



Cheri Jo Bates was slashed and hacked to death on a campus driveway.

RIVERSIDE, CAL., NOVEMBER 10, 1968

■ On the surface, October 31, 1968, appeared almost like any other Halloween in the city of Riverside, Cal.

Riverside, a community of about 135,000 residents, is located about 60 miles east of Los Angeles in California's famed "Orange Empire," and is about midway between Los Angeles and the desert mecca of Palm Springs.

The city is famed as being the birthplace of the seedless navel orange, the site of the Riverside International Raceway, and also for its several fine colleges. The tree-lined thoroughfares are dotted with street lights shaped like Indian rain crosses atop tall poles.

But the past Halloween was remembered by both mature residents and students as the second anniversary of the discovery of one of the most brutal crimes in the history of Riverside.

Students at Riverside City College congregated as usual in the *Pit*, for coffee, cokes and sandwiches between classes.

However, the main topic of discussion was not the upcoming football game or Halloween pranks, but of the murder of a pretty blonde, blue-eyed coed.

For it was on Halloween Day, 1966, that the body of 18-year-old Cheri Jo Bates was discovered savagely slashed and hacked to death in the dirt of a campus driveway.

The murder triggered the most intensive homicide investigation in the history of the city.

Residents in their homes and places of business, and students meeting on campus discussed the purported confession letter reprinted in the *Riverside Enterprise*. The letter, copies of which were mailed to both the police and *Enterprise* (with obscenities deleted) read:

"She was young and beautiful. But

"YOUR DAUGHTER MAY BE NEXT"

by JOHN MONTGOMERY

**Keep your sisters, daughters, and wives off the streets
and out of the alleys. I will murder again, and again . . .**

now she is battered and dead. She is not the first, and she will not be the last. I lay awake nights thinking about my next victim. Maybe she will be the beautiful blonde that babysits near the little store and walks down the dark alley each evening about seven.

"Or maybe she will be the shapely blue-eyed brunette that said no when I asked her for a date in high school. But maybe it will not be either... So don't make it too easy for me. Keep your sisters, daughters and wives off the streets and alleys. Miss Bates was stupid. She went to the slaughter like a lamb.

"She did not put up a struggle... but I did. It was a ball. I first pulled the middle wire from the distributor... Then I waited for her in the library and followed her out after about two minutes... The battery must have been dead by then. I then offered to help. She was very willing to talk with me.

"I told her my car was down the street and that I would give her a lift home. When we were away from the library and walking I said it was about time. She asked me, 'About time for what'... I said it was about time for her to die. I grabbed her around the neck with my hand over her mouth and my other hand with a small knife at her throat.

"She went very willingly... But only one thing was on my mind. Making her pay for the brushoffs that she had given me during the years prior. She died hard... She squirmed and shook as I choked her and her lips twitched.

"SHE let out a scream once and I kicked her head to shut her up. I plunged the knife into her and it broke... I then finished the job by cutting her throat... I am not sick. I am insane. But that will not stop the game.

"This letter should be published for all to read it. It just might save that girl in the alley. But that's up to you... It will be on your conscience not mine. Yes, I did make that call to you also. It was just a warning. Beware. I am stalking young girls now."

The confession letter, typewritten all in capital letters and containing several mistakes in spelling, was received almost a month after the murder.

The grisly discovery of the young student's body was made about 6:30 A.M. on October 31, 1966, by a 48-year-old campus groundskeeper. He was operating a sweeping machine near the dirt driveway off Terracina Street and near the campus quad when he came upon the body of the attractive coed.

continued on next page

Reproduction of confession letter

(This is a partial reproduction of the anonymous letter of confession of the murder of Cheryl Bates. A selection of few sentences or phrases have been omitted as excessively shocking. The omissions are indicated by dots.)

