

With their area already labeled “the murder capital,” Santa Cruz, Cal., police were stunned by a call from a quiet giant confessing killing his mother, a family friend and six hitchhiking coeds. And he promised...

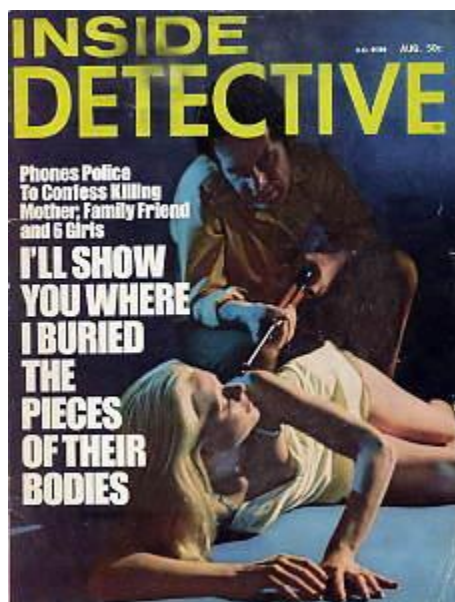
I'll Show You Where I Buried The Pieces of Their Bodies

By HUGH STEPHENS
INSIDE DETECTIVE
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See also the [1974 interview](#) with Kemper.

Young women disappear every day. They leave their husbands, their parents, their children and simply drop from sight. Police take the missing person reports, issue the required all-points bulletins and try to ease the fears of those left behind.

“She’ll come home or write you a letter or turn up somewhere. Most of them do,” is the standard response in cases where there is no indication of foul play.



A missing person case filed with the Berkley police department in the early morning hours of September 15, 1972, was typical.

Mrs. Skaidrite Rubene Koo, an employee at the University of California Library, called to report the disappearance of her daughter, 15-year-old Aiko Koo, from her home.

“She’s been kidnapped,” Mrs. Koo told the officer who drove out to her house to take the report. “I’ve had a premonition all summer that something was going to happen to change our lives. She has started

hitchhiking ... you know we have no car."

Aiko was a student at the exclusive Anna Head School for Girls over in Oakland, she told the officer. She was a good student, a good daughter. She would never just leave. There was love in their family.

And Aiko was talented. She had great plans for a future in Korean ballet. Already, she was receiving invitations to perform. The last weekend of the month, Aiko and two other girls were scheduled to travel to St. Louis to perform at the World Trade Fair there. Just before Aiko left for her ballet class the previous night, they had been putting the finishing touches on the girl's costume for that anticipated performance.

"It's been such a busy time," Mrs. Koo told the officer. "Normally, I would have gone with her. I always go with her to her dance classes. But I had so much to do."

"You know, I didn't want her to go. It wasn't that important for her to go to that class, but when my daughter wants things she wants them very bad.

"I'm no psychic, but I was afraid for her. She was so beautiful last night. I finally told her she could go if she took the bus, if she didn't hitch a ride.

"I know she's been hitchhiking. You know how impatient young people are these days. I know because she got a ticket for hitchhiking. When she told me about the ticket, she joked about it. She called it her parking ticket.

"I told her I was very much against her hitchhiking. But once people hitchhike and it goes well, they can't believe anything can go wrong. Now I think something terrible has happened. That's why Aiko didn't come home last night."

Aiko Koo never performed in St. Louis. She did not come home.

Police told her mother not to give up hope; the nicest young people were running away from home these days and they rarely gave their parents notice. Chances were at least 50-50 that Aiko had joined these wandering young runaways. The best thing she could do they said, is have some flyers printed with Aiko's picture and description

Mrs Koo was certain her daughter had met foul play, but she complied. She sent circulars to police departments and communes throughout the western states, asking any information about a beautiful young Eurasian girl, graceful in dance. She received hundreds of letters of sympathy but not one word of her missing daughter,

Last Christmas, three months after Aiko's disappearance, Mrs. Koo stopped sending the circulars. Ever since Aiko left, she had kept her daughter's Korean dancing drums and the dancing dress she was to have worn to St. Louis displayed on the living room wall. She took down the dress and packed it away.

"I never believed she ran away, she told an acquaintance. "Not even that night when she didn't come home."

The police, too, might have had hidden suspicions about the fate of Miss Koo. She wasn't the first hitchhiker to disappear in Berkley that year.

