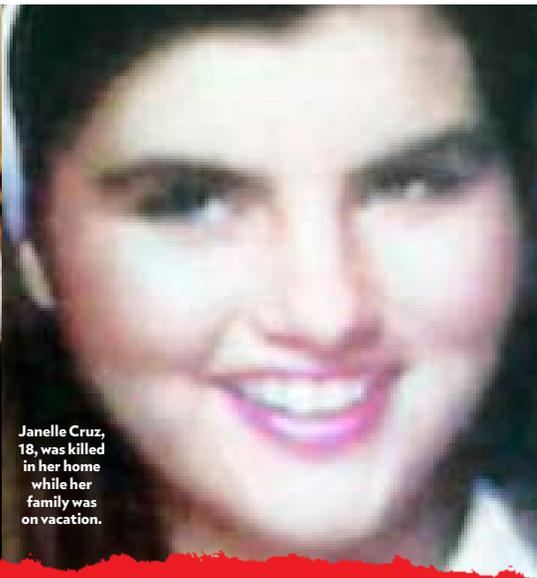


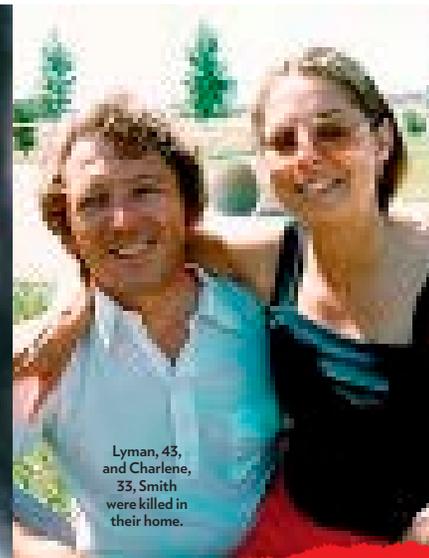
Manuela Witthuhn, 28, was raped and killed at her home.



Brian, 21, and Katie, 20, Maggiore were killed walking in their neighborhood.

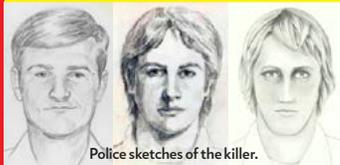


Janelle Cruz, 18, was killed in her home while her family was on vacation.



Lyman, 43, and Charlene, 33, Smith were killed in their home.

## THE GOLDEN STATE SERIAL KILLER

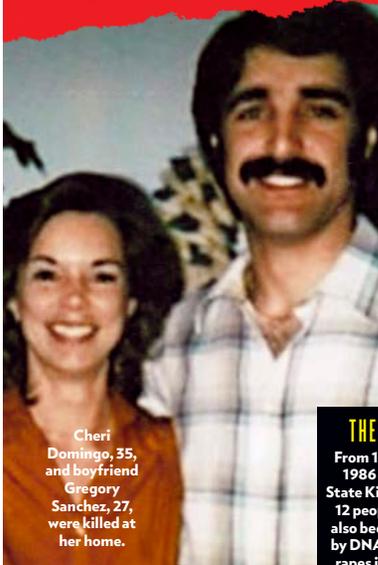


Police sketches of the killer.

# THE HUNT FOR A MONSTER

His sadistic rapes and murders claimed at least 57 victims. Four decades later investigators aren't giving up on answers—or justice

By SANDRA SOBIERAJ WESTFALL and CHRISTINE PELISEK



Cheri Domingo, 35, and boyfriend Gregory Sanchez, 27, were killed at her home.

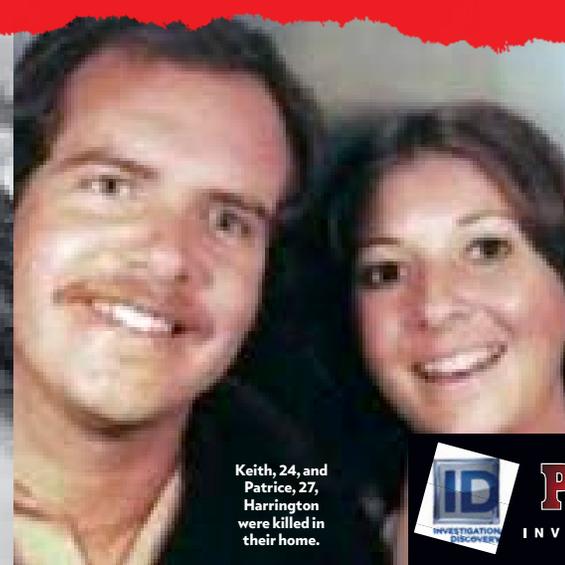
**THE VICTIMS**  
From 1978 through 1986 the Golden State Killer murdered 12 people—and has also been connected by DNA or MO to 45 rapes in California.



