

Psychopathic Sniper Hunted In 2 Slayings



Navy Radioman 3.C. Johnny R. Swindle, 19, and his wife, Joyce, 19, were slain by a sniper on cliff at foot of Narragansett Avenue.

Help Find Couple's Killer, Public Asked

By PLINY CASTANIEN

Police said yesterday a young sailor and his bride may have been shot to death by a psychopathic killer.

Because the sniper slayer may still be at large in San Diego, Police Chief Wesley S. Sharp requested the public to help find the slayer. The couple was killed Wednesday night in Ocean Beach.

"Everything in the investigation of this double murder points to a psychopathic killer," Sharp said. "We need all the help we can get from the public to locate the killer and his weapon."

DOUBTS ENEMIES

Everyone Liked Son, Mother Says

"I don't see how anyone could be his enemy. He was a good boy, someone that everyone liked . . ."

Mrs. Mary Swindle of Jasper, Ala., was speaking of her son. A newspaperman in Jasper had broken the sad news: Her Johnny Ray, 20, and his bride, Joyce Ann, 19, were dead of a sniper's bullets in San Diego.

"I just got a letter from Johnny Ray today," Mrs. Swindle sobbed in a telephone interview with The San Diego Union. "It arrived after we knew he was dead."

Mrs. Swindle said her son and his childhood sweetheart were married Jan. 18 in Parrish, Ala., after he flew home from San Diego for the wedding. The couple got a car for a wedding present and drove to New Orleans to visit one of his sisters. Then they motored to San Diego. He was to start a new six-year hitch in the Navy in July.

"He didn't quite finish high school," his mother said. "He had to help support the family—I've been a widow 17 years and there were six children. He joined the Navy at 17."

"He said he and Joyce Ann did everything together—even to washing the dishes and making the beds. They walked everywhere together."

And they were gunned down together on a beachfront patio.

SNIPER MOVES IN

Detectives said the two were first shot from a distance. Then, they said, the sniper moved in close to fire fatal shots in the head with a .22-caliber weapon.

The victims were Johnny R. Swindle, 20, and his blonde bride, Joyce Ann, 19, of 5073 Voltaire St.

NEAR SEA

They were found on what is called a patio area of the Silver Spray apartments at 5116 Narragansett Ave., overlooking the sea. She was dead. He died two hours later in a hospital.

An open box of Valentine's Day candy was found on a ledge above her body. Detective Inspector O. J. Roed said Swindle had bought the candy for his bride at an Ocean Beach store 30 minutes before they were slain.

Last night 18 detectives, headed by Lt. Raymond Hoobler, continued the search for weapons and clues. Hoobler was called into the investigation after recently being promoted to lieutenant and transferred from homicide to the narcotics detail.

BULLET IN HEAD

An autopsy revealed Mrs. Swindle died instantly when a bullet struck her in the back of the head. Other bullets had hit her under the left arm and in the left side of the back. Swindle was hit in the left ear, right upper temple, left thigh and left side of the back.

Seven .22-caliber bullets were found in the bodies of the two, and seven empty .22-caliber shell cases were found at the scene.

Five casings were found 50 feet up the cliff from the area (Continued on a-18, Col. 2)

Sniper-Slayer Hunted

(Continued from a-17)

where the victims were found. Two other casings were near the bodies.

These shell casings gave police some indication of how the couple was slain. Detectives said the sniper fired five shots from the cliff. Then the sniper approached and at close range fired fatal wounds into the heads.

"It is a possibility they were killed by someone they never knew," Homicide Lt. William Schenck said. "The landlady where they lived said they had no visitors since they moved in, and were a quiet couple."

The couple were married in Alabama Jan. 18 and were honeymooning here awaiting his reporting for duty aboard

the radar picket ship Chevalier (DDR805), now in Bremerton, Wash. They lived a week at 5073 Voltaire St., nine blocks from where they were shot.

Police homicide investigative teams concentrated all night and through yesterday on Ocean Beach for clues and for the missing weapon.

Detective Capt. Edwin De Bolt said relatives of the victims in Jasper, Ala., reported they knew of no enemies of the couple.

The relatives said Swindle married the girl next door whom he had known eight years, and they left five days after their wedding for San Diego, arriving here Jan. 29.

