

LAST BLOODY CAPER OF THE LOVELORN WARLOCK

True Police

DECEMBER 1972 50¢
06895

CASES

Case of the

SEXY BLONDE SLAVEMASTER

*She turned him into a
groveling slave but he
turned her into a corpse*

BIBLE JOHN— THE DANCING STRANGLER

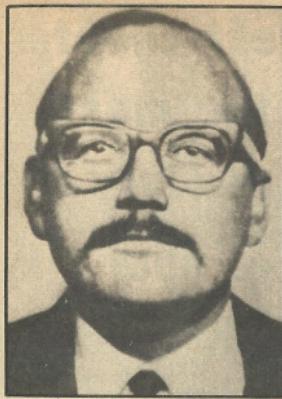
The True Story of:
Blackie Yazzolino
The cop who lives with a syndicate contract on his head



WHATEVER HAPPENED TO ZODIAC?



This is the official police drawing of the man who calls himself Zodiac. But the killer wrote a letter making jest of the Sketch, insisting that it does not resemble him.



Cab driver Paul Stine was the victim of a senseless Zodiac slaying.



This young couple was slashed to ribbons by the sadistic monster who later boasted of the deed in letters to newspaper editors.



"WHEREVER HE IS—HE WILL KI



A detective checks a blood-soaked patch of cloth, sent through the mail by Zodiac, with the shirt of the madman's latest victim. They matched.



The Zodiac became angry at stories written by Paul Avery. So he sent this card, threatening to kill the reporter.

After writing the bloodiest chapter in modern criminality the most feared killer of the 20th century has disappeared. Could he be in your city?

When the final book on satanic brutality is written, such names as Bluebeard, the Cleveland Butcher, England's John Christy and Jack the Ripper will receive prominent mention. But none will receive more prominent display than the name "Zodiac". The man who calls himself "Zodiac" has a snakepit for a mind, brimstone for a heart and the nerve of a programmed robot. The police know he has committed five merciless murders. By the "Zodiac's" own boast, he has killed thirteen. His calling card is a strip of bloody clothing torn from the body of a victim. He is a cunning madman who writes riddles in a strange code that baffles even the most expert military cryptographers. He is the single-most baffling crime phenomenon of our generation. For almost two years, the "Zodiac" held the San Francisco Bay Area in the palm of his hand — pricking it ever now and then just to watch it jump. Then, he disappeared. It has been almost two years since his last, evil message was received. Some say he is either dead, in prison or in a mental institution. But most lawmen still working on the case believe he is lying low after almost being caught on one occasion. Some think he has moved out of the Bay area and taken up residence in another city. And those who know him best do not even speculate on if he will kill again. They only try to guess when it will happen — and where.

by CARMENA FREEMAN

The Christmas greeting was one that had been belched up from the caverns of Hell. It had taken nine days to travel from San Francisco, California to Munich, Germany, during which time it had passed through extensive police laboratory examination before being dispatched to the rightful recipient, Attorney Melvin Belli, then on business in the German city.

The message bore no relation to the Peace on Earth tidings that temporarily link men and nations in brotherhood over the holidays. The greeting was a plea, a threat, and a reminder that some place

on California's West Coast lurked a killer of extraordinary dimension; a man who was known to have taken five lives and who had boasted of taking many more. It was a message from a man who once

A
**TRUE
POLICE
CASES
BOOK
LENGTH
FEATURE**

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

If there is a Zodiac expert outside the police community, it is veteran crime writer Carmena Freeman. For three years she has gathered every shred of available information on the shadowy killer. She has interviewed dozens of people, including officers on the case. She has poured over police reports and studied the strange messages from the infamous madman. It is all here in this article — the most thorough and probing story every published in a U. S. periodical about the man who calls himself Zodiac.



Famed defense lawyer Melvin Belli (right) made numerous appeals for Zodiac to surrender and halt the senseless slaughter.

ILL AGAIN!"

threatened to bomb a school bus full of children, a man who used for his calling card scraps from the bloodied shirt of his last known victim.

That Christmas card, received on December 29, 1969, halfway across the world from where it was posted, did not take its place on the mantle piece along with other reminders of the season. It served, instead, as a fresh prod to Attorney Belli to try to break through the killer's impregnable mask; it served to swell the staggering file of material gathered for over a year in the police departments of San Francisco's Bay Area — a file labeled simply "Zodiac."

The letter to Belli read: "Dear Melvin, This is the Zodiac speaking. I wish you a happy Christmas. The one thing I ask of you is this, please help me, I cannot reach out for help because of this thing in me won't let me. I am finding it extremely difficult to hold it in check I am afraid I will lose control again and take my nineth and possibly tenth victim. Please help me, I am drowning . . ."

"But if I hold back too long from No. nine I will lose all control of my self . . . Please help me. I cannot remain in control much longer . . ."

The maniacal ravings of an unhitched mind? Perhaps. But Attorney Belli, internationally recognized legal expert and highly successful defender in numerous courtroom battles, did not dismiss it as such. Two months earlier, on October 22, 1969, Belli had appeared on a popular San Francisco TV program at Zodiac's

(Continued on page 48)

(Editor's Note: All of Zodiac's messages contain misspellings and grammatical errors. We are publishing them in this article exactly as they were written. Investigators have speculated that Zodiac is really a learned person (perhaps even a genius) who purposely injects errors in his messages to throw off the police. The fact that he often spells difficult words correctly while misspelling simple ones lends weight to the theory.)

(1)

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L	I	I	L
K	E	N	G
I	R	T	E
L	A	S	P
E	M	O	O
R	N	N	O
N	O	O	N
O	N	N	O
O	O	O	O

E B E C A U S E I T I S S O M U C
W V T E G Y F O A H P D K I P Y F
H F U N I T S M O R E F U N T H
M J Y A U I K A P T L N Q Y D O

This is the Zodiac speaking
By the way have you cracked
the last cipher I sent you?
My name is —

A E N ♦ ♦ K ♦ ♦ M ♦ ♦ N A M

I am mildly curious as to how
much money you have on my
head now. I hope you do not
think that I was the one
who wiped out that blue
meannie with a bomb at the
cop station.

