

Weldon Mead Kennedy

Union City "Vampire"



Washington Township Museum of Local History

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Introduction

In the early 1970's, Union City was a fast growing town. Hayward and Fremont had started growing in the late 1950's and early 1960's with large subdivisions taking over farm land. Union City was slow to this trend and did not really start putting in subdivisions until the late 1960's.

In 1971 there were four companies advertising new homes in the local "Union City Leader" newspaper; K & B Homes with the El Dorado Park, Kay Homes with Regency Park, Boise Cascade with Casa Verde, and Braddock & Logan with Town & Country Homes. Most new homes were aiming for the middle class. Union City was moving away from its agricultural beginnings to a more suburban feel with homes and industry taking over farm land.

With the new homes, the population of Union City was growing rapidly. In 1967, the population was 11,441 and by 1970 it was at 19,700. The biggest increase in population was from 1969 to 1970, with over 4,000 new residents.

Union City was having some growing pains, with the Hispanic community in Decoto feeling overwhelmed by the new, mostly white, residents coming into town. Tension was felt mostly in the school district. The growing city had limited services for youth and there were discussions in the local newspaper about after-school youth issues. A dance in Decoto, sponsored by Commission Honorifica Mexicana, led to clashes with police after it ended and the crowd hung around. Some say the large police presence led to the small skirmishes.

Despite the tensions, Union City was a safe town to live in and it was out of the ordinary to have a serial killer within the city limits.

Vicky Lynn Iselin

On a bright Saturday morning, July 29th, 1972, Vicky Lynn Iselin, borrowed her brothers green bicycle to make a quick trip to a local Quick-Stop market, just a few blocks from her home on San Andreas Drive. Before leaving she told her mother that she would not be gone long as she wanted to go shopping with her sister.

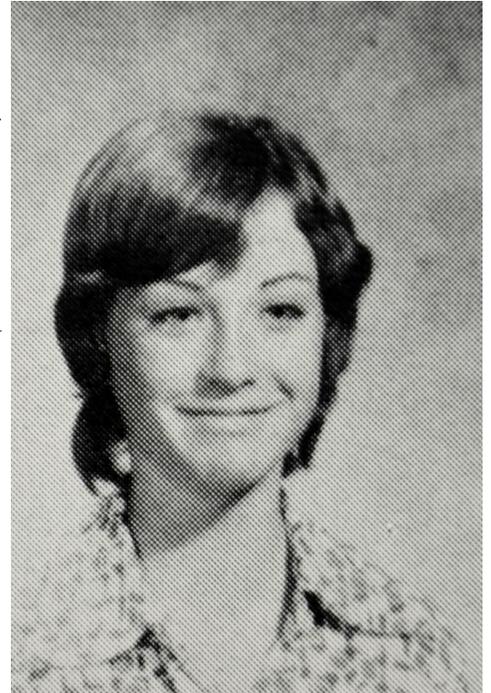
Vicky was a 14-year old with short brown hair, a James Logan High School student, and was described as "a girl who's personality matched her good looks." Friend Sidney Harris said that "she was a very nice person to get along with - she'd sit down and talk with you and she'd always be friendly and happy."

By 3 p.m., 4 hours after Vicky had left, Mrs. Keith was getting worried and started looking for Vicky in the Casa Verde neighborhood. She walked around the neighborhood asking neighbors and friends if they had seen her. About 6 pm, Mrs. Keith called the police to report her daughter missing.

Officer George Bist arrived and took the missing person report from Mrs. Keith. The police then organized their own door-to-door search for Vicky. Given the low violent crime rate of Union City at the time, the police initially suspected that she was out having some adventure. It was not uncommon for local teenagers to seek adventure by sneaking off to San Francisco or Berkeley. Vicky's elder sister told Officer Bist that

Vicky had told her that she had to go by her friend Debbie's house and talk with Debbie's step-brother about some money owed to a friend.