Four months earlier, two 18-year-old Fresno State College girls—Mary Ann Peso and Anita Luchessa—bade goodbye to some friends in Berkley, saying they were going to hitchhike to Stanford University in Palo Alto, south of San Francisco. Their friends at Stanford told police later that they never arrived.

The parents of the girls filed a missing persons report and sent photographs of their daughters to local newspapers, asking for help in locating them. The police report was filed and forgotten until a month before Miss Koo's disappearance.

In August, someone found Mary Ann Peso's skull up on rugged Loma Prieta Mountain in Santa Cruz County. An extensive search failed to turn up the rest of her remains or a trace of her companion.

The discovery of the skull on Loma Prieta Mountain was recalled by Santa Cruz County lawmen five months later when a 19-year-old coed named Cynthia Ann Schall disappeared while hitchhiking from her home in Santa Cruz to class at Cabrillo College in Aptos.

On January 10, the day after Miss Schall disappeared, a California highway patrolman made a ghastly discovery while driving on Highway 1, 19 miles south of Monterey, near Big Sur. Just a few feet off the roadway, he found two severed human arms and hands.

Seven days later, a badly mutilated human torso was found floating in a lagoon near Santa Cruz. Two days after that, a surfer at Capitola—just south of Santa Cruz—found a left hand. And, three days beyond that, someone else found a young woman's pelvis along the shore near Santa Cruz.

Pieced together like a macabre jigsaw puzzle, this was the body of Cynthia Ann Schall. Every part but her head and right hand was there. Fingerprints from the left hand matched prints taken from Miss Schall's rented room. Chest X-rays she had taken in October matched X-rays of the torso found in the lagoon. Police and a pathologist decided she had been hacked to death, then sawed into pieces with a power saw.

Coeds at Cabrillo College and the University of Santa Cruz campus just to the north started thinking twice about hitching for rides. Lawmen warned them not to. There seemed to be a homicidal butcher in the area, preying on defenseless young girls traveling by thumb.

At the University of Santa Cruz, a warning was posted:

"When possible, girls especially, stay in dorms after midnight with doors locked. If you must be out at night, walk in pairs. If you see a campus police patrol car and wave, they will give you a ride. Use the bus even if somewhat inconvenient. Your safety is of first importance. If you are

leaving campus, advise someone where you are going, where you can be reached and the approximate time of your return. DON'T HITCH A RIDE, PLEASE!!!"

At age 22, Rosalind Thorpe was a sensible, careful girl. She took the bus from her apartment in downtown Santa Cruz out to the university last February 5. And she was there all day. She left when the Science Library closed at 9 P.M. and headed for the bus stop.

Her arms laden with books, Rosalind stood there in an umbrella of light provided by a street light and hoped the last bus of the night had not left already for town. As she waited, a battered yellow 1969 Ford with a long, police type whip antenna pulled to the curb. There was a university staff parking sticker on the bumper. A big, friendly young man with a mustache leaned across the seat and rolled down the passenger window and called out:



"The bus is gone. I know. I've missed it before, too. Can I give you a lift? It's pretty late."

Rosalind got in the car and they drove off.

Two blocks away, 22-year-old Alice Liu, 21, was standing beside the road, wondering how she was going to get back to town. She had stayed too late in the main campus library. A car came toward her down the road. A street lamp behind it illuminated a couple in the front seat. As the car drew nearer, she saw a university parking sticker on the bumper. What could be safer, Alice probably thought as she stuck out her thumb and smiled.

Friends reported the two young women missing the next day. Santa Cruz police, recalling the fate of Cynthia Schall, issued an urgent "all-points."

Students at the university had no doubt about the fate of their two classmates. They formed search teams and began crisscrossing the wooded 2000-acre campus, looking for their remains. They found nothing,

Ten days later, an Alameda County road crew was out checking for storm damage in the Eden Canyon area of the county north of Santa Cruz. Alongside a lonely road, up in a steep ravine, they made a horrifying find.

At first, at a distance, they thought that what they had come upon were discarded mannequins. Up close, they were two mutilated corpses.

Both women appeared to have been young, though the men were not certain. The bodies were headless. One seemed to be Oriental and also had had her hands hacked off. She was nude. The white woman was clad in bra and panties.

It was a week before authorities were certain that the mutilated corpses were the remains of Alice Liu and Rosalind Thorpe. The confirmation came through use of X-rays and physical descriptions provided by the Liu and Thorpe families.

