



Night Stalker

By Clifford L. Linedecker

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From the darkest corner of your bedroom a gaunt face suddenly looms over you. You're pulled violently from your bed and a terrifying voice screams, "Swear to Satan!"

During a two year rampage, a sadistic serial killer entered the homes of families from El Paso to San Francisco. He raped, mutilated and tortured his unfortunate victims in one of the most vicious crime sprees in California history.

This is the horrifying account of his bloody journey, of the strange coincidence that led to his arrest-and of the sensational trial where the Night Stalker's eerie sexual magnetism resulted in women actually demonstrating for his acquittal.

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

In 1985, Richard Ramirez, a petty thief and drug-using drifter, terrified the Los Angeles area, brutally raping and murdering more than a dozen people. Dubbed the "Night Stalker" by the media for his habit of invading middle-class suburban homes at random, Ramirez was sentenced to death after a lengthy trial. Linedecker, author of *The Man Who Killed Boys* (LJ 3/15/80), has written a standard case summary, albeit somewhat plodding and pedestrian. His tone of high moral outrage finally wears thin--we know Ramirez resembles a "beast" and a "monster," but what motivated him? Not wishing to appear sympathetic to Ramirez, Linedecker's speculation ends up being trite and superficial. Suitable only where sufficient interest warrants.

- *Gregor A. Preston, Univ. of California Lib., Davis*

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About the Author

Clifford L. Linedecker is a former daily newspaper journalist with eighteen years experience on the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Rochester (N.Y.) Times-Union*, *Fort Wayne News-Sentinel*, and several other Indiana newspapers. He is an experienced investigative reporter who has covered police and the courts on each of the papers where he was employed. He is a former articles editor for National Features Syndicate in Chicago, and for "County Rambler" magazine. He is the author of numerous true crime titles, including *The Man Who Killed Boys*, *Night Stalker*, *Killer Kids*, *Blood in the Sand*, and *Deadly White Female*.

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Night Stalker

CHAPTER 1

Ice Cream

THE RINGING OF THE DOOR BUZZER WAS INSISTENT. No matter how determined the drowsy suburbanite was in his sleepy attempt to burrow under the pillow and blankets to shut out the unwelcome intrusion, the shrill trill of the bell persisted.

Finally, accepting the sad fact that the ringing wouldn't stop and that his equally drowsy wife, who slept beside him, wasn't about to get up to answer the persistent summons, he slid to the edge of the bed and wriggled his toes around in the dark, feeling for his slippers. Finding them at last, he slipped his feet inside, stood up, and padded through a darkened hallway. As he shuffled into the living room and headed for the front door, he rubbed at his eyes and grumbled to himself about the kind of people who would ring someone's doorbell at this ungodly hour of the morning. It was nearly three A.M.

There was no reply to his hoarse demand to know who was there when he called out. But the ringing stopped. And, at first glance, when he opened the door a crack and cautiously peered into the darkness outside, there was no one to be seen. There was, instead, a crush of hot, moist air rushing from the pre-dawn darkness of the early August night in the San Gabriel Valley, and the quietness of the deserted suburban streets. He almost missed the diminutive pajama-clad figure standing at his feet until the child spoke: "Ice cream?"

It was the neighbor's three-year-old, and, regardless of how quiet, free of traffic, and safe the comfortable valley community of Diamond Bar, some thirty miles east of Los Angeles, might be at three A.M., on Aug. 8, 1985 it was no time for the youngster to be wandering around looking for ice cream.

It seemed that the child had awakened and, as his parents slumbered peacefully, set out to find himself a late-night treat of ice cream. There was nothing to do but return him to his home, so the adult took the little boy

by the hand and led him back to his house.

The man and the child walked into a scene of horror!

The child's mother was slumped bloody, bruised and naked, hanging by her wrists from a bedroom door. The frail East Asian woman had been handcuffed to the doorknob, and her slender body was covered with a mass of ugly gray welts and bruises. Rivulets of blood trickled from her nose and mouth, and her tear-streaked eyes were swollen. The horrified neighbor telephoned police.