Dr. Robert Offerman, 44, was killed at his condo.



Dr. Debra Manning, 35, was killed with Offerman at his condo.



Keith, 24, and Patrice, 27, Harrington were killed in their home.

**M**argaret Wardlow was only 12 in 1977—the kind of sixth-grader who turned somersaults in the street outside the condo she shared with her divorced mom, Dolores—but the self-described “little crime buff” had fearlessly devoured every word written that year about the East Area Rapist terrorizing Sacramento with attacks since 1976 on 26 women inside their homes. “I would read the articles three times over,” Wardlow says, “and I’d think, ‘Why can’t they catch this guy?’” So, in the dead of night on Nov. 10, 1977, when she was awoken by a masked intruder

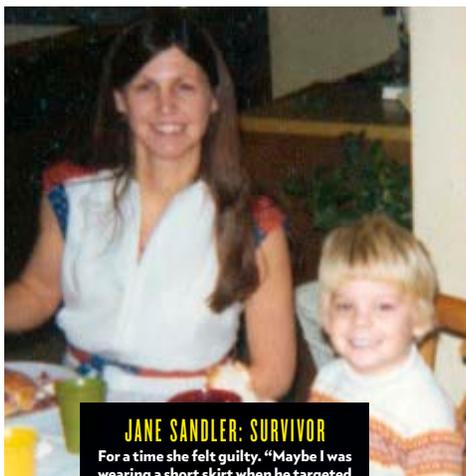
who blindfolded her and bound her wrists, his next move was no mystery. Before proceeding to rape a woman in another room, the attacker would place plates on the other victim’s body and threaten: ‘If I hear the dishes move, I’ll kill her.’ Wardlow, now 53, recalls that decades-ago moment with chilling clarity. “When I heard him coming with the plates, I knew that if he goes into my mom’s room with them, he’s going to rape me,” she says. “He went into my mom’s room. I said to myself, *Prepare yourself*. And then I was number 27.”

That number would climb to a horrifying 45 rapes and 12 murders between



For more on this case, watch the *People Magazine Investigates* premiere episode, *The Golden State Killer*, on Mon., Nov. 6, at 10 p.m. ET on ID.

the years 1976 and 1986, as the East Area Rapist—who was later known as the Original Night Stalker and then the Golden State Killer—made his increasingly violent migration from the California capital to the San Francisco Bay Area, Santa Barbara and Southern California's Orange County. It was one of the longest and most vicious crime sprees in the nation's history, including more than 120 home burglaries and victims ranging in age from 12 to 41, including women at home with their children and wives in bed with their husbands. And because the Golden State Killer's reign of terror largely predated the 911 system, surveillance cameras, DNA analysis and the Internet, he was never identified or caught. It wasn't until 2001 that analysis of what DNA evidence remained (Contra Costa County was the only Northern California jurisdiction to keep the evidence past the statute of limitations for sexual assault cases) even linked the Northern California rapist to the Southern California homicides. Now the FBI is offering a \$50,000 reward as investigators across California try to finally catch the notorious monster who held the state hostage more than 40 years ago. "Back then he could have been hiding in plain sight," says Sacramento County Sheriff's



**JANE SANDLER: SURVIVOR**  
For a time she felt guilty. "Maybe I was wearing a short skirt when he targeted me, which is ridiculous. You didn't talk about rape 40 years ago," Sandler says. She and her son (ca. 1976) didn't discuss it until he was in college. "He remembers a robber came into our house, but that is all."

Department Deputy Paige Kneeland, who serves on the task force coordinating information. Today she tracks more than 1,000 suspects and some 160 binders "busting at the seams" with evidence printouts, making sure that no lead goes unexplored. "We have his DNA," says Kneeland. "We just need a name to match it."

For FBI special agent Marcus Knutson, it's a visceral mission: "We have talked to the victims on this case and a lot of them, to this day, still look over their shoulder. That rips my heart out. I would like to get this thing solved so they can feel free of this guy."

● ● ●  
**Jane Sandler was rape victim No. 5, and what happened to the Air Force Reserves nurse on the morning of Oct. 5, 1976, illustrated early on the depravity of the monster.** Sandler's 3-year-old son had just crawled into bed with her as her husband left their Citrus Heights ranch house around 6 a.m. for work at nearby McClellan Air Force Base. Sandler, now 71, remembers every detail: "I heard the garage door close, and the next thing

I knew there is a light shining down my hall, and I am saying to my husband, What did you forget? That's when I looked up, and there is this masked man with a ski mask and a large knife. He knew when my husband would be gone." The intruder scraped her breast with the knife before tying her up, gagging and blindfolding mother and son side by side. "I don't even remember being raped. When he untied my legs and I knew what he was going to do, I leaned over and couldn't feel my son there. So all I remember is the fear: *Where is my son? Did he kill him?*" Her son was unhurt, but the trauma may have cost her her marriage, which she admits was negatively impacted, and, for a time, her sobriety. Now more than 13 years sober, Sandler considers them lucky to be among their attack-

**CLUES TO A KILLER'S ID**  
Publicizing crime-scene details can lead to a breakthrough, says Schubert, the Sacramento D.A. "Someone knows."



