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Lone SF Detective Is Chasing Zodiac

By TIM REITERMAN

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — For seven years, Police Det. Dave Toschi has been looking for one particular pot-bellied man, about 6 feet tall, 200 pounds, with short reddish brown hair and glasses on his round face.

The man appears intelligent and may have learned cryptography in the military. He sometimes wears pleated pants over size-11 shoes.

On weekdays, he may work at a menial job where he is looked upon as little more than a name and number. On weekends, he takes pleasure in killing unarmed strangers.

He calls himself Zodiac. In boastful, taunting, sometimes coded communications, Zodiac has claimed 37 murders — a figure put much lower by police — and Toschi wants to halt the deadly tally by putting him behind bars.

UNSOLVED MURDERS
"He has a personal boxscore of 38," the homicide detective says. "We know for sure he killed at least six and wounded two in the late 1960's, but there are many unsolved homicides. He hasn't taken credit for any specific killings in the last few years, yet whenever we get a new letter or postcard from him, the score goes up."

Zodiac has not issued a direct statement in 32 months, but that's not unprecedented. In January 1974, after a silence of 34 months, he wrote to update his murder count and to pan the gut-wrenching movie, "The Exorcist," as bad comedy.

Then, in July 1974, he wrote a letter to the San Francisco Chronicle, decrying ads for the movie "Badlands" as "murder glorification."

"Why don't you show some concern for public sensibilities and cut this ad?" printed the man who terrorized the area with grisly

murders and unconsummated threats against busloads of children. The letter was signed, "A Citizen," but alert mail room workers recognized his printing, which was then verified by handwriting experts.

"When we get intervals of silence, it's possible he's in the hospital or in prison where he wouldn't dare send a letter," Toschi says. "But this is only supposition."

Zodiac is a personal nemesis for Toschi, now the only San Francisco Police Department officer assigned to the case. His case files fill seven large drawers — one for each frustrating year on Zodiac's trail. He carries a copy of Zodiac's last letter at all times, a reminder that the killer may still be at large.

"To be honest, I'm no closer now to solving the case," the dapper, curly-haired detective says with a tug at his bow tie. "It's been a paper chase for me. My files are getting larger, but I doubt I'll get him unless he makes a mistake or strikes again. I don't know who or where he is."

SUSPICIOUS WIVES
Toschi says this after running down 2,000 possible suspects whose names were provided by concerned citizens, police officers, prison officials and others.

"I've even had wives come in and tell me they suspect their husband because he wears female attire, acts strangely and wears glasses," he says. "But I never joke about the Zodiac. I'll talk to anybody about the case on the chance they know something."

Toschi considers the Zodiac case the most important of his nine-year career in the homicide division.

"Zodiac is a fascinating case," he explains. "He has been compared with Jack the Ripper, who wrote the London Times about his crimes. Zodiac writes to the San Francisco Chronicle for some reason."

Zodiac has claimed responsibility for a host of murders, several of which police say he definitely did not commit. But they are certain the following attacks belong in his "boxscore":

—On Oct. 30, 1968, a man slashed the throat of a University of California coed Cheri Jo Bates in a Riverside parking lot.

—On Dec. 20, 1968, a man used a pencil flashlight taped to the barrel of a .32 caliber pistol to find and kill David Faraday and Betty Lou Jensen on a dark lover's lane near Vallejo.

—On July 5, 1969, less than two miles from the double murder, a man repeatedly fired a 9 mm pistol into another parked car, killing Mrs. Darleen Ferrin, 22, and wounding Michael Mageau, 19.

—On Sept. 27, 1969, a blackhooded man tied up and repeatedly stabbed Bryan Hartnell, 20, and Cecilia Ann Shepard, 22, at Lake Berryessa Park, about 20 miles north of Napa. The woman died with 24 stab wounds, but Hartnell recovered from 10 stab wounds.

—On Oct. 11, 1969, a man pumped a 9mm bullet into the head of taxi driver Paul Stine, 29, in a posh San Francisco neighborhood.