THE CONFESSION

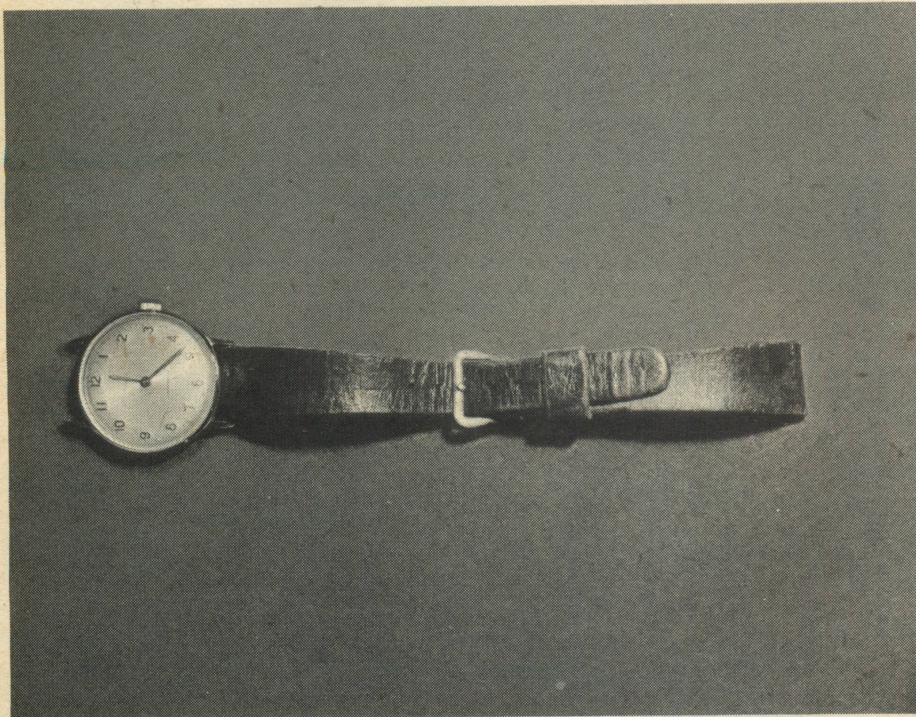
By

SHE WAS YOUNG AND BEAUTIFUL. BUT NOW SHE IS BATTERED AND DEAD. SHE IS NOT THE FIRST AND SHE WILL NOT BE THE LAST. I LAY AWAKE NIGHTS THINKING ABOUT MY NEXT VICTIM. MAYBE SHE WILL BE THE BEAUTIFUL BLOND THAT BABYSITS NEAR THE LITTLE STORE AND WALKS DOWN THE DARK ALLEY EACH EVENING ABOUT SEVEN. OR MAYBE SHE WILL BE THE SHAPELY BLUE EYED BRUNETTE THAT SAID NO WHEN I ASKED HER FOR A DATE IN HIGH SCHOOL. BUT MAYBE IT WILL NOT BE EITHER. SO DON'T MAKE IT TOO EASY FOR ME. KEEP YOUR SISTERS, DAUGHTERS AND WIVES OFF THE STREETS AND ALLEYS. MISS BATES WAS STUPID. SHE WENT TO THE SLAUGHTER LIKE A LAMB. SHE DID NOT PUT UP A STRUGGLE. BUT I DID. IT WAS A BALL. I FIRST PULLED THE MIDDLE WIRE FROM THE DISTRIBUTOR. THEN I WAITED FOR HER IN THE LIBRARY AND FOLLOWED HER OUT AFTER ABOUT TWO MINUTES. THE BATTERY MUST HAVE BEEN ABOUT DEAD BY THEN. I THEN OFFERED TO HELP. SHE

WAS THEN VERY WILLING TO TALK WITH ME. I TOLD HER THAT MY CAR WAS DOWN THE STREET AND THAT I WOULD GIVE HER A LIFT HOME. WHEN WE WERE AWAY FROM THE LIBRARY WALKING I SAID IT WAS ABOUT TIME. SHE ASKED ME 'ABOUT TIME FOR WHAT'. I SAID IT WAS ABOUT TIME FOR HER TO DIE. I GRABBED HER AROUND THE NECK WITH MY HAND OVER HER MOUTH AND MY OTHER HAND WITH A SMALL KNIFE AT HER THROAT. SHE WENT VERY WILLINGLY. BUT ONLY ONE THING WAS ON MY MIND. MAKING HER PAY FOR THE BRUSH OFFS THAT SHE HAD GIVEN ME DURING THE YEARS PRIOR. SHE DIED HARD. SHE SQUIRMED AND SHOOK AS I CHOKED HER AND HER LIPS TWITCHED. SHE LET OUT A SCREAM ONCE AND I KICKED HER HEAD TO SHUT HER UP. I PLUNGED THE KNIFE INTO HER AND IT BROKE. I THEN FINISHED THE JOB BY CUTTING HER THROAT. I AM NOT SICK. I AM INSANE. BUT THAT WILL NOT STOP THE GAME. THIS LETTER SHOULD BE PUBLISHED FOR ALL TO READ IT. IT JUST MIGHT SAVE THAT GIRL IN THE ALLEY. BUT THAT'S UP TO YOU. IT WILL BE ON YOUR CONSCIENCE NOT MINE. YES I DID MAKE THAT CALL TO YOU ALSO. IT WAS JUST A WARNING. BEWARE. I AM STALKING YOUR GIRLS NOW.