Hunt Pushed For Sniper Slaying Clues

Guns Tested, Copters Scan Roofs; Police Chief Lauds Public Aid

Police yesterday used ballistics tests, helicopters and old-fashioned shoe leather in an effort to uncover clues to the sniper slaying of a young Navy couple in Ocean Beach Wednesday night.

Police Chief Wesley Sharp said the shootings apparently were committed by a psychopathic killer. For this reason it is important for the public to provide information which may help police uncover clues, Sharp said.

The chief assigned several additional uniformed units to the Ocean Beach area for several days. He said they would insure greater protection for residents worried about being on the streets at night.

Six detectives yesterday checked information supplied by citizens in response to Sharp's appeal for assistance Thursday.

"The response is gratifying," Sharp told a reporter. "The citizens can save us hours of house-to-house work. We will sift through every lead a citizen furnishes and hope that one will zero us in on the killer."

GUNS SOUGHT

Twenty-five other detectives canvassed Ocean Beach door-to-door. They asked residents to voluntarily surrender guns of .22-caliber for ballistics testing by police.

A .22-caliber gun killed Johnny Ray Swindle, 20, and his bride of 18 days, Joyce Ann, 19, as they strolled on a

BULLETIN

The body of a man fatally wounded by a gunshot was found on the Admiral Baker Field golf course in Mission Valley last night. The naval Criminal Intelligence Division was understood to be investigating to determine if the death was a homicide. Naval Hospital officials notified San Diego police just before midnight that the man was dead but gave no details.

patio walk above the ocean at the foot of Narragansett Avenue. Swindle was shot four times and his bride thrice.

The lack of a motive or other tangible clues makes the finding of the death weapon doubly important, Detective Inspector O. J. Roed said.

Forty weapons were turned over to police and checked yesterday. None appeared to be the death gun.

ROOFS SCANNED

Two detectives scanned roofs in Ocean Beach from a Coast Guard helicopter on the chance that the killer threw the weapon on a roof. A search of the ocean off Narragansett by Navy frogmen from the Amphibious Base has failed to find the gun.

Two detectives from the Santa Barbara County sheriff's office arrived here yesterday with a bullet used in the slayings of a young Lompoc couple on a lonely beach near Gaviota last June 4.

* * *

SNUFFED OUT BY SNIPER

Johnny, Joyce Lived Quiet Life Till Gunfire Intruded

By JOHN WOOD

They lived in a group of old apartments called Paradise Court. It is less than two blocks from the sand at Ocean Beach.

The neighborhood is just like a hundred other beach neighborhoods: a hamburger stand on the corner, small groceries and quick-service stores, the unmistakable smell of salt water in the air and a never-ending "swoosh" in your ears from the white waves.

Johnny and Joyce Swindle were typical of many young Navy couples who move to San Diego.

They were married young - in a small Alabama town when she was 19 - and he was 20. Johnny had not finished high school before joining the Navy, but had worked hard to help support his widowed mother and her five other children.

He had been in the Navy here for more than two years, then had flown back to Alabama to marry his high school sweetheart.

The couple left for San

Diego soon after their marriage, for Johnny was to go to Alaska for duty. In July he planned to "re-up" for six more years.

Johnny and his bride of less than two weeks chose an inexpensive furnished apartment near the ocean, which they both loved.

They had been there a week Wednesday night. The couple took many walks on the beach in that week. It gave them a chance to be alone in a cool sea breeze. And they could talk freely, and stretch, even yell if they wanted.

Johnny and his blonde wife were standing together, leaning on a rib-high wall and looking towards the ocean when they were shot and killed by a sniper. Apparently they had no warning. No one has found a reason.

Early Thursday their three-room apartment was filled with policemen. All were in plain clothes except a big sergeant, whose head nearly reached the low ceiling. His crash hel-

met hung awkwardly in his big left hand as he talked in a low voice.

The others pored over the couple's belongings - on the chest of drawers, an end table, in the closet. A big stuffed, blue bear sat on the floor beside a faded couch. The bear - the kind you win at amusement parks for knocking over wooden bottles - was still wrapped in cellophane.

In front of a rough lounge chair in the living room was a paint-by-the-numbers set. One of the paintings, a poised ballerina, was filled in on the head and an outstretched arm, but the rest of her was a maize of blue lines and tiny numbers.

The painting was propped against the chair on the floor.

A used brush lay flat across the other painting and beside it, with the top on to keep from drying out, was a small glass jar of brown paint.

The ballerina will never be finished.