During their search, the police found one house that no one was answering their knocks. They talked to a neighbor across the street to find out if anyone was home in the house. The neighbor said that earlier in the day the blinds in the kitchen window were open and a Gremlin was parked in the street. The neighbor said she saw Weldon Kennedy leave in the Gremlin and return a little bit later. About 8 pm, Officer Bist was able to get someone to answer the door and talked with Kennedy. Kennedy said that Vicky had come by looking for Debbie and knew nothing about any money. Bist noticed a scratch on Kennedy's nose and asked about it. Kennedy said that he received the scratch from a rose bush at a friends house in another town. Bist left to research Kennedy's alibi, but said "The moment he opened the door, something hit me that there was something wrong. Nothing about his appearance or manner, just a certain feeling about the whole thing."



Vicky Iselin

About 10 pm, as the police officers were at a neighbors house, the garage door opened and a green Gremlin started pulling out of the garage. Officer George Bist went across the street and talked again with Kennedy, and even looked in the Gremlin. When asked where he was going, Kennedy said that he was going for dinner and would return after that. Officer Bist ended his questioning of Kennedy, but asked him to keep himself available for further questioning. Kennedy was last seen heading north on the Nimitz freeway in his Gremlin.

The neighborhood canvassing turned up reports that Vicky was seen close to the house of her friend Debbie DeTar. Mr. and Mrs. DeTar had left for vacation early that morning, taking Debbie with them, but leaving their step-son, Weldon Kennedy behind. The DeTar's were heading to Colorado and Oklahoma. Kennedy now became the focus of the investigation.



Officer George Bist

Officer Bist learned that Vicky had known that Debbie was leaving town and would not have gone to her house seeking her out, but probably went seeking Kennedy as Vicky's step-sister had said. This put Kennedy's statement at odds with the facts. Officer Bist had also contacted Kennedy's friend who had the rose bush that cut Kennedy's nose. The friend said that Kennedy had not been to his house the day that Vicky went missing. The friend also said that Kennedy told him that he "had a young girl coming over and that he would tie her up." Kennedy invited the friend over and "offered to let the friend join him in a sex act upon the girl." The friend told Officer Bist that he declined the offer.

The police wanted to search the home of the DeTar's, but they did not have enough probable cause. They had to get permission from the family if they wanted to search the

house. On Tuesday, August 1st, the police were able to contact the DeTar family by phone and get the permission they needed.

The next day, the police arrived at the house on San Angelo Way. A bicycle matching the description as the one that Vicky had been riding was found in a shed in the backyard. During a search of the house, a hastily written ransom note was found, which read "Leave \$5,000 under the freeway underpass. Contact you when is the right time, and where. Do not call cops, then she'll be returned to you." The search also found some rope with hair and small blood stains on the carpet. At 11:45 am, Detective Al Guzman found Vicky's body in a crawl space under the house that was reachable through an access door in a bedroom closet. Her body was found naked with her clothes nearby. It was clear to the officers that she had been stabbed and a knife was found close by her body. Thomas Keith, Vicky's step-father, identified Vicky's body at the Coroners office. He also identified the bicycle that Vicky rode that day.

As soon as Vicky was found, a state wide bulletin was put out for Weldon Kennedy and the green 1971 Gremlin with license plate "466 DEA". The DeTar family had a cabin in Arnold, in Calaveras County. Police were sent to the cabin to see if Kennedy was there, but there was nothing indicating that Kennedy was there or had been there recently. There was no way to know where Kennedy was.

Weldon Mead Kennedy

The bulletin sent out on Kennedy described him as having brown hair and hazel eyes. He was six foot two inches and weighed 160 pounds and had a pock marked face. Kennedy was born in Medill, Oklahoma on Sept. 24, 1943, the only son of Bud and Margie. He is the eldest of three, with two younger sisters. His father had left the family when he was two years old.



His mother remarried and Kennedy moved with his family to California when he was an early teen. The family moved to San Lorenzo, where he attended Bohannon Jr. High School (now Middle School) and Arroyo High School. Kennedy did not do well in school and dropped out. He joined the Army at the age of 17, serving two years and was honorably discharged. At the age of 21, he was convicted of grand larceny in Lewiston, Idaho, and served six months of a three-year sentence. After being paroled in Idaho, he was allowed to move to California to serve out his probation, which ended in July 1966.

