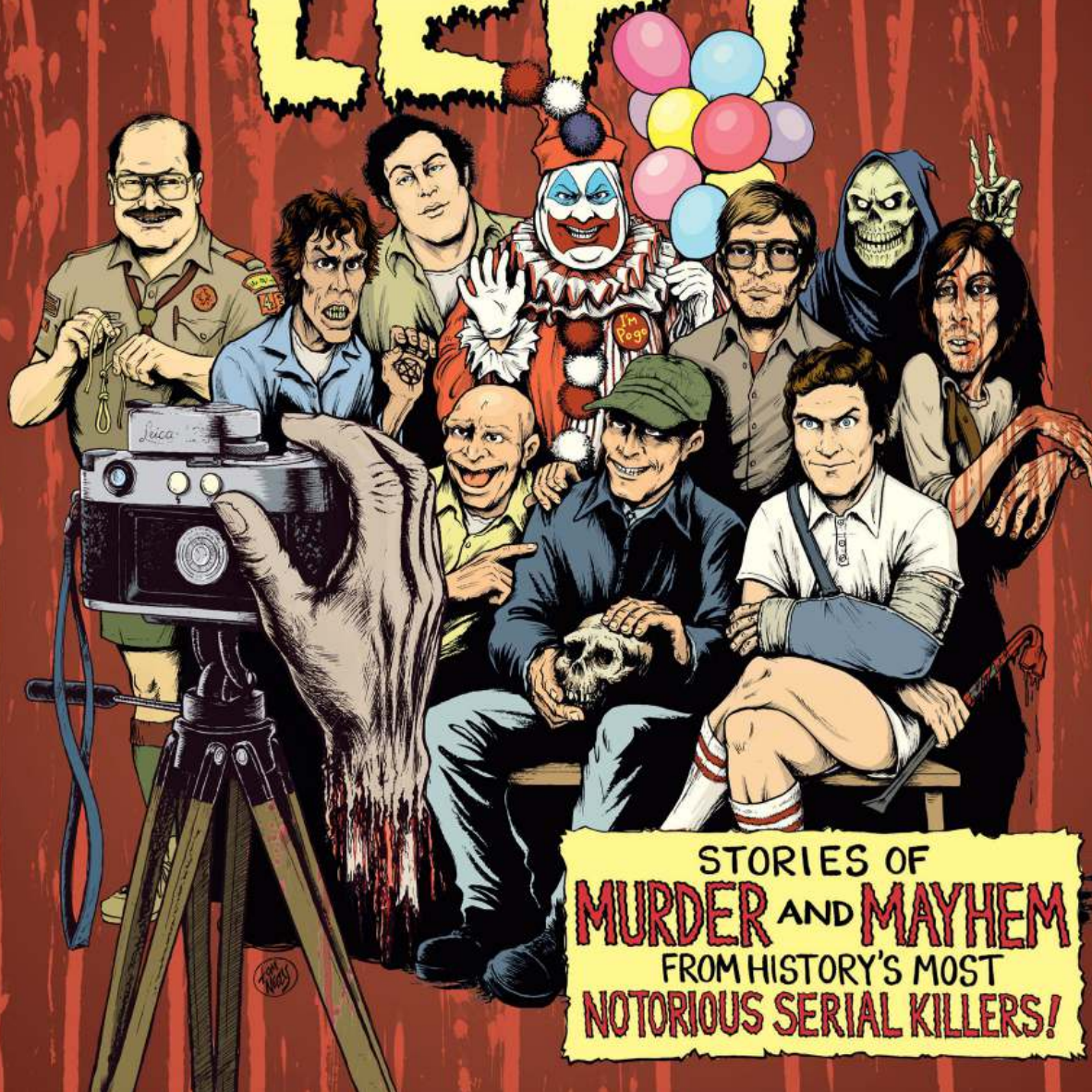


THE LAST PODCAST ON THE LEFT PRESENTS:

THE LAST BOOK ON THE

LEFT



STORIES OF
MURDER AND MAYHEM
FROM HISTORY'S MOST
NOTORIOUS SERIAL KILLERS!

THE LAST BOOK ON THE LEFT

STORIES of MURDER and MAYHEM from
HISTORY'S MOST NOTORIOUS SERIAL KILLERS

BEN KISSEL, MARCUS PARKS,
and HENRY ZEBROWSKI

with ILLUSTRATIONS by TOM NEELY

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN HARCOURT
Boston • New York
2020

Contents

[Title Page](#)

[*Contents*](#)

[*Copyright*](#)

[*Dedication*](#)

[*Introduction*](#)

[*Ted Bundy*](#)

[*Richard Chase*](#)

[*Ed Gein*](#)

[*John Wayne Gacy*](#)

[*Richard Ramirez*](#)

[*David Berkowitz*](#)

[*BTK*](#)

[*Andrei Chikatilo*](#)

[*Jeffrey Dahmer*](#)

[*Acknowledgments*](#)

[*Index*](#)

[*About the Authors*](#)

[*Connect with HMH*](#)

Copyright © 2020 by MEGUSTALATIONS ENTERTAINMENT, LLC

All rights reserved.

For information about permission to reproduce selections from this book,
write to

trade.permissions@hmhco.com or to Permissions, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, 3

Park Avenue, 19th Floor, New York, New York 10016.

hmhbooks.com

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Kissel, Ben, author. | Parks, Marcus, author. | Zebrowski, Henry, author. | Neely, Tom, 1975–

Illustrator.