Detectives Sift Leads In Slayings

A squad of detectives assigned in the search for a psychopathic sniper who killed a young Navy couple in Ocean Beach yesterday concentrated on a mass of information supplied by the public.

"We now have 10 detectives following leads supplied to us by citizens," Detective Sgt. Edward C. Stevens of the homicide detail said. "This information centers in Ocean Beach and concerns reports on persons and their movements in Ocean Beach Wednesday night, when the slayings occurred."

AID SOUGHT

Police Chief W. S. Sharp has asked the public to assist by supplying any information persons may have which will help the police investigation.

Johnny Ray Swindle, 20, and his bride, Joyce Ann, 19, of 5073 Voltaire St., were killed by bullets from a sniper's .22 caliber rifle on a walk along the ocean at the foot of Narragansett Avenue.

Stevens said the house-to-house canvass in Ocean Beach by detectives has been completed.

RESPONSE GOOD

"We have detectives in the area but they are investigating on information supplied us by citizens. The response has been wonderful. We are particularly interested in finding all .22 caliber guns in the area, for ballistics testing," Stevens said.

Mrs. Swindle was found dead from three bullet wounds and her husband was found dying from four wounds. Police have been unable to find the weapon nor learn the motive, and clues have been meager.

Double Killing Probe Turns To 7 Bullets

By **PLINY CASTANIEN**

Police homicide investigators yesterday were leaning heavily upon their only physical evidence in hopes of solving the slaying of a young Navy couple in Ocean Beach.

Seven hollow-nosed bullets may hold the key to who killed Johnny Ray Swindle, 20, and his bride, Joyce Ann, 19, of 5073 Voltaire St., the night of Feb. 5 as they strolled on a sidewalk at the foot of Narragansett Avenue near the beach.

The seven bullets cost less than 14 cents. A box of 50 shells sells for 90 cents.

They are .22-caliber long-rifle hollow-point bullets of the type commonly used by hunters. At 50 feet they would be deadly.

It is the hope of police now that modern criminal investigative methods, in the absence of the death weapon, will reveal the type and make of weapon.

Police have the help of the Federal Bureau of Investigation laboratory in Washington.

They have reached the opinion that the death weapon probably cost \$50 to \$60 new. The ammunition was made by the Remington-Peters Co.

Police yesterday asked Phoenix, Ariz., police to send them one of two .22-caliber shell casings found at a motel where a retired Illinois man was killed Friday night.

Ocean Cliffs Searched In Sniper Deaths

Five police officers spent yesterday walking along the ocean cliffs in an effort to uncover any new evidence in the sniper slayings of a young Navy couple in Ocean Beach.

Johnny Ray Swindle, 20, and his bride, Joyce Ann, 19, of 5073 Voltaire St., were shot as they strolled on a patio walk above the ocean at the foot of Narragansett Avenue the night of Feb. 5.

Sgt. Edward C. Stevens of the homicide detail said the officers searched in the general area of the slayings for any additional shell casings.

PROBES CONTINUING

Police Still Baffled In 2 Murder Cases

By **PLINY CASTANIEN**

Police homicide detectives are working to solve two murder cases.

1—On the morning of Jan. 7 a maid found the body of Dr. Alex S. Barnum, 40, a neurosurgeon, in the bathtub of his home at 3715 Rescroft Lane, Point Loma. An autopsy established that Barnum was strangled. His hands and legs were taped.

2—On the night of Feb. 5 a sniper's bullets killed Johnny Ray Swindle, 20, and his bride of three weeks, Joyce Ann, 19, as they strolled along the beach at the foot of Narragansett Avenue in Ocean Beach.

CASE RECALLED

Until these two cases the police homicide detail had only one unsolved murder in four years. This involved a \$138 robbery of the Crow's Nest Locker Club, 104 F St., on Sept. 24, 1962. An employe, Welford Thompson, 54, who was assaulted, probably with a hammer, died of head injuries Oct. 6, 1962.

In the 13 years from 1950 through 1963, of the 169 murder cases in San Diego, all but 13 were solved—an average of one unsolved murder case a year.