Most of Zodiac's messages were sent to select newspaper editors. Here are two examples of coded messages mailed to the San Francisco Chronicle. In the bottom note, he disclaims any responsibility for a recent bombing at a police station.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO ZODIAC?

(Continued from page 41)

request had held up his end of one of the most bizarre telephone conversations ever recorded.

The events leading to Belli's appearance that October morning were typical of Zodiac's unique and stunning pattern of behavior. He had phoned Jim Dunbar, host on KGO's early morning TV talk show and specified that he wanted Belli to appear on the program that day at which time he (Zodiac) would call in and reveal himself.

What unmitigated gall, you say. What would lead a wanted killer to think the nation's TV channels were open to his personal whim, or that the services of one of the country's leading attorneys were available? But ah, you have not reckoned with Zodiac. Whatever *finis* is written to his history, that history will nudge Bluebeard and Jack the Ripper aside for space in the biographies of the world's most cunning slayers.

The killer had not labeled himself Zodiac until August, 1969, but his fiendish hand had been at work as far back as December of 1968, and as the exhaustive research into his past continued, there came startling evidence that he had introduced his specific brand of horror as early as 1966.

Zodiac's brazen disregard for convention had first manifested itself on August 1, 1969, in three separate letters, one to each of the managing editors of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the *Examiner*, and the *Vallejo Times-Herald*.

The letter to the *Times-Herald* started: "Dear Editor, I am the killer of the 2 teenagers last Christmas at Lake Herman and the girl last 4th of July. To prove this I shall state some facts which only I & the police know.

"The facts:

Christmas

1. Brand name of ammo Super-X
2. 10 shots fired
3. Boy was on back feet to car
4. Girl was lying on right side feet to west

4th of July

1. Girl was wearing patterned pants
2. Boy was also shot in knee
3. Brand name of ammo was Western"

Attached to the letter was a neatly printed code with the explanation: "Here is a cipher or that is part of one. In it is revealed my true identity. The other

two pars have been mailed to the S. F. *Examiner* & the S. F. *Chronicle*.

"I want you to print the cipher on your front page by Fry afternoon Aug. 1, 1969. If you do not do this I will go on a kill rampage Fry night that will last the whole week end. I will cruise around and pick off all stray people or couples that are alone, then move on to kill some more until I have killed over a dozen people."

The signature was a cross inside a circle, simulating the cross hairs in a telescopic rifle sight.

The editor knew to which murders the letter referred. The first had taken place close to midnight on December 20, 1969, on the Lake Herman road several miles outside of Vallejo. The bodies of two young people were discovered sprawled beside a station wagon by a ranch wife on her way into Benicia to pick up her children from a movie. Town officers were dispatched immediately to find 16-year-old Bettylou Jensen, dead of five bullet wounds in her back, and 17-year-old David Faraday near death from a single bullet hole in his skull.

Both youngsters were students in the Vallejo schools, well liked, bright, and handsome. The area where their bodies were found was one popular to young lovers and police directed their early efforts toward pinning down a jealous motive or locating a disgruntled suitor of the girl.

Benicia Town Officer, Dan Pitta, Solano County Sheriff's Investigator Leslie Lundblad and Deputies Russell Butterbach and Wayne Waterman combined their skills in an extended effort to arrive at an early solution.

The initial theory that the seeds of the tragedy had been sown within the confines of the city of Vallejo and its immediate surroundings and that continued questioning, prodding, and the follow-up of meager clues would lead to the killer vanished with explosive force when Sergeant Lundblad received a telephone call from a local youth.

The boy was reporting a weird experience he had had at the scene of the murders just shortly before they occurred. He and a girl were parked in the same area at 9:30 that Friday night. "I thought no one else was around," he said. "Then I saw these headlights come on. I gunned our car out of there and the other driver followed me. I'm not sure he was actually chasing us because he never gained. I turned off toward Benicia and he went in the opposite direction. That was the end of it until I read what happened in that same place an hour and a half later."

The boy's story lent a disconcerting blow to previous speculation and opened up a far more disturbing possibility. Bettylou and David apparently were random victims of a roving nut who haunted lovers' lanes and picked off his targets at will. No strategy was effective in such cases. Young people could be warned. Secluded pockets could be given police attention. Sex deviates and suspiciously acting persons could be kept under surveillance. As a rule, police knew, it was sheer luck that led to the capture of these

depraved snipers. And, as they also knew, that luck rarely showed itself until several lives had been claimed.

The Faraday-Jensen case took priority on town and county police agendas throughout the winter and into the summer. It never was actually displaced, simply joined, by a second murder so similar in character as to chill the marrow.

The second shooting occurred sometime after midnight on July 4th, while fireworks were still brightening the skies over the Bay waters. The attack took the life of a 22-year-old Vallejo waitress, Darlene Ferrin, and came within a hair's breadth of killing her escort.

Three youths came upon the victims stretched beside their car not far from the municipal golf course in Blue Rock Springs Park, on Vallejo's outskirts.

Lieutenants James Dwiggin and Raymond Allbritton and Sergeant Roy Conway, from the Vallejo police, joined forces with Deputy Butterbach to examine the latest violence, noting as they headed out to the scene that it was only a few miles away from the Faraday-Jensen shootings.

Death claimed the young waitress before she reached the hospital, but a thin trace of life pulsed in her escort and the officers who circled the car examined the ground, gauged the murder weapon and searched for clues. The officers clung desperately to the hope that the critically injured youth would be able to supply some lead to his assailant.

The investigation was only minutes old when a freak note was injected in the form of a phone call to the woman clerk in Vallejo's police headquarters. "I want to report a double murder," a male voice said. "If you will go one mile east on Columbus Parkway to a public park you will find the kids in a brown car. They were shot with a 9 millimeter Luger. I also killed those kids last year. Goodbye."

