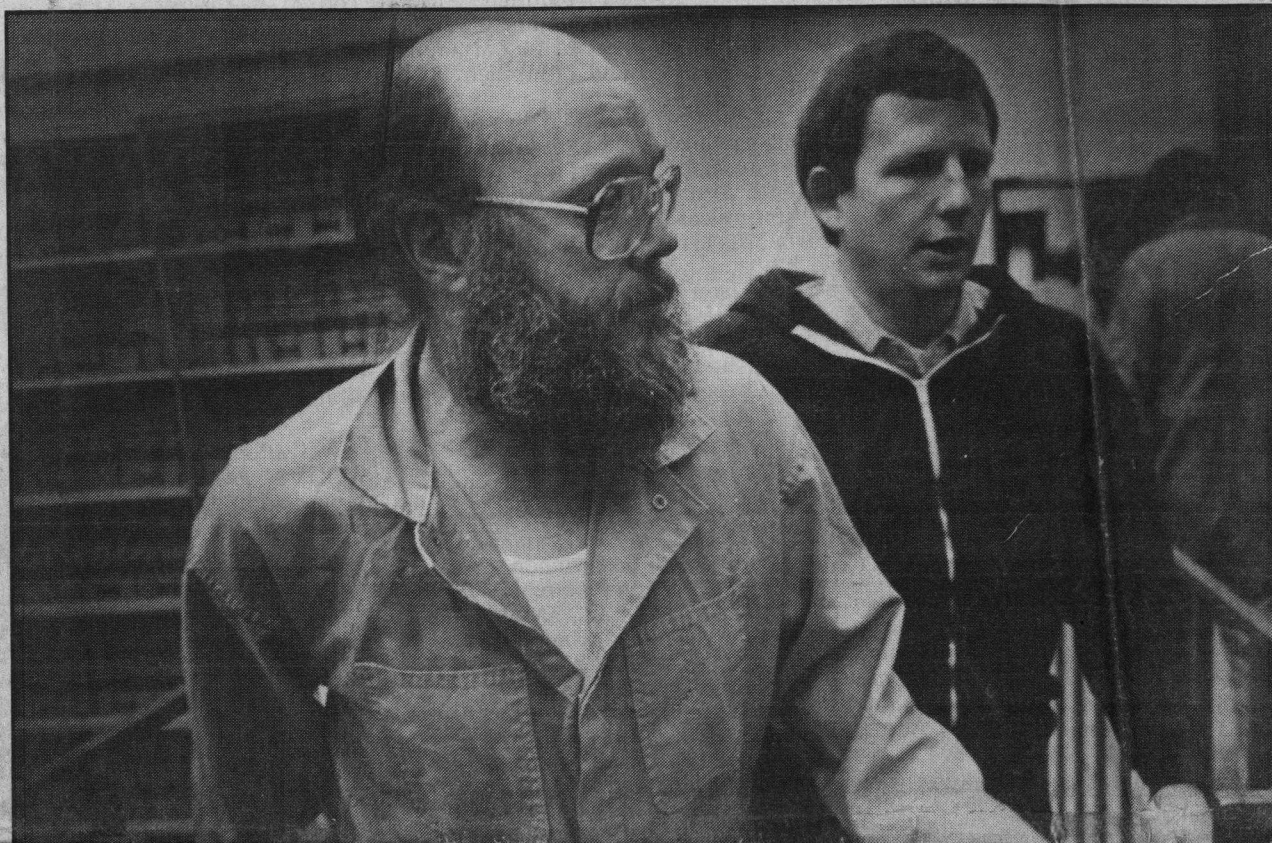
murder

The serial killers of Santa Cruz



Herbert Mullin, above, thought his murder spree would stop earthquakes along the San Andreas Fault.

He was convicted of 11 murders committed during 1972-73. David Carpenter, right, was



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David Carpenter,
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Trailside Killer
for his murder
spree of
1980-81.



When the county was the 'Murder Capital'

By MARK BERGSTROM
Sentinel staff writer

SANTA CRUZ — Americans are flocking to bookstores and movie theaters to be entertained by the current hit thriller *The Silence of the Lambs*, a story about an FBI trainee's hunt for a serial killer.