Title: The last book on the left : stories of murder and mayhem from history's most notorious serial killers / Ben Kissel, Marcus Parks and Henry Zebrowski; illustrations by Tom Neely.

Description: Boston : Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2020. | Second statement of responsibility from title page verso.

Identifiers: LCCN 2019045770 (print) | LCCN 2019045771 (ebook) | ISBN 9781328566317

(hardback) | ISBN 9780358172284 (e-audio) | ISBN 9780358306740 (CD) | ISBN 9781328566225

(ebook) | ISBN 9780358409809 (special edition)

Subjects: LCSH: Serial murderers—History. | Serial murderers—Humor.

Classification: LCC HV6515 .K57 2020 (print) | LCC HV6515 (ebook) | DDC 364.152/32092273—

dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2019045770>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2019045771>

Cover illustrations and design by Tom Neely

v1.0320

Clapping hands emoji on [page 241](#) © Sudowoodo/Shutterstock.com

To the listeners, without whom we would not exist.



INTRODUCTION

This is

THE LAST BOOK ON THE LEFT:

Stories of Murder and Mayhem from History's Most Notorious Serial Killers,

a work thirty-seven years in the making.

If you listen to the Last Podcast on the Left, you are a person of taste and power.

Thank you for your service. If you haven't heard of our podcast and just want

to read about serial killers, you've come to the right place! If you haven't heard of us and you don't want to read about serial killers, put the book down, slowly back away, and go purchase a nice Dave Barry book or one of those tiny books near the cash register with a title like *100 Ways to Make Your Pet Your Child*.

The *Last Podcast on the Left* is a true crime / paranormal / all things dark and mysterious comedy podcast that was started in 2011 by three cretins in the basement of a Mexican restaurant, right next to the crates of beans. Now we are one of the most popular podcasts on the internet thanks to luck and the boredom of millions of people.

Every week we dive deep into the minds and histories of some of the most notorious serial killers the world has ever seen. Led by intrepid producer and researcher Marcus Parks, cohosts Henry Zebrowski and Ben Kissel leave no stone unturned as they examine minute details of these murderers' lives and

make fun of their dimple penises and infatuation with milk. Years of researching serial killers has revealed that most of these criminals are not the monsters of nightmares they are so often portrayed to be by “true crime entertainment” but are more often huge dorks who couldn’t get anything right

in their lives so they turned to murder and mayhem. And we’re here to pick this all apart.

Now for the *Last Podcast on the Left* roll call!



Hi, I’m Henry Zebrowski, and I am a professional “comedian.” I hail from Queens, New

York and am thirty-five years young, and, at the present, I’m a loose-bodied 180-pound

man with a mind of garbage but a heart of gold. On LPOTL I do a lot of character voices

and try my best to keep up with the research prowess of Marcus Parks. I believe in the

healing power of our dark lord Satan.

I'm Ben Kissel! I'm a big guy from the Midwest who has always been fascinated by horror

films and true crime stories. As a matter of fact, I grew up only twenty minutes from Ed

Gein's grave in Plainfield, Wisconsin. My job on the podcast is to contribute levity to some

of the most heinous crimes ever committed and learn right along with the audience.

He learns!

You will not see Marcus's head very often. He lurks in the shadow of his computer.

Now, what goes into the book form of a podcast? That's a good question!

Each chapter is a deep dive into a serial killer, with Marcus's analysis driving

the narrative and jokes interjected by Henry and Ben. We are tackling nine of

the most notorious serial killers in history—most you would identify easily on the Tumblr page of a serial killer groupie—and we've addressed most of them on the show in one fashion or another, but our goal here is to look at these creatures again, with fresh eyes. You might notice Marcus's dried tears throughout as a result of these efforts. Let us be very clear: Marcus wrote

most of this. Henry and Ben drank and stared at him while he was hunched over a keyboard like Jack Torrance. All we had to do was write the introduction! Which turned out to be very difficult. It's hard to write a book! Join us as we cackle into the darkness. The only way to defeat these monsters is to laugh at them. Or put them in jail, obviously.

HAIL SATAN

HAIL GEIN

HAIL YOURSELVES

This is *The Last Book on the Left*.



CHAPTER 1

TED BUNDY

When it comes to serial killing, one hesitates to use qualifiers like best or greatest

because, for the most part, using descriptors of that sort is tasteless and disrespectful to the victims. But if one were to objectively quantify pure ability, evasion skills, and the capacity to inspire fear in the hearts of the public, Ted Bundy would come out on top. This man was so terrifying, so reprehensible, so iconic that he seemed mythical. However, when you pull back the curtain, Bundy, like all the degenerates you're going to get to know over the course of this book, was just a man.

Unfortunately, given that very few people ever actually witness a serial killer at work and live to tell the tale, we generally have to trust the most untrustworthy person in the room to create the narrative: the actual killer. The

mythology that surrounds Ted Bundy is one that he helped to create, from his

supposed habit of gussying up the decapitated heads of his victims with makeup to the sexual acts he allegedly performed on said heads. While there is no doubt about the heinousness of his crimes, there remains skepticism as to the veracity of some of his claims.



As a Knicks fan, I witness a serial killing every game.

They are paid millions of dollars to lose. I can relate. I am paid literally hundreds of dollars to suck on television.

