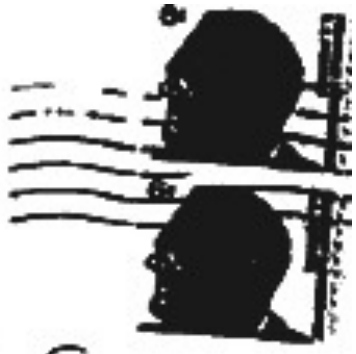


The L.A Times

Los Angeles Calif

Please Rush to Editor

AIR Mail

AIR Mail

This is the Zodiac speaking

Like I have always said
I am crack proof. If the
Blue Meannies are ever
going to catch me, they had
best get off their fat asses
& do something. Because the
longer they fiddle & fart
around, the more slaves
I will collect for my after
life. I do have to give them
credit for stumbling across
my river-side activity, but
they are only finding the
easy ones, there are a hell
of a lot more down there.
The reason that I am writing
to the Times is this, They
didn't bury me on the back pages
like some of the others.

SFPD-O ⊕ -17+

BREAKS SILENCE

17-Plus Victims Claimed in Letter by Zodiac Killer

BY DAVE SMITH
Times Staff Writer

California's long-silent Zodiac killer made another bid for public attention Monday, claiming that he has murdered in Southern California and saying that his victims now total "17+."

The letter—the Zodiac's first to The Times—was mailed Saturday afternoon or evening from Pleasanton, about 50 miles southeast of San Francisco, where all of his previous letters had been mailed.

The publicity-hungry killer explained: "The reason that I'm writing to the Times is this, they don't bury me on the back pages like some of the others."

The letter, messily printed with a by-now-familiar blue felt-tipped pen, bore the Zodiac's equally familiar symbol—a circle divided in four parts by a cross. It also contained his familiar misspellings.

John J. Harris, a questioned-documents examiner, compared the letter with earlier samples of the Zodiac's writing and confirmed that it was from the crazed killer whose inexplicable murders-at-random now reach back as far as October, 1966, in Riverside.

Steadily Escalates Claim

Although police have definitely attributed only five murders to the Zodiac, the killer himself has steadily escalated the claim in a series of letters, first to the San Francisco Chronicle and now The Times. His last letter asserted he had murdered 14 people.

The Riverside case, which Monday's letter appeared to claim as the Zodiac's work, would raise the known total to at least six.

As in the earlier letters, the Zodiac taunted police for not having caught him yet. His brief note read:

"This is the Zodiac speaking. Like I have always said, I am crack proof. If the Blue Meanies are ever going to catch me, they had bĕst . . . do something. Because the longer they fiddle . . . around, the more slaves I will collect for my afterlife. I do have to give them credit for stumbling across my Riverside activity, but they are only finding the easy ones, there are a hell of a lot more down there. The reason that I'm writing to The Times is this, they don't bury me on the back pages like some of the others."

The letter concluded like several past letters, with a box score showing himself ahead of police—"SFPD —0 (Zodiac symbol)—17+ . ."

The Zodiac Boasts That He's Killed 17 People Now

By DAVE SMITH
(The Los Angeles Times)

LOS ANGELES — California's long-silent Zodiac killer made another bid for public attention Monday, confirming that he has murdered in Southern California and claiming that his victims now total "17-plus."

His latest letter — the Zodiac's first to the Los Angeles Times — was mailed Saturday afternoon or evening from Pleasonton, about 50 miles southeast of San Francisco, where all his previous letters were mailed.

The publicity-hungry killer, silent since he threatened the life of a San Francisco Chronicle reporter last Halloween, explains:

"The reason that I'm writing to the Times is this, they don't bury me on the back pages like some of the others."

The letter, messily printed with a by-now-familiar blue felt-tipped pen, bears the Zodiac's equally familiar symbol — a circle divided in four parts by a cross.

Documents examiner John J. Harris, comparing the letter with earlier samples of the Zodiac's writing, confirmed that the letter was from the crazed killer whose inexplicable murders-at-random began in October 1966 in Riverside, Calif., according to the letter.

* * *

Although police have definitely attributed only five murders to the Zodiac, the killer himself has steadily escalated the claim in a series of letters, first to the Chronicle and now the Times. His last letter asserted he had murdered 14 people.

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"This is the Zodiac speaking. Like I have always said, I am crack proof. If the blue meanies are ever going to catch me, they had best get off their fat — —— and do something. Because the longer they fiddle and ——— around, the more slaves I will collect for my after life. I do have to give them credit for stumbling across my Riverside activity, but they are only finding the easy ones, there are a hell of a lot more down there. The reason that I'm writing to the Times is this, they don't bury me on the back pages like some of the others."

The letter concludes like several past letters — with a box score showing himself ahead of police — "SFPD-0 (Zodiac symbol) — 17-plus."

* * *

Inspector William Armstrong of the San Francisco police department said he was skeptical of the Zodiac's latest claim of 17 victims. Armstrong and his partner, Inspector Dave Toschi, have been doubtful of the Zodiac's claims for more than a year, when the mad killer began claiming murders for which police have yet to find victims.

In Riverside, Police Capt. Irving Cross said the latest letter would appear to confirm that the man who stabbed and mutilated Riverside City College coed Cheri Jo Bates on Oct. 30, 1966, was indeed the man now known as the Zodiac killer.

But as for the "hell of a lot more down there" the Zodiac claims to have killed, Cross said his department has no other unsolved murders.

* * *

Capt. Bud Brooks of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department said he had perhaps one unsolved murder that might be attributable to the Zodiac, but, added that the method of killing — strangulation of a woman with her own stocking — differed from other known Zodiac murders. **"I can't imagine what other cases he might be referring to,"** Brooks said.

The Zodiac — who achieved notoriety and got his bizarre nickname for murders in the San Francisco Bay area — was first linked to the 1966 Riverside slaying last November by Chronicle reporter Paul Avery.

Avery, sifting through old records of the Zodiac case, unearthed notes from Riverside authorities describing the Bates murder, and on further investigation found that her killer later wrote letters boasting of the crime.

Those letters were ultimately matched to the Zodiac's handwriting by handwriting expert Sherwood Morrill of the state bureau of criminal investigation.

It was more than two years after the Bates killing that the mysterious lunatic embarked on the string of Northern California murders that made him the most notorious killer in California history.

The Zodiac's slaughter of two Vallejo teenagers in December 1968, the murder of a young Vallejo woman in July 1969, and of a Pacific Union College co-ed two months later at Lake Berryessa were first chronicled on Oct. 15, 1969, in the Times.

The following day, in San Francisco, the boastful killer wrote to the Chronicle of his murder of a cab driver the previous weekend.

Since that killing there have been no others that could be proved to be the Zodiac's work, although more than a score of killings have been proved with that possibility in mind, including, for a time, the Tate-La Bianca massacre by the Charles Manson "family."

$3,700 Is Stolen From Bar Owner

The theft of $3,700 in cash from his apartment over the Red Baron Bar, 46 N. Park St., was reported to police Sunday by Terry C. Volk, proprietor of the bar and the Whisky-A-Go-Go.

Most of the money was in paper denominations, he said with some $700 of the loot in coins in paper rolls. The money represented receipts from both bars, Volk said.