

A high-contrast, black and white portrait of Ted Bundy, looking slightly to the left with a serious expression. The image is grainy and serves as the background for the text.

TED BUNDY

THE SERIAL KILLER

NEXT DOOR

JOE BLAKE

A black and white, high-contrast portrait of Ted Bundy. He is shown from the chest up, turned slightly to his left, looking down with a somber expression. His hair is dark and wavy. The background is dark and out of focus.

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Ted Bundy - The Serial Killer Next Door

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PREFACE

There have been many books about Ted Bundy but I hope this one can justify its existence and supply some details you might not have known before. The aim of this book is to learn more about Ted Bundy and somehow understand why he is so famous (in relation to most other serial killers) and why we still seem to be so fascinated by killers of this grisly ilk. Be warned that some of the details of Bundy's crimes which follow are not for the faint hearted.

CHAPTER ONE

Ted Bundy was born Theodore Robert Cowell on November 24, 1946, in Burlington, Vermont. Bundy was born at the Elizabeth Lund Maternity Home for Unwed Mothers in Burlington. This large and looming Victorian-style house had been the Lund Home since 1893, when it was called the Home for Friendless Women. The home was founded in 1890 by ten members of the Women's Christian Temperance Union for mothers on the fringes of society who felt alone and vulnerable. Eleanor Louise Cowell, known as Louise to all, was Bundy's (then) 22 year-old mother but the question of who his father was remains somewhat vague. Ann Rule wrote in her book on Ted Bundy that Bundy's birth father has been listed as Lloyd Marshall - an Air Force veteran and a Penn State graduate. Other sources suggest Bundy's father was named Jack Worthington but the real truth remains elusive.

Louise claimed that Bundy's real father was a war veteran who abandoned her after she became pregnant. There is a theory, never verified and pure speculation, that Bundy was the result of his mother being raped by her father. Louise briefly considered putting her baby up for adoption but decided against this course of action in the end. Bundy was, for a time, led to believe that Louise was his sister but deduced himself at an early age that this could not possibly be the case. "Maybe I just figured out that there couldn't be twenty years difference in age between a brother and a sister, and Louise always took care of me. I just grew up knowing that she was really my mother."

Bundy lived with his grandparents in the first years of his life in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. His grandparents

sometimes pretended he was their son in an attempt to make the family seem more conventional (there was obviously more of a stigma about single mothers back then than there is now). This arrangement must have been rather confusing to the young Ted Bundy. Bundy's grandfather was an unpredictable man prone to violent mood swings. This made Bundy and his grandmother tense and nervous in his presence. Bundy's grandmother suffered from depression and agoraphobia - just to further compound the tension in the house. It seems logical to presume that Bundy suffered a degree of psychological abuse from his grandfather.

When he was three years old, Ted Bundy and Louise left Philadelphia for Tacoma, Washington. He was given the last name Nelson in an attempt to hide the fact that he was an illegitimate child. Bundy's mother eventually married a man named Johnny Culpepper Bundy. She met Johnny Bundy (who of course gave Ted Bundy his soon to be infamous last name) in 1950 and the couple married in 1951. Johnny Bundy was an army hospital cook and although everyone else who met Johnny seem to regard him as decent, friendly and kind, Ted Bundy did not always get on terribly well with his new stepfather. Louise had four more children and Ted, although he got on well with siblings (his sister Linda in particular) and cousins, seemed to sometimes feel like something of an outsider in the family - not being the biological son of the head of the house.

Ted Bundy would throw tantrums and - already snobbish at a tender age - wish that he had been born into a family that was rich and elegant. Ted Bundy believed his stepfather to be his intellectual inferior and regarded him with private disdain. Ted Bundy was fond of lurid pulp fiction growing up. He would later (while on Death Row) vaguely seek to blame pulp fiction, horror movies, and pornography for the dark and unfathomable path his life would take. You never got

the impression though that Bundy even believed this spurious excuse himself. These influences seemed tenuous as clarification for the horrific crimes of Bundy. It was just something he vaguely floated in an attempt to say something, anything, in response to the unavoidable question of why he had killed. Millions of Americans were exposed to pulp fiction, girlie mags, adult films, and horror movies and never harmed a fly as a consequence.

