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The Judy Williamson story / An Examiner special report

# Her slaying hypnotized Bay Area

**By Lynn Loftis**

The rest of the world put long attention here in the first three weeks of November 1963, when Judy Williamson could be found.

Newspaper press runs went up 20,000 every time a banner headline announced new angles, but there was little new here.

Her photographs showed a smiling young woman, bright and beautiful, who must have embodied something important to a quiet, confident woman in the nation's history. Whatever the reason, those three weeks saw a public demand for news that had seldom been matched since.

It began on the cloudy morning of Oct. 29, 1963, when Judith Gail Williamson left the house of her parents for the last time.

The time was later reckoned at 6:25 a.m. when the 18-year-old pre-med student walked down the east side of Albany Hill toward her bus stop on San Pablo Avenue.

She carried an umbrella and the textbooks she needed for the day's classes at the University of California at Berkeley. She wore a black corset-style sweater with a Moosie pin, a white nylon blouse and a plaid skirt of green and black.

She carried two letters given her by her father, Stanley Williamson, then 52 and an electronics engineer at Navy Island Naval Shipyard. She must have mailed them. They were delivered.

At that point, on a thoroughfare busy with morning traffic, Judy Williamson disappeared.

Police would later talk to hundreds of her friends, acquaintances and neighbors. Among them was a young physicist whose studies named Joseph Otto Egenberger, son of Albany Mayor Joseph Egenberger Jr. He had attended public schools in Albany with Judy, graduating a year ahead of her in 1962. According to police investigations, they had dated from time to time.

Witnesses later told investigators that a white convertible, or hatchback car had pulled alongside a young woman, possibly Williamson, over the bushes on San Pablo Avenue.

Another witness came forward and reported seeing a young man and woman struggling in a similar automobile on Tamien Road in Berkeley, which links the south campus and Claremont Road district to Highway 24.

Still another witness saw a man and woman in what appeared to be a violent physical altercation in a convertible or hatchback parked at the Berkeley Hills on Fish Ranch Road.

Egenberger, whose father was also the city police commissioner, denied all knowledge of the incidents, according to police investigations.

But that was not all.

When came the photographs and reports, distributed on the tiny police house for 24-hour service, shoppers on San Pablo Avenue were stopped and asked about community rumors. Each level of the Williamson were interviewed over and over. The parents, being that publicity might help bring their daughter home, didn't lose their heads.

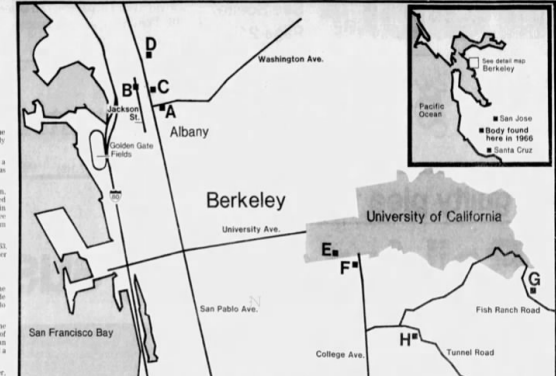
Subsequent newspaper published a screaming Sunday headline for Judy that included numerous romantic adventures. On the following Sunday, the same newspaper reported in another banner headline that Judy had been a virgin. When a news reporter revealed that the missing woman might have been raped in Del Real Hall on the UC campus, authorities dutifully walked through the area and found nothing.

Never was so much news projected in so little and turbulent time. Two weeks went by before police reported on Nov. 22 that Judy's white umbrella had been found in a trunk at the El Cerrito Plaza shopping center. An 11-year-old had had some of the umbrella. Nov. 1 and took it to his mother, who had called Judy's name on a cloth strip inside the trunk.

On Nov. 13, however, a trunk can near Sather Gate on the UC campus turned up two of the missing woman's textbooks. It was an ominous discovery. They were smeared with blood.

Five days later, on Nov. 18, a large blood stain was found in an underground garage owned by UC just south of the campus. The blood was of the same type as Judy's, and police speculated that it may have seeped from the trunk of a parked car.

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Main map shows (A) Egenberger home, (B) where Judy Williamson lived, (C) where she mailed letters, (D) shopping center where her umbrella was found, (E) trash can where her books and purse were found, (F) UC-Berkeley garage that yielded textbooks, (G) where a witness saw two persons allegedly struggling in car, (H) where another witness also saw a struggle between two persons in a car. Below, Judy Williamson (circled) followed dotted line from (1) home around UC to (2) mail box.