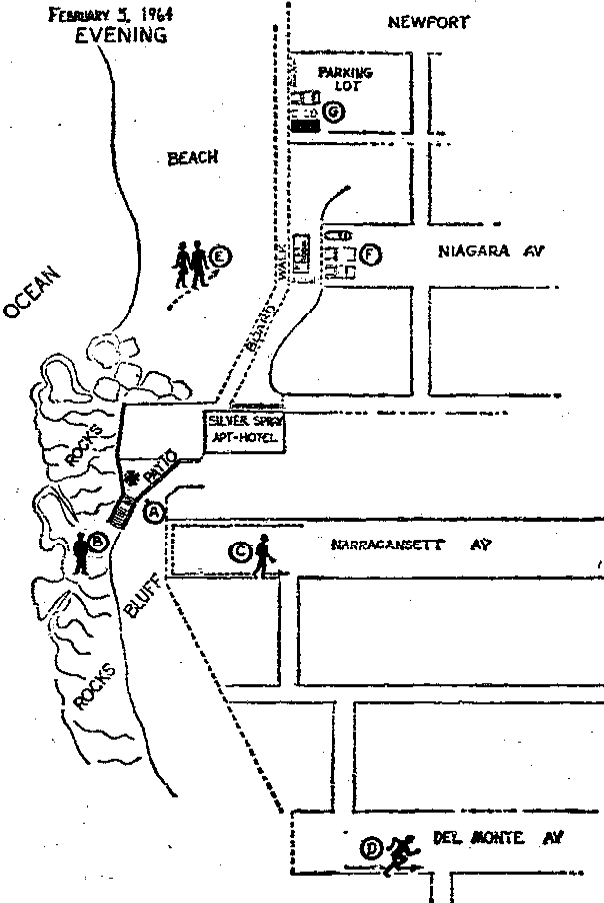
Detective Inspector O. J. Roed is the officer in charge of the investigations into the Barnum and Swindle homicide cases.

Roed in an interview indicated the Barnum case investigation is continuing. A suspect arrested on a murder complaint later was released on grounds of insufficient evidence.

SUSPECT RELEASED

This suspect, David A. Henson, 21, a former San Diegan, was arrested Jan. 11 in Salt Lake City. He was released Jan. 28. On Feb. 6 Henson was arrested in Salt Lake City on charges of robbery and grand larceny.

Lt. Norman D. Hayward of the Salt Lake sheriff's office said Henson was arrested on a complaint charging him with robbing a service station of \$67 on Feb.



—San Diego Police Department Drawing

Drawing shows area surrounding scene where Navy couple was killed Feb. 5. Police continue to seek aid from public to explain several factors. Drawing shows place where victims were shot (X); position of sniper (A); man reported seen standing on rocks (B); man walking on Narragansett Avenue (C); man running on Del Monte Avenue at 8:16 p.m. (D); couple walking on beach adjacent to Silver Spray Hotel (E); occupants of cars at foot of Niagara Avenue (F); occupants of cars in parking lot (G).

8, 1963. Hayward said the victim identified Henson as the bandit after seeing his picture in a Salt Lake City newspaper when he was arrested there in connection with Barnum's slaying.

Roed said: "We are not looking for anyone else in the Barnum case."

Roed said police never have found two things stol-

en from Barnum at the time of the slaying — a wallet and the keys to the doctor's sport car which was found parked outside the \$40,000 residence when the body was discovered.

The Swindle murders still are being intensively investigated by a team of detectives.

In a special press confer-

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IN 2 MURDER CASES

Police Baffled

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ence yesterday afternoon police released a diagram of the Swindle murder scene, with special markings showing location of five persons known to have been in the immediate area, location of the sniper-killer, and of two areas where cars were parked.

"This could be the beginning of a solution to the slayings," Detective Capt. Edwin De Bolt said in the conference. "The public assistance to date has been of utmost assistance to this case. If these people shown on the diagram will come forward and tell us what they know, we will be way ahead on our investigation."

The diagram shows the spot where the Swindles died; the position of the killer on a bluff above them; a man who was standing on the rocks to the south; a man a citizen saw running on Del Monte Avenue through a backyard carrying something in his right hand; a man walking on Narragansett Avenue; a couple walking on the beach north of the slayings; and cars parked at the foot of Niagara Avenue and in another parking lot to the north.

"At this point all we can say is in the Swindle case we have fewer clues to work with than in any other murder case in recent years," Roed said. "All we actually have is two bodies and the seven bullets that killed them."

Sniper Slaying Probers Seek Ex-Resident

**Man, 42, Wanted
For Questioning
But Isn't A Suspect**

Police disclosed yesterday they are looking for a 42-year-old man who moved away from Ocean Beach on or near the day a snipers' bullets killed Johnny Ray Swindle, 20, and his bride, Joyce, 19.

