



Victim of DIVORCE

A casualty of his parents' broken marriage, Ed Kemper was left at his mother's mercy. To toughen him up, she locked him in the cellar every night. Taking refuge in fantasies of revenge, Ed began by killing animals, then turned to killing relatives.

Ed Kemper (in full Edmund Emil Kemper III) was born in Burbank, California, on 18 December 1948. He was the second child, and only son of electrician E. E. Kemper Jr and his wife Clarnell. The couple already had a six-year-old daughter, Susan. In 1951, the family was completed with the birth of a second daughter, Allyn.

Both Kemper's parents were big: his mother Clarnell was over 1.9m (6ft) tall and her husband 2m (6ft 8in). Both had loud voices, especially when they argued,



AP/Wide World

▲ Ed Kemper was born in the city of Burbank (seen here in the 1940s) in Los Angeles county. This picture shows the hangar-like sound stages of the famous Warner Bros. studios.

together and fought again.

Eventually, Kemper senior, who, despite his size and his war record, was basically a weak and rather passive man, folded under the strain. He abandoned his wife and family in 1957, returning

▼ *The rage that afflicted Ed Kemper in his adolescence arose partly from the treatment meted out to him by his mother, as well as the feelings of abandonment he suffered.*

only occasionally. Clarnell Kemper took her children to live in Helena, Montana, where she found a job in a bank. She and E.E. divorced in 1961, and a year later she married for a second time.

Idolatry

Young Kemper hero-worshipped his father, who regaled him with stories of his war service in a Special Forces Unit in Europe. To him, his father was an all-

American hero like John Wayne, and he felt his loss keenly. He blamed his mother for driving him away.

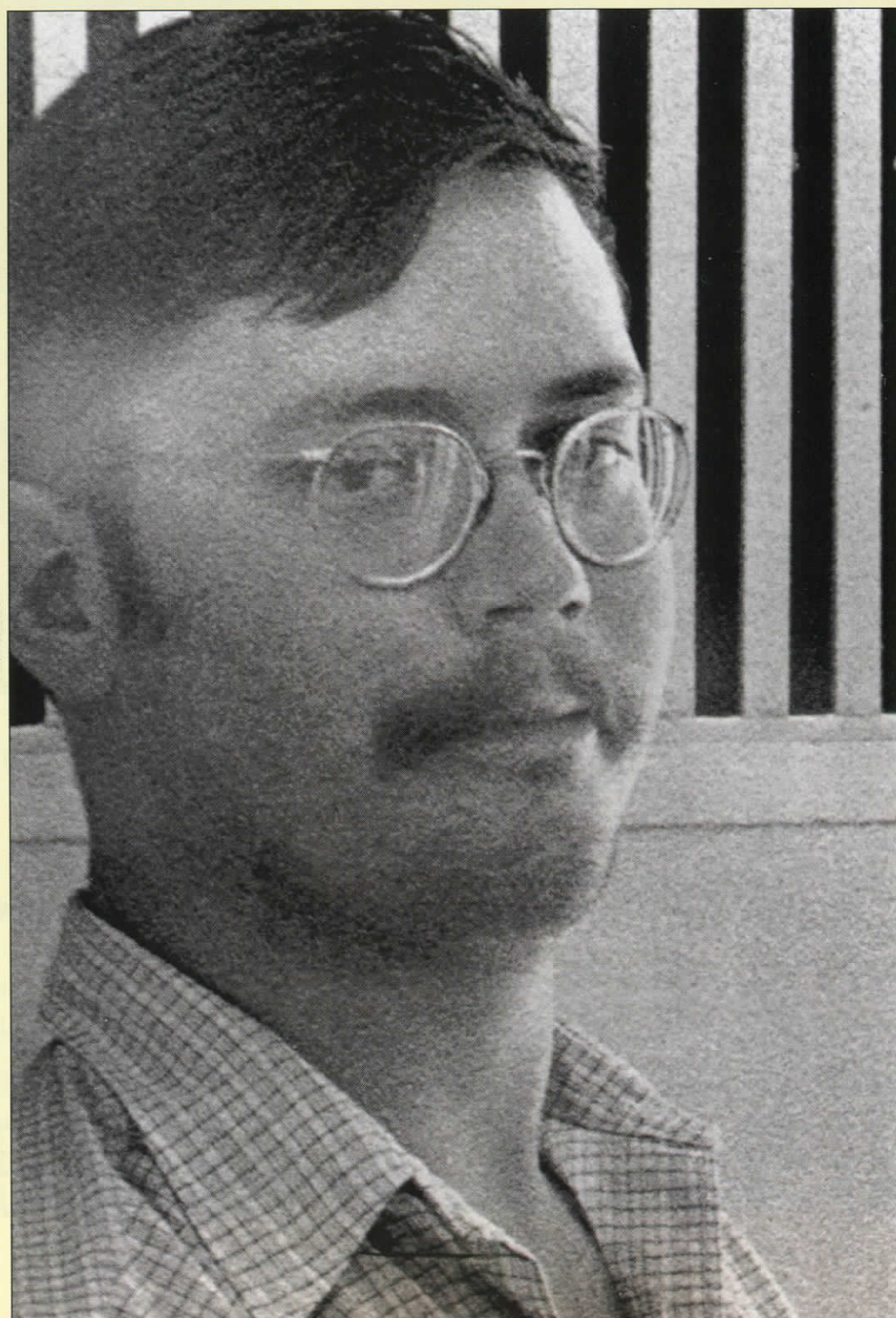
Clarnell Kemper, who was drinking heavily at this time, thought her son was too soft. A relative's son had turned out to be homosexual – then regarded as shameful – and she decided her own boy needed toughening up.