Murder was the Number 1 topic of conversation in Santa Cruz those days. District Attorney Peter Chang even commented that the once peaceful tourist community might be "the murder capital of the world right now."

He wasn't just talking about the horrible attacks on young women hitchhikers. There already had been 16 murders in the area since the start of the year. His office just had charged a young religious zealot and LSD user from Santa Cruz—25-year-old Herbert Mullin—with ten of those murders {Chalk Up Another for Mr. Kill-Crazy, June *INSIDE DETECTIVE*, 1973}.

When brought to trial, Mullin would be the second man Chang had prosecuted for mass murder in two years. He was the district attorney who sent John Linley Frazier, a drug-crazed ecology freak, to prison for the October, 1970, murders of prominent eye doctor Victor Ohta, his wife, two small sons and a private secretary. Frazier killed them and dumped them in the swimming pool of Ohta's expensive and remote hilltop house because he felt their luxurious existence damaged the natural wonders of the area. (A Swimming Pool Full of Corpses, February *FRONT PAGE DETECTIVE*, 1971).

What concerned Chang most—with Mullin in jail—was that this time he seemed to have not one, but two mass killers on his hands. There was no way Mullin could be connected with the murders of the hitchhiking coeds. There still was a psychotic killer on the loose and any young woman with her thumb out, standing at the side of the road, was a potential victim.

The horror was underscored two weeks later, when a hiker near Devil's Slide in Pacifica, up the coast in San Mateo County, found the skulls of two young women. Tests showed they had been chopped from the necks of Rosalind Thorpe and Alice Liu.

Everywhere in Santa Cruz, people looked a little more closely at their neighbors. The person responsible for this butchery must be living a very bizarre double life, they thought. Where could someone so thoroughly mutilate and dismember those young women without being seen? How could one be so sick as to even contemplate such crimes without giving some hint of dangerous instability to family, friends or neighbors?

One center for conversation about the murders was the gun shop in Santa Cruz where dealer Harry Ellis was selling handguns as fast as he did in the days when they were looking for the person who killed the Ohtas.

"I've never owned a gun before, but I'm frightened," a pretty office worker told Ellis as she slipped the snub-nosed .38 into her purse. "From now on, I'm keeping this handy at all times."

A tall husky man with a mustache stood near the counter and joined in the conversation. Ellis recognized him as "Big Ed," a gun freak who was in his shop quite often, sometimes to look, sometimes to buy, sometimes just looking for someone to talk to—about guns, mostly. They'd talked of the killings before.

"The guy who's doing this to those girls must be sick. He needs help," said Ellis.

"Sure does," said "Big Ed."

Another locale for intense speculation about the killer was the Jury Room, a bar frequented by off-duty Santa Cruz police officers and others from City Hall across the street.

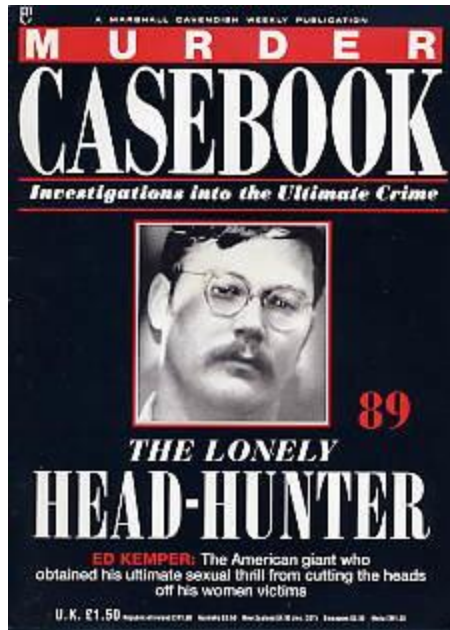
"Big Ed" Kemper often joined in those conversations and he was welcome. He was a friend of many of the officers in the tavern. He idolized them, wanted to be a policeman himself. He would be, he told everyone, if he wasn't too big. He stood 6 feet, 9 inches tall and weighed 280 pounds. He was a security guard, instead, he said, and he had the gun and handcuffs to prove it.

Everyone thought of Big Ed as a pretty good guy. He got a little rowdy sometimes. Generally, though, the straight shots of tequila he downed seemed to have little effect on him. He played the role of a friendly giant—picking up smaller friends and setting them down on bar stools.

