**TWO CHRISTMAS TEDS, BOTH DEAD**

--Ted [Bundy] knows that I am writing this book. He has

always known. Ted has been described as the perfect son, the perfect student, the Boy Scout grown to adulthood, a genius, as handsome as a movie idol, the bright light of the future of the Republican Party, a budding lawyer, a trusted friend, a young man for whom the future could surely hold only success.

He was all these things and none of them.

Ann Rule, *The Stranger Beside Me: Ted Bundy,* 1980, Preface.

Ted Byers was a big man, late twenties, 6 feet four inches, and about 230 pounds. Ted (really Theodore) was the first geography graduate student I met when I first arrived in Kirkwood hall, Indiana University in June 1961. Professor George H. T. Kimble, his double initials giving him away as British even before I met him, did indeed speak in a refined upper-class British accent. Professor Kimble asked Ted to show me around the department and gave him a key to my office, a former custodian closet and storage space that I would share with Dale Stevens, B.A. from Brigham Young University.

Ted Byers displayed a formal but friendly manner. He was always well dressed, always with a tannish brown corduroy sports coat, with a tie on the days he lectured. His major professor was Norman J.G. Ponds, another double-middle-initialed British professor, an expert on Western Europe and political geography. Dr. Ponds had written several books, including *Divided Germany and East Berlin,* published in 1962. Ted Byers naturally had identical interests. It became quickly evident that dr. ponds and Mr. Byers not only had identical interests in Western Europe and political geography, but they also had an uncommonly close social and personal relationship. Professor ponds, because of his transparent display of ego, was extremely vulnerable to ted’s excessive display of toadyism—I mean flattery. Some of the graduate students nicknamed Ted “the sycophant,” but never to his face. Actually, most of us were simply jealous. We in fact treated him with maximum respect.

One graduate student, Bill Witzel, also known as “bootlicker,” once asked Ted what caused boundaries to change. Ted officiously replied, “There are a multiplicity of reasons,” as he walked away. Bill Witzel was trying—unsuccessfully—to date Sue Ball, also a close confidant of Dr. Ponds until she crossed the great professor and dropped out of the Ph.D. program to marry a dairy farmer in southern Michigan. Ted Byers never crossed Dr. Ponds, ever!

When Dr. Ponds was in a writing frenzy and couldn’t stop to teach his class, he could always count on ted--of—n referred to by unsuspecting students as *Dr.* Byers—to take over, even on a moment’s notice. No student was ever corrected regarding the false title before his name.

Before Ted could finish his Ph.D. dissertation, his years of assistantship support had expired and he took a faculty position at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Like Ted, I had not yet completed my dissertation when I secured a faculty position at nearby Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, zoo, zoo. A student who had Mr. Byers at Calvin College during Fall Quarter, 1965, enrolled during winter Quarter, 1966, in my 325-student strong lecture class in Introduction to Physical Geography. Upon learning of my Indiana connection, he approached me one day after class to let me know that he had just had a class from Dr. Byers. I acknowledged Ted and my Bloomington, Indiana, connection, but corrected him about the “Dr.” title. He said he wasn’t sure I was right about that since all the students called him dr. Byers and were never corrected. “He acted so professional,” the student said.

A few days later, this doubting but now enterprising student approached me after class again. He said he checked with the administration at Calvin College. He said, “It turns out I was right about *Mr.* Byers.” He was bitter to have been so deceived—the whole class to have been so egregiously misled.

Here’s the surprise. He asked me when I was going back to Bloomington to defend my dissertation, as he knew my written draft had been approved. I said, “February 23.” He then asked me if I would do him a favor. He had typed up a fictitious letter, signature forged, ostensibly from the chair of the Board of Regents of the State of Michigan, and addressed to Mr. Theodore Byers, threatening to expose Mr. Byers’ unprofessional and unethical falsification regarding his title and the concomitant claim that he held the Ph.D.

The favor the student asked me was this: Would I please mail this letter from the small town of Bedford, Indiana, 20 miles south of Bloomington, home of Indiana University, the hometown of the Regents chair?

I detoured 20 miles south to fulfill my promise after my dissertation defense. I passed.

Ted resigned from Calvin College at the end of winter quarter 1966. Dr. Ponds had apparently written a glowing letter of recommendation to the University of Colorado promising, as I would find out later, that Ted would have his Ph.D. in hand by September of that year. Ted got the job, as the interview went extremely smoothly, as I would also later learn. He did not obtain the Ph.D., ever.

Mr. Ted Byers was, however, a gifted speaker and a well-liked, superior teacher. He made himself indispensable to Professor Thomas Veblen, the department chair, always willing to do extras for him. Ted finagled his promotion to associate professor with tenure based upon his exceptional teaching and unparalleled service to the department. Ted spent 17 successful years in boulder at the University of Colorado before it suddenly and tragically ended following a departmental Christmas party in Eldoro—not Eldorado, the legendary city of gold in the Rocky Mountains 20 miles west of Boulder.

Ted’s closest friends and his wife Martha had noticed that Ted had become tense and moody, perhaps depressed. So was Martha. It was no wonder as their lovely 22-year-old daughter became missing without a trace. Who could blame him? Her body was then recovered.

Greater anxiety gripped him, nearly paralyzing his thoughts and actions, when informed by the police that ted Bundy, the monstrous serial killer of young women, who had escaped (jumped out an open window) a few days before from a Pitkin county Colorado courtroom, where he was on trial for murder, was the likely suspect, based on an eyewitness and the M.O. in ted and Martha’s daughter’s death.

Martha could not bring herself to go to the Christmas party. Ted went alone, hoping it might help him overcome his overwhelming melancholy.

Ted was driving home, having had very little to drink at the 1985 Christmas party. He left no note. He had rounded a curve—no snow or ice—at what police officers calculated was likely 80 miles per hour, despite a 35-mile per hour curve warning sign. The brakes were checked and found to be in good working order.

Was it a depression-induced suicide? Maybe an accident? Did he simply fall asleep? Ann Rule notes, “Several of the parents of ted’s victims have died early…” (p. 440).

Whatever. Many years later, and after many more murdered young women, ted Bundy, the other Ted, was captured and executed in Florida, after unsuccessfully representing himself at trial, his last hurrah, also deadly.

Was Ted Byers the only male that Ted Bundy killed by inducing his suicide? In any case, again quoting Ann Rule (p.498), “The Ted who might have been, and the Ted who was, both died on January 24, 1989,” at 7:16 a.m., a late Christmas death for the second Ted.

Merry Christmas to Ted and Martha, and their lovely daughter Amy.