



Part of the campus of the University of California at Santa Cruz (UCSC), which sprawls over 810ha (2,000 acres). Two of Kemper's victims – Rosalind Thorpe and Alice Liu – were studying here.

# An Orgy OF DEATH

**O**n the night of 5 February 1973, less than a month after killing Cindy Schall, Ed had another argument with his mother. He stormed out of the house, saying he was going to see a movie. Full of rage, he neglected his usual planning – which was more to do with savouring the anticipation of the event than with strategy – and set off for the University of California campus at Santa Cruz.

It was raining and there were plenty of people trying to get lifts. Rosalind Thorpe came out of an evening lecture just as Kemper drove by. He stopped and she got into the front passenger seat. She started to chat amiably, assuming from the University of California parking sticker on

the car that Kemper was a fellow student.

They drove slowly through the campus, Kemper evaluating his passenger as a potential victim. 'Circumstances were perfect,' he explained later. 'Nobody else was around, the guard [at the checkpoint] didn't notice me coming in, nothing would look unusual going out, and she was not the least bit suspecting.'

## Alice Liu

Then he saw a small Chinese girl thumbing a ride. He stopped, and Alice Liu, 21, climbed into the back seat. As he drove out past the security guard, he flicked a glance at him to make sure he had not registered the two girls in the car.

The road swept down in long curves

The murder of two further students did not assuage Kemper's blood-lust. He went on to kill his mother and a friend of hers before fleeing to Colorado, where he finally gave himself up.

Richard Gibson

**5.2.73** Kemper abducts Rosalind Thorpe and Alice Liu from UCSC. He shoots them and cuts off their heads

**6.2.73** Kemper abuses Alice's body, then cuts off her hands. He visits a friend in Alameda with bodies in car

**7.2.73** He dumps bodies in Alameda County, and throws the heads off Devil's Slide cliff near Pacifica

**21.4.73** Kemper kills his mother and her friend Mrs Hallett; next day, he flees in Mrs Hallett's car to Reno where he leaves it and rents a car

**24.4.73** Kemper phones Santa Cruz police from Pueblo, Colorado

**DATE file** Feb–April 1973



## Victims

## STUDENT HITCHHIKERS



Courtesy of Santa Cruz DA's Office

**ROSALIND THORPE, 23,** was a popular final year linguistics and psychology student. She shared a flat in Santa Cruz and rode a bicycle to campus – except on the night that she died.



Courtesy of Santa Cruz DA's Office

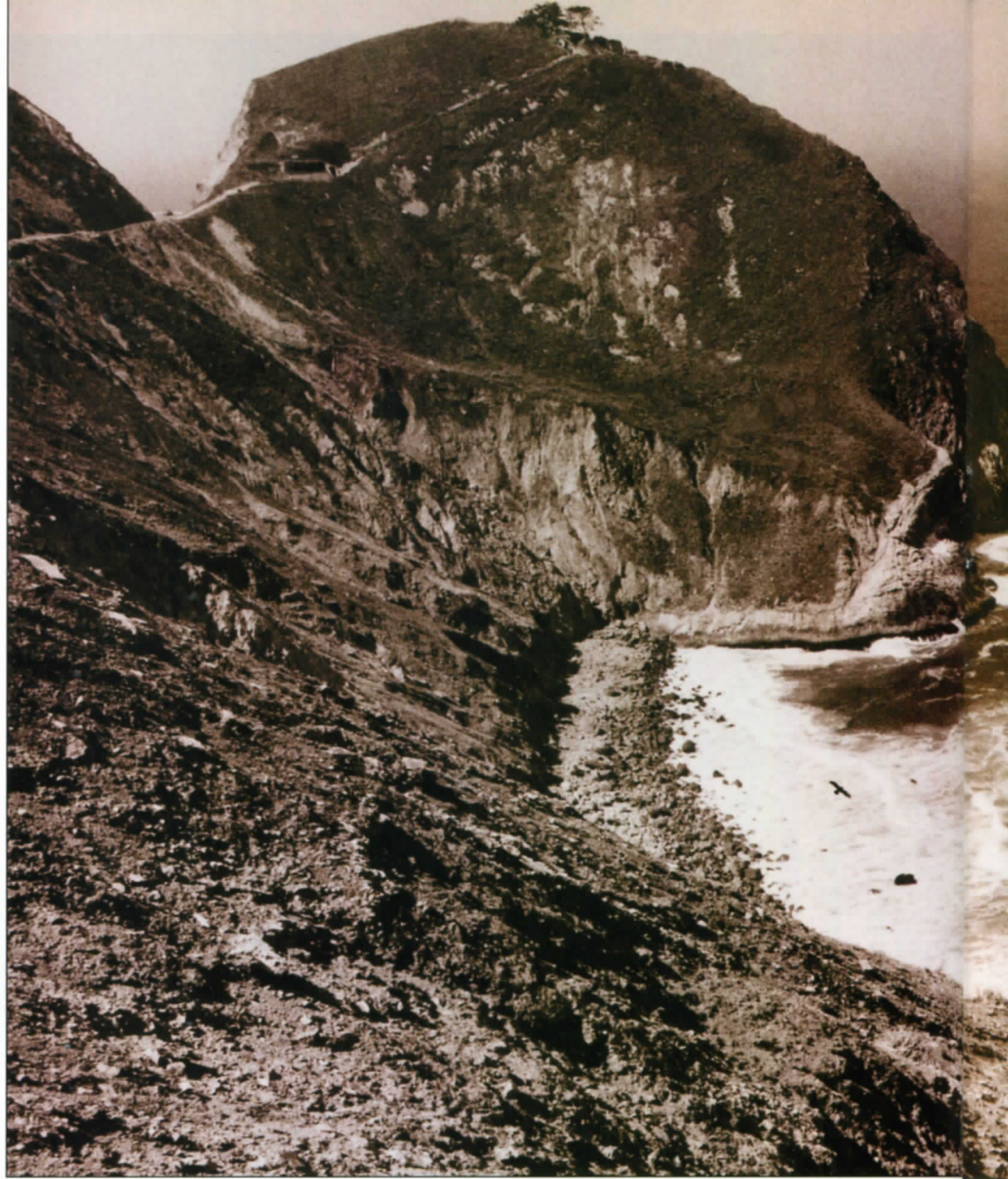
**ALICE LIU, 21,** the daughter of a Los Angeles aeronautics engineer, was also in her final year at the University of California. She shared rooms in Santa Cruz with a childhood friend.