In the movie, actress Jodie Foster matches wits and trades secrets with Hannibal "the Cannibal" Lecter so she can track down another serial killer named Buffalo Bill who is making a coat out of his victims' skin.

A Santa Cruz audience recently hooted and cheered at the final scene when Hannibal the Cannibal, a madman who ate his victims, called the agent to tell

her he was having an old friend for dinner.

But what may be so grotesquely humorous in movie theaters today was terror in the 1970s and '80s when three of the men on the FBI's list of America's 21 most infamous serial killers struck in Santa Cruz County.

Among them were Edmund Kemper and Herbert Mullin, whose side-by-side 1972-73 murder sprees left Santa Cruz branded the "Murder Capital of the World."

Less than a decade later Santa Cruz was again the caught up with a serial killer as David Carpenter, who became known as the Trailside Killer, struck first in Marin County and then Santa Cruz.

Bodies and parts of mutilated bodies turned up seemingly weekly in the summer and fall of 1972 and into 1973. Those killings, along-with other murders in the county, left investigators with 29 unsolved murders.

The grisly discoveries came just a year after mass-murderer John Lindley Frazier executed well-known eye doctor Dr. Victor Ohta, his wife, two children and secretary and dumped their bodies in the family pool in the hills above Aptos.

Out-of-town newspapers referred almost daily to the terror that was sweeping the "once sleepy seaside resort."

Then-District Attorney Peter Chang tried to reassure the pub-

lic that there was no need to panic.

Today, however, Chang and some of his investigators admit to having some real fears back then.

"There were months of terror," Chang said recently. "Bodies kept popping up every week. The murders were so bizarre.

"There were lots of people missing. I kept thinking that they'd show up dead, too, and most of them did," Chang said. "We still haven't found a lot of those missing people."

Going to a theater and being scared is one thing, Chang said. "You walk out and it's over. But this went on for 16 months."

Please see SERIAL — A2

Kemper: The 'murderous butcher'

By MARK BERGSTROM
Sentinel staff writer

SANTA CRUZ — Even before they knew Edmund Kemper was the serial killer they had been seeking, detectives joked about his size.

Just a week or so before he confessed to killing eight women in 1972 and 1973, Kemper caught the attention of sheriff's detectives when he bought a gun. The application form was sent to the Sheriff's Office as required and it showed that Kemper was 6-foot-9, 280 pounds.

When detectives checked his history, they learned that Kemper had killed his grandparents at age 15 and was sent to a mental hospital.

Even though Kemper's juvenile record was sealed by the court, the detectives didn't think Kemper was the kind of person who should have a gun.

"You go take the gun from him."

"No, you take it from him," the sheriff's detectives jockeyed.

Finally, Mickey Aluffi and Don Smythe said they would go to Kemper's Aptos home and take the gun from him.

The detectives had no idea at the time that Kemper, 24, was the sadistic sex murderer of six female college students, whose body parts were turning up in three counties. Some of the victims had been raped after they were killed.

Please see KEMPER — A2



Edmund
Kemper killed
six young
women, his
mother and her
friend in
1972-73
before turning
himself in.

A time of terror

Carpenter: a classic serial killer

By MARK BERGSTROM
Sentinel staff writer

SANTA CRUZ — The fact that Trailside Killer David Carpenter was a member of the Sierra Club was just one of many things investigators learned about him after his arrest in 1982.

The other facts they would learn would lead them to conclude that Carpenter was a classic serial killer.

One of those who studied Carpenter was District Attorney's Inspector Charles "Stoney" Brook.

Brook, then a sheriff's detective sergeant, had just finished hiking with his son in Henry Cowell State Park on March 29, 1981 when he saw several patrol cars rushing into the park.

He stopped and called the office, learning that a 20-year-old Davis woman, Ellen Hansen, had just been shot to death. Her boyfriend, Steven Haertle, was shot through the back, but survived.

Ballistics tests later revealed those shots were fired from the same gun that killed four women and a man on trails in Marin County in 1980.

On March 31, Sheriff Al Noren announced the link, adding a chilling warning:

"I am obliged to warn the public there is a safety hazard."