After the arrest of Mullin, there were no more murders. Memories faded. On the Santa Cruz campus, it once seemed as if no one could complete a sentence without mentioning the killings. Everybody joined the anti-hitchhiking campaign. Campus police passed out handbills reading "Everybody Needs a Body (Save Yours)." By mid-April of this year, though, hardly anyone was talking about the killings. Hitchhiking was starting to pick up again. Those who did recall the attacks on the coeds wondered if it hadn't been that guy Mullin after all.

Then, at 4 A.M. on Tuesday, April 24, the telephone rang at the dispatch desk of the Santa Cruz police department: A man's deep excited voice came over the wire:

"I killed my mother and her friend. And I killed those college girls. I killed six of them and I can show you where I hid the pieces of their bodies."



An excited dispatch officer waved at a superior to pick up an extension telephone. As the man continued to talk, the graveyard shift officers punched buttons on the telephone, frantically trying to set up a trace. Then the line went dead. Someone had pushed the wrong button and cut off the caller.

The startled officers in the police station began a tense wait, praying the disturbed young man would re-dial their number. While they waited, they arranged with the telephone company to place a tracer on the call immediately, if it came. Each time the

telephone rang, the men started in anticipation. At 6 A.M., he called again.

A two-man patrol car originally had been dispatched to the phone booth when Pueblo police headquarters had been alerted about the agitated caller to Santa Cruz. The California officers had warned their Colorado counterparts of the man's size and said that he probably was dangerous and armed. Patrolman Martinez, who had been just a few blocks away from the booth, took the assignment because of his location and he was warned about the suspect, too. '^

When they said on the police radio that he was 6-9 and 280 pounds, I couldn't see anyone that big," Martinez was quoted. "I moved into the area and spotted him in the phone booth with his back to me.

"Then I put on my red lights, pulled my revolver and eased from the cruiser," Martinez continued. "I wasn't taking any chances."

The 30-year-old officer, who is the father of three children, said that he had walked cautiously up to the phone booth, then tapped on the glass. "First I came up, he hadn't noticed me yet and I checked his hands to see if he was armed.

"He was still talking to Santa Cruz when I came up. When I told him to move outside, he asked 'What do I do with the phone?' I told him just to drop it."

His prisoner just walked out of the phone booth, Martinez went on, then leaned against it while the officer searched him.

"It took about four minutes for the backup car to arrive," Martinez recalled, "but to me it seemed like four hours." According to the arresting officer, a quick look in Kemper's car, parked near the booth, showed him there was enough ammunition in it "to hold off an army for about a week.

"It's not likely that I'll ever make as big an arrest again," Martinez told newsmen.

Kemper, who Pueblo Chief of Police Robert Mayber sized up as "big enough to beat a mountain lion with a switch," had surrendered without a struggle. He reportedly stepped from the booth with his arms together out front, indicating his willingness to be handcuffed. Asked where his weapons were, he indicated the trunk of a nearby rental car, obtained in Nevada. Inside, officers found a shotgun, a rifle, a carbine and 100 rounds of ammunition.

Kemper seemed almost driven to confess the Northern California murders, telling where and how he killed his victims, how he dismembered their bodies (usually with an ornamental saber) and where he hid the pieces. Chief Mayber, at that point, knew little of the string of killings to which Kemper was referring but he thought the man sounded authentic. Turning to another officer, he said:

"With that kind of detail, I believe he knows what he's talking about."

Kemper told them he had killed ten people in all and he was afraid he was about to kill some more.

It all started, he said, nine years ago —when he was just 15 years old and a mere 6-foot-4, 160 pounds. He was staying with his grandparents—Mr. and Mrs. Edmund Emil Kemper—at their farm house in North Fork, a Sierra-Nevada foothill community in central California.

He didn't like being there and he had heard some talk that he was going to be sent to live with his father in Van Nuys in Southern California. He didn't like that either. He was just "mad at the world" when he saw his grandmother sitting at her typewriter, putting the finishing touches to one of those boys' adventure stories she wrote. He took a gun and shot her twice in the back of the head. Then, taking up a ten-inch kitchen knife, he stabbed her twice because "I didn't think she was dead and I didn't want her to suffer."

When Kemper's grandfather drove up to the house later, he stepped from the car and greeted his grandson with a wave and a smile. When he turned back to take out some packages, Kemper shot him in the back of the head, "because I didn't want him to see what I had done."

He hid his grandfather's body in the closet, then experienced overwhelming feelings of sorrow for what he had done. He called his mother at her home, which then was in Helena, Mont., and sobbed his confession. She called the sheriff. As deputies were en route to the farmhouse, Kemper himself called the sheriff to report his crimes.