STRANGE PATTERN
The first known slaying and the last known slaying are considered particularly strange. Zodiac did not boast about the first, the only slaying outside the San Francisco Bay area. And the last did not fit his pattern.

"The other killings were in remote areas and no money was taken," Toschi observed. "This last one was a sloppy holdup. He had to have gotten blood on his hands and clothing. Maybe he got a total of \$20."

Did Zodiac need money or was he merely carrying out his chilling promise to conceal the slayings which he says are means of collecting "slaves" for afterlife? "I shall no longer announce to



Detective Dave Toschi, of the San Francisco police department, has been pursuing the elusive killer known as Zodiac for seven years. The killer has taken

credit for 37 murders although police are inclined to put the figure somewhat lower. Toschi is shown above going through the files he has amassed on Zodiac.

any when I commit murders, they shall look like routine robberies, killings of anger & a few fake accidents, etc." he wrote about the time of Stine's slaying.

Unlike many mass murderers, Zodiac has been clever enough to constantly change his techniques, never using the same weapon twice. He concealed his face during his only daylight murder, and he used a knife rather than gun when shots would attract attention.

He has written bizarre letters detailing his murders, announcing his plans, goading police, and at least pretending to reveal bits of information about himself. One of his cryptograms could not be decoded even by the best experts in Washington, who concluded it either was nonsensical or too complex to be deciphered.

Just what do police know about the mystery killer?

They have partial fingerprints but not enough to make an identification. They have an admittedly weak physical description based

on accounts of survivors and witnesses. They are almost certain he wears glasses, since he even wore them under his black hood at Lake Berryessa.

They believe he lives in the San Francisco Bay area because his communications were mailed from this area during the week, and the killings occurred on weekends.

"He's a weekend killer," Toschi says. "Why can't he get away Monday through Thursday? Does his job keep him close to home? It's easier to mail a letter than to get in a car and kill someone."

DATED SPEECH
Judging from Zodiac's physical description, his use of dated jargon, Toschi estimates that he may be 35 to 45 years old. "I would speculate he maybe has a menial job, is well thought of and blends into the crowd," he said. "He might be a room clerk or work for a big insurance company. A name and a number."

After reading and reread-

ing all of Zodiac's letters and having them analyzed by technical and psychological experts, Toschi has come to the conclusion that Zodiac's communications are prompted in large part by a huge ego within an obscure body.

"I think he's quite intelligent and better educated than someone who misspells words as frequently as he does in his letters," the detective said. "He'll often misspell a word at the top of a letter, then spell it correctly at the bottom. It's his ego game."

HIS MOTIVATION
What drives Zodiac to kill? In his own decoded words, Zodiac said, "I like killing people because it is so much fun; 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 that when I die I will be reborn in paradise, and all I have killed will become my slaves."

Toschi tends to dismiss the

SOLANO

CAROLYNN REECE
A baby girl weighing 7 pounds 13 ounces was born Aug. 22 in Kaiser Hospital to Mrs. Norman H. Reece. The father is an electronic mechanic. He is the son of

witchcraft-Satanic implications. "He was trying to be dramatic. If he had such an interest in the occult, he never would have misspelled paradise as 'paradise.' I think the letters are a screen, not a real clue."

Is Zodiac a perverse sex killer? "There's no evidence he ever molested any of his victims, nor did he do any fondling, or use filthy language," Toschi says. "Some psychiatrists will tell you he's a latent homosexual or he hates women. I think he gets sexual gratification or pleasure from killing unarmed people. One victim said he was laughing loudly and hideously while stabbing a woman victim."

Not a day goes by that Toschi doesn't think about Zodiac. Not a month goes by that doesn't bring another tip or two.

FOUR QUESTIONS
A newspaper article will prompt a rash of tips. He has consulted psychics and astrologers for clues. Four men considered likely suspects were placed under surveillance, fingerprinted and questioned extensively. But nothing has panned out.

"In 1969, I felt we'd solve the case, Zodiac would make a mistake or he'd come in and surrender," Toschi says. "I never thought then that I'd still be working on the case now."

"Dammit, I hope I can solve it. I have seven or eight years before I'm eligible for retirement."

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