Detective Sgt. E. C. Stevens of the homicide detail issued a bulletin to all San Diego officers containing a description of the man.

He was identified as Charles Thomas Mirich, also known as George Woodside, with the nickname "Woody."

NOT A SUSPECT

Stevens emphasized that Mirich is not a suspect in the unsolved sniper slayings.

He said the bulletin was issued for two reasons: because Mirich moved from Ocean Beach on or near the day of the slayings and because police have not been able to locate him for questioning.

Stevens also disclosed for the first time that Swindle's wristwatch and his wallet, containing his Navy identification and an Alabama driver's license, are missing.

Police believe Swindle was wearing the wristwatch and carrying the wallet when he and his bride of one week were shot from ambush near the seawall at the foot of Narragansett Avenue in Ocean Beach.

REQUEST MADE

The bulletin issued by Stevens asked officers throughout San Diego to contact the homicide detail if they knew of anyone with access to a .22-caliber automatic rifle or .22-caliber hollow-point ammunition.

Both victims were shot repeatedly with an unidentified .22 caliber weapon. After 18 days of investigation, detectives have found no motive for the slayings.

Police also are trying to locate four persons whom witnesses saw at the beach around 8:15 p.m. Feb. 5, when the Swindles were shot. They include a young couple on the beach at the foot of Newport Avenue, a middle-aged man at the foot of Narragansett Avenue and a man wearing tennis shoes who was standing on the rocks near the death scene.

Sniper Slaying Probers Quiz 4 Beach Visitors—Futilely

Four persons who were in the Ocean Beach area where a sniper killed a Navy couple Feb. 5 were questioned yesterday by police but could give no new clues to detectives.

The four contacted police after reading a story in The San Diego Union that police were seeking persons known to have been near the scene but not identified.

RIFLE USED

The victims, Johnny Ray Swindle, 20, and his bride, Joyce, 19, were shot repeatedly with a .22-caliber rifle as they strolled along the beach at the foot of Narragansett Avenue.

Detective Richard D. Ewens said the two couples he talked with yesterday told him they were at the beach that night, Feb. 5.

He said they added no information.

Ewens said the two couples, whom he identified as college students living in Point Loma, said they left their homes about 6:30 the night of the killings and returned home about 9. The Swindies were killed about 8:15.

ON BEACH, IN CAR

Ewens said one couple was on the beach north of the scene and the other in a car in a parking lot at the foot of Newport Avenue.

A 42-year-old man who moved away from Ocean Beach on or near the day the Swindies were killed is still sought by police. He was identified as Charles Thomas Mirich, also known as George Woodside, with the nickname "Woody."

Detective Sgt. E. C. Stevens of the homicide detail emphasized that Mirich is not a suspect in the unsolved slayings.

He said the man is sought

for two reasons: because Mirich moved from Ocean Beach on or near the day of the slayings and because police have not been able to locate him for questioning.

Police also are trying to locate two other persons seen

at the beach that night. They are a middle-aged man who was at the foot of Narragansett Avenue and a man wearing tennis shoes who was standing on the rocks near where the Swindies were killed.

Sniper Killing Quiz Asked In Ax Death

San Diego police yesterday requested that a Marine who is absent without leave from the Marine Corps Recruit Depot be questioned about the double murder of a Navy couple here last month. He is being held in Decatur, Ill., after admitting the triple ax murder of his family.



Gambrill

The Marine, Pfc. Michael Lee Gambrill, 19, was arrested Monday in Boynton Beach, Fla. He was armed with a .22 caliber pistol and a switchblade knife. Decatur police returned Gambrill to Illinois last night.

He is charged with the murder of his father, Everett, 49; his mother, Eileen, 46, and a sister, Annabelle Lora, 13. The victims were murdered with an ax while asleep in their beds.

San Diego police became interested in Gambrill as a possible suspect in sniper slaying of Johnny Ray Swindle, 19,

and his wife, Joyce Ann, also 19, when they learned Gambrill had been on liberty from approximately 7 to 11 p.m. Feb. 5. That night the Swindles were slain on the patio of the Silver Spray apartments, 5116 Narragansett Ave.

"All we know is that Gambrill was in San Diego when the double murder happened, and he was armed with a .22," Sgt. Edward C. Stevens, of the San Diego homicide detail said. "There is nothing connecting him with the murder."