CC CHIEF OF POLICE
ENTERPRISE

Killer or crank—a statement of murder and intent to kill again.



This watch, left at the scene of crime, was traced to Armed Forces PX.

The corpse was face down in the wildly trampled dirt of the roadway that led between two weatherbeaten frame houses to a student parking lot in the rear.

The girl's throat had been slashed from ear to ear and she had been stabbed in the chest and back. Her bright blonde hair was matted with blood and dirt.

The victim of the savage attack was clad in faded red capris, a long-sleeved pale yellow blouse with a ribbon tied at the throat. Her feet were encased in white sandals. A large red and tan woven straw bag was half covered by the body.

"The driveway adjacent to 3680 Terracina Street was so churned up it looked like a tractor had been over the ground," a detective said later. "The girl, who was very athletic, put up a terrific struggle."

Upon finding the body, the groundskeeper, notified his superior, who phoned the police.

Patrolman Don Walters, cruising near the campus area, was the first officer to arrive at the scene. Following a quick examination of the body, Walters phoned headquarters and gave the watch commander brief details of the scene of

the homicide and the details of her death.

Riverside Police Chief L. T. (Curly) Kinkead and Captain Irvin Cross, chief of detectives, were notified.

When Captain Cross arrived, he immediately assigned Detective Sergeant Gren and six members of the detective bureau to the murder investigation.

"You will drop everything else you are engaged in and work full time on this case," Cross told the detectives.

In addition to Sergeant Gren, the detectives assigned were Dick Yonkers, Earl Brown, Wayne Durrington, Cliff Arons, Curtis Best and Bob Walters. Detective Tom Mullen was assigned full time to the investigation at a later date.

The area was roped off by uniformed officers to keep away the curious college students arriving for their first classes. Younger boys and girls hurrying to nearby Central Junior High School stopped and stared from the sidewalk across the street at the police activity.

Cross and his detectives surveyed the murder scene. A man's wristwatch with a broken band was found about 10 feet from the body of the girl.

"The girl apparently tore the watch from her killer's wrist before she died," a detective pointed out.

The woven straw bag found half un-

der the body contained papers identifying the victim as Cheri Jo Bates, a first-year student at the college. It listed her address.

A check of recent police reports revealed that a relative of the girl had reported her missing when she had not returned home the previous night.

The relative was contacted by the coroner at his home before he left for his job in Norco, a small community south of Riverside.

At the murder scene, drops of dried blood leading from the body to Terracina Street indicated to the detectives that the murderer had walked back to the street following the slaying.

"It looks like the girl either walked up the road with her murderer—or he followed her up there," a detective said.

Roland Wilson, chief trial deputy for the district attorney's office, was notified of the finding of the body in the roadway between 3680 and 3692 Terracina Street.

THE veteran prosecutor, after making a personal inspection of the murder scene, assigned Loren Mitchell and other top investigators on his staff to aid police in their search for the killer.

The coroner's office also assigned investigators to work on the case in cooperation with the police and district attorney's investigators.

A description of the girl's lime green Volkswagen was obtained and the description and license number of the vehicle were immediately broadcast and put on teletypes.

The Riverside Sheriff's Department picked up the broadcast. Minutes later, Sheriff's Detective Sergeant Jack Reid and Detective Jack Elms discovered the little car. It was parked at the curb in front of the college library about 75 feet from the entrance of the roadway where the girl's body was found.

"We've got the car," Reid informed the police detectives, who made a preliminary examination of the vehicle.

The keys were in the ignition but the car had been disabled and would not start. It was found that the distributor coil and condenser had been ripped out.

Greasy finger and palm prints were discovered on the door of the car. Two school books and a note pad were in the front seat.

Cross ordered the car towed to the police station for a thorough examination by laboratory experts. It was hoped that latent prints could be lifted and other possible clues brought to light.

Detectives interrogated four young

men who said they had seen Cheri Jo near her car the previous night.

The discovery of the murder of the pretty blonde coed was broadcast by local radio stations and shocked the entire community.

Dr. Rene Modglin, a famed autopsy surgeon and pathologist under contract to the coroner's office, was summoned to the scene of the crime. He performed a partial autopsy on the spot.

The autopsy revealed that the 5 feet 3 inch, 110 pound girl had been slashed three times across the throat. One savage slash had severed the jugular vein.