Task forces were set up in Marin and Santa Cruz counties to try to catch the man whom Haertle described as being middle-aged with balding, gray hair. He had last been seen wearing a baseball cap and a gold, Olympia Beer jacket. Anyone matching that description was stopped on the street and questioned. Nervous citizens turned in one Felton man three times in the same day.

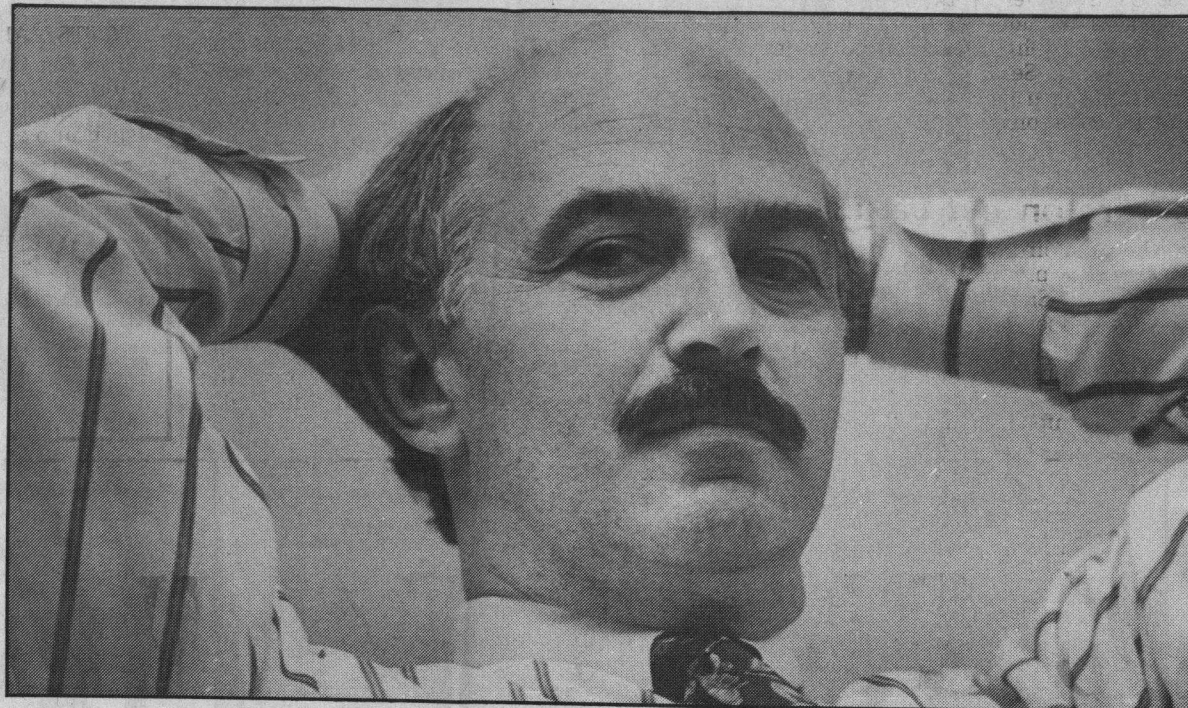
Investigators, Brook said, used large artist's pads to record the information, eliminating possible suspects one by one.

They seemingly got a break when a woman called to say she recognized the sketch of the suspect in the newspaper as a man from San Francisco named David Carpenter who had scared her by his actions on a cruise.

Detectives obtained a photo of the 50-year-old Carpenter that Brook thought was a pretty good match. But Carpenter, who had a history of sexual attacks, had fallen through the cracks and had never been required to register as a sex offender. Had Brook had access to all of Carpenter's criminal past, he would have insisted that Carpenter be thoroughly investigated as a possible suspect, he said.

Instead, Brook shipped the photo to Marin County authorities, who didn't share his view, and didn't follow up. According to the investigation protocol, Marin County investigators were to follow all leads of suspects living from San Francisco north and Santa Cruz County investigators were to follow up on suspects living to the south.

Still, Carpenter's name remained on one of the



Shmuel Thaler/Sentinel

District Attorney Inspector Charles 'Stoney' Brook studied mass murderer David Carpenter.