**STOLEN CHINA**  
In October 1978 the killer took 14 place settings of this Noritake Polonaise pattern—plus Reed & Barton Majesty silverware—from his first Concord, Calif., rape victim.



**BINDINGS**  
The killer rapist sometimes used pre-knotted shoelaces to tie up his victims. Other ligatures were fashioned from drapery cords or rope.

**TELLTALE RING?**  
Police hope someone recognizes this women's size-4.5 white-gold band with yellow-gold bows framing a ruby, stolen in '77 from a Sacramento victim.

er's first victims: "He got sicker."  
Local officials in Sacramento held town meetings on the crimes, and at one of those forums a man stood up to say, "If he ever comes to my house, I'll kill him." Months later that man and his wife were attacked, leading investigators to believe the rapist, more brazen and now using a gun, had been at the meeting. In some cases he took his rape victims' phone numbers and sardonically rang them months or even years later. Victim No. 14 got a call, believed to be his last, in April 2001, 24 years after he raped her. "He said, 'Remember when we played?'" says Contra Costa investigator Paul Holes, who has

been working the case since 1994. "She'd remarried and had a different address; he had to take time to find her."  
● ● ●  
**The rapist turned to murder** in February 1978, when newlyweds Katie, 20, and Brian Maggiore, 21, were walking their dog Thumper in Rancho Cordova and crossed paths with him. Brian and Katie were both shot dead. "They were just starting their lives together," says Katie's brother Ken Smith. "I really hope the person is still

**'EVERY NIGHT I SAY, DON'T LET ME DREAM ABOUT THE RAPIST. IT'S ALWAYS WITH ME'**  
—JANE SANDLER

alive; I would like this to be solved."  
Deb Domingo and Michelle Cruz have carried the scars of the Golden State Killer since each was in her teens. Domingo was 15 and rebelling—"breaking curfew, smoking, spending too much time with boys"—when she last spoke to her mom, Cheri, from a pay phone in downtown Santa Barbara in July 1981. Deb's furious exclamation of "Why don't you just stay out of my life!" before she slammed the phone haunted her for years. But this

**A TIMELINE: SEARCH FOR A SERIAL KILLER**

**SUMMER 1976**  
On June 18 a 23-year-old woman is raped by a man wearing only a mask and a T-shirt at her home in Rancho Cordova, east of downtown Sacramento.



**FEB. 2, 1978**  
After taunting his first victim with a phone call, the rapist—who's now attacked as many as 30 women—moves on to murder, fatally shooting Brian and Katie Maggiore, who are walking their dog in Rancho Cordova.



**NOVEMBER 1978**  
Though police don't know it yet, the attacker has committed 41 rapes and two murders in two years, and evidence is mounting.

**DECEMBER '78-DECEMBER '79**  
Police find three pieces of notebook paper near the home of a rape victim—an architectural-type drawing of a neighborhood and a rant against a sixth-grade teacher. Despite the clues, the killing continues with Dr. Robert Offerman and Dr. Debra Manning shot at Offerman's condo.

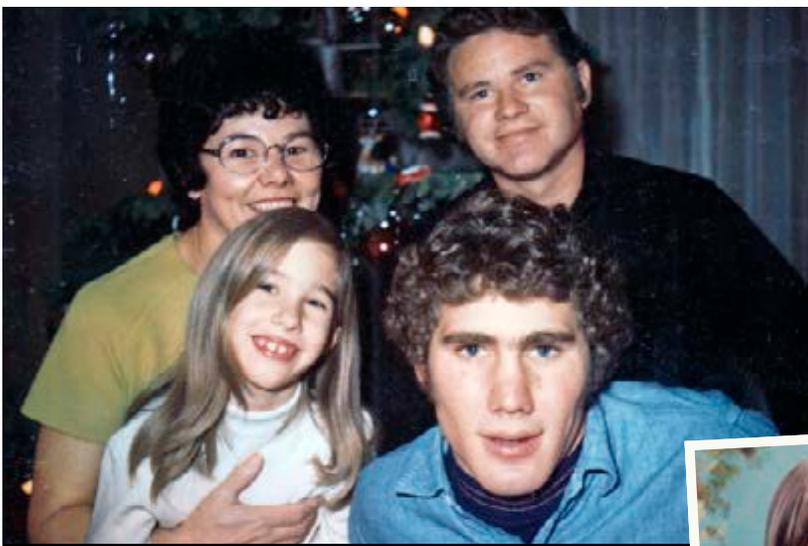


**MARCH 1980**  
Lyman and Charlene Smith are fatally bludgeoned in their Ventura, Calif., home. Charlene had also been raped, and ropes used in the murders are similar to those used in other attacks.

