

**Ted Bundy: Beyond the Rumors**

**His Relation to Olympia, WA**



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**Rumor** (rōō'm ər) *n.* Unverified information of uncertain origin usually spread by word of mouth; gossip; hearsay. (Morris, 1979)

Ted Bundy, an American serial killer active in the 1970's, committed his crimes in several locations in the United States. His first documented crimes took place in the state of Washington, and later the criminal migrated South to Oregon and East to Utah, Colorado, and eventually Florida. In his wake, rumors swelled, flooding the towns through which he passed, causing residents to speculate about where he lived, who he made contact with, and what his specific activities were in their area.

Olympia, Washington is one such location. This quaint college town sixty miles south of Seattle was a place where at one time Bundy worked. One of his victims, Donna Manson, was a student at The Evergreen State College (TESC). Rumors are present to this day that Bundy lived in Cooper's Glen Apartments (formerly The Ash Tree Apartments), an apartment complex adjacent to the TESC campus. A review of Cooper's Glen Apartments on ApartmentRatings.com warned renters to stay away from the complex, saying that the apartments are, "The best place Ted Bundy ever lived." (Anonymous, 2004) In 2008, residents still joke about "The Ghost of Ted" that haunts their apartments. The goal of this project is to prove or disprove these urban myths and clear the air regarding Bundy's activities in the City of Olympia.

Ted Bundy was born under the name Theodore Robert Cowell, November 24, 1946, at Elizabeth Lund Home For Unwed Mothers in Burlington, Vermont. (Rule, 1980) His mother, Eleanor Louise Cowell (known as Louise), ashamed to have a child out of wedlock, pretended Ted was her younger brother. The identity of Ted Bundy's father has remained a mystery, Louise simply described him as a "sailor" who abandoned her. (Rule, 1980) Ted and his mother lived with her parents in Philadelphia for several years, before moving to Tacoma, Washington, where Louise had relatives, in 1950. Shortly before moving to Washington, Louise had Ted's last name changed from Cowell to Nelson, in yet another attempt to cover up the fact he was born out of wedlock.

In May of 1951, shortly after moving to Tacoma, Louise married Johnnie Culpepper Bundy, and had her "brother's" name changed a third time to Theodore Robert Bundy. (Rule, 1980) Bundy did not learn until at least his late teens that his "sister" Louise was actually his mother, truly believing that his Grandfather and Grandmother Cowell were his parents.

Louise and Johnnie Bundy had two children together, and during his childhood Ted would take care of chores and babysitting duties. He was a diligent student, maintaining a B average. He would stay up all night, if necessary, in order to complete an assignment. (Rule, 1980) In high school, he was withdrawn, but not oddly so. He had a small group of friends, and he enjoyed skiing. He continued to be an excellent student, and Louise urged him to attend college.

Bundy did show evidence of a criminal mind at a young age. Hungry for a more extravagant, exciting life beyond the one his stepfather and Louise were providing for him, he began to lean towards theft. "Ted had been picked up at least twice by juvenile

authorities in Pierce County for suspicion of auto theft and burglary. There is no indication that he was ever confined, but his name was known to juvenile caseworkers. The records outlining the details of the incidents have long been shredded—procedure when a juvenile reaches eighteen. Only a card remains with his name and the offenses listed.” (Rule, 1980)

Bundy was accepted to the University of Puget Sound, and attended during the 1965-66 school year. After two semesters, he transferred to University of Washington, eventually graduating in 1972 with a degree in psychology. During his time at UW, he met a woman named Stephanie Brooks (a commonly used pseudonym). Stephanie was beautiful—slender with long, center parted brown hair. Ted fell completely in love with her. They stayed together for a year. When Stephanie graduated in 1968, she moved away to California, breaking off their relationship. Ted carried a torch for the woman for many years. In 1973, they reunited for a short period, and were even making wedding plans. Bundy then broke the relationship off abruptly. It’s almost as if he wanted to see if she would take him back, as an experiment. It is thought that Stephanie’s rejection of Bundy may have been one of the factors which caused him to snap and begin attacking women. Many of his victims had a striking resemblance to his ex-girlfriend. His first murder was committed one month after his final break up with Stephanie in 1973. (Rule, 1980)

In 1969 Bundy had moved into the home of Freda and Ernst Rogers, an elderly couple who lived in Seattle’s University District near the University of Washington. He moved in shortly after his first break up with Stephanie Brooks, and Ann Rule makes the assumption that McMahan Hall, the dormitory in which Bundy had lived for his first year at UW contained too many memories to return to. Bundy rented a room in the southwest corner of the Rogers’ home, and became very close with the couple during his time spent

there. He would help them with heavy chores and yard work consistently. Bundy lived in the Rogers' home up until he left to attend the University of Utah's Law School in 1974. (Rule, 1980)