'I am obliged to warn the public there is a safety hazard.'

— Al Noren, county sheriff,
on March 31, 1980

artist's pads.

Meanwhile, a San Jose Police officer, following up on the disappearance of a woman from that city, learned she was an acquaintance of Carpenter. The woman's body later was found in the Santa Cruz Mountains.

The officer went to talk to Carpenter at the print shop in Hayward where Carpenter worked. As the officer drove up, he noticed a red foreign car in the parking lot. It was similar to one seen in the area of a couple of trailside killings.

The officer then talked to Carpenter, believing Carpenter was a good look-alike of the sketch of the murder suspect.

Brook said the officer then reported to Santa Cruz authorities, who put Carpenter under surveillance.

The final link came a short time later when Carpenter's girlfriend told detectives that she had given him a gold beer-drinking jacket identical to the one Hansen's killer was described as wearing.

The woman told Brook she got the jacket while working in a bar in Billings, Montana. Brook followed up and learned only 20 were made.

With that evidence tying up the case, detectives moved in and made the arrest on May 15, 1981.

As investigators began researching his background, they saw a pattern of behavior they had seen before in previous serial killers.

For example, they learned from school records that Carpenter had come to class as a child with bruises showing that he had obviously been beaten

at home.

There also were notations that at age 9 he was recommended for counseling for beating up other students and twisting their ears.

He was arrested for burglary at age 12 and suspected of several arsons at age 15. At 16, he was diagnosed as "psychoneurotic" following a court-imposed 90-day evaluation.

Carpenter was expelled from high school for continually annoying female students and for dragging a girl down a hallway. Also at 16, Carpenter molested two sisters, ages 9 and 6, in Glen Park in San Francisco.

At age 17, after several other sexual offenses, Carpenter was again referred by juvenile court for psychiatric evaluation and then committed to the California Youth Authority where he served some time before being released.

At 20, he was arrested for burglary and attempted rape.

Ten years later, in 1960, Carpenter was caught attempting to rape a woman at the U.S. Army Presidio in San Francisco. A military police officer, who spotted Carpenter beating the woman with a hammer, shot Carpenter twice, once in the side and once in the leg.

Carpenter was sentenced to 15 years in federal prison, but only served eight years before being released.

He soon was back in jail. In 1970, he was arrested in Santa Cruz County for the attempted kidnapping and attempted rape of one woman, and the kidnapping and rape of a second woman.

Carpenter was released in 1980, just months prior to the beginning of the trailside killings.

Brook frequently lectures about serial killers, and points out several common childhood traits, including episodes of arson, torture of animals and children, and sexually-related burglaries.

"My theory is that with people like Carpenter, they don't grow out of those phases, but only repress the behavior," Brook said.

Mullin left long trail of death

By MARK BERGSTROM
Sentinel staff writer

SANTA CRUZ — The rain, the cold, and, most of all, the weekly discovery of dead bodies overwhelmed young District Attorney Peter Chang as he climbed back up to the roadway from a campsite deep in the redwoods of Henry Cowell State Park.

The spot was called the Garden of Eden.

"There were four bodies; all had been shot. There were flies all around them. It was a very invasive, eerie thing," Chang said recently of that Saturday morning, Feb. 17, 1973. He turned to Watsonville Register-Pajaronian reporter Marj Von B. as they walked back up the trail and uttered a statement that would put Santa Cruz on the map.

"This must be Murdersville, U.S.A.," said Chang, who was exhausted.

"We had something like 29 unsolved murders. Bodies and parts of bodies kept popping up. The killings were all so bizarre." A stringer for the Associated Press was a step or two behind and overheard the "Murdersville" comment. He later put it out over the wires, misquoting Chang as calling Santa Cruz "The murder capital of the world."

The bodies at the campsite later would be identified as those of Robert Michael Spector and David Allan Olier, both 18, and Brian Scott Card and Mark Dreilbelbis, both 19. Their killer, Herbert Mullin, had been arrested for other killings a few days before their bodies were discovered.

The Southern California men had been on a camping trip when they were approached by Mullin, a 25-year-old Felton man out walking in the woods.