Everybody knew everybody else three days in Albany, she said yesterday.

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attention to the report of a witness from San Francisco who has since become the killer looking for a place to dump the body on the strip of Judy's disappearance. She said a young man driving a white convertible went up a narrow lane off Highway 24 near Sather Gate. From inside her house she watched him park and walk around. But neither of the hideouts proved successful.

The body was found elsewhere, so if the killer had changed his mind.

The Williamson had been waiting for their only child for 29 months, and they had hoped for an extended European trip on April 1, 1963. Chief James' husband then downed and confessed their worst fears.

When they returned to Albany in June 1963, Charles Williamson reported: "Please bring us along. We've been through enough at ready."

A memorial service was held June 25, 1963.

The Williamson have since moved to the remote village of Carthage in Santa Clara County.

James and his two daughters have retired. James Simmons, the chief since 1974, was just a part-time cop in 1963.

Ed Montgomery, an Examiner reporter who had kept silent for 14 years about circumstantial evidence pointing to Egenberger, has also retired.

Egenberger's father died a few months after Judy's remains were found.

Although interrupted from time to time, young Egenberger was never named as a suspect. He received a degree in accounting at San Francisco State University in 1969. He worked for U.S. Steel in San Francisco until 1972, transferred back to the Chicago office as a systems designer. He was regarded as something of a loner.

The Williamson case was so sensitive that Albany police couldn't find all the files immediately when Egenberger declined to quit his job, return to Albany, find a lawyer and turn himself in. According to as-

### The chronology: from '63 to '77

- Events in the Judy Williamson case followed this timetable:
- Oct. 29, 1963 - Judy Williamson, 18, leaves her home in Albany, works three blocks to the bus stop, mails two letters and is seen walking into a white convertible in the street. Her father, Stanley Williamson, reports seeing a man and woman arguing in a white convertible on Tamien Road in Berkeley. A similar scene at 6:25 a.m. is reported on Fish Ranch Road in the Berkeley Hills.
  - Oct. 30, 1963 - Her parents report missing Joseph Otto Egenberger, 19, of 1133 Chesapeake Ave., Albany, who had dated Judy. Egenberger's father allows in his findings in Los Angeles that he arrived a hatchback parked three blocks from Judy Williamson's home.
  - Nov. 1, 1963 - With approval from public interest in the mystery, Albany police identify newspaper reporter Joseph Otto Egenberger, son of Albany Mayor Joseph Egenberger Jr. He had attended public schools in Albany with Judy, graduating a year ahead of her in 1962.
  - Nov. 2, 1963 - Police Chief James Simmons orders the missing girl's photo placed in a car trunk and heading for a garage owned by Egenberger.
  - Nov. 22, 1963 - The association of Professor James J. Simmons of Del Real Hall and Egenberger's father allows a three-volume history of political activities, including Egenberger's résumé, a copyright for the newspaper. A date is entered a prime suspect but has no name given.
  - Jan. 14, 1964 - Police announce they have searched a closed apartment in San Francisco. Egenberger has stepped out of school.
  - April 7, 1965 - Four men gathered last week in the South Gate Showroom in a three-volume history that they had read and copied. Egenberger, a witness, later identified through dental records as Judy Williamson's father.
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that, an Alameda County deputy district attorney. The two men were second-year law students at Ball Hall in the fall of 1963.

Standing yesterday outside Albany City Hall talking with Examiner reporter Don Martinez, they considered how the public had become so compulsively fascinated with the disappearance of Judy Williamson.

They also recalled hearing with shock of an event that would set off a craze that would last for three weeks. It was Nov. 22, 1963. Newspaper had just announced the death of Judy Williamson in page six.

### Town shields Williamsons

explained. "They don't realize or talk to anyone.

"It seems they just walk to my house and forget it.

"We have a porch about one month, but they don't even come to them. They just stay to themselves."

"Mr. Williamson comes for her and every day. She just says, 'Hello, but that's about it.'

The couple, whose daughter was kidnapped and murdered 14 years ago, retired another 200 days from the Golden Gate Bridge.

"I don't think we'll find anyone here who'll talk to me," she added. "So that they're out there, but those people want to be left alone."

"They're the kind of people that just remain to themselves," she