The Ferrin car was brown. Nine millimeter shells were found at the scene. There had not been time to publicize these findings. The caller had to be taken seriously. And what of his sinister end note, "those kids last year"? Was he also the Faraday-Jensen killer?

Here was the initial clue that one man had taken the three lives and almost a fourth. City and county officials continued to check out both cases singly and as a unit, and waited for the time the lone survivor would be able to talk.

When that time came, police were prepared for the scraps they picked up, but scraps they were. The young man said that he and the girl had just pulled off the road when their car door was jerked open and the gunman let loose a fusillade of shots. The girl fatally wounded fell back behind the wheel, but the youth managed to tumble out of the door and to face death until the gunman drove off.

"You saw him?" the interrogators asked.

"I didn't get a chance to. He just started firing like a madman."

"His car? You saw it?"

"Yes. It was remarkably like Darlene's. Same color, brown, and the same model. Carried California license plates."

Investigators chased down tips, followed up leads, correlated procedures on the Lake Herman and Columbus Parkway shootings, but by the beginning of the next month, when the bewildering message in code arrived, neither case was near a solution.

Confirmation soon came from the *Chronicle* and the *Examiner* that parts two and three of the code were in their hands, accompanied by explanatory notes from the sender that his identity was buried within the cipher.

Vallejo sits on the lip of Mare Island Navy Yard, the biggest naval base on the West Coast, plentifully staffed with crack cryptographers. All codes were turned over to these experts, but their publication in the three papers generated an amazing enthusiasm among amateur cryptographers and puzzle fans throughout the nation. Before long, Vallejo and San Francisco police departments were inundated with possible translations of the code. Some respondents devoted themselves to analyzing the writer's character; others tried to pinpoint his areas of interest; still others made heroic attempts to bring order out of the jumbled symbols.

Three days after the first letters were received, a second message came to the San Francisco *Examiner*. It opened with the ominous greeting, "This is the Zodiac speaking . . ." Contained in this communication were references to the two Vallejo shootings that proved to the satisfaction of Deputy Lundblad and Police Chief Jack Stiltz that they were, without question, dealing with the three-time killer.

It was this letter, irrefutably authored by the slayer, that provided the popular name by which he was to be called during the course of his criminal life . . . "Zodiac".

Now the astrologers got into the act, transcribing esoteric symbols and phraseology for the better understanding of the layman and prophesying new fields of activity for Zodiac whose movements might be determined by the coursing of the planets.

No issue of West Coast papers went to press without some current interpretation of the cryptograph by one of the nation's experts. But it was a high school teacher and his wife from North Salinas, California, who, by combining training, skill and remarkable tenacity, succeeded in unscrambling the code, thereby giving to its author a cloak of such fearsome pattern as to panic the sturdiest of men.

Deciphered, the message, with all of its misspellings, read: "I LIKE KILLING PEOPLE BECAUSE IT IS MORE FUN THAN KILLING WILD GAME IN THE FOREST BECAUSE MAN IS THE MOST DANGEROUS ANIMAL OF ALL TO KILL SOMETHING GIVES ME THE MOST THRILLING EXPERIENCE . . . THE

BEST PART OF IT IS THAE WHEN I DIE I WILL BE REBORN IN PARADICE AND ALL THE I HAVE KILLED WILL BECOME MY SLAVES I WILL NOT GIVE YOU MY NAME BECAUSE YOU WILL TRS TO SLOI DOWN OR STOP MY COLLECTING OF SLAVES FOR MY AFTERLIFE."

The last two lines were a jumble: "eboere eti me t hh piti."

Crack cryptographers examined the translation and nodded sagely. The code had been broken. But what had the message provided? No name, certainly. And no recognizable leads unless one could be guided by the suggestion that the sender was a poor speller, preoccupied with violence and sex and perhaps given to an inordinate interest in fantasy and the far out philosophy that his afterlife might be eased by taking a family of slaves with him.

Vallejo authorities, aware that they were dealing with an intelligence of devilish design and unpredictable release, never let up in their vigilance. But the young people who had temporarily shied from isolated lovers' lanes were quick to dismiss the dangers and to ridicule the possibility of themselves as potential "slaves" for a trigger mad gunman. By summer's close, the idyllic haunts of those in pursuit of romance were drawing their usual crowds.

That Zodiac was mindful of this lapse in caution became apparent to a stunned county on September 27, 1969, in one of the most awesome displays of savagery ever perpetrated.

His diabolical signature was first evidenced on that Saturday afternoon when a fisherman, working the waters of Lake Berryessa, a sportsman's paradise artificially created in the rugged hills of Napa County by Monticello Dam, heard the weak but urgent cries for help from what appeared to be two figures on the shore some 20 yards away.

Reluctant to investigate on his own, the fisherman gave throttle to his boat and soon returned with Berryessa Park Rangers Sergeant William White and Dennis Land from the nearby ranger station.

What they found Ranger White later described as the worst thing he'd ever seen, "two nice kids cut to pieces."

The "two nice kids" were Cecilia Shepard, a 21-year-old coed from the University of California in Riverside, who the previous year had attended Pacific Union College in Angwin and who had returned that weekend for a reunion with her former classmates and 20-year-old Bryan Hartnell, a junior in the college.

Those two students, their splendid young bodies ribboned by knife slashes, lay on the lakeshore on a carpet of sand reddened by their blood. Their wrists and ankles held the gnawed ends of rope that had lashed them in bondage.

"We'll need an ambulance to get them out," White said, wincing with each tortured breath that came from the still conscious victims.

While they awaited the arrival of the ambulance, the students filled the rangers in on the unbelievable horror they had experienced.

They had driven up to the lake for a picnic, parking Hartnell's car on a knoll above the shore. The youth stretched his arm with noticeable effort and pointed to a white Karman-Ghia, barely visible from where he lay.

They thought themselves to be alone, but at roughly 4 p.m., an apparition slid out from behind a tree and approached them, a stocky man in baggy black pants, his face covered by a shoulder-length hood, his hand waving an automatic pistol.

