
Theoretical Explanations Of Behavior Of Theodore Robert Bundy – One Of America's Most Notorious Serial Killers

Theodore 'Ted' Bundy did not only have a bright future in Politics, he was attractive, charming, intelligent and also one of the most notorious serial killers, and serial rapists in United States history. Theodore Cowell, known to world as Ted Bundy, viciously murdered and sexually assaulted over thirty young women, however it has been feared that the true body count could be more than one hundred. However Ted was only ever convicted of aggravated kidnapping, attempted murder, burglary, murder and rape. Ted's murder spree started in January 1974 until his capture in 1978. Before bringing each innocent young woman to her death after a series of violent sexual assaults he would first gain their trust with fake disabilities and injuries. On many occasions Ted would re visit the women's remains to engage in necrophilia up until they began to decompose. For the majority of his imprisonment after countless appeals and before he accepted his fate of death by electric chair in 1989, Ted Bundy proclaimed his innocence. When that failed due to tremendous amounts of evidence against him, Ted then tried to use his victims one last time, to keep himself alive. Ted again failed and was executed by electric chair on the 24th of January 1989 in Florida State Prison and was declared dead at 7:13 am. The purpose of this case study is to develop a case description of Theodore Robert Bundy. To identify who he was and his life experiences from childhood to adulthood, how he changed from Theodore Cowell to Ted Bundy and the psychological theories that contributed to his offences. The objective is to establish why Ted Bundy committed the offences he did using psychological theories related to his horrific crimes of kidnap, rape and murder.

Definitions of the Offence

In addition to committing willful murder of a human being, Ted Bundy was reported to have been guilty of many other offences some of which being aggravated sexual assault, deprivation of liberty and kidnapping. Starting on the fourth of January 1974 Ted allegedly entered eighteen year old Karen Sparks' apartment. In a violent rage he then bludgeoned the sleeping woman with a metal rod from her bed frame and went on to sexually assault her with the same rod. This was reported around the same time his first relationship with Stephanie Brooks was terminated which could relate to the amount of hatred and humiliation within the offence as Ted himself felt humiliated. As per the Criminal Code of Western Australia s.325 aggravated sexual penetration without consent has been defined as "a person who sexually penetrates another without the consent of that person in circumstances of aggravation". Ted Bundy then went on to abduct Lynda Healy from her basement flat and later murdered her in February 1974 whilst still in Seattle. Based on the evidence from the Criminal Code of Western Australia s.332 he committed a kidnapping offence stated as "enticing or taking a person away" or "by confining or detaining the other person in any place". By later killing Lynda Healy and many others throughout his killing spree he has committed the act of willful murder which based on the Criminal Code is defined as "a person who unlawfully kills another, intending to cause death". Based on the evidence from the DSM-5, Ted would be described as being extremely angry and hostile. This indicated that whilst having great difficulty controlling his anger, he did not experience negative emotions such as self-consciousness, anxiety, and depression.

Dorothy Ottnow Lewis, a psychiatrist from New York University Medical Centre, diagnosed Ted

Bundy with anti-social personality disorder (ASPD), and dissociative identity disorder (DID). ASPD is a person who has no remorse over persuasively disregarding and violating the rights and consideration of others. DID previously known as Multiple Personality Disorder, occurs when two or more distinctive identities or personalities are present. Each identity has its own relatively enduring perception relating to and thinking of one's self. It has also been alleged that he may have also suffered from narcissistic personality disorder.

History of the Offender

Theodore Robert Cowell was born on the 24th of November 1946 in Burlington, Vermont United States of America, starting his life as his mother's secret shame. Eleanor Louise Cowell, who went by Louise for most of her life, gave birth at the Elizabeth Lund Home for Unwed Mothers at the age of 22. Due to her young age and deeply religious parents Ted was lead to believe Louise was his sister and his grandparents were his parents to avoid controversy. The identity of Theodore's father was never certain. However it had been suspected by family members that Louise's own violent and abusive father, known as Samuel Cowell, was Theodore's biological father. Theodore's grandfather was reported to have been an extremely violent influence of him as a child, enforcing violent behavior towards people and animals as acceptable. This became evident at a very young age as he soon became fascinated by knives, surrounding them around his aunt as she slept and woke to find Ted smiling down upon her.

Although Theodore did not start committing his horrific crimes of rape and murder until the 1970's whilst in his 20's, this does not mean the earlier signs of a disturbed mind were not present. In his teenage years he would often spend hours on end obsessing over violent pornographic material and anything of a similar nature. Ted would often ravish through rubbish in hopes of find graphic books filled with dead or mutilated bodies. As this addiction festered within Ted throughout the years, he began consuming copious amounts of alcohol whilst lurking around the neighborhood in hopes of finding any revealing windows in which women may be undressing. Ted himself admitted to his addiction often referring to it as his 'entity'. "Once i became addicted to it, I would keep looking for more potent, more explicit, more graphic kinds of material." admitted by Ted himself. Ted graduated from high school in 1965 and in 1966 he transferred from the University of Puget sound to the University of Washington to study Chinese. In the following year Ted became romantically involved with a classmate known by most sources as Stephanie Brooks. Ted soon dropped out of college and began working a series of minimum wage jobs in 1968. Frustrated by Ted's lack of maturity and drive to succeed, Stephanie terminated their relationship, devastating and humiliating Ted.

Throughout the 1970's Ted became goal orientated and re-enrolled at the University Of Washington with a major psychology and became an honor student.