Even before he got a chance to humblebrag about his crimes, Bundy was already well versed in deception. Throughout his life, he fooled those around him by combining his striking good looks with a carefully crafted aw-shucks facade that was rooted in sociopathic confidence. Outwardly, Bundy personified the old cliché: women wanted him and men wanted to be him.

Inwardly, he was fueled by narcissism and rage.

Ted Bundy follows a long line of serial killers who lived double lives: during the day they

were “normal,” meaning they could hold a job and have relationships, but in their minds

they would turn into a monster. We learned from H. H. Holmes that for serial killers, getting

away with the portrayal of the “normal” part of their lives is often just as thrilling as the

murders themselves. They love “getting one over” on someone else because it tickles their

sense of superiority—though deep down they know they are in actuality very small and

weak.

Even though Bundy’s victim count likely runs well past a dozen, many were too badly decomposed when they were found for a full forensic



reckoning. The true crime world, however, just couldn’t help itself in filling in the blanks when building Bundy’s persona and mythology. Bundy has the dubious distinction of being top of the serial killer trash pile, so he needed no

help in giving his story an edge of evil. But in the pursuit of profit, crime writers and TV producers turned an admittedly deadly animal into a beast out

of Revelation.

It's a common thread in true crime "entertainment": the scarier the monster portrayed, the

easier it is to sell books (thank you for your purchase) and get people to watch television

shows. Fear makes people buy stuff!

Ted Bundy was born Theodore Robert Cowell in Burlington, Vermont, on November

24, 1946, at the Elizabeth Lund Home for Unwed Mothers, known locally as Lizzie Lund's Home for Naughty Ladies.

Better than the original nickname, Lizzie Lund's Bastard Brasserie.

His mother, twenty-two-year-old Eleanor Louise Cowell, was a little shaky on the identity of her son's father upon Ted's birth. Originally, the man listed on Ted's birth certificate was Lloyd Marshall, reportedly a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, an air force veteran, and a "salesman." Shortly thereafter, for reasons unknown, Louise changed the name to Jack

Worthington, of whom we know nothing, save for the fact he was allegedly a sailor who impregnated Louise in Philadelphia.





Literal y the most made-up name of al time since Engelbert Humperdinck.

For my money, the most made-up-sounding name I've ever heard was Dick Trickle, but

who am I to correct you? (He was a race car driver—I had to look him up.)

In the definitive Ted Bundy book, *The Stranger Beside Me*, criminologist

Ann Rule speculated that Bundy was the product of an incestuous

relationship between Louise and her father, Samuel Cowell. While Rule

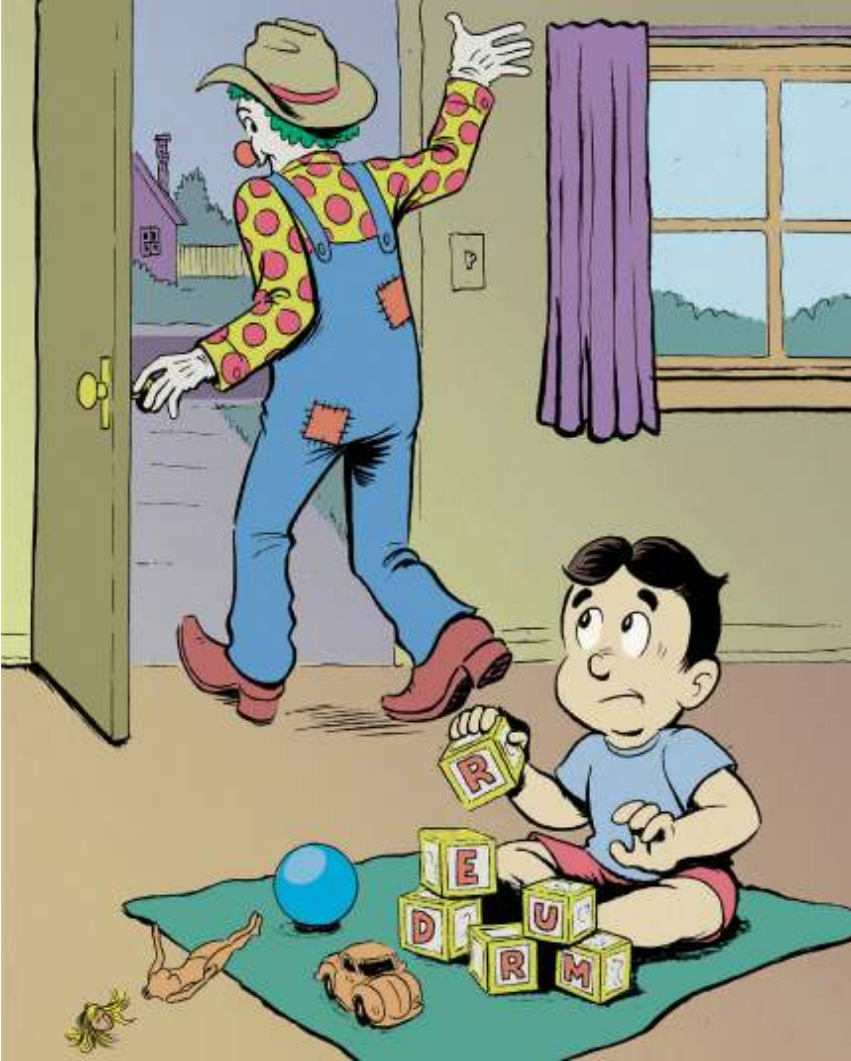
provides no hard evidence to support this claim, that hasn't stopped the

allegation from being bandied about as the truth for decades. It seems as if

most felt that the only other option was that Bundy's father was a mysterious

character out of one of the darker Tom Waits songs, perhaps even the devil

himself come to the City of Brotherly Love.