Bundy never divulged much about his early life but there is enough evidence to suggest it was troubled. His aunt once woke up to find Bundy, still a child at the time, placing knives around her sleeping form. "I remember thinking at the time that I was the only one who thought it was strange," she said. "Nobody did anything." Bundy attended the Woodrow Wilson High School in Tacoma. He was the class of 1965. Those that remember Bundy from this time seem to have conflicting perspectives. This is by no means a rare occurrence in the life of Ted Bundy. Bundy was seemingly all things to all people. Sandi Holt, who grew up with Ted Bundy, remembered him as a socially awkward young man with a speech impediment. "He just didn't fit in. He had a horrible speech impediment, so he was teased a lot. He had a temper. He liked to scare people." Others though remembered Bundy as an impeccably dressed young man who loved school dances. Bundy, for his part, said that he never quite understood social interactions as a young man. The simple act of making friends baffled him.

The real Ted Bundy was a tabula rasa. Bundy was like the lead character in the Woody Allen film *Zelig*. *Zelig* tells the story of fictional thirties celebrity Leonard Zelig - a man so insecure he becomes a real life human chameleon who can emulate the speech and appearance of other people when in their company. This was Ted Bundy. He could blend into a university campus, the world of political fundraising, or even

a suicide crisis hotline. Bundy could also convincingly play the part of a kind and sensitive boyfriend. Bundy could appear perfectly normal to the world around him.

Not all serial killers were wild-eyed loners who lived in squalor surrounded by the bones of their victims. Rodney Alcala, who may have killed as many as a hundred people, appeared on the ABC television show *The Dating Game*, enrolled in the NYU film school, and had a counseling job at a New Hampshire arts camp for children. Dennis Rader, the 'BTK killer (BTK stood for 'bind, torture, kill'), was married, had a daughter who adored him, and was president of his local church council.

Bundy was cut from this cloth - as opposed to the 'plain sight' dysfunction and evil of a Richard Ramirez (aptly named *The Night Stalker* - Ramirez would break into random houses armed with a gun and knife to murder, rape, and steal). Ramirez looked crazy but Ted Bundy looked like a normal person. Though a 'lone wolf' who loved freedom and time alone to roam and kill, Bundy was also able to integrate and surround himself with enough trappings of 'normality' to mask his true nature from those that knew him.

Bundy wasn't much of an athlete at school and failed to make sports teams. He was also largely unsuccessful with girls. "It wasn't that I disliked women or were afraid of them, it was just that I didn't seem to have an inkling as to what to do about them," reflected Bundy. In later life as an adult though, Bundy would be surprisingly successful with women - sometimes juggling more than one girlfriend at a time. Bundy confessed to becoming a peeping Tom in his early years. He would roam the streets at night looking for windows where he might see someone undressing. Bundy was also arrested a couple of times in his school years for

theft - including trying to steal a car. He would remain a habitual thief long into adulthood. There were times in his life when Bundy stole practically everything he owned.

Bundy's grades at school were nothing to write home about - despite the fact that he was desperate to project the image of a high achiever who belonged in the higher echelons of society. Bundy was not a remarkable student. He had a habit of becoming easily distracted and never seemed able to focus on any one thing for a protracted period of time. Bundy seemed to have a low boredom threshold and short attention span. This quality sometimes made him seem rather aimless and yet he remained ambitious. Bundy's childhood was relatively normal for long periods. He was a newspaper delivery boy and attended church. Bundy was a Scout too. He also saved the life of a friend's niece when she was at risk of drowning. This was a rare case of Bundy saving a life rather than taking one.

Bundy's first 'official' victim was killed in 1974 but many believe he may have killed for the first time in 1961 when he was only fourteen. Eight-year-old Ann Marie Burr mysteriously disappeared from her Tacoma home in the middle of the night on August 31, 1961. Bundy - an active peeping Tom who would roam around the streets - lived near the Burr family at the time. It is more than possible that Bundy had been spying on people's homes that night and spotted an opportunity. Ann Marie was also a piano student of Ted Bundy's uncle (a man named Jack). Given that Bundy was the local paperboy and lived four blocks away, it seems highly plausible to think that Ann Marie Burr may possibly have been his first victim.

