

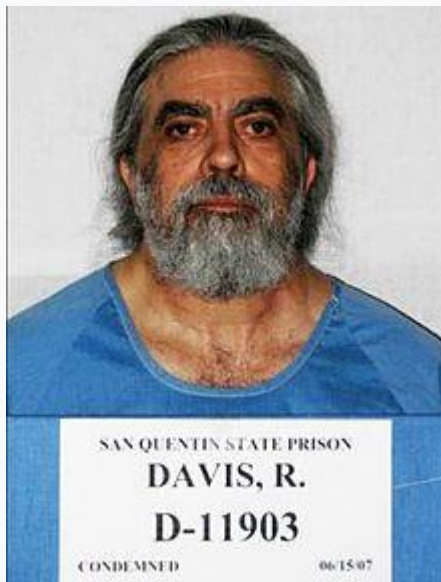
Richard Allen Davis

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Richard Allen Davis



Richard Allen Davis in 2007

Born June 2, 1954 (age 63)
[San Francisco](#), [California](#), U.S.

**Criminal
penalty** [Death](#)

[Conviction\(s\)](#) Murder with special circumstances
(robbery, burglary, kidnapping and lewd
act upon a child)

Richard Allen "Rick" Davis (born June 2, 1954) is an [American](#) convicted [murderer](#), whose criminal record fueled support for passage of [California's "three-strikes law"](#) for repeat offenders. He is currently on [death row](#) in Adjustment Center at [San Quentin State Prison](#), [California](#). He was convicted in 1996 of [first-degree murder](#) and four special circumstances (robbery, burglary, kidnapping, and a lewd act on a child) of 12-year-old [Polly Klaas](#). Davis abducted Klaas on October 1, 1993, from her [Petaluma, California](#), home.

A [San Jose, California](#), Superior Court jury returned a verdict of death on August 5, 1996. After the verdict was read, Davis stood and [gestured obscenely](#) at the courtroom with both hands. Later, at his formal sentencing, Davis read a statement claiming that Klaas had said to Davis, "Just don't do me like my dad," just before Davis killed her, implying that Klaas' father was a [child molester](#). Polly's father, Marc Klaas, reacted by shouting, "Oh, burn in hell Davis! Fuck you!" Klaas then left the courtroom to avoid causing further commotion. Judge Thomas C. Hastings proceeded with the formality of the death sentence, saying "Mr. Davis, this is always a [traumatic](#) and emotional decision for a judge. You made it very easy today by your conduct."^[1]

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Early life^{[[edit](#)]}

Davis was born the third of five children in [San Francisco](#). Both of his parents, Bob and Evelyn Davis, were [alcoholics](#).^[2] His defense attorneys during his trial said that his mother was a strict disciplinarian and punished Davis for smoking by burning his hand.^{[3][4]} Davis claims to be half Native American;^[5] his maternal grandmother was a [Paiute](#).^[6] He also claims to be of [Shoshone](#) and [English](#) descent.^[5]

The couple divorced when Davis was 11. After the divorce the children lived with their father, Bob, a longshoreman. Davis' father was sometimes unable or unwilling to care for his children, so they shuttled among family members and babysitters.^[7] Davis' father would remarry two times. Davis resented both of his stepmothers.^[4]

Bob Davis was mentally unstable and sometimes suffered from hallucinations. He is reported to have taken a gun outside the home and shot at mirages.^[8]

At an early age, Davis [tortured and killed animals](#). According to Ruth Baron, the mother of one of Davis's childhood friends, "He would douse cats with gasoline and set them on fire. He made a point of letting people know he carried a knife, and he used to find stray dogs and cut them."^[8]

By the time he entered his teens, Davis was deeply involved in a life of crime. He told a psychiatrist that stealing relieved whatever "tensions" were building up inside him.^[9] He dropped out of high school in his sophomore year.^[10]

At 17, Davis found himself in front of a judge, who told him that he could either go to the California Youth Authority or join the [United States Army](#). He chose the latter. He received a discharge after 13 months' service.^[11]