Kemper was tried in Juvenile Court and found insane. He was sent to Atascadero (Cal.) State Hospital, where, five years later, he was pronounced cured. The hospital turned him over to the California Youth Authority, which released him after two years imprisonment.

The hulking young man went to work for the State Division of Highways as a laborer, but fantasized about going into police work of some kind. First, he had to get his juvenile court record sealed. To do that, he had to convince two psychiatrists that he was normal, no longer a danger to others.

But Kemper knew he was not normal. He had bizarre sexual fantasies about the young women he found in the free world around him. And they were so available. All he would have to do would be to pick up one of the pretty young hitchhikers.

On May 7, 1972, the tormented young giant gave in to his desires. He picked up Mary Ann Peso and Anita Luchessa on a Berkeley street corner. On the pretext of driving them to Stanford, he headed his auto south. Near Hayward, he turned off onto a lonely road and easily overpowered the young women, fatally stabbing each.

Stuffing the bodies into the trunk of his 1969 Ford, he drove back to his apartment in Alameda. After nightfall, he dragged their bodies to his room, then ceremonially dismembered them, experiencing great sexual release.

Later, he placed the butchered bodies in plastic bags and stored them in his bedroom closet overnight, he said, then carried them to his car in boxes the next morning and headed south. In Santa Cruz County, he dumped the remains on Loma Prieta Mountain. He remembered the exact place, he said, and would lead the police to it.

The urge overcame him again the night of September 14, he said, when he saw pretty little Aiko Koo hitchhiking near the bus stop in Berkeley. Once she was in his car, he forced her to ride with him to the Bonnie Doon area of Santa Cruz. He smothered her there, covering her mouth and nose with his oversized hand until she was dead. Using his ornamental saber, he dismembered her body with mounting excitement. He deposited her remains in scattered parts of the county the next day. He remembered most of the places, he said.

Actually, not all of Aiko Koo's remains were left in Santa Cruz County that day. He kept her head in the trunk of his car. In fact, he recalled with a smile, her head was in his car trunk on September 16, when he went to Fresno and was examined by two court-appointed psychiatrists in his effort to have his records sealed.



Kemper was given a clean bill of health by the two medical men.

"He has made an excellent response to the years of treatment. I see no psychiatric reason to consider him to be of danger to himself or any other member of society," one of them wrote.

The other suggested Kemper's motorcycle and his driving habits were "more of a threat to his life and health than any threat he is presently to anyone else."

The records were sealed a month later, despite the objection of District Attorney Hanhart that they should have been kept open for at least ten more years.

On January 8, 1973, Kemper said, he picked up Cynthia Schall in Santa Cruz and drove her to Watsonville, where he shot her with his .22-caliber rifle. Since it was daytime and his mother was at work at the university, he brought the body back to his mother's apartment. Using his bedroom there, he thoroughly dismembered the young girl's body, placing most of the remains inside plastic bags in boxes in his closet. Her head, he said, he took into the apartment courtyard and buried near a stepping stone with the face turned toward his bedroom window.

The next day, he scattered the other remains over a two-county radius, driving up and down Highway 1, stopping at cliff sides to make his grisly deposits.

When he picked up Alice Liu and Rosalind Thorpe on the Santa Cruz campus on February 5, he drove them only a short distance before the girls realized he wasn't taking them back to town, he said. He pulled to the side of the road and hurriedly shot them both with his rifle. He beheaded them that night and dumped their bodies in Alameda County and heads in San Mateo County the next day,

He started brooding, Kemper said, after the sheriff's deputy came to his mother's apartment in April and took away the .44 Magnum revolver he had purchased. He felt lawmen must be "onto me" and had come to the apartment mainly "to size me up." He wanted to spare his mother the heartbreak of knowing he was once again a killer.

Early on the morning of April 21, he crept to his mother's bedroom and struck her a massive blow to the back of the head with a claw hammer. He then stripped her nude, cut off her head and right hand, then placed her in the closet.

Later that day, he inexplicably called his mother's close friend, Mrs. Hallet, and asked her to come over to the apartment. He was going to take them out for dinner, he said. When she arrived, he strangled her with his hands and placed her body in the other closet.

He loaded his guns into Mrs. Hallet's car, he said, and drove down to the Jury Room for a couple drinks. Then he headed out of state. In Reno, he abandoned that car and rented one.