She had also been stabbed twice, once in the chest and once under the left shoulder blade. Her once pretty face had been slashed across the left cheek and upper lip.

JUDGING from the rigor and body temperature, the tentative time of death was fixed at about 10:30 P.M. the previous day.

Sergeant Gren and Detectives Yonkers and Brown handled the initial search of the murder scene and were given the responsibility of preserving any evidence found.

Gren and Yonkers then interviewed college custodians and other college employees who had worked or been on the campus grounds the previous night.

Other detectives interviewed residents of a nearby apartment building.

A girl tenant in an apartment only a few doors from the dirt driveway where the body was discovered, told the detectives that she had heard "screaming and yelling" about 10:30.

"Then I heard a muted scream, and then a loud sound like an old car being started up—this was about two minutes after I heard the first scream," the girl informant said.

However, the girl admitted she had not called police that night to inform them of the sounds of apparent violence she had heard.

Gren and Mitchell then drove to the girl's home to interrogate a relative.

The relative told the investigators he had been home until about 4:30 or 5 P.M. that Sunday and had then driven to the beach.

"Cheri Jo's Volkswagen was parked in front of the house when I left and she was somewhere close by in the neighborhood," the man said.

Meanwhile, other detectives learned from a male librarian at the college that he "thought he saw" Cheri Jo in the library that Sunday evening. He was unable to pinpoint the time.

It was found that the library books

found in Cheri Jo's car had been checked out Sunday night.

A young Mexican-American student said he knew Cheri Jo and had noticed her in the college library the night in question. He said he saw the girl "writing something with a ball point pen" in her blue spiral school notebook.

"The boy told us he was outside about 5:30 P.M. waiting for the library to open at 6, and it was then he saw the girl," Sergeant Gren said. "He seems to have a very good memory."

However, other students who were acquainted with Cheri Jo said they were in the library between 6:30 and 6:40 P.M.—and did not see the girl during that time.

"The girl was definitely in the library as she checked out the books," Gren said. "She must have been contacted by the murderer as soon as she received her books."

Gren noted that Sunday was the first day of the return to Pacific Standard Time and that darkness had set in at 6:15 P.M.

As different phases of the investigation developed, Cross took detectives off

other details and assigned them to the murder probe. Uniformed officers were also assigned to the investigation.

"In a major case of this importance and magnitude, everything else is secondary," Cross told the men.

(A total of 24 police officers put in 133 man hours during the first day of the investigation into the murder of Cheri Jo Bates. The first month following the slaying saw 30 officers working on different phases of the investigation).

On Tuesday, November 1, Gren told reporters, "We have interrogated 75 persons since the crime was reported at 6:30 A.M. yesterday, but so far we have drawn a blank."

Gren requested that it be publicized that the police were in desperate need of locating persons who had contact with the murdered girl Sunday afternoon and evening.

"If witnesses who saw or had contact with the girl will come forward, we can guarantee their names will not be publicized by us," Gren said in his public appeal for public assistance in solving the crime.

A probe into (Continued on page 59)



Lt. Gren, Capt. Cross, and Det. Mullen evaluate what evidence they have.

the slain girl's background revealed that she had enrolled in the fall term at the college following her graduation the previous June from Ramona High School.

"She was real friendly and very popular," a girl friend of Cheri Jo's said. "Guys asked her out all the time."

Cheri Jo had been active in high school activities and was a cheerleader for the football team. School officials described her as "very bright, and popular with both the girls and boys."

Another girl said Cheri Jo had confided in her that she planned to marry a boy she had gone to Ramona High with. The Highland youth was presently enrolled in San Francisco State College, where he played end on the football team.

Two young girls who said they knew Cheri Jo, gave a taped interview to a crew from a Los Angeles television station.

The girls, in the television interview, said that Cheri Jo had told them Sunday that she was "going to the library to meet her boyfriend."

However, Gren said that while Cheri Jo had met her boyfriend in San Francisco the weekend prior to her murder, the boy was still in the Bay Area at the time of her death.

"We have talked to the boy's parents and they have no knowledge of his being in Riverside during the past weekend," Gren said. "The boy's football coach verifies he was in San Francisco at the time."

An unrelenting search had been in progress for the murder weapon, and that Tuesday detectives used a metal detector in shrubbery adjacent to the murder scene in an effort to find the knife used by the slayer.

Captain Cross revealed to the news media that the autopsy showed that the murder weapon was probably a pocket knife with a "3-inch blade or less."