People look for any sort of explanation for behavior they feel rubs against the fibers of

society. An explanation is comforting and makes it feel like there is purpose or logic in our

random universe. Unfortunately, a lot of these monsters are made at random. Like shirts.



Bundy's parentage is probably no more remarkable than that of any other illegitimate kid in Philly whose mother provided shore-leave entertainment and forgot to use a condom. Either way, the Cowell family—proud, upstanding Methodists one and all—decided to spare Ted the shame of illegitimacy and instead raise him as the son of Louise's parents, Eleanor and Samuel. This lie was repeated to every person who came in contact with the Cowells, from friends and family to the neighbors next door. In other words, it was a secret begging to be discovered.

Always use a condom, especially in Philadelphia! Have we learned nothing from one of

Tom Hanks's most famed roles? Protect yourself!

Technically, Ted got a lot more consideration than many other kids get. Your parents really

have to give a shit about your birth to start an entire conspiracy. Ask Dick Cheney how

hard it must have been to put his big one* together. *9/11.

Ted's grandfather, Samuel Cowell, was said to be a terrible human being in every way. Animal cruelty was a favorite pastime of his—not a cat in the neighborhood was safe from Samuel swinging them by their tails.

Predictably, Samuel was violent toward his family as well; it was reported that he once threw Ted's aunt down a flight of stairs for oversleeping.

Interestingly, Ted said he got along famously with his grandfather, mentioning in a 1989 interview with psychiatrist Dr. Dorothy Lewis that he had a special bond with him, even as a very young child. It's possible that the

man saw something of himself in his grandson.



Whether it was his grandfather's creeping influence or the awakening of an inborn darkness, it soon became apparent that young Ted was anything but normal. His aunt Julia claimed to have awoken one day to find her then-

three-year-old nephew standing at the foot of her bed, smiling. When she lifted the covers, she found that he had arranged three butcher knives around her body, all pointing inward.

Also the Origin Story of the Incredible Chef DAVID CHANG.

Whether it was this specific incident, the violent home situation, or the fear that Ted would discover the secret of his lineage as he grew older, Louise Cowell packed up her son and moved across the country to Tacoma, Washington, shortly thereafter.

Like a struggling indie band looking to make it sorta big.

Like Pavement!

In 1951, Louise met a diminutive hospital cook named Johnnie Culpepper Bundy at a Methodist get-together. Within a few months, the two were



married, and five-year-old Ted Cowell was rechristened Theodore Robert Bundy. Johnnie tried to bond with his new stepson, but Ted never took to playing ball or going on fishing trips with his stepfather.

It's hard to bond with a man with pepper in his name. Ask Barry Pepper. Too spicy for

friends.

Culpepper Bundy sounds like a tool used to clean out Uncle Eddie's sewage tank in

National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation. "The crapper is full —hand me that Culpepper

Bundy hose to drain it out!"

From a young age, Bundy begged out of father-son activities by playing sick because his stepfather was, in Bundy's words, "not too bright." He saw his stepfather as a lesser-than because he worked a blue-collar (yet entirely respectable) job. His stepfather's choice of profession and subsequent inability to provide an upper-crust lifestyle for his family grated on him; even

as a young boy, he believed he deserved better.

Bundy was known to be a solitary child. His only solace came from listening to the radio. He particularly enjoyed talk radio, but not for the content. In an interview given in 1980, Bundy said he liked radio because he felt as if he were eavesdropping on other people's conversations, a hint of his budding sociopathic tendencies.





I don't want to condone supporting violent criminals, but if he had subscribed to our

Patreon, I'd have accepted the money.

Last Podcast on the Left cannot be held responsible for the actions of our fans.

The other thing Bundy was apparently a freak for—even as a small child—was pornography. Supposedly, before Bundy even arrived in Washington, he had whiled away countless hours in his grandfather's shed, looking at the hard-core collection the old man kept stashed behind the garden tools. Bundy

said that seeing these magazines at such a young age essentially broke his brain. Tellingly, though, when he was finally outed as a killer it was found that his masturbation material was not the stuff of torture and bondage, but rather a magazine devoted to the art of cheerleading called *Cheerleader*.

Wait, a radio fanatic who also liked smut? What's next—a professional cornhole player

who also likes buckets of beer?



Are we all monsters? There was a period of my life when if I put two cantaloupes next to

each other, I would become aroused. When I was a kid, I got most of my porn from the

illegal cable box my family had, like a real millennium. I'm just trying to say the porn didn't make him bad! Oh my god, what have I done?

Once Bundy was in his teens, however, his actions began to pattern those

we see in many serial killers. He was a pathological liar and an accomplished

shoplifter, and he was arrested twice on suspicion of car theft and burglary.

Unfortunately, the details of those crimes are lost to history because the

records were shredded once he turned eighteen. But one detail we do know

about his kleptomania was that he was most fond of stealing ski equipment.



Bundy was indeed a skier, but as a lower-class kid, the sport's expenses were essentially prohibitive. He said he would get sideways glances from his peers when he showed up with the latest-and-greatest ski equipment, but he learned early on that he could get away with a crime if he maintained a nonchalant attitude. In his mind, he was owed the finer things in life by dint of his very existence, and he was determined to reach that special status by any means necessary. In trying to explain his motivations to investigators, Bundy said, "I felt kind of deprived, at a disadvantage to those people who had the money, the successful parents, all the goodies."



