

Karla Almonte

March 3, 2024

Criminology 102

Professor Satenik Margaryan

Term paper- Step 1

Richard Ramirez- The Night Stalker

Richard Ramirez was an American serial killer who murdered 14 people and tortured dozens in California, in 1984 and 1985.

Ramirez grew up in El Paso, Texas, the youngest of five children born to Mexican immigrants. It is mentioned in reports that when he was 12 years old Richard Ramirez started a close relationship with his cousin who was a Vietnam War veteran, his cousin showed him pictures of Vietnamese women who he said he raped, tortured, and killed. At 13 years old, Ramirez was witness to how his cousin shot his wife. Then, Ramirez started breaking into homes, dropped high school, and moved to Los Angeles, where he continued committing crimes and was in prison for a brief time for stealing a car. It is also mentioned that when he was a child he developed epilepsy, became a drug user, and a fan of Satanism.

He committed more than 30 violent crimes, that included rape and torture during the spring and summer of 1985 . The first victim was Jennie Vincow, 79 years old, on June 28, 1984. It started with theft and turned to violence, Vincow was sexually assaulted, stabbed, and killed during a burglary in her house. What followed this was a spree of murders, rapes, and robberies in Ramirez's hands. Nearly nine months later, on March 17, 1985, the same evening, Ramirez attacked Maria Hernandez and killed her roommate, Dayle Okazaki, without enough satisfaction, he also shot and killed Tsai-Lian Yu. Just 10 days later, on March 27th, Ramirez murdered a couple, Vincent Zazzara and Zazzara's wife. The husband was shot first and then Ramirez sexually assaulted and stabbed the wife to death, also he took her eyes out. During the police investigation, they never had concrete results, so Ramirez repeated his attack pattern. In May 1985, Ramirez did the same with another couple, William and Lillian Doi. Over the next few months, the number of attacks went up, claiming another dozen victims of burglary, assault, violence, and Satanic rituals.

The Los Angeles Police Department responded by putting a dedicated task force and the help of the FBI. The pressure of the Police and the descriptions from his surviving victims made Ramirez leave Los Angeles and go to San Francisco, where he took two more victims, Peter and Barbara Pan. Thanks to that most of his assaults took place at night, the press quickly gave him the name "Night Stalker". On August 24, 1985, on his last night of terror, in the Los Angeles area, he left some evidence that helped police to capture him. A footprint, a witness took note of his car and license plate, and a victim that he raped and killed her husband that night, also provided a detailed description of her assailant.

The car of Ramirez was found abandoned a few days later, with enough evidence and fingerprints to make a match. On August 31st, he was captured when residents from east Los Angeles beat him while attempting two carjackings. After the conclusion of his trial in 1989, he was sentenced to death. He spent the rest of his days at California's San Quentin Prison, before dying from cancer in 2013.

Resources used for investigation:

BIOGRAPHY/ INFAMAUS SERIAL. KILLER

<https://www.biography.com/crime/richard-ramirez#richard-ramirezs-teeth>

BRITANNICA/ HISTORY & SOCIETY

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Richard-Ramirez>

NETFLIX/ NIGHT STALKER: THE HUNT FOR A SERIAL KILLER

<https://www.netflix.com/title/81025701>