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Los Angeles County Sheriff Sherman Block displays photo of Night Stalker suspect at a press conference, flanked by Orange County

Sheriff Brad Gates, left, and Los Angeles Police Chief Daryl Gates. Authorities say suspect has used various aliases while living in California.

Police Identify Stalker Suspect

25-Year-Old L.A. Man Named in Seven-Month Spree of Killings

By DAVID FREED
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Times Staff Writers

An all-points-bulletin was issued late Friday for Richard Ramirez, 25, of Los Angeles, suspected of being the "Night Stalker" whose seven-month rampage of kidnapping, rape and murder has spread fear from Orange County to San Francisco.

In a press conference held at the Hall of Justice, Los Angeles County Sheriff Sherman Block, Los Angeles Police Chief Daryl F. Gates and Orange County Sheriff Brad Gates said Ramirez has a "lightweight" criminal background—including conviction for drug possession and driving an automobile without the owner's permission. But now he is considered "armed and dangerous," Block said.

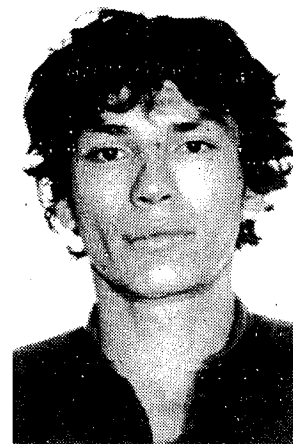
The suspect was identified through a fingerprint lifted from a stolen car spotted at the scene of the killer's last attack early Sunday in Mission Viejo.

Resembles Drawing

The multi-agency task force searching for the Stalker released a photograph taken Dec. 12, 1984, at the time of Ramirez' arrest by Los Angeles police on suspicion of driving a stolen vehicle.

The photo bears a striking resemblance to the composite drawing of a curly-haired man with discolored, gapped teeth on the official flyer for the night-prowling killer now blamed for at least 16 murders and two dozen rapes, assaults and other crimes since February.

The law enforcement officials said Ramirez is Latino, 6 feet, 1 inch tall, weighing 155 pounds, with black hair, thick lips and bulging brown eyes.



Night Stalker suspect Richard Ramirez, in police photograph

His most notable physical characteristic, they added, is "extreme decay" of his upper and lower teeth—an item also mentioned by several of the Night Stalker's surviving victims.

According to police records, Block said, Ramirez was born in El Paso, Tex., but has spent most of his adult life in Los Angeles and San Francisco, where he is known to have used the aliases "Richard Moreno," "Noah Jimenez," "Nicholaus Adame," "Richard Munoz" and "Richard Mena."

Block said authorities are also searching for Ramirez' automobile, a green, 1978 Pontiac Grand Prix bearing California license number 1LFA 239. Under certain light conditions, the sheriff said, the car

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might appear to be maroon. According to the state Department of Motor Vehicles, the green 1976 Pontiac is registered to Jesus Estrada at an address in San Fernando.

However, Estella Gonzales, who said she has lived at that address for 17 years, told reporters she did not know anyone by the name of Estrada, did not own a car, nor did she ever own a green 1976 Pontiac.

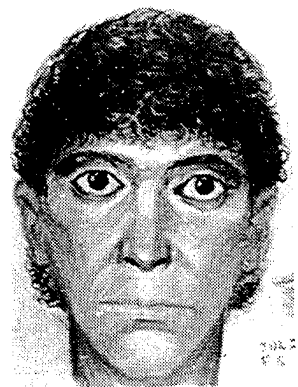
She added that she did not know anyone bearing any of the Night Stalker's aliases, or had seen anyone resembling the suspect.

At the joint press conference, Block said, "We are satisfied that we now know the identification of the individual known as the Night Stalker . . . all police agencies in California and surrounding states have been notified."

Investigators considered withholding the identity of the suspect so as not to tip their hand to him.

'Agonizing Discussion'

"We went through an agonizing, soul-searching discussion as to whether to proceed on this identification (for the public)," the sheriff said.



Police artist's sketch of suspect in Night Stalker slayings.

But after conferring with various law enforcement agency heads involved in the hunt, it was decided to publicize the name out of concern for public safety, Block said.

Addressing a message directly to Ramirez, Block added:

"You cannot escape. Every law officer and every citizen now knows exactly what you look like and who you are."

Task force investigators said it was a single fingerprint lifted from

A growing number of Monterey Park residents have joined a police "Night Watch" unit in the effort to catch the Night Stalker. Part II, Page 1.

a Toyota station wagon that was stolen in Chinatown and found abandoned Tuesday in Los Angeles that led to positive identification of the suspect as Ramirez.

The Toyota had been spotted earlier in Orange County, near the scene of the most recent Stalker attack last Sunday.

Pattern of Attacks

Authorities believe that the Stalker last struck early that morning in a home in Mission Viejo. There, 29-year-old William Carns was shot three times in the head by an intruder who also raped Carns' 29-year-old girlfriend.

Carns remained in critical but slightly improved condition Friday night in a Mission Viejo hospital.

A witness in the neighborhood where the attack took place reported seeing an orange Toyota station wagon, but was able to remember only a partial license plate number of 482 T.

On Tuesday morning, an orange Toyota station wagon bearing the license plate 482 RTS was found abandoned in a lot at Chapman Park, a small shopping center at 6th Street and Alexandria Avenue in the Rampart area of Los Angeles. A resident notified police.

Detectives watched the car from hidden positions until after dawn Wednesday, hoping that whoever stole the Toyota would return. No one did.

The car was taken by flatbed truck Wednesday morning to Orange County, where sheriff's officials used a state-of-the-art laser and Superglue fumes to highlight fingerprints—even those that may have been partially wiped clean.

J. Larry Ragel, commander of

the Orange County Sheriff's Forensic Science Services Division, reported that criminalists had found "good" prints on the car that did not match those of the car's owner, carpenter Bill Gregory of West Hollywood.

The prints were fed into the sheriff's computerized fingerprint file, which produced about 100 fingerprint sets bearing similarities to those lifted from the car. Officials said they also intended to send the lifted prints to the state Department of Justice, which has more than 1 million sets of fingerprints on file.

"It's a long process to look at 100 prints by hand," Ragel said.

But the process was successful late Friday.

The murderer, whose victims have ranged from children to octogenarians, enters private residences in the early morning hours through unlocked windows or doors, authorities say. He immediately shoots any adult males in the home and then attacks the female occupants.

Some of the victims were strangled, others had their throats slashed. The majority were shot with either a .22-caliber revolver

or a .25-caliber automatic.

Police have blamed the Night Stalker for 16 slayings in Rosemead, Monterey Park, Whittier, Monrovia, Arcadia, Glendale, Sun Valley, Diamond Bar, the Lake Merced district of San Francisco, Mission Viejo—and in two Los Angeles area locations not yet officially identified.

He was also blamed for the kidnap-molestations of four children in the San Gabriel Valley.

Times staff writers Steve Harvey, Deborah Hastings, Nancy Skelton and Ted Thackrey Jr. contributed to this article.