Mullin eventually would be linked to 13 murders and convicted of 11, including the stabbing death of a Roman Catholic priest, the Rev. Henry Tomei, in the confessional of his Los Gatos church.

Other victims in the spree that started in October of 1972 included a high school friend and his wife and a woman and her two small sons.

Mullin's final victim was 72-year-old Fred Perez, who he gunned down Feb. 13 in the front yard of Perez' home on Lighthouse Avenue.

A witness saw Mullin drive away and the description of the car led police to Mullin, who was arrested a short time later.

Mullin testified at his trial that he killed at the command of telepathic messages he called "die songs," and that the killings were sacrifices to prevent a catastrophic earthquake on the San Andreas Fault.

When detectives searched Mullin's apartment they made a startling discovery, a drawing of a woman whose body had been mutilated in exactly the same way a young Santa Cruz college student had been.

Could Mullin also be responsible for the mutilation deaths of UC Santa Cruz students, whose bod-

authorities, who didn't share his view, and didn't follow up. According to the investigation protocol, Marin County investigators were to follow all leads of suspects living from San Francisco north and Santa Cruz County investigators were to follow up on suspects living to the south.

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Kemper

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When Aluffi and Smythe showed up at Kemper's door and asked for the gun, Kemper handed it over.

Kemper, however, thought the cops were closing in on him. He later told District Attorney's Inspector Dick Verbrugge to spare his mother the grief of learning that he was killing again, he killed her and her friend.

"No need for her to suffer anymore at the hands of this horrible 'murderous butcher,'" Kemper scrawled on a note to lawmen shortly after killing his mother and her best friend, when they returned to the house from their jobs on the UC Santa Cruz campus.

Kemper clubbed the two women to death. Then he beheaded his mother and put the head on the mantle.

Kemper then packed an assortment

of guns and a sword and drove off. He listened to the radio, waiting to hear reports of the gruesome discovery.

In Reno, Nev., Kemper rented a sedan and continued on, taking No-Doz to keep awake.

By the time he reached Pueblo, Colo., Kemper was so tired and paranoid, according to Verbrugge, that he stopped at a phone booth and called Santa Cruz Police.

Kemper had met Detective Lt. Chuck Scherer's daughter once at a party so he called Scherer collect.

The police dispatcher said Scherer was not in and refused to accept the call.

Kemper called back.

This time he confessed to murder and the dispatcher accepted the call.

Verbrugge, Scherer and District At-

torney Peter Chang were on the next flight to Colorado.

When the news of the arrest broke, no airline would fly Kemper back to California, so Verbrugge struck a deal with the rental-car agency in Reno to bring the car — and Kemper — back there.

Being unfamiliar with the territory, Verbrugge said he drove right through Laramie, Wyo., expecting it to be much larger than it was. They had planned to spend the night there.

They wound up in Elko, Nev. After booking Kemper into the jail there, Verbrugge, Scherer and Chang checked into a motel. They turned on the TV and were shocked to see a national news report that they were overdue in Laramie and possibly had been overpowered by their suspect.

to the beginning of the trailside killings.

Brook frequently lectures about serial killers, and points out several common childhood traits, including episodes of arson, torture of animals and children, and sexually-related burglaries.

"My theory is that with people like Carpenter, they don't grow out of those phases, but only repress the behavior," Brook said.

On the way back to Santa Cruz, Kemper spilled every grisly detail of his murder spree.

"His total recall was amazing," said Verbrugge. "He could even tell us everything that was in the co-eds' purses and what their home addresses were. It was very scary."

Some of the details of the killings were so gruesome, such as how he removed one victim's teeth with a screwdriver, that the lawmen grew sick and asked Kemper to stop.

At one point, Kemper began describing how he picked up a young girl hitchhiking in Berkeley. "That was news to us," said Verbrugge, who stopped the car and phoned police there. Yes, they had a girl by that name missing. Kemper later led detectives to her body.

Serial killers

Continued from Page A1

Chief Inspector Dick Verbrugge today admits he would look in the back seat of his car before he would get in. "Those were very scary times," he said.