On October 12, 1973, Davis went to a party at the home of 18-year-old Marlene Voris. That night, Voris was found dead of a gunshot wound.^[12] There were seven suicide notes at the scene, and the police concluded that she committed [suicide](#).^[13] Friends of Voris believe Davis murdered her.^[14] In 1977 he told a psychiatrist that her death had deeply affected him and he had been hearing her voice in his head and also "At times another voice would appear, telling him that she wanted to be assaulted or robbed or raped".^[15]

A few weeks after Voris' death, Davis was arrested for attempting to pawn property he had stolen. He confessed to a string of burglaries in La Honda and served six months in the county jail.^[16] Five weeks after his release, on May 13, 1974, he was arrested for another burglary. He was sentenced to 6 months to 15 years in prison; however, he was released on parole after serving a year of his sentence.^[17]

Criminal justice record[[edit](#)]



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1960s[[edit](#)]

- March 6, 1967: At age 12, Davis has his first contact with law enforcement when he was arrested for burglary in Chowchilla, where he lived with a grandmother.
- May 24, 1967: Arrested again for forging a \$10 money order. He was briefly in Juvenile Hall before his father moved him and his siblings to La Honda.
- Nov. 15, 1969: Arrested for the burglary of a La Honda home.
- Nov. 16, 1969: The first of several occasions when Davis' father turns Davis and his older brother over to juvenile authorities for "incurability."

1970s[[edit](#)]

- September 15, 1970: Arrested for participating in a motorcycle theft. A probation officer and judge accept his father's suggestion that he enlist in the Army to avoid being sent to the California Youth Authority.
- July 1971: Entered the Army. His military record reflects several infractions for AWOL, fighting, failure to report and morphine use.
- Aug. 1972: General discharge from the military.
- Feb. 12, 1973: Arrested in Redwood City for public drunkenness and resisting arrest. Placed on one-year summary probation.
- April 21, 1973: Arrested in Redwood City for being a minor in possession of liquor, burglary and contributing to the delinquency of a minor. Charged with trespassing, later dismissed.
- Aug. 13, 1973: Arrested in Redwood City leaning against hedges extremely intoxicated. Released when he was sober.
- Oct. 24, 1973: Arrested in Redwood City on traffic warrants. Between April and October, he was implicated in more than 20 La Honda burglaries, leading a probation officer to report that residents were so angry at him, he might be in danger if he returned to La Honda. He pleaded guilty to burglary and was sentenced to six months in county jail and placed on three-years probation.
- May 13, 1974: Arrested for burglarizing South San Francisco High School. He is sent to the California Medical Facility, Vacaville, for a 90-diagnostic study. A county probation officer recommends prison, but proceedings are suspended when Davis enrolls in a Veterans Administration alcohol treatment program. He quits on the second day.
- Sept. 16, 1974: Sentenced to one year in county jail for the school burglary. He was allowed to leave jail to attend a Native American drug and alcohol treatment program. He failed to return, leaving behind two angry fellow inmates who had given Davis money to buy drugs and bring the contraband back to jail.
- March 2, 1975: After being released, the two inmates tracked Davis down and shot him in the back. He is rearrested on a probation violation for failing to return to jail. Later, he testified against the inmates, earning him the epithet of "snitch" from fellow inmates. He was placed in protective custody.
- April 11, 1975: Arrested for parole violation.
- July 11, 1975: Arrested for auto theft and possession of marijuana. Received 10-day jail sentence.
- Aug. 13, 1975: Probation revoked after arrest for San Francisco burglary and grand theft. He was sentenced to a term of from six months to 15 years in prison.
- Aug. 2, 1976: Paroled from Vacaville.
- Sept. 24, 1976. Abducted Frances Mays, a 26-year-old legal secretary, from the South Hayward BART station and attempted to sexually assault her. She escaped, hailed a passing car, in which California Highway Patrol Officer Jim Wentz was riding. Wentz arrested Davis.
- Dec. 8, 1976: Transferred to Napa State Hospital for psychiatric evaluation after he tried to hang himself in a cell at Alameda County Jail. He later admitted he faked the suicide attempt in order to be sent to a state hospital, where he could more easily escape. He was mistakenly admitted as a voluntarily patient rather than a prisoner.
- Dec. 16, 1976: Escaped from Napa State Hospital to go on a four-day crime spree in Napa. He broke into the home of Marjorie Mitchell, a nurse at the state hospital, and beat