Across the spectrum of true crime we see a theme of this “I’m actually supposed to be a

very important millionaire” mentality. This is used to justify a superior attitude toward other people and help validate crimes against society. David Berkowitz had this same mentality,

as did Jim Jones and L. Ron Hubbard. And a lot of people who live at the Greyhound

station in West Hollywood.

Part of Bundy’s desire to ascend the ranks of society led him to the University of Washington. The year was 1967, and while much of America’s youth was being swept up in free love, good drugs, and some of the best music ever recorded, Bundy focused himself on two things that could not have been more diametrically opposed to the burgeoning hippie movement: skiing and China.

Both also fun words for cocaine, which I imagine was around quite a bit.

While skiing was Bundy's gateway into a more privileged social echelon,

learning to speak Chinese was supposed to be his pathway to power. Once

Bundy arrived at UW, he enrolled in an intensive Chinese language course—

solely because he believed that the Chinese were likely going to take over the

world, sooner rather than later.



This really helps me understand his love of Richard Nixon.

Throughout his middling college career, Bundy continued skiing, which

eventually led him to meet Stephanie Brooks, who would turn out to be both

the love of his life and his victim prototype. He'd burn rides up to the

mountains with her and slowly fell in love with the beautiful brunette from a

rich, stable family. While the feelings were not fully reciprocated, Stephanie

certainly felt a kind of puppy love for Ted. But from her perspective, he was

immature, emotional, and undependable: perfect for a college fling, but

definitely not husband material. In other words, Stephanie was slumming it every time she hopped into bed with Bundy, and she knew it.

Though Bundy himself was not living a posh lifestyle, he tried his best to nuzzle into the upper class, both through these interactions and a series of part-time jobs in more monied settings, like as busboy at a yacht club.

However, he didn't use his yacht club employment as an opportunity to hobnob; instead, he preferred stealing from club members. This propensity for theft, lying, and straight-up sociopathy naturally drew him to the world of politics.

Kissel? Kissel?

Ted Bundy is the perfect poster boy for the alt-right. His politics are terrible. He dresses

wel . And he's constantly attempting to cover up his weird fetishes.



But unlike fellow politician-turned-serial killer John Wayne Gacy (D-Illinois), Ted Bundy was a dyed-in-the-wool lifelong Republican. These two

men's motivations for getting into the game differed as well. Gacy looked at politics as a way to gain influence and inflate his ego; his brand was sleazy and local, true Chicago-style. Bundy, on the other hand, liked standing next to those in power—he was cleaner and more formal. While Gacy wanted theme parties and parades, Bundy wanted policy.

Maybe he also liked the dichotomy of knowing there was a homicidal gremlin roiling on the

inside and a put-together Republican on the outside. And he gets the extra kick out of

being a contrarian during a very liberal part of our history. There are so many fun ways to

make white people horny!

He would support the death penalty for people who wear white after Labor Day, don't own

a yacht, and don't rewind VHS rentals, like Kathleen Turner in Serial Mom!

In 1968, at the age of twenty-two, Bundy was appointed both the Seattle

chairman and the assistant state chairman of the New Majority for

Rockefeller, backing the titular Nelson Rockefeller in his third unsuccessful

run for president. Bundy traveled to that year's Republican National

Convention in Miami only to have his political dreams crushed when

Rockefeller was destroyed at the hand of the by-then unstoppable political

machine that was Richard Nixon.



And even as an adult, Bundy didn't kill as many people as Nixon! Nixon beat him at

everything!

That political heartbreak was only the first of many disappointments that year for Bundy. In the fall, Stephanie Brooks, realizing more and more that Ted was a lying, scheming layabout, told him it was over. Devastated, he dropped out of the University of Washington. He eventually landed a job as a

driver and bodyguard for another political candidate, Art Fletcher. Fletcher was headed for the lieutenant governor spot, but the only thing he gained from that campaign was a mention of Ted Bundy on his Wikipedia page.

How did he get hired as a bodyguard? "Yes, find me the man who most resembles an

L.L.Bean model so I can feel safe."

After the Fletcher defeat, Bundy returned to Philadelphia, the city of his conception, where he enrolled at Temple University for one half-hearted, aimless semester. Afterward, he traveled to Vermont and supposedly discovered the truth behind his parentage: his parents were his grandparents and his sister was his mother.

Disgustingly, this is an actual genre on Pornhub.



In the true crime genre, this event has been put forth time and again as the breaking point for Ted Bundy, but this claim is circumstantial at best. It may have been a catalyst, but it was by no means an immediate cause and effect, as it was another three years before he attempted his first murder. What's even more telling, though, is that multiple high school friends later reported that they clearly remember him unironically calling Louise "Mom" on multiple occasions. It's very likely that by the time he returned to Vermont, Bundy had known the truth for years.

Narcissists like Bundy always have to control their story arc. This was him putting in his

own chapter headings. He saw his whole life as this dramatic tale that everyone would

read about one day. Now he's being played by Zac Efron, and I'm mad because of how

sick his abs are. Total y rude, sick abs.