Stevens said the Illinois police will interrogate Gambrill.

A Marine Corps spokesman said Gambrill signed out on liberty at 7:30 p.m. Feb. 5 and reported back to the base at 10:30 p.m.

Police said the Swindle couple was found at 8:35 p.m.

The killer shot his victims from a distance of 50 feet from atop a sloping hill, police said. He then walked up to the wounded couple and shot them at point blank range. Police found five .22 caliber shells on the hill and

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Sniper Death Link Sought

(Continued from a-9)

two more near the dead woman's body.

Police have been unable to find a motive for the slaying.

In Boynton Beach, Police Sgt. William R. Hamilton said Gambrill told him, "I killed my mother first and then my sister, and then went to the rear bedroom and killed my father."

After the killings, Gambrill said he drove the family car to Fort Pierce, Fla., then abandoned it and started hitchhiking.

Hamilton said Gambrill told him he pleaded with his parents to get him a passport so he could get out of the Marines and return to his native Ireland. His parents refused.

Sniper Slaying Of 2 Denied By Marine

The young Marine accused of killing his parents and a sister with an ax in Illinois has denied he killed an Ocean Beach couple Feb. 5, police here were told yesterday.

San Diego police had asked Decatur, Ill., authorities who are holding Marine Pfc. Michael Lee Gambrill, 19, in connection with the ax killings to question him about the double slaying here.

SHOT NEAR BEACH

Johnny Ray Swindle, 20, a sailor, and his wife, Joyce Ann, 19, were shot to death as they stood near the beach at the foot of Narragansett Avenue.

Gambrill is listed absent without leave by the Marines. A Marine Corps Recruit Depot spokesman has said Gambrill was on liberty Feb.

5 from 7:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. Police here say there is nothing to connect the Marine with the shootings.

Decatur police reported yesterday that Gambrill denied the slayings. Detective Lt. William J. Schenck said last night.

BULLETS MAILED

He said Decatur Police have mailed expended bullets from a .22-caliber pistol found on Gambrill at the time of his arrest for comparison here with bullets used in the sniper slayings. Gambrill was reported to have told Decatur officers he had obtained the pistol from his father and did not have it in San Diego.

Gambrill's parents and sister were killed with an ax while asleep, Decatur police said. They said Gambrill admitted the slayings.

Ballistics Link Ruled Out In 2 Killing Cases

Ballistics tests show a pistol found on a young Marine charged with killing his parents and his sister with an ax in Illinois was not used in the sniper slayings of an Ocean Beach couple, police said here yesterday.

Tests run in the police laboratory here show two shells and casings sent here by Decatur, Ill., authorities do not match the bullets which killed Johnny Ray Swindle, 20, a sailor, and his wife, Joyce, 19, detective Sgt. Edward Stevens said.

Stevens said the expended bullets and casings were from a .22-caliber pistol found on Marine Pfc. Michael Gambrell, 19, when he was arrested in connection with the ax killings.

Gambrell, who is listed as absent without leave from the Marine Corps Recruit Depot here, has denied he killed the Swindles. They were shot Feb. 5 as they stood near the beach at the foot of Narragansett Avenue.

"Gambrell can't recall his whereabouts the night the Swindles were killed," Stevens said. "We believe he was alone while on liberty. We are still trying to trace his movements that night."

Recluse Checked In Sniper Killings

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SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

A man picked up in a hobo jungle in Santa Ana is being investigated in the ocean front sniper murders of young couples in Ocean Beach and Santa Barbara.

The man, held in Santa Barbara, is George Edward Gill, 50, a recluse, sought since the bodies of Linda Edward, 17, and Robert Dominguez, 18, Lompoc High School students, were found June 4, 1963, in a shack on a lonely beach 35 miles north of Santa Barbara.

Capt. Edwin De Bolt of the San Diego Police Department said he wants to know where Gill was the first five days of February this year.

On Feb. 5 Johnny Ray Swindle, 20, a sailor, and his bride, Joyce Ann, 19, of 5073 Voltaire St., Ocean Beach, were killed as they stood at the foot of Nar-

ragansett Avenue looking toward the ocean.

In both cases the victims were killed by bullets fired from a .22-caliber rifle. Ballistic tests have proven the bullets did not come from the same rifle.