from the hill-top campus to the town below. Kemper slowed, ostensibly to enjoy the view of the city lights and the ocean beyond. He dropped his right hand into his lap – he could not use his left because it still had a cast on it – and pulled out his .22 pistol from under his thigh.

**Cut down**

He lifted it up. Rosalind half-turned towards him, her mouth open to say something. He shot her once in the side of the head.

As she slumped, he turned to Alice Liu. She was cowering, terrified, in the corner of the back seat, trying to make herself as small as possible. Kemper missed with his first two shots as she thrashed around,



trying to avoid the bullets. The third hit her in the temple, and she stopped moving, but he fired again to make sure.

As the car rolled slowly down the hill, he dragged a coat over Alice, who, though unconscious, was moaning softly, then tried to push Rosalind's body down out of sight below the dashboard. He could barely move her, so he just draped a

He stopped at a petrol station, and went into the toilet to wipe the blood off his plaster cast and dab at what he had got on his clothes. He always wore the same clothes when he went on the hunt – dark denims that did not show bloodstains.

Returning home, Kemper parked the car in the street outside his mother's house in Aptos, and told her that he had fallen

**“Very good-looking, built nicely and everything, and intelligent, and moderate in her dress and everything, nothing outlandish.”**

*Ed Kemper on his victim Alice Liu*

blanket over her and accelerated smoothly away.

He drove out of town. He felt sick to his stomach. Alice was still moaning and gurgling in the back. As soon as he was sure it was safe, he turned and shot her again, point-blank in the head. She was quiet for a second, but then the noise started again. He pulled up in a quiet cul-de-sac and dragged both bodies into the boot of the car before heading back.

asleep at the cinema. Then, leaving her watching TV, he went out again, saying he had to buy cigarettes.

Before he went to the shop, he opened the boot of the car and, using his hunting knife, decapitated both the bodies. It was not particularly late, between 10 and 11pm, but nobody saw him.

The next morning, he brought the heads into the house, washed them and removed the bullets. Then he brought in Alice's body





Richard Gibson

▲► After disposing of the bodies of Rosalind Thorpe and Alice Liu in Alameda County, Kemper (right) threw the bags containing their heads and hands over the cliff at Devil's Slide (above), near Pacifica.

and sexually abused it, before washing that too, and putting it back in the boot of the car. There, he cut off her hands 'as an afterthought'.

## Different tactic

This time, though, he did not dissect the bodies. He no longer got a thrill from the task. All he wanted to do was get rid of the evidence. He headed north towards San Francisco, hoping that if he left the bodies around there the police would assume the killer was a local man. He visited a friend in Alameda for a while, then drove out into Eden Canyon in the early hours to dump the bodies.

Afterwards, he drove across to the coast, near the town of Pacifica, and tossed the heads and hands of the girls over a cliff called Devil's Slide.