The broadcast and published information about the knife caused the police switchboard to be flooded with calls reporting knives of similar description being found all over the city of Riverside.

"The phones have been almost ringing off the hooks," a weary detective said. "Tips and information about knives and other bits of information. We are checking out each tip."

Detective teams contacted all of Cheri Jo's known friends and people she had worked with during the past six months while working part time at a local bank.

Gren and Yonkers interrogated school and bank officials. Other detectives were kept busy checking out the flood of phone tips as they came in.

On Wednesday, November 2, Police Chief Kinhead revealed that about 125

persons had been questioned by detectives working around the clock.

On Thursday, the Timex watch found near the body of the girl was mailed to the California Criminal Identification and Investigation Bureau in the state capitol in Sacramento.

Mailed to the state bureau at the same time were the only other objects of physical evidence collected by the investigators. They included the greasy palm and fingerprints lifted from the Volkswagen and scrapings taken from under Cheri Jo's fingernails.

Cross then issued a statement that police had discounted the reported conversation the two girls on television said they had with Cheri Jo in which they claimed she planned to meet her boyfriend at the library the night of the murder.

"The statements of the two girls on the television program were apparently based on hearsay and not on fact," Cross told newsmen.

About 200 persons had now been questioned.

AMONG the names of possible suspects that came up during the first phase of the investigation was that of a Riverside youth who had been convicted of attempted murder in the stabbing of another coed on the Riverside City College campus.

The 19-year-old suspect was found to be still serving a sentence for the attempted slaying of the other coed in April, 1965.

The victim of the earlier crime, a 20-year-old girl, had been walking on campus not far from the spot where Cheri Jo was murdered when she was stabbed by the youth.

"The two cases were identical in many ways and we immediately checked on the boy's whereabouts last Sunday," Gren said.

The weary detective sergeant admitted there were few substantial clues after 72 hours of round-the-clock investigation.

"There is a strong indication that Miss Bates scratched and clawed her murderer in the struggle for her life," Gren said. "We are checking on leads of persons who have recent unexplained scratches."

"We believe the screams the girl in the neighboring apartment reported she heard came from Cheri Jo as she was being murdered, but we cannot definitely pinpoint the time of the crime on this information alone."

It was revealed that Cheri Jo had cooked roast beef Sunday afternoon and had eaten before leaving her home. The autopsy showed that the meal had been digested for two to four hours at the time she was killed.

Dr. Modglin gave a revised estimate and said the girl had apparently been dead eight to 12 hours at the time he conducted his preliminary examination shortly after 9 A.M. Monday.

A state of shocked calm pervaded the campus. Students gathering in the *Pit* for coffee and cakes between classes could talk of little else than the murder of the popular girl.

"What happened was so sudden and so awful that it has made a lot of people stop and think of all the times they have parked back where the body was found and walked on campus by themselves," a girl student said.

It was reported that 50 students had dropped out of night classes following the discovery of the brutal murder. Many of the coeds were forbidden by their parents to go on campus at night.

A teletype was put out on the wrist-watch found near the body of the girl. The watch was described as a Timex with "stainless steel white face, no serial numbers, and a broken black leather band." It was hoped the teletype would help trace the timepiece to its owner.

On Saturday, November 5, a report was received from the Sacramento crime lab where the watch had been minutely examined by experts.

It was determined that the watch had been sold in an Armed Forces PX at an overseas military base.

This piece of information led to the questioning of 154 airmen stationed at nearby March Air Force Base who attended classes at the college. Military authorities cooperated in the interrogations of the airmen.

"Preliminary analysis of the scrapings from beneath the fingernails of the dead girl tend to show the murderer is a white male," Cross said.

The detective captain also revealed for the first time that a tuft of human hair had been found clutched in the palm of the girl's hand. He declined to say what color the hair was.

Other law enforcement agencies in California as well as out of state were asked to notify Riverside police of any recent assault or molesting cases in their communities for comparison with the M.O. in the murder of the Bates girl.

The Saturday following the murder, about 250 mourners, composed mainly of students who had known Cheri Jo at Ramona High and City College, gathered for the services at St. Catherine's Catholic Church.

Police photographers unobtrusively took photos as detectives scanned the faces of those attending the services.

The casket containing the mortal remains of the murdered girl was lifted from the hearse by six youthful pallbearers.

Cheri Jo Bates was laid to rest in a grave on a misty hillside overlooking the community where she had lived and

attended school during her exuberant and happy girlhood.

The hue and cry following the murder caused school officials to install mercury vapor lights in the dark alleys and driveways intersecting the campus grounds.

