Rape's aftermath raises issue of suburban safety.
San Ramon—At about 2:30 in the afternoon of Oct. 28, a 23-year-old suburban mother awoke to find a masked intruder standing near the bed of her 3-year-old son.

"The only parts of his body I could see were his eyes, his little eyes, just staring," recalls the woman, who shall be called Kathy.

During the next two hours the intruder bound Kathy and her 24-year-old husband, stole a small amount of cash and some jewelry, drank beer and raped Kathy on the cold linoleum of her kitchen. Her child slept rough it all.

"He wasn't really brutal. He didn't lock me around," she says. "But he didn't gentile either."

The rape itself lasted five minutes.

Sheriff's investigators won't say whether they think the intruder is a notorious East Area Rapist, who is believed to have raped more than 30 women in the Sacramento area and, they concede, may have struck in Concord earlier in October.

"There are similarities but there are also some subtle differences," says Warren Rapf, chief of the sheriff's investigative division.

But whether an isolated incident or one of a pattern of similar incidents that has been at least California ignited by fear, the San Ramon police tell a great deal about how suburban lives are affected when a dramatic crime abruptly tears the reputation for peace of the fabric of suburban existence.

The response of law enforcement agencies has been worth examining. If it is apparent that communities of suburban towns in connection with the San Ramon rape show how they well may not be equipped to try to protect the rapes of other suburban women.

If the East Area Rapist is in fact on the run in Contra Costa, has the sheriff's office shown it can cope with the situation? Some say no.

* * *

For about two weeks after Kathy's rape, a wave of anxious couples—most of them young—inundated gun and hardware stores in the San Ramon Valley. They were seeking fire extinguishers, locks and burglar alarms. Gun sales rose as much as 30 percent. Revolvers costing up to $250 were the most popular purchases, some for salesmen, because they're for women to handle instead of men.

Sales at some hardware stores declined. Deadbolts, winch locks, peephole locks and garage doors were grabbed from the shelves as aspirin from the medicine cabinet.

About 80 percent of our bedrooms have guns now

where you felt you didn't have to lock your doors," Kathy recalls.

In fact, Maureen Orlando of Springdale Avenue—has two teenage daughters who have to get permission to use the car and to use the phone. She's embarrassed that she didn't lock her doors before Oct. 24.

"What upsets everybody," Orlando explains, "is that the rape disproved that if your husband's home, you're safe."

A male neighbor of Kathy's defended husbands.

"There's not much you can do," he says. "I would try not to do anything stupid. My wife's safety would be the most important thing. Rape would be unfortunate, but life would go on."

The man, who refused to give his name, added, "If he was a killer or if he was a criminal, I'd consider getting a gun."

His wife said:

"We're from New York City and we've been raised differently. We were taught to look behind us. Here, you're in a nice place and you have a nice home, but you're not as safe as a person in a city."

"So your defenses actually have to be up more. New York has 8 million people on the streets. Here, something can happen during the day and no one would know."

Possibly not even the sheriff, the rape victim herself claims.

"Even if they had the whole force in front of our house, they couldn't have prevented it," Kathy says. "There was no way they'd have known what was going on."

Investigators arrived five minutes after she managed to call them (which was five minutes after Kathy began to believe the rapist had departed). She says they did a good job—"couldn't have been better."

There are three new villains in Kathy's world today, however:

- The rapist, of course.
- Howard Jarvis.
- The phone company.

"I dialed 911, the emergency number, after he'd gone—but it's not in service in San Ramon even though we pay 28 cents a month for it, which I deduct now."

A mile-and-a-half to the south, San Ramon residents are critical of the sheriff. On Northland Avenue and on Ernwood Place, some people believe the East Area Rapist—or an equally menacing counterpart—might have..."
The rape was like a death in family for little town

The rape was like a death in family for little town.

build, his features, his hair. He wasn't as muscular. He was in a sleeveless shirt, too.

"It wasn't the same person."

Appel's description of the man in her backyard matches police descriptions of the East Area rapist. He's said to be in his mid-20s, blond, extremely muscular, very composed and unafraid of dogs. In short, a cool customer.

When authorities arrived at her home, Appel also pointed out that a screen on her living-room window had been pried open about seven or eight inches. She was asked to remain at home the following day so a sheriff's investigator could fingerprint the screen. He didn't come. She called again the following Saturday and a fingerprint technician was sent out. (No "usable" prints were found, authorities would later report.)

Appel continued:

"A week later, we found a footprint in our backyard in front of the kitchen window. I discovered it when a neighbor called to tell me their trip wire (a detection device installed next to a fence) had been sprung.

"The neighbor called the sheriff who confirmed that somebody had been in their yard. They also covered the footprint in my yard with a shoe box and a board and said somebody would come out in a day or so.

"But nobody ever showed up. I called the next week and asked for the officer who'd taken the fingerprints off the screen. He wasn't there and I left a message. I got no response.

"That was it. I was baffled. They'd also asked me if I would identify 'pictures.' I said I would, but they never showed them to me. I left the footprint covered, too, but it's rained . . ."

Appel's account was partially confirmed by a neighbor on Ernwood Place and another on Northland Avenue.

"I'll never know why they didn't get a composite from Mrs. Appel," said an Eastbay police officer who lives on Northland Avenue. "You'd think they'd be hot to get the guy."

Continued Page 22
Rape...

Continued from Page 15

"We at least deserve an explanation to ease the tension. There are guns in 80 percent of the bedrooms around here. Some poor guy breaking into a house is going to get blown away.

"People are scared to death."

Capt. Warren Rupf, the sheriff's chief investigator, was asked why authorities apparently failed to take note of the possible leads Lorraine Appel wanted to provide.

Rupf checked the official account of the Nov. 1 incident in Appel's backyard. He was unable to reconcile it with what Appel told The Tribune.

"If what she relates in fact happened, I would be concerned," he said. "Any officer that tries to direct a witness in terms of a statement or description is acting in an improper fashion.

"I'm going to have my investigative sergeant go out and talk to everybody."

Rupf declined to say categorically whether he believed the man who raped Kathy was the East Area rapist. He noted, however, "The Concord Police Department has identified the EAR as being in their city."

Was it therefore possible the East Area rapist also was operating in the nearby San Ramon Valley?

"Certainly," Rupf replied.

Is there enough manpower to conduct the best possible investigation?

"The sheriff's office has sufficient manpower to conduct a proper investigation," he said.

But Lt. John Gackowski of the sheriff's patrol division complained about inadequate staffing in his division, which would play a key role in any concerted effort to capture a rape suspect.

Residents hope dogs will deter rapist

"We need more people," Gackowski said.

He noted, however, that the San Ramon Valley is more intensely patrolled today than ever before—because of the area's growing population, which jumped almost 15 percent (to an estimated 49,800) between 1975 and 1978.

As many as seven deputies are in the valley at one time. That's one man in one car for every nine square miles and every 7,100 residents.

Gackowski said Kathy's rape "focused attention on that need."

Increased patrols might not be the answer, however.

"They've done studies in Kansas City and Denver showing that you can throw 5,000 cops into a neighborhood and it doesn't affect the crime rate," said an Oakland Police Department rape investigator.

He noted that increased patrols also had had no effect on the rate of sexual assault in East Oakland, an area with a particularly bad rape problem.

That leaves it up to the investigators—and people like Lorraine Appel, who believe they have information that may help solve a crime problem terrorizing Contra Costans.