Just a year later, Kennedy was convicted of transporting stolen property across state lines. He was caught taking a stolen car from Nevada to Washington. He served two and a half years in Federal prison in Washington State. Kennedy was released in 1970 and his probation ended on July 16, 1972.

Weldon Kennedy in High School

Neighbors of Kennedy described him from "a nice, quiet guy," to "a somewhat retarded, slow-speaking man." Mrs. Comstock, a neighbor on San Angelo Way, said that she left the same time in the morning as Kennedy and that "we exchanged only a few words and rarely."

Kennedy worked at the Valley Industrial Laundry in Union City as a dry cleaning machine operator. Bob Pounds, the plant manager, said that Kennedy was a "very hard worker" who did not miss many days. Bob described him as "a very quiet person - I guess you might call him a loner."

Caught in Wyoming

After leaving Union City, Kennedy headed east, driving for days and eventually ending up in South Dakota on August 3rd. There Kennedy picked up two teen hitchhikers, Don Kotel, 19, and Russel Hughes, 17, both from the Chicago area. Kennedy then drove for 300 miles into Wyoming. They stopped to spend the night near Ten Sleep Canyon, about 35 miles east of Worland, Wyoming, on Highway 16. While resting with the teens, Kennedy drank a six-pack of beer and started talking about the murder he committed in California. He then grew worried that he had said too much to the boys, so he attacked them with a screwdriver. He punctured the lung of Russel Hughes.

After the stabbing, Kennedy headed west on Highway 16. The teens provided a description of Kennedy and his vehicle to the police. During what was described as a high speed chase, Kennedy ran his Gremlin off the road and started running through a wheat field. He was able to elude the police, and tried to hitchhike on a road heading south out of Worland. A passing trucker noticed Kennedy and considered it unusual for someone to be hitchhiking at night, so he contacted the police. Soon after, Kennedy was picked up.

On August 4th, the Wyoming police found that there was a murder warrant for Kennedy in Union City and contacted the Union City Police. Sgt. Bob Rainey from the Union City Police Department, Robert Bernard and Jack Richardson, investigators from the Alameda County District Attorney's Office, flew to Wyoming to interview Kennedy about the murder of Iselin.

The team first saw Kennedy on the morning of August 5th and again on Sunday, August 6. During the interview Kennedy confessed to killing others besides Iselin. He admitted to the killing of "Billy" Oliver from Hayward, and even provided directions to where Oliver and his clothes could be found.

Kennedy also admitted to killing an 18-year old woman at South Lake Tahoe, on July 4th, and dumped her body in the lake. South Lake Tahoe Police Chief John Crow said that a police lieutenant and a deputy district attorney were sent to Wyoming to discuss the crime with Kennedy. After searches were made around Lake Tahoe, no body was found and there was no evidence of any murder.

Kennedy said that on, July 5th, he attacked and robbed a woman in Seaside, California. The woman, Marilyn Burgess, was on the beach when Kennedy attacked, struck her in the head with a hammer and left her for dead. In fact, she was not dead and just had a fractured skull. She was unable to describe her attacker to the police and the attack left her with brain damage.

Mario "Billy" Oliver

Mario "Billy" Oliver was a 15-year old from Dixon Street in South Hayward. On June 27th, 1972, he went missing. His mother, Dorothy, worried about him and spent the evening by the telephone, knowing that something bad had happened to him. No call ever came.

During his interview with police, Kennedy told the story of the murder of Oliver.

About 4:30 p.m., Kennedy left work and drove home. There he picked up a machete and a shovel. He drove out to an isolated area near the "new Whipple extension". He found a large drainage ditch, where he dug a long shallow pit, covered it with a mattress and hid the machete. He then started driving around the area, looking for a victim.

About 9:30 or 10 pm, Kennedy came across Billy Oliver near the Holiday Bowl bowling alley on Industrial Parkway in Hayward. He picked up Oliver, who was hitchhiking. He asked Oliver where he was going and if he smoked marijuana. Oliver said that he did smoke, so Kennedy offered to take Oliver where he had some marijuana growing. He drove to the location in Union City, right where he had prepared a grave.