The bodies were found by some workmen less than a fortnight later. In the interim, Mary Guilfoyle's body had also



AP/Wide World

turned up. Kemper knew that he was going to have to stop killing students. The whole area was on its guard, and he had been getting more and more reckless.

Despite his worries, Kemper deviated from his master plan by keeping evidence – the bags Rosalind and Alice had been carrying. For weeks, he pored over the family photos, the letters, and the rest of the documentation they had carried,

trying to get to know the girls.

It was only in the middle of April that he packed up the papers, together with the keepsakes he had taken from Cindy Schall, and the gun he had used to kill all three girls, and threw them in the ocean.

His nerves were shot, and he was getting ulcers. It was time, he felt, to climax his career of crime. To show the world that he was a man to be reckoned with, he



would make a 'demonstration to the authorities'.

For a while, he considered killing everyone who lived in his immediate vicinity, fantasizing about creeping from house to house under cover of darkness, silently slaying. He abandoned the idea as impractical. Besides, there was his mother to think about.

## Grim choice

He knew he would be caught soon, he said later, and then 'the only choices I saw were just accept it and go to jail, and let my mother carry the load... like [what] happened the last time with my grandparents, or I could take her life.'

On Good Friday, 20 April, he went to see his friend in Alameda, and then put in a few hours at his old job. However, he was in a black mood when he drove back to Aptos.

His mother was still at work. He phoned her to say he was home and she told him she would be going out straight from work and would not be back until late. Ed spent the evening working his way through a six-pack of beer in front of the TV. His mother had not returned by midnight, when he went to bed, nor at 2am when he decided to get up and check.

She was there at 4am, and had just got into bed when he wandered in. When she



▲ When Kemper began his campaign of slaughter, he destroyed the evidence. But in the case of Rosalind Thorpe and Alice Liu, he kept their personal possessions (above) for several weeks in an attempt to get to know his victims. Only then did he throw their bags over a cliff along the coast.

asked what he was doing, he told her he was just checking to see if she was back. She asked if he wanted to talk and he said no. With that, she turned over to go to sleep, saying, 'We'll talk in the morning.' Ed went back to his room, glad that there had not been an argument. He did not want to part from her on bad terms.

He lay awake for an hour or so, until he was sure that his mother was asleep. Then, carrying his pocket-knife and a hammer, he went back to her room. His mother was sleeping on her left side. Ed stood over her, watching, for a minute or two, then brought the hammer down on her right temple with great force.

She did not move, just lay there. Blood trickled from the wound, but she was still breathing. Ed turned her over on to her back and swept the pocket-knife across her throat. 'What's good for my victims is good for my mother,' he thought. Working swiftly with practised hands, he removed her head, then dragged the body into the cupboard.

It was morning by the time he had cleaned the blood off the walls and carpet. He felt sick and giddy. This time, killing had not assuaged his murderous

feelings. He had to get out of the house. He loaded the guns and knives into the car and left.

Driving around town, he met a drinking buddy, Robert McFadzen. McFadzen had owed Kemper \$10 for some time. It was a good enough reason for Kemper, in his current state of mind, to decide to kill him. Before he could carry out the plan, however, McFadzen apologetically handed over the money. Kemper promptly bought them both \$5-worth of beer.

Back at the house, Kemper worried about explaining away his mother's absence over the Easter weekend. It occurred to him to say she had gone away with someone. This flimsy story could be made more convincing if the friend were to go missing as well. He searched out his mother's address book.

## The trap

He called Sally Hallett, a colleague of his mother who had become her friend, but there was no reply. Kemper fretted around the house, then at 5.30pm Mrs Hallett rang and asked to speak to his mother.

Kemper told her that he was celebrating being back at work after a long lay-off, and had been trying to get in touch to arrange a surprise dinner for his mother. Mrs Hallett immediately agreed to come over at 7.30 that evening.

Ed got the house ready for his guest. He closed the doors and windows, put a pair of handcuffs in his pocket and scattered assorted weapons handily around

## In focus

### RULES OF THE GAME

Part of Kemper's fantasy was the setting out of a number of rules that would ensure he remained at liberty. But he broke many of them.

To perfect his technique of picking up hitchhikers, for example, he learnt the times and places he was least likely to be observed. He resolved never to turn back to pick anyone up or perform any other manoeuvre that would draw attention to himself.

For the same reason, he practised making himself as inconspicuous as his size allowed. There were many more hitchhikers at weekends, and people consequently paid them less attention. When out looking for a victim, he would take note of factors such as traffic flow and police presence. One important part of his strategy was to operate away from the immediate vicinity of Santa Cruz, but at the end he failed to do this.



the place. Mrs Hallett was half an hour late. When she arrived, Ed told her his mother had been delayed and showed her into the living room. According to Kemper, she made straight for the couch, saying, 'Let's sit down, I'm dead.'