That, he said, was about it.

Santa Cruz County authorities, by that time, had confirmed the truth of Kemper's claim to have killed his mother and her friend. They found them in the closets in the bedroom. The bed, which Kemper apparently had used as an operating table, was soaked through with blood to the springs. A claw hammer and curved, three-foot saber with scabbard were found nearby.

As officers carried the bloodstained bed from the house, Claire Scali, an upstairs neighbor, told her sisters she had heard the officers say Ed Kemper had killed his mother and another woman and all the coeds.

The girls wondered if some of the young women had been cut up in the apartment below them. They remembered seeing Kemper carry cardboard boxes "in and out of the apartment all the time."

They also recalled talking with Kemper about the killings of the college girls.

"It must be some crazy person doing all this," he had told them, they recalled.

Two days later, the police reappeared at the Kemper apartment and went into the backyard. As the girls upstairs watched, they went to a stepping stone in the courtyard and started digging. Two feet into the earth they stopped. One of the men, in plain clothes and plastic gloves reached down and carefully extracted a human skull from the hole.

"When we first heard he was confessing all this stuff, we thought it might be for the publicity," said Claire. "But we changed our minds when the officers dug up that head."

A team of three officers from the Santa Cruz police department and sheriff's office flew back to Pueblo to question Kemper further. When the big man waived extradition—telling the judge who offered to appoint an attorney for him, "I don't think that's necessary"—and said he wanted to come back and face trial, the officers set out with him for California in the rented car, but not before he had a laugh when the local police couldn't find the key to his handcuffs, which he had asked to have removed to smoke.

In Reno, they decided, they would leave that car and proceed to Santa Cruz in Mrs. Hallet's auto.

As they motored across country, Kemper rode in the back seat, shackled and handcuffed and scrunched down to avoid attracting attention. At night, Kemper stayed in local jails. During the days, they stopped for lunch at drive-in restaurants. At one point, they were stopped for lunch when two attractive young women walked by the car.

Kemper vomited violently, then apologized, saying that was a common reaction for him when he saw an attractive woman, police reported. While Kemper was en route home, lawmen with a search warrant impounded his yellow Ford with the whiplash antenna, found parked near the Aptos apartment. From the passenger compartment, they extracted strands of human hair—some blonde, some dark—a blood-

streaked back seat, a whole clip of ,30-caliber ammunition and a spent bullet lodged in an interior panel of the car.

From the trunk, they meticulously collected more hair snarled in the trunk latch, a short-handled shovel, a tan cotton raincoat, a plastic water bottle and an enamel dish pan.



When Kemper and his escorts arrived in the Bay Area, they stopped first in Alameda County, where he led lawmen through his apartment and to sites where he encountered his victims and where he deposited the bodies of two of them. They stopped briefly in San Mateo County, where he had dropped off the skulls of the two Santa Cruz coeds.

After four days, they arrived at the Santa Cruz County line where 20 sheriff's deputies, anticipating further explorations of burial sites, were waiting. When Kemper saw the small army of lawmen, he was upset.

"This is no circus to me, man. Get me out of here," he bellowed,

When he calmed down, he led the sheriff's deputies on a six-hour tour of the county. The tour yielded:

—A decomposed, headless body believed to belong to Mary Ann Peso in a shallow grave near Old Santa Cruz Highway, off Summit Road.

—A bone, possibly a human pelvis, and some clothing in a rugged canyon near Loma Prieta Mountain.

—An arm in a plastic bag at the bottom of a steep canyon off Rodeo Gulch Road.

—What may be the skeleton of Aiko Koo from a makeshift grave off Two-Bar Road near Boulder Creek.

—Personal items of some of the young women, on a ledge below a cliff where Kemper said he threw parts of Cynthia Schall.

All burial and deposit sites were within a 20-mile radius of Kemper's mother's apartment.

On April 30, Kemper was charged in Santa Cruz Municipal Court with eight counts of murder. He was arraigned and Chang said he would

take the case to the county grand jury. The district attorney also had harsh words for the psychiatric profession for its apparent inability to identify persons who are dangerous to others.

On May 28, Kemper reportedly twice tried to commit suicide while being held in a Santa Cruz jail cell. He slashed his arm with a pen clip, obtained from an unknown source, and received hospital treatment, then tried again when back in jail.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The names Harry Ellis and Claire Scali are not the actual names of the persons who were in fact participants in the incidents described in this article.*