**AUGUST 1980-1986**  
The Golden State Killer murders Keith and Patrice Harrington; Manuela Witthuhn; Cheri Domingo and Gregory Sanchez; and Janelle Cruz. DNA advances will later connect him to 45 rapes and 12 murders.



**2011-2017**  
A task force comprising investigators and criminalists from Northern and Southern California work the Golden State Killer case. The FBI offers a \$50,000 reward for info leading to his arrest.



## MARGARET WARDLOW: SURVIVOR

When the East Area Rapist was making news, Wardlow had read so much about him, “I felt like I knew him,” she recalls. “This guy gets off on the power of control through fear. I wasn’t going to give him that. Plus, I was 12. I was immortal. If he’s still alive, he’s smart enough to know that DNA is catching up to him.”



Wardlow (inset at 12 and, left, at age 9 with, clockwise, her mom, Dolores, late brother Michael and younger brother James) was determined not to let her rapist see fear.



fight with her mother also saved her life. Deb wasn’t home when the killer struck Cheri and her boyfriend Greg. To cope with all her questions over the years, Deb, 52, who now works as a state prison clerk, stayed in touch with the sheriff and with online crime-solvers. Says Deb: “The Internet community are the ones that have kept this case from sinking into the cold-case pit.”

Cruz is one of them, and for her it’s deeply personal. Her sister Janelle was the Golden State Killer’s last-known victim, beaten to death so brutally in her bed—on May 4, 1986, at the age of 18—that her blood soaked through her mattress and into the boxspring. She had been apartment hunting earlier, circling rental ads in a newspaper that was spread on the kitchen table when her body was found. “Janelle was my best friend. She was always writing little poems and was going to go to college to be a legal secretary,” says Michelle, the younger sister who went on to get a degree in criminal justice and now spends some 30 hours a week researching potential suspects in Janelle’s murder.

If the killer is still alive, he is now in his mid-60s to mid-70s, investigators believe. A detailed, hand-drawn diagram of a residential subdivision that he dropped while fleeing one 1978 attack in Danville, Calif., suggests a white-collar type in the construction

business, says investigator Holes. The way the attacker altered his voice—affecting a stutter or an accent through clenched teeth—constantly changed gloves and masks, and planted information with victims (about driving a van, or using drugs) that was likely meant to mislead police, further suggests “we are dealing with an intelligent, sophisticated offender,” says Holes.

Police say the attacker seemed to blend into the middle- and upper-middle-class neighborhoods he stalked and struck, perhaps posing as a jogger with a German shepherd. “We have a profile. Even though it may seem like a needle in a haystack, someone can find the needle, and we need the communities’ help,” says Sacramento County District Attorney Anne Marie Schubert. For the first time police are releasing, exclusively to *People* (see previous page for photographs of clues in the case), details of the distinctive china tokens that the killer stole from his victims as well as a Lycoming College class ring. “There are a million people with a million theories,” says the FBI’s Gina Swankie. “But even if he’s passed away, someone going through their loved one’s belongings could come across this really unique

stuff and that might be our guy.”

That he could still be out there has victim No. 40 terrorized even today. Afraid to use her real name, “Sunny” was raped in October 1978 and still remembers his whisper. “He seemed pretty comfortable,” she recalls, “not real nervous.” Now, she says, “I don’t go out alone. I try to listen to men’s voices everywhere I go: Is it him? Is he out there?” She has scoured message boards on the crimes for word of his capture. “I don’t feel 100 percent safe anywhere,” says Sunny.

For murder victim Janelle Cruz’s sister Michelle, the thought that the Golden State serial killer could finally be brought to justice gives her hope. “It’s exhausting, but I don’t want to give up,” Michelle, 49, says. She recently installed surveillance cameras and window alarms on her home, bought a gun and posted a personal note to “the man behind the mask” on a website about the case. “My gut says he is alive and watching. I wanted to tell him, you took my sister, you screwed with my life, you should confess before you die.”

**‘THE ANSWER IS OUT THERE. IT’S A JOURNEY TO JUSTICE’**

—ANNE MARIE SCHUBERT, SACRAMENTO D.A.

**Contact 1-800-CALL-FBI or go to [tips.fbi.gov](https://tips.fbi.gov) with any info on the Golden State Killer.**