her on the head with a fire poker while she slept. He broke into the Napa County animal shelter and stole a shotgun. He used the shotgun to try to kidnap Hazel Frost, a bartender, as she climbed into her Cadillac outside a bar. When she saw he had bindings, she rolled out of the car, grabbed a gun from beneath the seat and fired six shots at the fleeing Davis.

- Dec. 21, 1976: Broke into the home of Josephine Kreiger, a bank employee, in La Honda. He was arrested by a San Mateo County sheriff's deputy hiding in brush behind the home with a shotgun.
- June 1, 1977: Sentenced to a term of one to 25 years in prison for the Mays kidnapping. A sexual assault charged is dropped as part of a plea bargain. He is later sentenced to concurrent terms for the Napa crime spree and the La Honda break-in.

1980s[\[edit\]](#)

- March 4, 1982: Paroled from the Deuel Vocational Institute in Tracy.
- Nov. 30, 1984: With new girlfriend-accomplice Sue Edwards, he pistol-whipped Selina Varich, a friend of Edwards' sister, in her Redwood City apartment and forced her to withdraw \$6,000 from her bank account. Davis and Edwards make a successful escape.
- March 22, 1985: Arrested in Modesto when a police officer noticed a defective taillight. He and Edwards were charged with robbing a Yogurt Cup shop and the Delta National Bank in Modesto. Authorities in Kennewick, Wash., were unaware for several years that the pair had robbed a bank, a Value Giant store and the Red Steer restaurant during the winter of 1984-85. Davis later confessed to the crimes in an attempt to implicate Edwards, whom he believed to have welched on a promise to help him while he was in prison.

1990s[\[edit\]](#)

- June 27, 1993: Paroled from the California Men's Colony, San Luis Obispo, after serving half of a 16-year sentence for the Varich kidnapping.
- Oct. 1, 1993: Davis kidnapped Polly Klaas during a slumber party at her Petaluma home and murdered her.
- Oct. 19, 1993: Arrested in Ukiah for drunken driving during the search for Polly. He failed to appear in court.
- Nov. 30, 1993: Arrested for parole violation on the Coyote Valley Indian reservation north of Ukiah, he is identified as the prime suspect in the kidnapping.
- Dec. 4, 1993: Davis provides investigators with information that leads them to Polly's body off Highway 101 near Cloverdale.
- Dec. 7, 1993: Charged with the kidnap-murder of Polly.
- June 18, 1996: Convicted of kidnap-murder of Polly.
- August 5, 1996: Superior Court jury in San Jose recommends death sentence.^{[\[12\]](#)}

2000s[\[edit\]](#)




- July 2006: Davis was found unconscious in his cell following an [opiate](#) overdose.^{[\[13\]](#)}

- June 1, 2009: The California Supreme Court upholds Davis's death sentence. Davis had argued that his jailhouse confession was inadmissible because it was given without an attorney present. The court ruled that this was justified by the public safety exception to the Miranda ([Miranda v. Arizona](#)) rule. His lawyer Phillip Cherney told press that he intends to ask for a rehearing and will lodge a [Habeas corpus](#) appeal with the state, and then federal courts.^[14] Davis has been diagnosed with [antisocial personality disorder](#).^[15]

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External links[[edit](#)]

-  [San Francisco Bay Area portal](#)
-  [Biography portal](#)
-  [Criminal justice portal](#)

- [All About Polly Klaas and Richard Allen Davis, by Denise Noe](#) - [Crime Library](#) (page not found, redirected to home page)

- [KlassKids Foundation](#) founded by Marc Klaas, whose daughter, Polly Hannah, was kidnapped and killed by criminal Richard Allen Davis in 1993.
- [Murderpedia](#) Richard Allen Davis

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