But no matter what happened during his adventure out East, the fact remains that in the spring of 1969, Bundy returned to Washington a changed man. No longer the rudderless busboy of the past, he emerged from his experience in Philadelphia as a straight-A student. He set aside his fantasy of Chinese domination and reenrolled at the University of Washington with a major in psychology. In this, Ted seemed to have found his calling.

His psychology background also gave birth to perhaps one of the most misunderstood episodes of Bundy's life: his time as a suicide hotline volunteer. This era was well documented by Ann Rule, a former Seattle police officer turned student and the author of the aforementioned book *The Stranger Beside Me*. Rule answered phones right alongside Bundy during the

summer of 1970, spending twelve hours a day with the most notorious serial killer in history.





This is the only redeeming quality of Ted Bundy's life. It's kinda in the opposite order of

how Michael Vick killed dogs but now he helps them! Donate to his foundation here . . .

Bundy's time as a volunteer has been the focus of many discussions when it comes to parsing the mind of a serial killer. The notion that a sociopathic murderer would willingly save lives by working a suicide hotline naturally raises the question of his possible motivations for doing this. The answer is surprisingly mundane: working for the hotline was a work-study requirement for his psychology degree. He and Rule worked side by side as partners for months. According to her, they made a good team. He spoke to callers with patience and empathy, in a drawl that she described as almost courtly, and she considered him a close friend. For Ted, though, it was just another role to play.

But whether or not he appeared normal, there was still something vicious bubbling beneath the surface of Bundy's psyche. Around this time, he began acting in a way that was relationally sociopathic, briefly bringing his old flame Stephanie Brooks back into the mix while ensnaring a completely

different woman into a decades-long thrall.

In September 1969, Bundy met and started dating a young single mother named Elizabeth Kloepper. She wasn't as pretty or blue-blooded as Stephanie

Brooks, but she was devoted to Ted and would stay by his side for a surprising length of time, even after Bundy was placed behind bars.

For the single ladies out there, when you're dating a new guy, here's a trick: place a

mannequin in your bed and invite the guy over. Casually put your phone on video record

behind a teddy bear and hide in the closet. If the dude comes in and immediately starts



strangling the mannequin, break up with him, y'all ! This has been dating advice from Henry

Z.

Bundy's greatest trick was convincing Elizabeth that no matter what he did, she was lucky to have him. She was so blind to who he really was that she didn't even notice—or refused to notice—when he reconnected with Stephanie Brooks in early 1970. Since Stephanie had first dumped Ted, he'd undergone an impressive transformation. In addition to earning his

psychology degree, he'd started becoming successful in politics on a state level, was admitted to two law schools, and had even saved a local toddler from drowning. To Stephanie, he had grown up, but in reality, these changes were not born of any desire to turn his life around. Instead, Ted Bundy had become a better man in order to destroy Stephanie Brooks, using his accomplishments as the cheese in the trap.

If he was Bobby Bonilla and this was about Bobby defying his father and winning at

baseball, I would be rooting for him. But it's not. Also, I'm not sure about Bobby Bonilla

suffering too much hardship. I think his dad might have loved him.

When Stephanie heard about Ted's shifts in personality and social standing, she was smitten. Now that he had seemingly transformed into the man she needed him to be, the two talked on the phone and visited each other

as much as they could. Marriage was even discussed. However, right when he

was on the verge of proposing, the manipulation began and he slowly and methodically broke her heart. Sex became perfunctory and emotionless; he'd ditch her for days on end; and a fictional ex-girlfriend who supposedly badgered Ted for an abortion was created to sow phony discord. After months of this behavior, Stephanie confronted him about his emotional

but his only response was a flat, “Stephanie, I have no idea what you mean.”

Smart enough to see the game he was playing, she never spoke to him again.



There are more red flags in this relationship than what you see in Google Maps when you

search for bagel shops in Brooklyn.

This motherfucker had his psycho tendencies baked in; dude is legitimately scary. And this

is before he started killing people!

This sequence of events has generally been described as one of the triggers that thrust Bundy down the killing path, but it's hard to say for sure. After all,

he'd orchestrated the whole charade himself, and the only rejection was his own. It is worth noting, though, that in the same month that his relationship with Stephanie Brooks ended, he began following women home from bars without their knowledge. It could be that he'd been planning this all along, treating Stephanie Brooks's heartbreak as just another item in a checklist on the way to something more nefarious. But it *is* uncanny that the vast majority

of Bundy's victims had long hair parted down the middle, just like Stephanie Brooks.

Even though his internal sociopathy was begging him to go further, Bundy needed one more ingredient to make the leap into violent assault: alcohol. He

began drinking heavily in this era, finding that when he was drunk, the inhibitions that kept him from acting on his dark impulses were removed. In

early December 1973, leaving a bar after a long night of boozing, he followed

a woman home on a whim.



I don't recall seeing this trope in Bud Light commercials.

They cut it out of the American run, but it's still in the Dutch version.

As he followed this woman, Ted took a shortcut and got ahead of her.

Then he grabbed a two-by-four he found next to a dumpster and waited in the

shadows. But just before she crossed paths with Bundy, she took a left turn, possibly saving her life. However, instead of waking up the next morning feeling remorse, Bundy said he opened his eyes feeling both terrified and excited. He'd gotten a taste of the hunt, and the only thing that would satisfy his newfound hunger would be a successful catch.