They sat there and smoked some weed. Kennedy told Oliver that he had some more weed stashed in a bush, but pulled out the machete instead. Pulling a knife on Oliver, Kennedy said "I'm not going to hurt you" and commanded Oliver to take his clothes off. He then tied up Oliver's hands and had him lay on the mattress. Kennedy performed oral sex on Oliver. He then masturbated himself, finishing on Oliver. Kennedy killed Oliver by choking him and then he used the machete to cut off Oliver's head. He put the body in the shallow grave, covering it up with the mattress, and buried the head about 50 feet away from the body. He then grabbed up Oliver's clothes and left.



Officer Al Guzman

During the interview with police, Kennedy said that he "knew that the devil was the one who sent me. Pick this special person up." Kennedy also said that was out driving that night "to find someone to kill." He said that "I felt compelled by the devil to kill somebody for him."

About two days later, Kennedy returned to where Billy was buried and dug up his head. He placed it in a sack and put it in the back seat of his car, then returned home. A few hours later, he went to visit a friend near Niles Canyon, Kennedy was not able to find his friend, so he drove into the canyon and parked near the creek. Kennedy said about the head; "After a couple of hours, it stunk pretty bad." He took the head to the creek, where he removed it from the sack and washed it in the creek. After looking at it for a bit, he dropped it into the creek and left it there. Kennedy took Oliver's clothes and buried them near a concrete berm in Niles Canyon.

After the interview, Sgt. Rainey called back to Union City and talked with Acting Chief Jere Brashinski. He relayed the information about where the clothes were. An officer was sent out and was able to find the clothes based on the directions given by Kennedy. The police were also able to find the body of Oliver, right where Kennedy said it would be. Oliver's head was never found after being dumped in Alameda Creek.

At 4:30 p.m. on August 9th, Don Hurlburt found a machete in a field adjacent to the Oliver grave site. He turned it into the police, where they believed it to be the murder weapon.

Trail in Wyoming

The authorities in Wyoming decided to pursue two attempted murder charges against Kennedy. The State of California had to wait for Kennedy's trial to take place in Wyoming and then seek extradition. Kennedy was held at the Worland County Jail after his arrest. Kennedy pleaded innocent by reason of insanity. To evaluate him for this defense, he was sent to the state hospital in Evanston, Wyoming. After just under 60 days of evaluation, Kennedy was returned to the Worland County Jail.

The results of his evaluation in Evanston showed that he was diagnosed with schizophrenia but was "considered sane but extremely dangerous". While in the state hospital, Kennedy "asked for raw liver to eat, so he could relax." The evaluation was clear in that Kennedy was sane at the time of the attack on the teens. In a later interview, Kennedy had this statement on his time in Evanston; "Dr. Pace at Wyoming told me he could help me until I tried to kill two of his aides and he told me he could not and told all them lies"

The trial was set for November 1, 1972. At the trial, Kennedy pleaded guilty to two counts of stabbing the Kotel and Hughes. He was sentenced to two consecutive 1 to 12 year prison terms by District Judge Donald Harkins.

Trial in California

Kennedy was extradited from Wyoming to face the murder and attempted murder charges in California. He arrived back in the state on December 12, 1972.

About a week later Kennedy tried to cut his wrists. At the Municipal Court in Fremont, Kennedy was able to find some metal and used it to cut his wrists while riding in the van back to the county jail in Oakland. Kennedy was only able to inflict superficial wounds on his wrists.

Kennedy was formally charged on December 19th. Attorney Michael Ciralo was assigned to defend Kennedy. On January 16th Ciralo filed a motion to change the venue of the trial, but the motion was denied.

On January 19th 1973, Ciralo filed a motion to restrict pre-trial publicity, but this too was denied by Judge William McGuiness. The prosecutor, Donald E. Whyte, made a motion to make the grand jury proceedings public and that was allowed. At the January 16th hearing, Kennedy had mentioned that he did not want a blackout on the news of his trial. A few days later, during a pre-trial session, Kennedy asked the judge if he could get rid of his attorney, but the judge denied the request. Kennedy responded by saying "I knew you would deny it. It is no big thing. You are against me. You are all a bunch of crooked bastards."