Sheriff's Detective Gil Chayra of Santa Barbara said Gill has been sought because he is known to have said he built the shack where the bodies of the Lompoc teen-agers were found.

Santa Ana police said they arrested Gill Tuesday night during a routine check of vagrants in hobo jungles there. He was taken to Santa Barbara where he is being held in the county jail.

Chayra said Gill has said he was not at the scene at the time of either of the murders, and his whereabouts are being checked.

Sniper Slaying Still A Mystery After A Year

By JERRY MARCUS

The week before Valentine's Day last year a 20-year-old sailor bought a \$1.75 box of candy and walked two blocks with his bride to admire the ocean.

They walked to the end of a patio at 5116 Narragansett Ave. Ocean Beach, where the swirling surf laps at the base of the cement wall.

One of the last things Johnny Ray Swindle, 20, ever did was to place the box of candy on the retaining wall behind which the couple was standing. It was a moonless night as they looked upon the ocean.

SHOT FIVE TIMES

Atop an ice-plant-covered hill about 50 feet away from Johnny and his 19-year-old wife of two weeks, Joyce Ann, someone aimed a rifle at their backs and began pulling the trigger.

The killer shot them five times from his vantage point on the hill. He then moved down to the patio to shoot them twice more at close range.

Swindle was shot four times, and his wife was shot in the left arm, the back and the head. The couple was found at 8:35 p.m., 40 minutes after Swindle

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Sniper Slaying Of 2 Remains Mystery

(Continued from a-15)

purchased the candy from an Ocean Beach drugstore.

A woman in the area, Mrs. Marci Shields of 5014 Santa Monica Ave., told police she heard two shots and a man scream "No, no" about 8:30 p.m. Police said she probably heard the last two shots, the ones fired from close range.

Mrs. Swindle was dead when a resident in the area came upon the scene. Swindle died in Doctor's Hospital at 10:15 p.m. He never uttered a word, leaving the police nearly clueless from the start.

Police made a house-to-house search in the Ocean Beach area and collected dozens of rifles. The Navy sent frogmen scouring the ocean bottom in search of a murder weapon and hundreds of leads were followed and dropped.

Today the police are still looking for the killer, the weapon and a motive.

Swindle's mother, brother and three sisters, who live in Jasper, Ala., and another sister in New Orleans, could not give any reason why anyone would kill the couple.

Everyone police questioned

who had known Johnny and Joyce Swindle said the same thing:

They were a happy, quiet pair. They had been sweethearts from childhood in Alabama. Johnny was kind to his widowed mother and helped support her.

Seven empty casings from a .22-caliber rifle at police headquarters here are the only threads the police have in trying to connect the double murder with the killer.

Missing Teacher, Student Safe

A San Mateo high school teacher and one of his students, reported missing in Baja California, have been reported safe.

James N. Hobson, father of the student, Bruce W. Hobson, 15, said he received a letter from his son saying that he and the teacher, David B. Werner, 29, had difficulty with their Jeep.

Hobson had reported the two missing Thursday. He said the teacher and student had been expected to return Monday from a study of whale mating waters 400 miles south of San Diego.

7 HOLLOW CLUES

Beach Slayings Of Couple In '64 Still A Mystery

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the first in a series of articles on unsolved homicides in San Diego County.

By JIM WATKINS

The young couple walked on the beach as they had done for a week. She liked to watch the sunset and listen to the surf pounding against the sand. He liked to be with her and stand silent in the moonlight.

It was Feb. 5, 1964.

At about 7:30 that evening Navy Radioman Johnny Ray Swindle walked into Adler's Pharmacy at 4991 Newport St., and purchased a \$1.75 box of Whitman's candy for Joyce, his blonde-haired wife of 19 days.

The two of them walked to a cement patio at the rear of the Silver Spray Hotel at the foot of Narragansett Street in Ocean Beach. They opened the box of candy and stood near the seawall talking as they listened to the high surf washing against the shore line, hidden now in the moonless night.

GIRL DIES INSTANTLY

At 8:15 p.m. the first of seven bullets' ripped into their bodies as they stood there listening to the sound of the sea and dreaming about the future.

Thus began one of the most bizarre unsolved murder cases in San Diego history.

Joyce Ann Swindle, 19, died instantly as a bullet crashed into the back of her head. Johnny, 20, died two hours later at Doctor's Hospital.

The sniper first fired and hit his victims from about 50 feet away. Then, police believe, he walked up to his victims and fired one bullet into each of them at close range.