Detectives learned from the slain girl's friends that Cheri Jo had been "terribly afraid of the darkness." This information led investigators to believe that Cheri Jo had known her killer and unsuspectingly accompanied him to her death.

The disabled Volkswagen with the keys in the ignition gave rise to speculation that the girl, unable to start her car, had perhaps accepted a ride offered by her killer.

"Cheri Jo was very proud of her little car," her boyfriend told detectives. "She worked hard to pay for the car. She never left it without locking the doors and rolling the windows up."

Then why, detectives wondered, were the windows rolled down and the keys in the ignition when the car was found?

The unrelenting investigation continued.

"We are trying to get to know the girl better," said Homicide Detective Dick Yonkers. "Who her friends were, her habits, and anything else that might aid us in establishing the identity of her killer."

Yonkers, in response to questions by newsmen, stated that no footprints had been found in the dirt driveway where the body was found.

The police file catalogued "Cheri Jo Bates, Homicide #352-481," continued to thicken as copies of reports, correspondence, photos, laboratory reports and memoranda were continually added.

A suspect was checked out and it was found that he had moved to a southern state soon after the murder. However, further investigation eliminated him as a suspect.

A mental patient at nearby Patton State Hospital made a confession of sorts by telling a hospital psychiatrist that he "thought he had killed Cheri Jo Bates."

The psychiatrist determined from exhaustive interviews that the patient was subject to delusions and hallucinations, and was apparently not even acquainted with Cheri Jo Bates.

The man's watch found near the body was put through further exhaustive laboratory tests by a private firm in San Diego. Flecks of paint found on the face of the watch were analyzed and classified.

THEN on the evening of November 13, two weeks after the murder, detectives quietly rounded up 65 persons known to have been in or around the library on the night of October 30.

A dramatic "reenactment" of the scene in the library the night of the murder was then staged.

The participants in the reenactment, at the detectives' request, wore the same clothing and sat in the same seats that they had occupied the Sunday night of the murder. They were also asked to park their cars in the same places as they had on the night of October 30.

It had been determined that Cheri Jo (or a girl resembling her and in similar clothes) had arrived at the library about 5:40 P.M. and waited for 20 minutes for the doors to be opened.

The girl apparently entered the library as soon as the doors were opened at 6 P.M. and checked out the books she had come for.

Statements were taken from all the students who showed up for the reenactment.

In addition, the male students were asked to submit to having their fingerprints taken, and a lock of hair was nipped from each. The students, many eager to have the brutal crime solved, cooperated fully with the detectives' requests.

The samples of hair clipped from the male students were analyzed and compared with the tuft found in the murdered girl's clenched fist.

Following the reenactment, Captain Cross announced that police were seeking a 1947-52 model Studebaker car with "light-colored oxidized paint."

"A number of students reported they say the car parked just south of Terracina Street about 7 P.M. on the night of the murder," Cross said. "The car was missing at the reenactment."

Cross also announced that police were seeking a "heavy-set man with a beard" as a result of the reenactment. The man had been placed in the library by witnesses the night of the murder but had failed to appear for the reenactment. Homicide file 352-481 grew thicker and thicker.

On November 14, the day following the library reenactment, a campus gardener reported he had unearthed a hunting knife with his rake. The knife had apparently been buried near the murder scene.

Detectives hurried to the campus and turned over the knife to the homicide detail.

However, examination failed to show any evidence of dried blood on the knife blade. Also, its width did not compare with the incisions made by the stab wounds.

Detective Tom Mullen was given the assignment of running down leads on the missing Studebaker.

A photo of a similar car was run in the local newspapers and hundreds of tips flooded in from residents who thought they had seen the wanted vehicle. Mullen and other detectives checked out the tips but all came to a dead end.

Then on November 29, almost a month after the murder, copies of the lurid and sometimes obscene confession letter were received.

The first copy to come in was addressed to *Daily Enterprise*, Riverside, Cal., Attn: Crime. The second copy, mailed to the police homicide detail, was intercepted by U.S. postal authorities and turned over to Cross.

Both letters and envelopes were sent to the state crime lab in Sacramento for analysis and checking for fingerprints.

"The man who wrote that letter certainly has a deranged mind," said Detective Al DeWindt.

Deranged or not, detectives are still not quite certain that the man who wrote the confession is the man who brutally murdered Cheri Jo Bates.

File 352-481 is now several inches thick. It will be closed with the arrest and conviction of the murderer. The investigation will continue until that day.

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