"I'm a fugitive," he announced, "I killed a guard in escaping from Deer Lodge Prison in Montana. I need money and a car."

The youth offered him all he had, 75 cents, and handed him the keys to his car. But the gunman had changed his mind.

"I'm going to have to tie you up," he said, pulling a length of cord from his pocket.

He ordered Miss Shepard to tie up Hartnell, then he bound the girl, hands and ankles. The gun had been replaced by a knife and when both victims were securely trussed, the hooded monster began plunging the weapon repeatedly into first the man, then the girl, accompanying each thrust with a maniacal laugh.

For what seemed an eternity to the horrified, screaming, helpless victims, the merciless butcher continued. Their tormentor first slashed, then stabbed as his hideous laughter echoed along the banks of the lake.

More than two hours had passed since the attack, hours in which the two students slipped from agonizing consciousness to unconsciousness, and the assailant took casual leave of his bloody work.

With the arrival of the ambulance, the victims were rushed to the Queen of the Valley Hospital in Napa while investigators began the loathsome task of gathering up mementos of the assault. Chief among these was the car door from Hartnell's Karman-Ghia on which the hooded assailant had scrawled three dates: December 20, 1968; July 4th and September 27, with the hour, 6:30. The signature brought chill of recognition to the examining officers: a circle within which were the cross hairs simulating a telescopic gunsight.

Zodiac!

If there was any question in the minds of the investigators that the Lake Berryessa atrocity was the work of the same man who murdered young Faraday, Miss Jensen and Miss Ferrin, that doubt was dispelled within minutes with the receipt of a phone call at 7:30 that evening in the Napa County Sheriff's office.

Deputy David Straight answered the ring.

"I want to report a murder," a man's voice said. "No, a double murder. I just killed two kids. They are two miles north of park headquarters. They were in a white Volkswagen Karman-Ghia. I'm the one who did it."

Book-Length Feature

The call was ended abruptly, but there was no sound of the receiver being replaced. Police swarmed over public phone booths and in a neighboring car wash found the receiver dangling from its wire.

"My God, less than two blocks from headquarters!" one of the officers exclaimed.

Criminologist Hal Snook arrived at the booth with dusting equipment to try for prints and his results were rushed to the FBI and to the State Department of Criminal Identification and Investigation, along with the prayers of two counties that something tangible would emerge from the effort.

Even stronger hopes were riding on the official interviews that had been set up with Bryan Hartnell and Cecilia Shepard. The young victims had undergone immediate medical treatment for their atrocious wounds and surgical knowledge had it that Hartnell would recover. The report on Miss Shepard was far less encouraging, but she was conscious and bravely willing to lend what assistance she could to the capture of her attacker.

A day later, Miss Shepard was dead, but the information she had supplied, along with that provided by Hartnell, gave the officials the first physical data available on the four-time killer.

He was not, investigators proved, an escapee from the Deer Lodge Prison in Montana. He was, according to the patchy descriptions obtained from the two students, probably in his 30s, somewhere between 5 feet 9 inches and 6 feet tall, weighing in the neighborhood of 200 pounds. Through the overlarge eye holes cut in the hood, Hartnell was able to get a glimpse of brown hair and of spectacles covered with sunshades. The killer was husky of voice and had been armed with a pistol, not a Luger, and a butcher knife some 10 to 12 inches long.

The description was translated into a sketch and given wide publicity with an attached plea from Captain Townsend for the man to give himself up so that no one else would be hurt. He also assured that authorities would lean over backwards to make certain he would be treated with justice and given full protection of his constitutional rights.

Tips, suggestions as to Zodiac's identity, plus scholarly interpretations of his personality and behaviour patterns rolled in on the wake of his latest crime and were given front-page display by a press both fascinated and appalled at the killer's bold mockery of life and decency.

Numerous suspects were questioned and released throughout the rest of September and into October of 1969. Police activity centered in Solano and Napa Counties, scenes of the murders, but detailed coverage was provided by the San Francisco papers that, through the communications from Zodiac, felt a reluctant kinship to the investigation.

The kinship took on straight blood lines the morning of October 13, 1969, when the editor of the Chronicle slit open a

letter addressed to him and stared down at a swath of blood-stained shirt that fell from the envelope.

The *Chronicle* had received its invitation to become the killer's pen pal.

Thus began a one-sided correspondence that was to build into the most remarkable example of a maimed mind and a disastrously swollen ego ever to be recorded.

"This is the Zodiac speaking . . ." the accompanying letter began. "I am the murderer of the taxi driver over by Washington St. and Maple St. last night. To prove this here is a blood stained piece of his shirt. I am the man who did in the people in the north bay area."

"The S. F. police could have caught me last night if they had searched the park properly instead of holding road races with their motorcycles seeing who could make the most noise. The car drivers should have just parked their cars & sat their quietly waiting for me to come out of cover."

The cabby to whom Zodiac referred was Paul Stine, a night driver for Yellow Cab, who had picked up a fare in front of San Francisco's Fairmont Hotel Sunday evening and followed instructions to take him to Washington and Maple Streets. A few blocks short of the destination, the passenger, riding in the front seat, pulled a 9mm automatic from his coat, drilled Stine once and fatally through the cheek, took his wallet, ripped a strip from the cabby's shirt and calmly stepped from the death car. He wiped the door clean and strode off into the protection of the Presidio's woods.

Three youngsters witnessed this much of the drama and passed it on in breathless relay to investigators, adding the information that the killer was white, 25 to 30 years old, roughly 5 feet 9 inches tall. His reddish brown hair was close cut and he wore heavy-rimmed glasses.

Handwriting experts examined the letter. No question about it. The Zodiac! Lab analysts tested the shirt. No question about it. Stine's blood, Stine's shirt. Top investigators from Napa and Vallejo studied the description. The man who killed Stine was the man who had boasted by phone and letter of four previous murders.

Chief of Inspectors Martin Lee and Inspectors David Toschi and William Armstrong set off that Monday morning on the first step of an incredible journey through the corridors of a maniacal mind.