Officers found five .22-caliber shell casings up the cliff from the patio and two more near the woman's body. No gun has been found.

The victims were discovered by a passerby. The murder scene is nine blocks from where they lived at 3073 Voltaire St.

Joyce, wearing a black leather jacket and plaid capris to ward off the cold February dampness, was found lying face-down on the concrete patio. Johnny was on his side between her and the patio's 4-foot retaining wall.

The only physical evidence police have are seven hollow-point .22-caliber bullets taken from the bodies — the seven worth less than 14 cents — and an open box of Valentine's Day candy found sitting on the seawall ledge.

Police said any hope of finding further evidence on the iceplant-covered hill was slim because newsmen and spectators had trampled the scene before police determined the shots had come from the hill. There were no footprints which could be identified as the killer's — footprints which may have told a story by themselves.

NO APPARENT MOTIVE

There appeared to be no motive for the crime, and it is doubtful there was premeditation.

The officer then in charge of the investigation, Det. Sgt. Ed Stevens, later said:

"He (Johnny) has been described by everyone who knew him as a quiet, inoffensive, likeable person, not much of a conversationalist — a typical small-town boy."

There was nothing in the backgrounds of either Johnny or Joyce Swindle to give the slightest possible motive for their murders. Both had spotless reputations. This was supported by Sheriff Blanton Bennepp of Walker County, Ala., where Johnny and Joyce had been childhood sweethearts.

Johnny enlisted in the Navy at Birmingham, Ala., on Dec. 14, 1960. From Dec. 15, 1960, until March 6, 1961, he underwent recruit training at San Diego's Naval Training Center.

Navy authorities gave the San Diego police complete cooperation. Johnny Ray Swindle had been a good sailor and they were anxious for the killer to be found. Scuba divers from the Navy's underwater demolition teams searched the waters offshore in attempts to find the murder weapon. They had no success.

Police detectives scoured the neighborhood in a door-to-door canvass. They rode Coast Guard helicopters over roof-tops looking for clues — perhaps the killer had abandoned the rifle — but the search proved fruitless.

Johnny died without regaining consciousness.

\$3.03, KEYS, KNIFE

In his right front trousers pocket they found a key chain with pocket knife and car key, a large pocket knife, one key ring with assorted keys, a cigarette lighter, two \$1 bills and \$1.03 in coins.

On his left hand he was wearing a wedding band bearing the inscription "JAK to JRS 1-18-64."

Days went by and they soon became months — then years. Police had no more leads to the crime months later than they did the day after the murders.

What they knew they published and asked the public to help them piece the crime puzzle together.

Several weeks after the murder a map was published in The San Diego Union. It graphically showed what police knew about the area at the time of the slayings.

A man was reported seen standing on rocks above the area, another walking on Narragansett Avenue, a man running on Del Monte Avenue at 8:16 p.m., a couple walking on the beach adjacent to the Silver Spray Hotel, occupants in several cars at the foot of Niagara Avenue, and there were people in cars in a parking lot near the oceanfront walk.

Two couples and three men known to be in the vicinity at the time of the killings came to police but could offer no leads. The two couples in a car two blocks from the scene had heard nothing over the roar of the surf.

Police also know there were three cars in the area whose owners have never come forward. Did the murderer get away in one of them?

Officials still are looking for the owner of a green sedan parked at the foot of Newport Street, as well as the owners of a Pontiac and a Jaguar XKE parked on Niagara.

Sometimes, in the night hours, a lone figure makes its way down a darkened but familiar corridor at police headquarters. Off-duty and tired from the day's work, the solitary shadow climbs the narrow wooden stairs. Filing cabinet drawers are pulled open and contents of thumb-worm files reread.

STILL WALKS BEACH?

Stevens is eight years older and now a lieutenant. He knows the contents of the files by heart. He knows everything humanly possible about Johnny and Joyce Swindle — he knows everything but who killed them. He still searches for that.

Sometimes he is joined by Det. Sgt. Phil Jarvis and the two of them question each piece of evidence and information.

"Who knows," said Jarvis recently, "out there in the city there may be someone who will remember something that happened that night. If there is I want to talk with him."

And what of the anonymous murderer? Does he still walk to the beach — and remember.

The case of the childhood sweethearts who came to San Diego full of love and life and were gunned-down may never be closed. After eight years the search is still on.