The trial started March 12, 1973, with Judge Allen Lindsay presiding. Kennedy pleaded "not guilty by reason of insanity" to reduce the charge from first degree murder to involuntary manslaughter. The claim was that Kennedy sustained organic brain damage from working with dry cleaning solvents at Valley Industrial laundry. It was claimed that the fumes aggravated an already diminished mental capacity.

Pathologist George Loquvam testified that Vicky was strangled and had her throat slit. He also testified that Vicky had 23 stab wounds on her body.

Robert Pounds and Roger Hazen, both of Valley Industrial Laundry, testified about the working conditions at the laundry. They said that the clothes are cleaned in 500 lbs lots using a standard solvent called "Stoddard." Hazen testified about the venting in the laundry and about the filtering mask that employees like Kennedy wear. Kennedy had voiced complaints about the fumes and was given a mask that he wore occasionally.

David Sheriman, industrial hygiene specialist for the Alameda County Health Care System testified that he collected seven different air samples from the laundry. The air samples went to George Prziborowski, public health chemist for the County Health Service. Prziborowski testified that the solvents in the seven samples varied from 140 to 625 parts per million. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has set a maximum exposure limit of 500 parts per million for an 8-hour workday, 40-hour workweek.

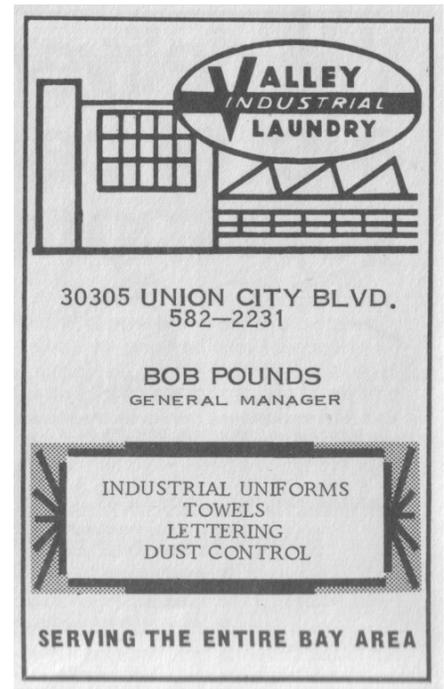
Dr. David Sandler testified that Kennedy had progressive brain disease suggestive of organic brain syndrome. Kennedy had an IQ of 110 when he was discharged from the Army. After working at the laundry, his IQ dropped to 87.

Dr. Sandler was a clinical Psychologist working part time for the City and County of San Francisco, and a consultant of the University of California Medical Center. He gave a number of tests to Kennedy. In one of two tests, designed to test perceptual motor function, Kennedy tested normally. Dr. Sandler said, "He showed no disturbance of these functions." He also said in his report that - "Reasoning, Judgment, and memory functions affected by this impairment." Sandler said that he diagnosed Kennedy as suffering from schizophrenia and was further diagnosed as a sexual deviate.

Dr. Martin Blinder, a psychiatrist, testified that Kennedy was "propelled by obsessive sexual impulses and preoccupations with death and blood to commit heinous crimes." He said that Kennedy tortured cats and exhibited suicidal tendencies in his youth. He further testified that Kennedy was a man with "homosexual, heterosexual, sadistic and necrophiliac impulses," superimposed on schizophrenic personality. This impaired his ability to control his actions.

Dr. Charles Morris, a psychiatrist, also examined Kennedy. Morris testified that "He developed 'vampire' ideas while he was jailed at Lompoc." Morris also testified that "He talks at great length, reiterating almost as a learned memorized speech, about good and evil, the Devil and his involvement. He states that what he has done is good regardless of what people might say." Morris was able to extract some information from Kennedy about his past mental issues; "After an Army discharge, he stayed in a mental hospital where he faked being insane." Morris testified further that "he relates to being raped in jail and having constant memories of the incident. ... He goes into an involved account of feelings of being a vampire, desire for red meat and blood and intimates that he is unable to distinguish between fantasy and facts until he is shown the evidence. ... Content of thought is chiefly concerned with God and the Devil, being taken over by the Devil, and his 'vampire feelings.' "

The testimony of Dr. Morris ended with this statement: "... does not suffer with a mental state or condition of such a nature or of such a severity that he would not be able to understand the nature of the charges against



him. Conclusion: This individual is classified as a sane person within the meaning of section 1368 of the Penal Code."