Bundy met a woman named Elizabeth Kendall in a University District tavern called The Sandpiper in 1969. Recently divorced, Kendall was a single mother, and found Bundy to be very attractive, intelligent, and engaging. They were friends at first, but then began a romantic relationship that would last seven years. During the relationship Ted would keep his apartment at the Rogers' home, but they would spend many nights together in Kendall's apartment, also in Seattle. (Rule, 1980)

While he was a student, Bundy was very involved with the Republican party in Washington. "During the fall of 1968, Ted had worked as a driver for Art Fletcher, a popular candidate for Lieutenant Governor." (Rule, 1980) Fletcher ended up losing the race. Earlier that year, Bundy attended the Miami Republican National Convention as a representative from Seattle. He worked on the committee to re-elect Governor Daniel J. Evans in the fall of 1972. "Former Governor Albert Rosellini had made a comeback try, and it had been Ted's assignment to travel around the state and monitor Rosellini's speeches, taping them for analysis by Evans' team." (Rule, 1980)

Evans won the election, and this put Bundy in good standing with the administration in power. "He was employed by the City of Seattle's Crime Prevention Advisory Commission and was reviewing the state's new hitchhiking law, a law which made thumbing a ride legal again." (Rule, 1980) Bundy wasn't promoted to Director of Seattle's Crime Prevention Advisory Commission as he hoped, so he resigned his post in January of 1973. (Rule, 1980)

Shortly after that, he applied to the University of Utah's Law School for the second time. Despite a great academic record, Bundy hadn't performed well enough on the legal aptitude tests to be accepted the first time he had applied. "He bombarded the Admissions department with letters of recommendation from professors and from Gov. Daniel J. Evans." (Rule, 1980) He was accepted, but chose to put off entering law school until fall of 1974 for unknown reasons. He told the Admissions office that he needed time to recover from serious injuries sustained in an automobile accident (Rule, 1980), a complete fabrication.

It is clear that Bundy was involved with the goings on at the State Capitol in Olympia for his political dealings. He also held a job at The Department of Emergency Services in nearby Tumwater, WA. (Michaud & Aynesworth, 1984) During that time period, his residence was in Seattle—he was dating Elizabeth Kendall and regularly staying overnight at her apartment, as well as renting a room at the Rogers' residence. (Rule 1980) There is no indication that Ted Bundy ever lived in Olympia, WA. In the summer of 1974 when he worked at The Department of Emergency services he commuted from Seattle to Olympia on a daily basis.

Bundy was a person who loved to go on long drives, and it's likely the lengthy commute from Seattle to Olympia was no problem for him. He was definitely familiar with the roadways in the Olympia area. In an interview with Detective Robert Keppel, Bundy stated, "...I mean, the Tumwater/Olympia area. I'm always bad about where one starts and the other stops. That whole area has always disoriented me. That's the problem. There's a maze. I call it a maze of back roads. It's not a maze, I guess, but there's something about the area that I have a hard time keeping track of the back road system there."

Any resident of the Olympia/Tumwater area will get a chill down their spine when they realize that Bundy knows exactly what he's talking about in that statement. A driver can easily get turned around in the back roads between the two towns. Though he never resided in either town, it's clear that Bundy spent time driving around the area. Since it is a hub of political activity and a college town, it only makes sense that he would be drawn to Olympia.

Bundy frequented college campuses. His first five victims were college students from the Northwest. During his crime spree from 1974-1978, a large number of the women he abducted were college students, and in many cases, they were abducted from the campuses themselves.

In 1989, just before Bundy was to be executed for the murder of two women at the Florida State University Chi Omega Sorority house, Bundy requested to speak with several police investigators that had been after him for years for a "debriefing". According to Robert Keppel, the investigator from Washington who Bundy requested to speak with, "Bundy's plan was to give detailed information to me regarding the location of the remains of pre-selected missing women, so that detectives armed with this information would locate remains and "prove" his sincerity. Then other detectives and the family members of victims still missing would speak on Ted's behalf to the governor of Florida, who would delay the execution in order for Ted to confess, in detail, to the rest of the murders he'd committed and provide the locations of the bodies. This seemed to me to be an elegant form of extortion." (Keppel, 1995)

During this “debriefing”, Bundy confessed to the abduction and murder of Donna Manson, TESC student. Prior to his confession, though he was a suspect in Manson’s disappearance, there wasn’t enough evidence to convict him for the crime.