To this end she made Ed sleep in the basement. Every night he was locked in and

and they argued a great deal.

Clarnell was disappointed that her husband had not made it through college and felt he was not making enough money. She thought he was too hard on the girls, but too easy on Ed.

The couple separated – from 1953 to 1955 E. E. Kemper was in the Pacific, working on atomic bomb testing sites – then got back



Corbis Bettmann/UPI

the kitchen table was dragged over the trapdoor. Every night in the dark the young boy nurtured fantasies of revenge.

This nightly ritual lasted for eight months, until his father got wind of it and put a stop to it. Young Ed grew up extremely disturbed. He had been taught to shoot at summer camp when he was quite young. When he was 13, he shot dead a classmate's pet dog, an incident that made him even

more unpopular, and shunned by his peers, who taunted him. He always ran away; he was terrified of physical violence.

It was not the first time he had killed an animal. When he was nine, he had buried the family cat alive in the back yard. Later, he dug up the body, took off the head, and mounted it on a stick in his bedroom, where he prayed to it.

Animal killer

After killing the dog, he killed his own Siamese cat, apparently because it preferred his sister's company. Simmering with rage, he pounced on the unfortunate animal, sliced off

the top of its skull with a machete – there were always weapons in the house, a legacy of his father – then stabbed it. He buried part of the body in the garden, and hid the rest in his bedroom cupboard.

In the autumn of 1963 Ed went to stay with his father, who was newly remarried and had a stepson around Ed's age. Ed enrolled in school in Los Angeles, but did not settle down. His classmates rejected him and his stepmother feared him. After a week he was bundled off back to Montana.

During that time, his mother had found the remains of the cat in his cupboard. He denied

▼ After Kemper's parents separated in 1957, his mother took the nine-year-old Ed and his two sisters to live in Helena (below), the spacious state capital of Montana.



THE STEPFATHER

Clarnell Kemper – Ed Kemper's mother – was divorced in September 1961, and married a 45-year-old plumber called Norman Turnquist soon afterwards.

Turnquist set about making friends with Ed, taking the boy with him on the fishing trips that were his chief form of relaxation.

Ed responded well to this kindly treatment, but even so, he remembered once standing behind his stepfather as he fished, debating whether or not to brain him with the iron bar he was holding.

He had a half-formed plan to steal Turnquist's car and drive south to see his natural father, who was living in Los Angeles.

Turnquist and Clarnell were divorced in 1963, after just 18 months of marriage.

knowing anything about it.

He continued to be very unhappy, and to lose himself in fantasies. In November, not yet 15, he stole his mother's car and drove south to Butte. From there he caught a bus back south to see his father, who agreed that he could stay on.

Paradise lost

This brief idyll ended at Christmas, 1963 when his father took him to his parents' farm at North Fork, in the western foothills of California's Sierra Nevada. At the end of the holidays, Ed's father left him there.

He started school in a nearby town, but did not do well, despite his intelligence – he usually scored in the high 130s in IQ tests. At the end of the school year, Kemper went to stay with his mother for a while, returning to North Fork on 12 August 1964. Two weeks later he shot his grandparents.