Kemper took this as his cue for action. He stepped in front of her, punched her in the stomach and chest, spun her round into a stranglehold and lifted her off the ground.

She dangled there, across him, tugging futilely at his arm for a while, then went limp; Kemper had crushed her windpipe, making it impossible for her to breathe.

He lowered her to the ground, then wrapped paper bags around her head and tied a cord and a scarf around her neck to make sure.

He put the body on his bed, covered it, then went out for a drink at the Jury Room. He sat there for a while, outwardly in control, if a little distracted, nursing a beer and hoping to eavesdrop on some policeman or other talking about his crimes.

When he got home, he cut off Mrs Hallett's head, then fell into a fitful sleep in his mother's bed. He knew it was over. He had been relatively secure when he was

slaughtering strangers on deserted back roads, but there was no way he could brazen this one out. There was nothing for it but to run.

First thing in the morning, he transferred Mrs Hallett's body to his bedroom cupboard, then loaded his weapons into her car. He had no precise plan, but had not completely forsaken the idea of climaxing everything with an orgy of violence.

At 10am he was ready. He headed east, over the Sierras. When he arrived in Reno, Nevada, he transferred his guns to a hire car and left Mrs Hallett's car at a garage, on the pretext of asking them to check it for an electrical fault.

### Cracking up

Then he hit the road again, continuing eastwards up and over the Rocky Mountains. He drove more or less non-stop, sustaining himself with fizzy drinks and No-Doz caffeine tablets. He listened to the news reports on the car radio, alternating between fear that he would soon be the subject of a manhunt and disappointment that no one seemed to notice him.

He drove throughout Monday, 23

### ED'S MOTHER

**CLARNELL STRANDBERG** died at a point where most of her problems – with the exception of Ed – had been solved. With three broken marriages behind her, she had finally become reconciled to being alone. She made a success of her career at the UCSC campus, where she had begun as a secretary, and worked her way up to administrative assistant to the Provost. She was well-liked and respected by her fellow workers, and had got her former drinking habit under control. Few people at her work thought Ed's characterization of her as a domineering querulous woman rang true.

April. Just before midnight, he stopped at a pay phone in the town of Pueblo, Colorado, 2,414km (1,500 miles) from Santa Cruz. He dialled the number of the Santa Cruz Police Department and recognized the voice of the man who answered – it was Andy Crain, a uniformed officer he had met drinking in the Jury Room.



*The small village of Aptos (population about 8,000), where Kemper lived with his mother, lies some 16km (ten miles) east of Santa Cruz.*



Kemper asked for Lieutenant Charles Scherer, who was in charge of the murder investigation. Told that Scherer was off duty until 9am, Kemper insisted that Crain send for him. The policeman, thinking he was speaking to a time-wasting crank, humoured him for a while. Kemper got his attention by addressing him as Andy, then identified himself. Crain, still sceptical, agreed to try to contact Scherer, and Kemper said he would ring back.

## Another attempt

When he called again at 1am, another policeman took the call, told him Scherer was out, and abruptly hung up on him. He just sat in the car, willing sleep to come. Strung out from caffeine and lack of sleep, he felt a rising urge to take his guns and just run amok until he was shot down.

The only problem was facing up to his own death. He was terrified of violence; one of the reasons he had confessed from a phone booth was that he was sure the police would shoot first and ask questions later if it came to a confrontation.

At 5am he rang again. Yet another officer was on duty at the desk. It was a poor connection and Kemper had to bellow 'Co-ed killing!' down the line a couple of times to get them to take him seriously. He told them where he was, the number of his car, and that he had already killed eight people.

The policeman, Officer Conner, said he would send someone to pick him up. 'I wish to shit you would,' replied Kemper, on the edge of hysteria. 'I have over 200 rounds of ammo in the trunk and three guns. I don't even want to go near it.'

## Stringing along

Conner tried to keep him talking. Kemper gave him his mother's address, and suggested they send Sergeant Mike Aluffi to check it out: Aluffi had been there before, making a routine enquiry about one of Kemper's applications to buy a gun.

They talked on. By now, Conner was totally convinced that Kemper was serious and on the edge of more violence. He could not understand what was taking the Colorado police so long. Then, at last, they were there. Kemper broke off in the middle of a recital of where he had hidden his victims' bodies: 'The man's here, Whew! He's got a gun on me.'

► At just over two metres (6ft 9in) tall, Kemper was a formidable figure. Yet he was afraid of violence – at least violence done to him – and surrendered to the police by phone, rather than risk harm in a shoot-out.

