

Female Hitchhikers And The Pain of Kim's Mother

Hundreds of people, many of them young girls, hitchhike daily in Sonoma County.

The sight of a young girl hitchhiking has become a personal curse for Mrs. Roberta Allen, of Oakland, mother of Kim Wendy Allen, whose nude body was found off Enterprise rd. March 5 in an isolated area southeast of Santa Rosa.

She was raped and strangled. Sheriff's Lt. Charles Kishbaugh said yesterday the investigation into Kim's death had become a matter of routine, running down every case that comes up with similarities to

see if the suspect may tie in with the case here.

"It may turn out to be a life-long process," he admitted, adding that Detective Sgt. Timothy Brown has checked out numerous similar cases since being assigned to find Kim's killer more than a month ago.

For Mrs. Allen the sight of young girls seeking rides has become a life-long reminder of her own loss.

In an interview with the Oakland Tribune yesterday, she said, "I was feeling pretty good—people tell me I'll start getting over it—until I was on my way to work and got to

Broadway and MacArthur" in Oakland.

"I saw a girl, she must have been about 15, and she was hitchhiking. I got to thinking about it, and by the time I got to work I broke down," Mrs. Allen said.

Her thoughts returned to the death of her daughter, a Santa Rosa Junior College student who was working part-time at a Larkspur health food store.

Kim had been warned repeatedly by her parents and teachers about hitchhiking, but sheriff's officers have traced her from the time she left

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FEMALE HITCHHIKERS

The Pain of Kim Wendy Allen's Mother

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She got a ride with two men, who told sheriff's officers they let her out at a northbound on-ramp at Belle ave. and Highway 101 in San Rafael around 5:30 p.m. that day.

The only person who has seen her after that was her killer.

Det. Sgt. Brown said he questioned the driver of the car who gave Kim a ride that far, but he has been cleared of suspicion in the killing.

As for memories of her daughter, Mrs. Allen said, "she was never a speck of trouble to anyone from the day she came on this earth. She trusted everyone, believed that people were good."

One of her teachers at Santa Rosa Junior College said Kim had "an absolute openness to any kind of teaching one could offer her. There was an air of innocence about her."

Warnings

Mrs. Allen said she had warned Kim numerous times about the danger of hitchhiking. "It used to be you'd tell a child not to ride with strangers, and they'd mind. But these days you can't tell a child any more."

Elizabeth Barr, one of Kim's junior college teachers, said af-

ter the death of the attractive 19-year-old coed. "I am haunted by what she must have suffered in her ordeal, not only physically but in the utter disillusionment she must have felt that, indeed, there is such evil in the world.

"I do believe she loved everyone, and felt everyone to be good.

"One night she started to leave my class early, because she said she had to hitchhike home. I called her back and spoke to her at some length about the danger she was placing herself in.

"I told her of another girl student of mine who had recently been murdered hitchhiking, and of yet another who spent five months in the hospital with her whole body broken as a result of this practice.

"I begged her not to do it any more and on that particular night asked if anyone in the class would take her home. We did get a ride for her."

But Mrs. Barr said, "About two weeks ago (before her death), Kim came to see me and we chatted for a while and she told me she had this job in Larkspur. I asked her how she could get there and back such a distance, and once again she said she hitched rides.

"I begged her again to reconsider, but she felt it was all right, and there seemed to be nothing more to be done. How I wish I could have convinced her."

Two Students Killed

Mrs. Barr said, "It is indeed true that in the two years I have been teaching at junior college, two of my girls have been slaughtered thus and a third, a student at Sonoma State College and a friend of my daughter's barely survived.

"I think that for my part and in order to make Kim's memory meaningful I shall set about finding some way at our school to re-educate these girls to the fact that the practice of hitchhiking can be deadly."

It is believed many young hitchhiking girls these days are raped — and only a small number of them report the incidents to the authorities.

After Kim's death was reported in the newspapers, Lt. Kishbaugh said several girls called the sheriff's office to report they had been raped after being picked up while hitchhiking.

They were trying to offer information that might help in finding Kim's killer, but by the time they reported their own cases many of them were

months old, he said.

100 Rapes Last Year

In Sonoma County alone, "We have had more than 100 rapes last year and about 80 per cent of them have involved hitchhiking. Heaven knows how many girls have been assaulted and don't report it," Lt. Kishbaugh said.

Left now with only memories of her daughter's brief life, Mrs. Allen said, "I don't hold any malice in my heart for the person who did it, because I think they must be so sick, so emotionally distraught."

She has turned to the living, the young people who continue to beg for rides every day, hoping to warn them not to hitchhike.

"If only we can reach them before any more are taken from us," she said.