Dr. James Terry also examined and testified about Kennedy; "He is obsessed with the thought that he is a superior type person. He admits a high order of ESP skill." Terry concluded that "The defendant at this time is a sane person within the meaning of section 1368 of the Penal Code." Terry diagnosed Kennedy as "a sexual psychopath with schizoid tendencies."

Another doctor, John Peschau Jr. also examined Kennedy and testified to a number of statements that Kennedy had made while Peschau was interviewing him. Kennedy said "I used to get urges to kill and I get them now." Kennedy bragged a bit about himself and said "There's lots of bodies I have not told them about. All I did when I was on parole was to drive around and kill people." Kennedy told Peschau that he "had a nervous breakdown in the Army" and that "I had no feeling about right or wrong when I killed." Peschau concluded that Kennedy was legally sane at the time of the murders.

Neurologist Dr. Hans Twang told the jury that a electroencephalogram made of Kennedy's brain wave patterns showed signs of organic brain disease. It was pointed out that an electroencephalogram made in Wyoming showed that Kennedy was normal. Dr. Twang testified that the disease may not always show up on the electroencephalogram.

Dr. Jane Books, a clinical physiologist, testified that she reviewed the tests performed by Kennedy with Dr. Sandler and said that she could not reach a conclusion other than that Kennedy was a man with a less than average IQ.

Kennedy took the witness stand, despite the advice of his council. Kennedy said that he wanted to testify to discount the "lies" that he said were being told about him. He said that the killings of Vicky and Oliver were "sacrifices to Satan." He testified that in the case of Vicky, "I used to have dreams of sacrificing people to Satan. Some happened; some did not, I guess. When Vicky came over to my house, I had the idea of sacrificing her to Satan, but I wasn't going to kill her."

Kennedy said that "voices" told him to offer these sacrifices to the devil and that he had no power over his actions, when he was under the power of a demon. "I remember seeing myself do those things, but it all seems like a dream. Now it is shocking to see what happened. At first I didn't believe it," he said. Kennedy testified that after he strangled Vicky and stomped on her neck, he put her in the crawl space. He said that he heard noises "like she was suffering although she was dead" and then he slit her throat. He said that he had sex with her several hours later.

When asked about talking with Officer George Bist, he said that he lied when he talked to him in the driveway. He said Bist had his hand on his gun and he was afraid Bist might shoot. "I couldn't explain what I had done, and I knew the police wouldn't understand. I asked Satan not to let him look under the house and he looked everywhere but under the house," he testified.

Kennedy was asked about the difference between killing and sacrificing, he said "Sacrifice is when you're told to do it. Killing is when you do it on your own."

Kennedy said that when he was working at the laundry, he complained about the smell. He said that he visited a doctor who told him to take vitamin B and tranquilizers, but refused to take the tranquilizers.

In testifying about the murder of Oliver, he said that he picked up the hitchhiking youth and took him to a prepared spot in Union city. He said that he sexually assaulted the teen, then strangled and decapitated him.

The defense called Dr. Walter Rappaport, a psychiatrist. Rappaport, at the request of the DA's office had examined Kennedy the previous December. Rappaport reported that Kennedy said that he started getting into witchcraft and vampires while reading books in federal prison. Kennedy told him that he had tortured cats and dolls as a youth.

Dr. Rappaport concluded that "this is a man who is very vicious and sadistic. A person who is a sexual deviant and who is cruel in carrying out his sexual desires. But I find no evidence of brain damage." Many times during Rappaport's testimony, Kennedy interrupted him with outbursts, saying that he was lying. "He's trying to crucify me, just like Jesus was. He's a damn liar. The devil won't let the truth come out," Kennedy said.

Dr. James Terry, a psychiatrist appointed by the court to determine the mental state of Kennedy said that although Kennedy considers himself to be "the devil, god and a vampire" he does not believe Kennedy is mentally ill.

During closing arguments, the prosecutor walked close to Kennedy, pointed his finger at Kennedy and said that he regretted that he had "to refer to him as a man." He went on to say that "there's nothing wrong with his head. If there's even one abnormal wavelength...." At this point, Kennedy lurched forward and tried to grab his finger. The prosecutor said "If you do that again, young man, you'll be in serious trouble."