The boozed-up stalking and his success with scamming Stephanie seem to be the first

rungs of the ladder Bundy climbed to becoming a serial killer. It's the same "system of

allowances" that gives these fuckers the "self-permission" to start killing. They slowly build a world where murder becomes the natural solution to all their problems. It's like when

you're on a no-carb diet and one Thursday you have too many skinny 'ritas and then a

couple of french fries, and by Monday you are eating a loaf of bread for breakfast. THIS IS

MY STRUGGLE.

Emboldened by this first venture, Bundy went out again the next few nights, seeking an opportunity to strike. Three days after the failed attempt,



he came across a woman fumbling with her keys as she tried to open her car door. Sneaking up behind her, he bashed her in the head using a club, possibly the same two-by-four from his earlier effort. However, the blow wasn't enough to knock her out; instead she fell to the ground screaming, sending Bundy running off into the night.

Bundy went out on countless occasions after that, but he only found a victim who was "just right" a handful of times. Although Bundy's system was simple, serial killers are often captured when their system breaks down. As the urge to kill rises, the less patience they have when it comes to finding

a victim, and less patience means more mistakes. As the infamous Ted Bundy

quote goes:

“You learn what you need to kill and take care of the details.

It’s like changing a tire. The first time you’re careful. By

the thirtieth time, you can’t remember where you left the lug wrench.”



Bundy claimed his urge to assault this woman coincided with the appearance of what he called the “entity.” While his rational mind was supposedly battling the constant craving to attack, the entity was what got him into the streets to look for a victim. However, he said that it was not the entity itself that committed the murder—the mysterious presence was only responsible for the assaults. Bundy claimed that it was his rational self who committed the murders in order to cover up the entity’s crimes.

Kinda fun fact: The Entity is also a horror movie starring Barbara Hershey.

Following that first assault, Bundy switched tactics and began seeking victims via window peeping. After carefully scouting for his first home invasion, he found an opportunity with Karen Sparks, who had a basement

apartment near his law school. From the moment he entered her apartment on

January 4, 1974, Bundy was swift, cruel, and full of wrath. He snuck into her room while she was asleep, quickly twisted a metal bar from her bed frame, and beat her unconscious. Then he sexually assaulted her with the same metal

bar he'd used to beat her half to death.

Karen was found by her roommate under blood-soaked sheets the following afternoon. She had survived but was left with permanent brain damage. Bundy would ensure his next victim wouldn't even be left with that.

Just a few days after his attack on Karen Sparks, he picked Lynda Ann Healy as his next target. He stalked her for weeks, watching her every move and waiting for the perfect moment to strike. That moment came on January 31, 1974, almost one month to the day after his last conversation with

Stephanie Brooks. He broke into Healy's bedroom, knocked her unconscious,

wrapped her in a sheet, and carried her out to his infamous VW Bug. Taking her to a spot where he and Stephanie had occasionally gone on ski trips,

Bundy proceeded to rape Lynda Ann Healy before strangling her to death.



With this murder, Bundy claimed to have moved on from amateur status to what he called his “prime” or “predator” phase. For the next seven months, there was not a coed in Seattle who was truly safe from him.

He has no business having this Eric Trump level of confidence.

Unlike many serial killers who go years between their first, second, or even third kills, Ted Bundy had, to put it in sports terms, one hell of a rookie year. Two months after Lynda Ann Healy came Donna Manson, who disappeared moments after leaving her house to go to a jazz concert. Next was Susan Rancourt, bludgeoned in the head with a tire iron while she was in

the middle of doing a load of laundry. She, too, took a trip to the mountains with Ted Bundy.

After these three young women mysteriously disappeared, some members of the community came forward with reports of a suspicious handsome man with his arm in a sling driving a VW Beetle and approaching women on the street. One woman said the stranger asked her to help carry a load of books to

his car, but when she noticed it was missing its front passenger seat—removed by Bundy to facilitate a quick kidnapping—her flight instinct took hold and she ran away. Other women reported similar encounters. This trick became Bundy’s signature move: preying on women by pretending to be

injured, and then using their kindness as an opening to attack them in a vulnerable moment.

After the first three murders, both the frequency and the brutality of the attacks escalated. Take Brenda Ball. Bundy's confession of the Brenda Ball murder included an admission to the most unnatural act known to man: necrophilia. He claimed to have met Ball when he picked her up from the side of the road as she was hitchhiking. They went to his apartment and had consensual sex, but that wasn't enough for the so-called entity. Bundy strangled Ball and claims he then had sex with the corpse. He kept the body in the closet for days, pulling it out like a favorite toy when the entity wanted



more. When the smell got to be too much, Bundy took the body to his dump site in the mountains before moving on to his next victim just a week later. Now, we don't know if this story is true, as the only evidence for it comes from Bundy himself. It's difficult to understand the motivations in his confessions. At times he was forthcoming with details of his crimes, while at others he conveyed the information entirely in third person, as if to remove himself from the situation. For example, at the age of fourteen, Bundy had a job tossing newspapers. In 1961, eight-year-old Ann Marie Burr disappeared

from a location that was on his route. Her body was never recovered, but in 1989 Ted told investigator Robert Keppel that even though he had confessed to over thirty murders, there were some he would never talk about. He then switched to a third-person narrative, saying those killings included a murder, “committed at a young age, against a child victim, close to his own home.”

This type of obfuscation is fairly common among highly compartmentalized killers, the ones who manage to live a “normal” life while indulging in their macabre hobby. In order to blend into society, these men have to separate themselves into different personas, and those personas rarely overlap.