There was an unlocked door and a footprint in the Burr house. Burr's father claimed he saw Bundy in a construction ditch shortly after the child disappeared and Bundy was once

said to have remarked in prison (when he would speak of murders third person and had not yet offered any frank confessions) that, for a killer, "when he's 15 (describing the moment of murder) it'd be a much more mystical, exciting, intense, overwhelming experience than when he's 50." Was he talking about himself when he said this? Bundy always insisted he had nothing to do with Ann Marie's disappearance but in 1986 Ann Marie's mother Beverly Ann Burr wrote the incarcerated Bundy a letter imploring him to confess.

Dear Ted,

On August 31, 1961, just before school was to start for you and our children, there came a black rainy night with lots of heavy winds. You were 15 and had been wandering the streets late at night and peeping in windows and taking cars. I feel your FIRST MURDER WAS OUR ANN MARIE BURR. The bench from the back yard was used to climb in the living room; the orchard next door was a dark setting for a murder. What did you do with the tiny body? God can forgive you.

With all appeals likely to be refused and soon, there is nothing left for you in this world; there can STILL be everything good for you in the next. Your life started going wrong somewhere when you were very young. There had to be a lot of bad things happen to make you have your strong feelings of hatred.

I came close to ruining my life because of my cruel actions and feeling no sorrow about them. A lot of strange circumstances brought help to me or I would not have found myself, even though I knew I needed help and my actions were getting out of control. You should have received that same help when you needed it.

God can still give the help to you - if you can gather together any strength you have left and try to feel a real sorrow inside for the horrors you have brought so many. You will face these horrors alone if there is no chance to be with God after you die.

You have NOTHING MORE TO LOSE IN THIS WORLD. By explaining your sickness, you will feel sorrow and gain everything in the next life, as God promised you and all of us. Please try. There isn't much time. I am deeply sorry you did not get help when you needed it. I have not written until now because the end of life for you did not seem near until now. Will you write back.

Bundy penned a prompt reply:

Dear Beverly, thank you for your letter of May 30.

I can certainly understand you doing everything you can to find your daughter. Unfortunately, you have been misled by what can only be called rumors about me. The best thing I can do for you is to correct these rumors, these falsehoods. First and foremost I do not know what happened to your daughter Ann Marie. I had nothing to do with her disappearance. You said she disappeared August 31, 1961. At the time I was a normal 14-year-old boy. I did not wander the streets late at night. I did not.

One person who always believed Bundy had nothing to do with Ann Marie's vanishing was Louise. She simply refused to believe that his killing spree could have begun while he was still living at home with her. Louise had enough trouble believing that Bundy was a killer at any point in his life - let alone while still a teenager living with her. Louise

would remain Bundy's staunchest supporter in the tragic decades to come.

Bundy completed his high schooling in 1965 from Woodrow Wilson High School and spent the following year in the University of Puget Sound - a private liberal arts college in Tacoma. His mother would work at this college long after her son was outed as one of the worst serial killers in history. In 1966, Bundy got himself transferred to the University of Washington in order to learn Chinese. Bundy apparently had a (if true, rather perceptive in hindsight) theory that China, with its huge population, would one day be the most important and powerful country in the world and felt that learning Chinese as a second language would not only be common but advantageous to one's career in the future. However, true to form, Bundy struggled in his classes and never actually learned much Chinese in the end.

In 1966, a young stewardess named Lonnie Trumbell, the daughter of a Portland Ore Fire Dept lieutenant, was bludgeoned to death in her room by an unknown assailant. Her room-mate Lisa Wick was also hit over the head by a heavy object but somehow managed to survive. Lisa ended up in a coma and when she awoke could remember nothing of what had happened. A piece of wood covered in blood was found near the building. The attack took place in Seattle. Ted Bundy was twenty years old at the time and living in the area as a student. The attack seemed to fit the modus operandi of Bundy's savage (later) attacks and so it is speculated (and often presumed) that he may have been the person who attacked these flight attendants in such brutal fashion.

As with many prolific serial killers, the true number of Bundy victims is almost impossible to verify but it seems impossible to think that Bundy did not kill or attack anyone

before 1974 (the year usually credited as marking the start of his official 'career' as a killer). The attack on Trumbell and Wick had all the hallmarks of Bundy. Most of his victims had skull damage and - given the chance - he would frequently attack women as they slept. Bundy was what you might describe as a very careful and calculating serial killer. He never left his prints at the scene of a crime and he never used a gun. Guns were too risky. They could be traced and the noise might attract others. Besides, Bundy was savage enough without the use of a firearm. He relished the violence and intimacy of killing. A gun would be too second hand for his own tastes. It would make the murder feel too remote and too easy.