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Deputy John Knight, a strapping six-foot-six veteran of the department, was the first police officer to arrive. Still handcuffed to the door and moaning with pain and fear, the woman begged him to check on her husband. She gasped that he was in the next room and needed help.

The body of thirty-five-year-old *Ahmed Zia* was stretched out on his bed in the master bedroom. There was a spot of blood on his left temple, and small flecks of blood speckled the pillow and the other bed-clothing. Knight felt for a pulse. There were no signs of respiration, and it appeared obvious--although it would be up to a medical examiner to make an official pronouncement --that *Zia* was dead.

There was nothing Knight could do for the husband, so he returned to the wife, *Suu Kyi Zia*. Although he carried handcuffs of his own, the key wouldn't fit into the cuffs used on the woman. So the brawny peace officer lifted one leg and kicked the knob off the door.

Within minutes after the woman was freed, other uniformed officers, detectives, and evidence technicians began streaming into the house. The young Asian woman was taken by ambulance to a hospital for treatment. But it would be much later before her husband's body was removed from the house and taken to the county morgue to await an autopsy.

In statements at the scene, and later, the woman told investigators a chilling story of violence and perversion that was almost unbelievably savage and gruesome.

She said that a few hours after the family had retired for the night, she was awakened by a popping sound. She barely had time to open her eyes before someone began beating her with his fists, and demanding to know where she kept her money and jewelry.

Dazed and terrified, she told him, "I swear upon God, I don't know."

"Swear upon Satan," he demanded.

Moments later, the intruder was beating her again. Roughly, he dragged her from her silent husband's side and threw her onto the floor, ripping off her pajamas. The tiny woman was dazed and unable to defend herself as he kicked her with the hard pointed toes of his boots, and slammed her head and frail body into the floor and bed.

Finally, he rolled her over onto her stomach and handcuffed her hands behind her back. Then, grabbing her by the hair, he dragged her, bleeding from her nose and mouth, into a guest bedroom, where he flung her onto the bed and raped her. Howling that she was a bitch and heaping upon her a string of other curses and obscenities, he ordered her to swear upon Satan that she would not scream for help. He threatened to kill her little boy if she disobeyed. She was half-conscious and her mouth was half-filled with blood, but somehow she mumbled the words--swearing in Satan's name not to scream.

The boy was awake and crying, and the slender, curly-haired intruder angrily rolled off of the bed and turned his attention to the youngster. He tied up the boy and began ransacking the house, furiously ripping open dresser drawers and rummaging through closets looking for money and other valuables.

Then he returned to the woman, roughly threw her onto her stomach, and attempted to sodomize her. When he was unsuccessful at doing that, he raped her again. She was only half-conscious, in shock, and dazed as the nightmarish ordeal continued. Amid the pain and fear, there were glimpses of a scraggly, bony body, a cadaverous face with rotting and missing teeth, and unruly spikes of hair. And a constant, angry stream of curses and filth.

When the degenerate, vile assault ended at last and the savage intruder was ready to leave, he pulled his victim from the bed and handcuffed her to the door.

Despite the terrible battering and abuse she had suffered, she was still moaning about her husband. She was frantic for his safety. Her attacker told her moments before leaving that her husband was all right, that he had

merely been knocked unconscious. She was still unaware that the "popping noise" that had roused her awake had apparently been the sound of the gunshot that ended her husband's life while he slept.

Somehow, after the intruder left, she managed to untie her son's feet and sent him into the master bedroom to look after his father. The child returned after a few minutes and told her, "Mama, he's not waking up." That's when she began screaming.

But screaming didn't bring help. She finally told the child to go to the neighbor's home. The boy was afraid to go outside in the dark.

It would be safe, she assured him. And, if he did as he was told, she said, he could have some ice cream.

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Danny Whittemore:

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