For killers like Bundy, who believe they are superior to the rest of society, control is what

they seek, be it with their victims or in the narrative of their crimes. Whether it’s true or not that Bundy was a necrophiliac, he liked to make people feel extremely uncomfortable. It

was an intrinsic part of his sexual gamesmanship. He knew he could say anything and

people would believe him, and so the mythmaking became another form of power. People

were quick to accept the monstrous persona that Bundy helped shape during his

incarceration as truth; he, in turn, got pleasure from increasing the gap between his life as

a “civilian” and his life as a serial killer. The farther away a serial killer can push his

“normal” life from his “deviant” life in terms of extremism, the better the serial killer can

show how capable a predator he (or she, you’re welcome) is.



Now I am scared.

Less than a fortnight after the murder of Brenda Ball, Bundy embarked on

the first of what would be a series of incredibly audacious crimes: the murder

of Georgann Hawkins. A student at the University of Washington, her

disappearance gained the most notoriety of his murders in Seattle because of

the almost supernatural way in which she disappeared. She was walking back

to her sorority house after visiting her boyfriend at his fraternity. The two

houses were located a mere ninety feet away from each other, connected by

an alleyway, and—as if we needed any more help making this feel like a

slasher flick—two students saw her when she was just forty feet from home.

But in those forty feet, Georgann Hawkins disappeared without a sound.

The theory as to what happened is that while Bundy was lying in wait for a victim, he'd heard one of the students at the frat house refer to Georgann using a familiar nickname: George. As she walked past Bundy's Bug, he may

have whispered this name, drawing her close. Then, quick as a rattlesnake, he

swung his tire iron and knocked her unconscious, killing her instantly.

Georgann Hawkins is one of the few who fell victim to Ted Bundy whose body has never been found.

The fact that he didn't need much prep before abducting his victims is part of what made

Bundy so deadly. So here's a tip: don't stare at your phone when you're walking at night!

You could be a target! Buy a flashlight or a whip, and use THOSE instead. Whip your arms

around your head like a helicopter and make cat noises. Now you're being scary AND

getting in some cardio.



By June 1974, all of Washington State was on high alert, specifically young women. This presented Bundy with a problem: his old tricks would no longer work. Nobody was going to venture into a dark corner with a stranger now that these disappearances and subsequent searches were almost-daily news. To circumvent this, he changed his MO, or at least partly. Ted stuck with the injury ruse, but instead of doing it under the cover of night, he started claiming victims from a place and time where no one would expect a snatch-and-grab killer to strike: at the beach in broad daylight.

On July 14 Bundy began approaching solitary women at Lake Sammamish, twelve miles east of Seattle, where over forty thousand people were trying to cool off on a scorching day. With his arm in a cast, he charmingly asked women for assistance attaching his sailboat to his car. Many followed him off the beach, assuming they were only going to the parking lot, but once there Bundy added a second location—actually, the boat was at his parents' place up the road.

NEVER HELP ANYONE.

Woman after woman refused upon hearing this new information, but at 12:30 p.m., twenty-three-year-old Janice Ott offered to help. Bundy took her to an abandoned house, raped and terrorized her for hours, and then left her

tied up, still alive. He returned to the house at around 5:00 p.m. with Denise Naslund, who had been taken in by the same ploy. She was raped while Janice watched before he proceeded to strangle them both. Their bodies were dumped only two miles away in Lake Sammamish State Park, near the bodies

of Lynda Ann Healy, Brenda Ball, and Susan Rancourt.

Police were once again baffled by the disappearances, especially because they had occurred during the day. But in an act of hubris, Bundy had given his real name every time he had approached a potential victim. Police now knew they were looking for a Ted, but what they didn't have, surprisingly, was a solid sketch.



One of Bundy's greatest advantages as a serial killer was that his facial features seemed to morph and change in a way that bordered on the paranormal. He was known to be handsome, but every person who sketched the mysterious Ted could never seem to draw him with any recognizable

facial features.

Every police sketch of Bundy looks like it's drawn by a talentless hack trying to get into art school to waste their parents' money.

Even so, the sketch of the man named Ted resembled him enough for coworkers, friends, and even his girlfriend, Elizabeth, to tease him for his similarities to the Sammamish Beach killer. The sketch looked just like him, the man's name was Ted, and he reportedly drove a VW Bug just like Bundy—and yet, even the remote possibility of Ted Bundy being a murderer seemed like the most ridiculous idea in the world.

How funny is that?! Ted, look, this serial rapist has the same name as you and he drives

the same exact car! Isn't that funny? Ted, put down the knife!

Conveniently for Bundy, he'd already accepted an offer from the University of Utah to attend law school in Salt Lake City. Just as investigators were presented with a few promising leads about Seattle's coed killer, he left town to embark on a killing spree that would span at least five states and two coasts.





Honestly, by Salt Lake City standards, Ted Bundy is the wildest guy since Jeremy Piven

from PCU!

But Bundy was leaving more than just victims behind; he was leaving Elizabeth as well. She doubted his promises that he would return to Seattle

but over the previous year, he'd introduced other worries into her mind, mostly concerning some of his more inexplicable possessions.

“Wait a second, you mean to tel me al the tubs that Ted brought home . . . they were not

butter? I can't believe it!”

The plaster of paris and crutches were odd things for a healthy man like Bundy to keep around, but according to him, he'd stolen the plaster just for the thrill of it and was storing the crutches as a personal favor to his landlord.

