Ted Bundy: The Development of a Serial Murderer

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**Introduction**

Who was Ted Bundy, and why did he commit the crimes that he did? This study was devised to assess the life of Ted Bundy, one of the most prolific murderers in the United States. This secondary research study was conducted using interviews with Bundy, professional analyses conducted of him post-arrest, testimonies from people who knew him, and research regarding serial killer typologies and motivations. This information has been compiled in the form of a poster board presentation, complete with the researcher’s own assessment of Bundy, an analysis of the motivations for his crimes, and a timeline of his life. The results of this comprehensive analysis will provide insight on what it took for Ted Bundy to become one of the most prolific serial killers in U.S. history.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this study is to develop a profile of serial killer Ted Bundy.

**Materials/Methods**

This is a secondary research analysis utilizing interviews with Ted Bundy, professional analyses conducted of him post-arrest, testimonies from people who knew him, and research regarding serial killer typologies and motivations.

**Results/Conclusions**

Motive:

When questioned about his crimes during a series of recorded interviews conducted in 1989, Ted Bundy always referred to himself in the third person. He cited an “entity” as the person responsible for his murders, and claimed that it was a separate part of his personality. Bundy stated that he needed to be heavily intoxicated in order for this part of his personality to emerge and begin killing. Bundy also claimed that this “entity” was motivated entirely by sex; the murder was merely a part of the process that allowed him to continue his work without being apprehended. While recounting his childhood and early adult years, Bundy mentioned that he spent large quantities of time committing acts of voyeurism and reading pornographic materials. He cited these as potential causes for his obsession with sex and rape which, eventually, resulted in the murder of his victims.

Process:

Ted Bundy gained access to his victims in two different ways. Oftentimes, he would put his arm in a sling or his leg in a fake cast and utilize his charm andphony disability to lure young, attractive college women in to help him either carry books or do something from his vehicle. He would then hit them over the head with a pipe or crowbar, handcuff them, move them into his vehicle, and drive (Crime Museum, 2017). Alternatively, Bundy would sometimes impersonate an authority figure such as a police officer or firefighter in order to gain his victim’s trust before attacking (Crime Museum, 2017). Once Bundy had his victim, he would release her and then kidnap her. After he had achieved sexual gratification, he would typically murder his victim by either strangulation or bludgeoning. He often mutilated the bodies of his victims post-mortem, and was even known to take corpses home with him to commit sexual acts upon them for extended periods of time before discarding them (Crime Museum, 2017).

**Typology**

Ted Bundy is most commonly categorized as a power/control serial killer according to Ronald Holmes and James DeBurger’s (1988) motivational model of serial killer typologies. Power/control killers are typically charming, charismatic, and intelligent. More power/control serial killers rape and sexually assault their victims not out of lust but as another form of control. It is very common for power/control killers to engage in necrophilia, which is defined by Merriam-Webster as the obsession with and typically erotic interest in or stimulation by corpses. Power/control killers are typically very organized, and they are known for keeping trophies from their kills. Bundy took polaroid photos of his victims because he said that “when you work hard to do something right, you don’t want to forget it” (1989).

**References**


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**Timeline of Events**

- **November 24, 1946**: Bundy was born in Burlington, VT.
- **February 1, 1974**: Bundy abducted his first known victim, Lynda Ann Healy, 21, from Central Washington State College. Her remains were recovered here in 1975.
- **March 1, 1976**: Judge Stewart found Bundy guilty of Leach’s kidnapping and assault.
- **February 17, 1978**: Bundy revealed his true identity.
- **December 30, 1977**: Bundy escaped from the prison in Florida.
- **January 1977**: Bundy was transferred to the Federal Correctional Institution in Butner, NC.
- **August 1978**: Bundy revealed that he had been raped by a fellow inmate.
- **June 24, 1979**: Bundy was convicted of raping and murdering Kimberly Leach.
- **July 2, 1985**: Bundy was executed by lethal injection.
- **April 17, 1974**: Susan Elaine Raincourt, 18, disappeared from Oregon State University. Her remains were recovered at Lake Sammamish State Park in Issaquah, UT in 1977.
- **June 1, 1974**: Brenda Carol Ball, 22, disappeared from an alley behind her sorority house at the University of Washington. Her remains were recovered after leaving the Flame Tavern in Seattle. Her skull and mandible were recovered at Taylor Mountain in Utah in 1975.
- **March 1, 1976**: Judge Stewart found Bundy guilty of Leach’s kidnapping and assault.
- **November 24, 1946**: Bundy was born in Burlington, VT.
- **February 23, 1976**: Bundy stood trial for the attempted murders of Karen Chandler, Kathy Kleiner, and Cheryl Thomas.
- **December 30, 1977**: Bundy escaped from the prison in Florida.
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