Mullin, who testified at trial that he killed to prevent a catastrophic earthquake from occurring on the San Andreas Fault, ultimately would be convicted of 10 random murders in Santa Cruz County and the stabbing death of a priest in the confessional of a Los Gatos Catholic church.

Kemper was convicted of six mutilation murders of hitchhik-

ing college students, plus the beheading of his mother and the bludgeoning of her best friend.

Both are serving life sentences in prison: Mullin at the California Men's Colony at San Luis Obispo and Kemper at Vacaville.

Both serial killers have been the subjects of several books.

Nearly 10 years later, when Trailside Killer David Carpenter brought his rape and murder spree to Santa Cruz, many people would ask why so much violence would come to such a beautiful and tranquil area.

Carpenter is the subject of one of the latest books on serial kill-

ers, *Sleeping Lady*, by Robert Graysmith. Carpenter is currently on death row for two Santa Cruz county murders. Five murder convictions in Marin County were overturned and a new trial is pending.

Three of America's most notorious serial killers striking in one small area had never happened before. "It will never happen again, either," said Chang.

"There is no reason, except perhaps for some cosmic reasons," Chang said.

District Attorney's Inspector Stoney Brook, who worked on

vent a catastrophic earthquake on the San Andreas Fault.

When detectives searched Mullin's apartment they made a startling discovery, a drawing of a woman whose body had been mutilated in exactly the same way a young Santa Cruz college student had been.

Could Mullin also be responsible for the mutilation deaths of UC Santa Cruz students, whose bodies also were turning up.

The answer would turn out to be "no." Mullin's drawing was just a freaky coincidence.

Just a few months later, however, an Aptos man, Edmund Kemper, would confess to the murders of six women between the ages of 15 and 23.

Trying to coordinate the investigations into all of the deaths — some unrelated to either Mullin or Kemper — was difficult because it required unprecedented cooperation among law-enforcement agencies.

"We'd get together with all the chiefs at the Holiday Inn for meetings, but invariably we'd all get drunk and accomplish nothing," Chang said.

"We couldn't form a task force without stepping on everybody's toes."

As the chiefs and Chang drank at the Holiday Inn, Kemper drank across the street at the Jury Room.

He would later tell DA Inspector Dick Verbrugge that sometimes when he left the bar he would look across to the County Center and see Chang's silhouette in a window on the second floor late at night.

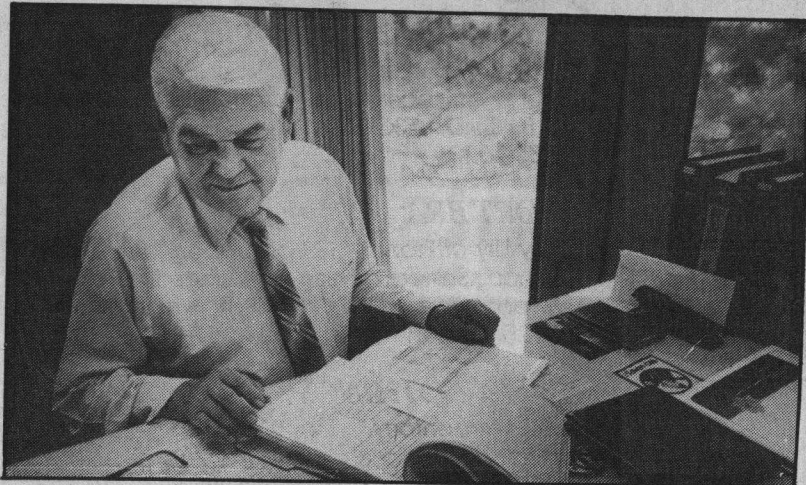
"Kemper told me that he fantasized about killing Mr. Chang," Verbrugge said.

the Carpenter case, believes everyone has their dark side, a tiny bit of anti-social behavior they keep under wraps.

"I would venture to say that only one-tenth of one percent of all Americans are truly evil in that they have an anti-social personality disorder that they can't control," said Brook.

"I don't think people should walk around in fear of being a victim of a serial killer."

"There's a better likelihood of being hit by lightning and winning the Lotto on the same day," Brook said.



Shmuel Thaler/Sentinel

Dick Verbrugge of DA's office reviews files of old cases.