Stine's murder revealed a killer who either lived in or was extremely familiar with San Francisco's streets and traffic patters; a man who considered his disguise, whatever it was, impervious to puncture; a man the depth of whose capacity for evil could only be guessed at. A partial estimate of that depth was revealed three days later when police released the complete text of the letter the *Chronicle* had received that Monday morning.

"School children are nice targets," he had written. "I think I shall wipe out a school bus some morning. Just shoot out the front tires and then pick off the kids as they come bouncing out."

To date Zodiac's known victims had been adults or teenagers verging on adulthood. Whatever dream of relief could be extracted from the likelihood that he was not a child killer evaporated in that closing paragraph of his letter.

Fear oozed over the whole of northern California, snaking into classrooms, playgrounds and homes where grade-school children should have been assured of the greatest security. Officers were enlisted to ride buses and guards were stationed along certain routes. Radio equipment was installed in a few vehicles and teachers gave daily instructions on what to do if the bus driver yelled: "Hit the floor."

The best police brains in two counties devoted to analyzing the killer. The results provided as many answers as there were participants. "A clumsy killer, a liar, and possibly a latent homosexual," was Captain Lee's summation in San Francisco. "An intelligent individual," State's Attorney General Tom Lynch determined. "A genius who got so far out he went over the edge," Captain Bird contributed. "Deviously clever and expert in field of cryptology," Police Chief Stiltz added.

These theories were lumped together with the known physical evidence; descriptions provided by witnesses fortunate enough to have lived through the attacks; and weapons known to have been used — two 9mm guns, a .22 automatic and a long-bladed kitchen knife. Police artists contributed their skills to a composite sketch that was sent throughout California and into neighboring states where Zodiac might conceivably be seeking sanctuary. Graphologists and cryptographers stuck to their manuals, trying to extract a more detailed picture of the wanted man from the curlicues and symbols at their command.

Not until October 22, 1969, were authorities to learn that the killer they wanted could pipe more tunes than a flautist. The newest facet of his character came over the phone wires that morning in the police station in Oakland, California. The Zodiac was demanding a telephone interview with Attorney Melvin Belli, to be aired on the daily talk show directed by Jim Dunbar of KGO-TV.

Cynics labeled the demand a publicity gimmick. Knowledgeable police authorities leaped at it as a possible lead to the killer's identity. Attorney Belli accepted the challenge.

At 7 o'clock that morning, KGO's TV audience was advised of the dramatic contents of that day's program. "Please keep the telephone wires open. Please make no effort to call us. There is a possibility that Zodiac will be in touch with Attorney Belli through this channel. You will be party to the conversation. Please do not interfere with what may be the most important turn in this investigation."

At 7:14 the studio phone rang. Belli took the call. A soft, boyish voice was transmitted into the homes of thousands of hypnotized listeners. Then the caller hung up. Minutes later, he called again. "Meet me on the roof of the Fairmont

Hotel," he instructed Belli. "Come alone or I'll jump."

For three hours, the brief but regular phone calls came. The caller was asked to abandon the ominous name of Zodiac and agreed to be called Sam. He expressed curiosity about what would happen to him if he surrendered. Belli assured him of a fair trial and offered to see that he got medical treatment.

The audience was given ear to only parts of the conversation. On a private wire, heavily monitored by police brass, Attorney Belli and "Sam" were drawing up guide lines for a secret meeting that day.

Belli carried out his end of the bargain. He spent 45 minutes in front of a thrift shop in Daly City, the site selected by "Sam" for his appearance. There was no Sam.

Experts sifted through the odious doings left from that morning's experience. The phone call to Oakland, they believed, was made by Zodiac. The calls that came through to the TV station were the antics of a fake. Sam was sick. Sam was in need of treatment. But Sam was not Zodiac.

These suspicions were buttressed by the conclusions of those who had previously heard Zodiac's voice. All of them, the woman clerk from the Vallejo Police Department; Deputy Straight from Napa; Bryan Hartnell who survived the vicious Lake Berryessa knifing and Miss Ferrin's escort who recovered from the bullet wounds received on July 4th, listened to playbacks of the taped TV conversations. "Not the Zodiac," was the verdict.

The incident, nonetheless, served to heighten the terror. Zodiac had assumed the proportions of a monster out of mythology, except that his deeds revealed him to be very much alive and capable of savagery that fiction would never attempt.

One man who refused to buckle under the scare was Joe Stine, brother of the murdered San Francisco cabby. It was Joe who had helped to finance his brother's education. He now wanted just one thing . . . "a chance at Paul's killer." He offered to set himself up as a target for Zodiac. He provided, through the newspapers, a copy of his daily schedule, his place of work, his lunch hour, his mode of transportation. "Let him come and get me," was Joe's courageous challenge. The challenge was not met.

As is typical of all mass killers who defy capture, Zodiac attracted his legion of admirers and mimics: psychopathic copy cats who tried to dress their grotesqueries in the flamboyant colors of the killer of the day. Many of the weirdo crimes that were executed in the Bay Area for the next several weeks bore some forged reference to Zodiac, a crude symbol, a signed name, a phoned message. Valuable time was lost in sorting the wheat from the chaff, but not until late November, when a two part letter arrived at the *Chronicle*, were the experts convinced that they again were in communication with the McCoy.

The first part of the letter was a comic,

greeting card in which was enclosed a new cryptogram and the message: "This is the Zodiac speaking. I thought you would need a good laugh before you hear the bad news. You won't get the news for a while yet. P. S. Could you print this new cipher in your front page? I get awfully lonely when I am ignored, so lonely I could do my *Thing!*"

In the second part of the letter, one of the longest the Zodiac had submitted, he claimed seven instead of five victims, expressed anger at the lies the police were telling about him, and announced that henceforth he would not admit to murders he committed. "They shall look like routine robberies, killings of anger, & a few fake accidents.

"The police shall never catch me because I have been too clever for them."

He then listed all of the ways in which he had been "too clever."

"1. I look like the description passed out only when I do my thing, the rest of the time I look entirely different. I shall not tell you what my disguise (disguise) consists of when I kill.