Tuesday, March 12, 1974, Donna Manson set out from her dorm room to attend a concert called, “Twenty-five Years of Jazz” presented by the Evergreen Jazz ensemble in the main floor Library lobby on the TESC campus. (The Evergreen State College, 1974) In the 200 yards between her dorm and the concert, Manson disappeared. (Smith, 1974)

Donna Manson was 19 years old on the date of her disappearance. She was petite—only 5 feet tall and about 100 pounds. (Thurston County Sheriff Department, 1974) Like most of Ted Bundy’s victims, Donna had long, dark, center-parted hair and was considered attractive. Though she had a high I.Q., Manson wasn’t a very good student, and was reportedly involved with drugs. At TESC, she was enrolled in the P.O.R.T.A.L.S. (Personal Options Reaching Towards Affective Learning Skills) coordinated studies program. (TCSD, 1974) Her topic of study in the program was Alchemy. She was reportedly very interested in mystical topics such as I-Ching and Alchemy, and was losing interest in her education at TESC. (TCSD, 1974)

Her roommate said that the night she disappeared, Manson changed clothes several times before going out, trying to decide what to wear. She finally decided on a red, orange and green striped top, blue slacks, and a fuzzy black maxi coat. She had also worn a brown agate ring and a Bulova wristwatch. (TCSD, 1974) She left a little after 7:00 pm that night to go to the show, but individuals interviewed by police reported that she was never seen at the concert. Sherriff Don Redmond stated, “She probably didn’t get that far.” (Rule, 1980)

Though Bundy didn't go into great detail about the night he abducted Manson, he did state that she was one of his victims. He claimed to have buried her body in the Cascade Mountains, and "in a fit of paranoia and cleanliness" incinerated her skull in the fireplace of his unsuspecting girlfriend, Elizabeth Kendall. (Keppel, 1995) In his interview with Keppel, Bundy was reluctant to divulge how he had disposed of Manson's skull, stating, "I promised myself I'd never tell this, because of all of the things I did to this woman, this is probably the one she was least likely to forgive me for. Poor Liz." (Keppel, 1995)

At the time of the murders, dental records were the main way of identifying a recovered body. By destroying the skull, Bundy had virtually eliminated the possibility that the body would ever be identified. DNA testing to identify bodies didn't come into use until after 1984—Dr. Alec Jeffreys at the University of Leicester pioneered the method. (Genetic Fingerprinting, 2008) Unfortunately, by Bundy's 1989 confession, Manson's remains were long gone, and his claims were never backed up by hard evidence. However, after Bundy's confession, the missing persons case for Donna Manson was closed, ending a 15 year search for the 19 year old girl.

After the search for Donna ended, rumors about Ted Bundy's association with Olympia persisted. The rumors are true in some respects—Ted Bundy definitely spent time in Olympia, WA. He worked in Olympia, he drove around the area, and he abducted and murdered Donna Manson, who went to school at The Evergreen State College, but at the time he was a resident of the City of Seattle. The rumor that Ted Bundy lived in the Coopers Glen (Ash) Apartments is not supported by factual information.

### Annotated Bibliography

**Anonymous (2004, March 30). *Opinion of Cooper's Glen Apartments posted 3/30/2004: The best place Ted Bundy ever lived.* Retrieved 1/31/08, from <http://www.apartmentratings.com/rate/WA-Olympia-Coopers-Glen-Apartments-206051.html>**

An example of the urban legend that Ted Bundy lived in the Cooper's Glen Apartment complex in Olympia, WA.

**Bell, R. (2007). *Ted Bundy, notorious serial killer - The Crime library.* Retrieved 1/31/08, from [http://www.crimelibrary.com/serial\\_killers/notorious/bundy/index\\_1.html](http://www.crimelibrary.com/serial_killers/notorious/bundy/index_1.html)**

A good background reference for general information about the Bundy case.

**Bellamy, P. (2007) *Robert D. Keppel Ph.D. An Interview by Patrick Bellamy.* Retrieved 1/31/08, from [http://www.crimelibrary.com/criminal\\_mind/profiling/keppel1/1.html](http://www.crimelibrary.com/criminal_mind/profiling/keppel1/1.html)**

An interview with Robert Keppel, investigator on the Bundy case in WA. Interesting insights on his views of the Bundy investigation, and profiling.

**Daniel J. Evans. (2008, May 13). In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia.* Retrieved 04:54, May 27, 2008, from [http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Daniel\\_J.\\_Evans&oldid=212152214](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Daniel_J._Evans&oldid=212152214)**

Found a link to the letter of recommendation that Evans wrote for Bundy to get into University of Utah law school. Corroborated Ann Rule's information that Bundy and Evans had a close professional relationship.