Theoretical Explanations of Behavior

There are many psychological theories that could relate to his past experiences from his childhood through to his adulthood, starting back with his true mother Louise. Due to her young age and marital status, she led Ted to believe she was his sister. Therefore Louise failed to provide Theodore with any emotional support throughout his childhood regardless of the fact she was always there. A range of different issues such as behavioral, emotional and social problems can occur in children who lack secure and loving relationships with their guardians or

caregivers, which results with the contribution of an antisocial personality disorder, which inevitably, Theodore grew up to have. Due to the lack of nurture throughout his childhood between himself and his mother Ted went through life suffering from an identity crisis and suffered from Dissociative Identity Disorder based on biological theories and attachment theories. The inability to form meaningful and emotional relationships along with poor impulse control, lack of remorse and chronic anger issues is referred to as 'affection-less psychopathy.' This can occur due to the disruption of attachment during the crucial first three years of one's life.

It has been reported that Ted suffered copious amounts of both physical and psychological abuse throughout the years with his grandparents. His grandmother was suffering from deep depression and took no interest in Ted whilst his grandfather was violent and abusive. Growing up with a violent grandfather who would harm living animals with no remorse showed Ted that this behavior was acceptable. "There is emerging evidence that genetics may play a role in the development of psychopathy." Based on the evidence of these ongoing issues, a behavioral theory could be related due to the behavior of violence learnt from his grandfather. The violence he displayed in his crimes centers around the desire to control his victims and is essential to his needs. This is demonstrated in the apparent anger, excitement and sexual violence committed against his victims.

Based on Ted's obsession and addiction to violent pornography a cognitive theory could be suitable as it contributed to his way of thinking about women. Ted's fantasies of demoralizing and humiliating women were brought on by his many hours of obsessing over extremely violent porn at a young age. This escalated when he became older as the graphic pornography no longer satisfied him. He then went on to committing the act on young women himself in order to satisfy his addiction portraying a need to be superior. Ted Bundy was a violent sexual murderer who was portrayed as an angry predator when he confronted his victims and used then to satisfy his need for dominance, violence, control and intimacy. A cognitive theory could be applied to Ted's need to feel superior over women and to dominate them. This is due to his past experience with his first romantic relationship, which ended badly changing his way of thinking towards women. This could also be seen as an attachment theory as he fell in love with Stephanie and was blindsided by her ending the relationship, causing hostile aggressiveness towards women. "Fear of loss or separation can generate strong feelings of anxiety and rage in the offender, often resulting in violent actions." Ted became romantically involved with a fellow classmate of the University of Washington known by most sources as Stephanie Brookes in 1967. When Ted went on to withdraw from college Stephanie soon terminated their relationship which ultimately devastated and humiliated Ted. When his crime spree began in 1974 it became evident that all of his victims were a template of his first girlfriend, demonstrating the attachment theory. This is shown by the similarity between all his victims as they appeared to have all been young white females between the ages of fifteen and twenty five with long and straight brown hair that was parted in the middle, which was all very similar to Stephanie.

The cognitive theory could have contributed to his offences as the pain and humiliation then fuelled Ted's way of thinking of women, taking his anger out on young women fairly similar to the woman who he became quite attached to and initially broke his heart. It has been reported that Ted and Stephanie got back together soon after Ted re-enrolled in law school and it has been alleged that they even discussed marriage. Though in January 1974 Ted terminated their relationship as he was only in it to prove a point, that he could have her. Soon after he again dropped out of Law school and young women started disappearing. His attachment to

Stephanie was obsessive, he allegedly brutally raped and murdered many young women and also appeared to have struggled with attachment towards them. This is evident as he would often re visit the corpse only to engage in necrophilia until decomposition made that no longer possible. This experience in Ted's past contributed to a sense of superiority as he never forgave Stephanie for the initial break up in 1968. This contributed to Ted's way of thinking towards women as an object that he could take and humiliate just as he himself was humiliated. It has been reported that Ted murdered most of his victims during a violent sexual act by ligature strangulation, however in some cases he would behead the corpse or remove the hands. He then considered them now belonging to him.

Conclusion

Based on the research demonstrated within this case study it is evident that Ted Bundy suffered both mentally and psychologically. It was reported that he was medically diagnosed with Antisocial Personality Disorder and Dissociative Identity Disorder by Dorothy Ottnow Lewis, a psychiatrist from the New York University Medical Centre. Although he did show narcissistic personality disorder characteristics, it was never medically diagnosed. Based on biological, behavioral, cognitive and attachment psychological theories it suggests that Ted Bundy murdered and raped over thirty young women due to his past experiences from childhood to adulthood. The lack of a nurturing environment and an emotional relationship with his mother contributes to the biological theory. The taught behavior of violence and abuse from his grandfather contributes to the behavioral theory, as he believed that this behavior towards living beings was acceptable and went on through his life with a sense of superiority as there was no negative reinforcement towards this behavior. Ted's addiction to violent pornography contributes to the cognitive theory, as from a young age he thought of women as a sexual being to satisfy his needs up until his first rape and murder when he committed the act himself as the pornography no longer satisfied him. The reaction from the romantic rejection brought on by his first romantic relationship with Stephanie Brooks also changed his way of thinking towards women, he felt devastated and humiliated when she terminated the relationship because she believed he was immature and unsuccessful. Therefore Ted went on to demoralize and dominate women out of hatred and anger. Ted showed a sense of attachment to his victims as he would continue to re visit the corpse to engage in necrophilia until decomposition made this no longer possible, this also leads back to the attachment that he had with Stephanie Brooks. Based on these psychological theories it is evident that Ted Bundy viewed his murders as his life accomplishment and had no remorse for the lives he took. No one could take that away from him, it was the one aspect in his life in which he felt in total control.