"2. As of Yet I have left no fingerprints behind me contrary to what the police say in my killings I wear transparent fingertip guards. All it is 2 coats of airplane cement coated over my finger tips . . . quite unnoticeable and very effective.

"3. My killer tools have been boughten through the mail order outfits before the ban went into effect except one & it was bought out of the state.

"So as you see the police don't have much to work on. If you wonder why I was swiping the cab down I was leaving fake clews for the police to run all over town with. I gave the cops some busy work to do to keep them happy. I enjoy needling the blue pigs. Hey blue pigs I was in the park . . . you were using fire trucks to mask the sound of your cruising prowl cars. The dogs never came in 2 blocks of me & there was only 2 groups of parking about 10 min apart then the motor cycles went by about 150 ft. away going from south to northwest.

"ps. 2 cops pulled a goof after I left the cab.

"I was walking down the hill to the park when this cop car pulled up & one of them called me over & asked if I saw anyone acting suspicious or strange in the last 5 to 10 min & I said yes there was this man who was running by waving a gun & and cops peeled rubber & went around the corner I directed. I disappeared into the park a block & a half away never to be seen again.

"Hey pig doesn't it rile you up to have your nose rubed in your booboo?

"If you cops think I'm going to take on a bus the way I stated I was you deserve to have holes in your head.

"Have fun!! By the way it could be rather messy if you try to bluff me.

"P. S. To prove that I am the Zodiac, ask the Vallejo cops about my electric gun sight which I used to start my collecting of slaves."

Although it was not disclosed at the time, it was later reported that San Francisco police had questioned one man in

the Presidio woods the night of the Stine murder. Through an unexplained error in the transmitted radio instructions, police had been told the wanted killer was black. For this reason, no specific attention was given to the man to whom they spoke. Had Zodiac come that close to capture? If he had, it was as close as he was to come for more months than authorities cared to chronicle.

The investigation, bound about with trappings unique in police memory, plowed ahead along routine and not so routine channels. Individual kooks took stage center briefly to identify themselves as Zodiac on radio and TV stations; one drug addict proclaimed himself to be Zodiac just before a police bullet ended his life as he headed himself to plunge a saw into his daughter's neck. A school teacher in Martinez, Calif., disclosed a series of threatening phone calls received from a man who claimed he was Zodiac. An aroused and terrified public read of the current claims and crimes, then gave itself over to newssstories on Charles Manson and his alleged murder cult. The Zodiac, quick to note the swing away from the coverage he craved, laid low.

He did not surface again until Christmas of 1969, when his greeting to Belli was delivered in Munich and the stained piece of shirt that was enclosed confirmed that the sender was Zodiac.

There was no solace for police authorities with the start of a new year. The killer, with a known record of five murders and the boast of more, could be readying any number of atrocities to spill on a vulnerable nation. Belli, aware of this, volunteered his services in any capacity to make contact with Zodiac. Cryptographers stood at the ready with their specialized skills. And hundreds of miles from Zodiac's arena of action, a Chicago mystic steeped himself in Zodiac lore, then financed his own trip to Vallejo to offer his efforts to Solano and Napa County officials.

He ranged over the murder sites, receiving "strong vibrations" that he translated into possible leads for the detectives. He spent three days in the heart of Zodiac country, bugged by the frequency with which tantalizing snatches of "truth" came through, then evaporated. Finally, the mystic returned to his home in Chicago, just as frustrated as the non-mystic police.

The early months of 1970 were pockmarked with false leads and false claims, building into such a confusion of rights and wrongs that police officials were at a loss to label them.

One incident that occurred in March down in Patterson, California, was dismissed as a backlash of imagination from a hysterical woman, then later resurrected as possible the most valuable information available on the wanted man.

The incident had its inception close to midnight on March 22 when a pregnant woman, accompanied by her 10 month old daughter set off along Highway 132 from her home in San Bernardino for Petaluma. As she neared the town of Patterson, she was flagged down by a motor-

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Book-Length Feature

ist who advised her that her left rear wheel was loose. He volunteered to fix it.

His offer was accepted, but when the woman set off again, the wheel fell the ground, and the man suggested that he drive her to a garage. He pocketed the keys to her car and started down the highway with the woman and her daughter.

They had gone only a few miles when the woman realized that he had no intention of finding a garage. He drove her along deserted rural roads for more than two hours, making no overt advances, but threatening her with death in the soft, calm voice of a maniac who meant it.

Through sheer luck, the woman finally was able to fling herself and child from the car and to hide in a culvert until he tired of hunting for her and drove away.

She managed to reach Patterson where she blurted out her story to the local police. In the course of describing her tormentor, she glanced up at the official bulletin board where a wanted Zodiac poster was tacked. ‘That’s the man,’ she screamed. ‘My God, that’s the man who picked me up.’

The woman was pregnant; her experience was highly unsettling; the hour was late. Police dismissed her hasty identification as the figment of a temporarily distressed mind. Even when her car was found with its interior burned out by a deliberately set fire, authorities were reluctant to add her misadventure to the fat file of Zodiac inspired crime.

Zodiac continued to pepper the *Chronicle* with letters throughout the spring and summer of 1970. He enclosed ciphers in a few and rarely failed to boost his death tally, jumping from 7 to 10 and finally to 13, though there was nothing in the plethora of unsolved Bay Area murders to indicate Zodiac's involvement.

In one letter he reprimanded the *Chronicle* for not publishing the blue print of a death bomb he had submitted earlier, outlining plans to blow up a school bus. At the time, San Francisco's Police Chief Al Nelder had urged the *Chronicle* not to release the note for fear of panicking an already uptight citizenry. After weighing the threats contained in Zodiac's reprimand, Nelder decided it was time to publish both the first and the second letter. Northern California readers were made suddenly aware of the sinister hold Zodiac had on that part of the state. Even his bold suggestion that Californians be asked to wear Zodiac buttons failed to strike a light note. A request from Zodiac, no matter how far out, was beginning to take on the authority of a command.