**Genetic fingerprinting. (2008, May 25). In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia.* Retrieved 00:25, May 27, 2008, from [http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Genetic\\_fingerprinting&oldid=214816613](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Genetic_fingerprinting&oldid=214816613)**

Information on the invention of DNA testing to identify bodies.

**Grossman, M. (1998). *Encyclopedia of Capital Punishment*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, Inc.**

Contains a brief overview of the Bundy case, including Bundy's last words. Detailed description of the last moments of Bundy's life. He nearly had to be carried to the electric chair because he was despondent and crying.

**Halsne, C. (2007, October 17). *Bundy Confession Tapes Revealed for the First Time*. Retrieved March 5, 2008, from <http://www.kirotv.com/investigations/4182402/detail.html>**

Audio of Ted Bundy's confessions to Detective Robert Keppel. Contains information about Donna Manson's disappearance.

**Kendall, E. (1981). *The Phantom Prince*. Seattle: Madrona Publishers, Inc.**

Ted Bundy's girlfriend's account of the time period during which Bundy committed his murders. An interesting and disturbing look into Bundy's psyche, as well as the psyche of his misguided girlfriend.

**Keppel, R. D., Birnes, W. J. (1995). *The Riverman: Ted Bundy And I Hunt for the Green River Killer*. New York: Pocket Books.**

Ted Bundy assisted Detective Robert Keppel in profiling the notorious Green River Killer while on death row in Florida. As well as discussing the Green River case, there are confessions that Ted Bundy made prior to his execution included in the book. This is where I first heard that Bundy had worked in Olympia, and the quote where Bundy describes the back roads of Olympia/Tumwater as a "maze". Also, I got the information about the disposal of Donna Manson's body from the confessions in this book.

**Michaud, S. G., Aynesworth, H. (1983). *The Only Living Witness*. New York: Linden Press.**

I found some details here about the time Bundy spent at the Department of Emergency Services in Olympia, WA in the summer of 1974. Some discrepancies with Ann Rule's book, *The Stranger Beside Me* are present in this account, (i.e. when exactly Bundy learned his "sister" Louise was actually his mother. Rule says he learned in college, Muchaud and Aynesworth say he learned in high school.)

**Michaud, S. G., Aynesworth, H. (2000). *Ted Bundy: Conversations With a Killer*. Irving, Texas: Authorlink Press**

This book is the transcribed conversations that Aynesworth and Michaud had with Bundy when researching for their book *The Only Living Witness*. Bundy speaks about serial killers in the third person, developing profiles for killers, essentially talking about some of his own acts and philosophies.

**Morris, W. (Ed.). (1979). *Rumor. The American Heritage Dictionary*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company.**

Obtained dictionary definition of the word Rumor for the introduction to my research paper.

**Robert D. Keppel. (2008, February 6). In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved February 6, 2008, from [http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Robert\\_D.\\_Keppel&oldid=189570666](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Robert_D._Keppel&oldid=189570666)**

General information about Robert Keppel – pointed me in the right direction as to how to try and get in touch with the author.

**Rule, A. (1980). *The Stranger Beside Me*. New York: Signet.**

A detailed account of the entire Bundy affair, written from a personal perspective since the author was at one time a friend of Bundy's. In *The Stranger Beside Me*, I found information about Donna Manson's interests and class load as well as valuable information on the investigative process during the 1970's. I got the names of the lead investigators in Thurston County and on the TESC campus from this book. This is the first place I read about Ted Bundy's time working at Department of Emergency services. She also details the fact that Bundy commuted from Seattle to Olympia while working at DES, a fact she confirmed for me via e-mail.

**Smith, R. (1974, April 17). *Missing Girl: Frustration is all that's found in investigation. Globe News, Volume 85, No. 46*. Auburn, WA.**

Newspaper article that stated it was a 200 yard walk from Manson's dorm to the jazz concert in the library building.

**Thurston County Sheriff Department (TCSD). (1974, April 5). *Supplementary report.* (Thurston County Sheriff Department Case no. 74-3868-3). Olympia, WA: Thurston County Sheriff Department.**

Andrea Michelle Horne, ex room mate of Donna Manson, described Donna as promiscuous, involved with drugs, and losing interest in her education.

**Woodbury, Ron. (1974, April 4). 23 Days No Trace Manson Still Missing. *Cooper Point Journal*, Vol. 85 No.19. Olympia, WA.**

Article in The Evergreen State College campus newspaper, about Donna Manson's disappearance. The article stated that Donna was enrolled in the academic program P.O.R.T.A.L.S., and that she was last seen between the dorms and the library on March 12, 1974.