By 1968, Bundy evidently lost interest in Chinese and started taking classes in both urban planning and sociology. There were stories too that Bundy only took the Chinese course because he was trying to woo a woman named Susan - who ultimately rejected him (thus, if true, explaining why he lost interest in his studies at this time). Whatever his true motivation for taking the course, he simply hadn't the patience to stick with it. It was around this time that Bundy began his first relationship. His girlfriend was a fellow student named Diane Edwards (aka Stephanie Brooks). "The relationship I had with Diane had a lasting impact on me," said Bundy. "She's a beautifully dressed, beautiful girl. Very personable. Nice car, great parents. So for a first-time girlfriend, you know, it was really not so bad. We spent a lot of time driving around in her car, making out and telling each other how much we loved one another."

Edwards gave an interview in 1976 where she described the Ted Bundy she knew as weak and directionless. This is what had soured their relationship - at least from her perspective. "This was my main criticism of him after the year and a half of our relationship. He wasn't strong. He

wasn't really masculine. If I got mad at him because he did something he sort of felt apologetic about it. He wouldn't stand up for himself."

"I experienced any number of insecurities with Diane," said Bundy. "There were occasions when I felt she expected a great deal more from me than I was capable of giving. I was not in any position to take her out or squire her around in the manner she was accustomed. But, I think I was coming apart at the seams and maybe she saw it. Throughout the summer, Diane and I corresponded less and less. Then she stopped writing and I started to get fearful of what she was up to. I had this overwhelming fear of rejection that stemmed, not just from her, but everything. In there somewhere was a desire to have some sort of revenge on Diane."

Their relationship was mostly doomed by Bundy's failure to attain the grades he needed to gain admittance to a good law school. He took low-wage jobs to get through college and always feared that Edwards was out of his league. Her rejection made him determined to prove her wrong. It made him desperate to do better and make something of his life. He was no longer in college when they split but re-enrolled at the University of Washington to study psychology. He was also at Temple University, Philadelphia for a single semester. Four years later, Bundy and Edwards met up again and Bundy attempted to rekindle their romance - but apparently only so that he could reject her and so have his revenge. Bundy described her as "the only woman I ever really loved."

It is unavoidably speculated then that Bundy's killing spree perhaps represented some sort of revenge on the world for his rejection by Edwards. Though this is often disputed (there were blonde victims too), the women he

killed often bore a striking resemblance to her - right down to the way they parted their hair in the middle. Many of the women that Bundy killed were young, bright, attractive dark-haired students - just as Edwards had been when they were together. Years later there was the distasteful spectacle of 'Bundy groupies' turning up to his trial with their hair parted in the middle. A sort of ghoulish, tasteless fancy dress costume.

Bundy had grown up to be a relatively handsome young man with striking blue eyes and dark wavy hair. In a decade where long hair, hippies, drug taking, pop music, psychedelia, and counter culture was cool, Ted Bundy cut a resolutely traditional figure. Bundy was more Eisenhower era than The Rolling Stones. He had short hair and smart preppie clothes. He was a Republican and volunteered at the Seattle office of Nelson Rockefeller's presidential campaign. Bundy attended the 1968 GOP convention as a delegate for Nelson Rockefeller.

It is often suggested that Bundy, with his Zelig like qualities, could have gone far in politics if he hadn't been a serial killer and academic slacker. He had plenty of superficial charm and personal ambition - two qualities that would appear to be essential in the world of politics. Ted Bundy avoided the Vietnam draft because he complained of a bad ankle. He was 4-F, he would tell people. Bundy said he had broken his ankle once and it never healed properly. Bundy's attitudes to Vietnam were illustrative of his chameleon personality. He told Republican friends that he supported the war. In more liberal company, Bundy would say he was against the war and complain that the use of napalm was disgraceful.

In 1969, Bundy met a woman named Elizabeth Kloepfer (aka Liz Kendall) and the pair began dating. Kloepfer, a 24-