The men assigned to track him down had followed leads of outrageous design. Nothing was too remote if it offered a line on the wanted man. One of the most time-consuming and unusual assignments stemmed from a Zodiac letter received in July. The contents were built around stolen fragments from Ko-Ko's opening aria in the famous Gilbert & Sullivan

operetta, *The Mikado*. Ko-Ko, as the Lord High Executioner, had sung of “a little list” of persons he intended to exterminate. Zodiac adopted the verse. He too, he said, had “a little list”.

Experts, always on the alert for an unwitting clue to Zodiac's identity, thought it possible that he once played the role of Ko-Ko in a production of the operetta. They spent the summer examining programs in search of a hint to Zodiac's real name or place of abode through one of the casts of characters.

This search, though fruitless, was indicative of the frenzy that attended every phase of the investigation. If the plagiarized aria suggested a streak of whimsy in Zodiac, the tone of a later letter negated it. In this he itemized the tortures through which he might run his victims . . . “pine splinters driven under their nails and then burned. I'll watch them scream and twitch and squirm . . . placed in caves and fed salt beef until they are gorged. Then I shall listen to their please for water and I shall laugh at them.” By October, Zodiac was claiming 13 victims. “Some of them fought. It was horrible.”

It was during this same month, on the eve of Halloween, that Zodiac, for the first time, swung away from a nameless list of potential victims and singled out one person on whom to vent his spleen. That person was Paul Avery, the *Chronicle's* astute crime reporter who had penned the major share of the Zodiac stories that appeared in that San Francisco journal. ‘You are doomed,’ Zodiac informed Avery through his favorite device, a greeting card.

Avery played it cool. His colleagues believed it enough to wear buttons reading “I am not Paul Avery”. Not until late November did Avery touch off his own bombshell with an explosion heard around the country and with echoes that suggested it was not Avery who might be doomed, but the Zodiac himself.

Avery's block-buster had been distilled from a long forgotten murder file in Riverside, California. A file numbered 352-481, which contained all the evidence attached to the slaying of Cheri Jo Bates, who, in 1966, the year of her death, was an honor student in Riverside City College.

On the morning of October 31 of that year, a groundskeeper came upon the body of Cheri Jo, pierced with knife wounds and nearly decapitated from a slash across the throat.

Investigators back-pedalled through the evening hours of Sunday, October 30, and learned that Cheri Jo had driven her Volkswagen into the parking lot of the school library at 6:10 p.m., spent 20 minutes in the library, and returned to her car at 6:30.

An examination of the machine revealed that in her absence someone had tampered with the motor, jerking the middle wire loose from the distributor. There was evidence that the vandal then waited for the girl and lured her to her death with an offer to drive her to a garage.

Such tactics suggested a disgruntled suitor and police devoted their energies

to finding someone of this nature in Cheri's background. They had made little headway a month later when two letters, identical in their wording, were delivered to the Press-Enterprise in Riverside and the Homicide Detail of the local police department.

"She was young and beautiful," the letters started. "But now she is battered and dead. She is not the first and she will not be the last . . . Miss Bates was stupid. She went to the slaughter like a lamb. She did not put up a struggle. But I did. It was a ball . . . I said it was about time. She asked me 'about time for what?' I said it was about time for her to die."

"I am not sick. I am insane. But that will not stop the game."

There were some statements (unpublished) in the letter that convinced police the writer was the girl's killer and that they had been correct in believing he jimmied her car, then offered her help. The letter, along with a Timex wristwatch found at the scene of the crime, were the only two clues with which investigators had to work and there was nothing in either to indicate that the theory of a disgruntled suitor was wrong. They continued to pursue this line of investigation.

A few days later, the school janitor came upon another repulsive literary effort. This one had not been placed in the mails, but penned in red on one of the library study desks.

"Sick of living unwilling to die.

"cut. clean, if red! Clean.

"Blood spurting, dripping, spilling;

"all over her new dress.

"oh well, it was red anyway.

"life draining into an uncertain death.

"she won't die this time.

"someone'll find her.

"just wait till next time."

Unquestionably the poem was a reference to Cheri Jo's murder, but serious doubts were attached as to whether it had been written by the killer. There were two lower case initials at the bottom of the lurid poem, an "i" and an "h". Possibly the author's initials, but not necessarily the killer's initials, believed the police.

The scarred desk was placed in a locker along with the other memorabilia of the slaying and the authorities returned to the frustrating search for the killer.

Exactly five months later to the day, the mails disgorged a fresh flood of "Cheri Jo" letters; one to the Press-Enterprise; one to the police department, and, cruelly, one to the dead girl's father. The message in triplicate: "BATES HAD TO DIE THERE WILL BE MORE." Two of the notes carried an abbreviated signature — a printed Z.

That signature in 1970 would have been of paralyzing significance. In 1966 it was meaningless. Was it an initial? A squiggle? A slip of the pen? Was it from Cheri Jo's killer from some nut trying to absorb an ounce of infamy?

Police kept after the case. It was the first murder in Riverside's history to go unsolved and the homicide detail was as anxious to perpetuate its record as it was

to avenge the crime. But four years passed with nothing but suspicion on which to act, and that too thin to permit an arrest. The only suspect was a thwarted suitor against whom there was only speculation and guess work. The investigation became a batch of yellowing papers in a file marked 352-481.

It was toward the close of 1970, about the time that Paul Avery was elected to membership on Zodiac's "little list", that the reporter was informed of this aging file and its peculiar similarities to the *modus operandi* of the Zodiac.

Avery investigated the Riverside case carefully. He found far more than coincidence in the likenesses that emerged. He advised San Francisco authorities of the file and for three days the Bay Area investigators and Riverside officials sat in solemn conclave, matching the letters sent to the Chronicle by Zodiac against the anonymous messages delivered in Riverside. The similarities were too great to be disregarded. The opinion of a handwriting expert, Sherwood Morrill of the State Bureau of Investigation and Identification was invited.