On March 29th, after a hour of deliberation, the jury returned a verdict of guilty on two counts of first-degree murder.

On April 2nd, during a sanity hearing, Kennedy confessed to killing 25 itinerant farm workers whom Juan Corona had been convicted of killing. "You better let Corona out, I killed all those damn people up there and I just want to tell it all," he said. Kennedy also testified that he killed four other people in Alameda County and that no one was asking him about them. Kennedy repeated that he was a disciple of the devil when he killed Oliver and Iselin. "Now I pray to God. I used to feel like an animal. That's what demons do to you," he said.

Sentencing was set for April, 23rd. Superior Court Judge Alan Lindsay sentenced Kennedy to two consecutive life terms. They were to run consecutively with the two 2-to-12 year sentences Kennedy must return to Wyoming to complete. Kennedy filed a hand written appeal before sentencing took place, but Judge Lindsay denied the appeal.

Incarcerated

Kennedy was sent back to Wyoming to serve his term from the case in that state.

While in the Wyoming State Penitentiary, he and another inmate, Elmer DeVore, claimed to own a gold mine in Nevada and know the location of another mine in Idaho. DeVore said the mine was registered in his name. Kennedy said about the Idaho mine, "an old miner told me about it. He's dead now. I've known about the Idaho mine since 1964, but I never stayed out of prison long enough to work it." Kennedy offered 50%

interest in the mines to any attorney that could get his convictions overturned. Kennedy did not reveal the location of the mine, but had sent the location to his step-father. He said that "I'm expecting a miracle from God to lead my step-dad to the mine." Kennedy and DeVore filed a claim on a mining claim in Arizona. The State of Arizona denied the claim because it was filed too late and a fee was not paid. Kennedy and DeVore failed an appeal and it was overturned on July 31st, 1980.

Kennedy kept busy in Wyoming by filing complaint after complaint against the prison. He even sued the Warden and Deputy Warden for "civil rights violations stemming from the failure to provide Kennedy with a prison rule book." He filed a second suit where he claimed that "he is being harassed, denied access to the courts, and denied the right to assist other inmates with legal matters. Kennedy also alleges appellee Ferguson has told Kennedy to stop filing so many grievance complaint forms." Both lawsuits were dismissed.

After his term was completed in Wyoming, Kennedy came back to California in about 1980. He was first in the California Medical Facility in Vacaville, then San Quinton for a year or so, and then returned to California Medical Facility where he resides to this day as prisoner B54101.

Media Reporting

When going through a local newspaper archive, the "Union City Vampire" clippings caught my eye. Most of the local newspapers covered the murders as murders, but the San Francisco Chronicle picked up in the claim that Kennedy made about being a vampire. Their headlines always had the term 'vampire' (with quotes around it) when discussing the case.

Although Kennedy clearly claimed to be a vampire, there was nothing brought out in the trial that indicated that he had done anything that one would normally assume a vampire does, like drinking blood. It was stated that he did request raw liver for a meal, but there was no reporting of any behavior like this when he was outside of prison.

It is obvious that the San Francisco Chronicle picked up on the "vampire" angle as a way to make a very appealing and eye-catching headline.

Timeline

1972

June 27 – Murder of Mario "Billy" Oliver.

July 4 – Claimed murder of 18 yr old girl at South Lake Tahoe

July 5 – Claimed murder of woman in Seaside Marilyn Burgess (attacked only)

July 29 – Vicky went missing

July 31 – Kennedy did not show up for work.

August 2 – Vicky found dead

August 3 – Attacked two hitchhikers in Wyoming (Worland)
Don Kotel, Russel Hughes

August 3 – Apprehended by Wyoming police

August 4 - Union City Police Dept. contacted about warrant.

August 5 & 6 - Kennedy interviewed about murder of Vicky and Billy.

August 9 – Billy's murder weapon found

Nov. - Trial and sentencing in Wyoming.

1973

Dec. 12 - Kennedy returned to California

March 12 - Trial Started

March 29 - Convicted

April 23 - Sentencing