Studiously the expert went over the accumulation of letters. His verdict: "The hand-printing scratched on the desk is the same as on the three letters, particularly like that on the envelopes, and this hand-printing is by the same person who has been preparing the Zodiac letters that have been received by the Chronicle."

THE ZODIAC!

The authorities still did not know for sure that he had killed Cheri Jo, although they could surmise as much. But there was little doubt that his hand had penned the cruel letters that followed her death.

The black history of the killer, whose previously known crimes dated from 1968 was suddenly expanded by another two years. The possible addition of one and maybe more victims brought to mind Zodiac's incredible claim that he had taken 13 lives.

Was Zodiac a student at Riverside City College at the time Cheri Jo Bates was killed? That possibility motivated an intensive investigation. For the first time, the police were almost optimistic that the brutal mass slayer would be found.

Meanwhile, up and down the Pacific coast, homicide departments began pulling out their old unsolved murder files, searching for anything resembling Zodiac's *modus operandi*. The child slayings in San Jose came under close scrutiny. So did the unexplained disappearance of Elaine Davis from Walnut Creek and the ghastly string of girl murders in Sacramento that coursed through a nine-month period of savage bleeding.

Meanwhile, the *Chronicle* dug up the little-publicized story involving the woman from San Bernardino and the man who loosened the wheel on her car.

During an interview with the woman, it became clear that time had not dulled her memory of that horrible night. His car was tan, she said. It was a late model with black bucket seats and California

license plates. It had a fancy console with an ashtray at one end and a cigarette lighter at the other. The interior of the car was messy with items of clothing scattered over the seats and there was a rubber-grip flashlight on the dashboard. She described his dress as dark blue nylon windbreaker, dark-colored bell-bottomed pants, dark shoes with a high gloss. His voice, mannerisms and threats were permanently catalogued in the woman's mind.

To lend even more emphasis to the woman's identification of Zodiac was an almost-forgotten scrap of a letter received weeks earlier from the killer but not previously published. The Vallejo *Times-Herald* now put it in print: ". . . so I now have a little list starting with the woman & her baby that I gave a rather interesting ride for a couple of hours one evening a few months back that ended in my burning her car where I found them . . ."

But the optimism of the investigators soon faded with the trail. Nowhere could they link a Riverside City College student with the murder of Cheri Jo Bates or any subsequent Zodiac slaying. Attempts to trace the car were fruitless. And mysteriously, the letters stopped coming and the Zodiac seemed to fade into the mist that clouds Bay Area mornings.

The enigma that is the Zodiac continues to tantalize writers and dramatists. Plays, movies and books have been built around his character with nothing but guesswork to provide answers to his motives or whereabouts.

Theories sprout like mushrooms. He's in jail; in an institution; overseas. He's dead. He's lying in wait.

Regular meetings continue to be conducted by the State Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation in California's capital, Sacramento. Here, in addition to the CII experts, representatives from nine Bay Area counties and three counties from the Riverside-Los Angeles area gather to pool their information and in February of 1972 inaugurated a new computer hunt. The CII computers already had sifted through hundreds of thousands of Californians in an effort to reduce the number of suspects to the lowest possible number, but the figure still remains in the thousands.

Every anniversary of a Zodiac murder alerts investigators to the possibility of a repeat. This year, on March 22, a year from the date the Zodiac was last heard from, San Francisco Inspectors Dave Toschi and Bill Armstrong, who have headed the city's Zodiac Squad through two years of torment, went through their mail cautiously, expecting to turn up a taunting or boastful card from their pen pal. There was nothing. Even the kook letters, that once averaged 10 a week, from women who thought the Zodiac was a former husband or an ex-boyfriend, has died out.

Authorities allowed their confidence to build. They regretted the Zodiac had never been captured, but took comfort in the growing evidence that he either was dead or had ceased his satanic

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Book-Length Feature

pleasures.

That confidence was severely shaken on April 7, 1972. On that day, a 33-year-old legal secretary from Marin County was walking near her home when she was knocked to the ground by a car. The driver went to her assistance and offered to drive her home. When she refused, he flew into a frenzy, stabbed her, and fled.

The woman was treated at Marin General Hospital where she provided a description of her assailant: in his early 40s, stocky, and wearing dark, horn-rimmed glasses.

"It's a good chance he's the Zodiac," Captain Ken Narlow of the Napa County sheriff's office remarked. "I've been chasing that S. O. B. for two and a half years and this description fits him to a 'T.'"

The Zodiac's unexplainable absence from the crime scene on the West Coast proved to be a prod to imaginations on the East Coast and in the midwest. Radio warnings from Detroit, Mich., were said to have alerted people there to the possibility the killer had taken up residency in Michigan.

When, in July of this year, a 26-year-old woman from Indianapolis was shot in the head on a remote road near Huntertown, Zodiac buffs hinted the man had moved into Indiana, and when the woman's car was found some 40 miles away, with the hood up, suggesting car trouble and a fiend's offer of help, the buffs nodded their heads in sage agreement. "You see. That's how he operates."

The Zodiac has carved his initials in the bloody block once reserved for Bluebeard, the Cleveland Butcher, England's John Christy and Jack the Ripper. If he is captured, the frightening machinations of his mind may provide interesting study or a history of his background may supply criminologists with valuable data for preventives in the future. But that "if" is too big to permit residents of the West Coast to live in comfort.

Many school children are still driven to class by concerned parents: Lovers' Lanes are avoided like quicksand; single women ask for escort if they go out on the streets at night. If Zodiac lives, where does he live? The Bay Area? The Midwest? In the east? In Vancouver? Miami? Has he ceased operations or will he announce himself tomorrow with a postcard and the dread message, "this is the Zodiac speaking" clipped to a piece of bloodied shirt?

Most lawmen who have followed his bloody trail and the psychologists who have studied his strange mental quirks, are convinced that he cannot stop the slaughter.

One of his last letters may provide a clue to what happened to the Zodiac. In it, he said he would no longer reveal those murders he would commit. "They shall look like routine robberies, killings of anger & a few fake accidents."