

“GARY SPAT OUT HIS DUMMY AND PLAY-ACTED HIS REVENGE IN MURDER... TO GET BACK AT HIS EX”



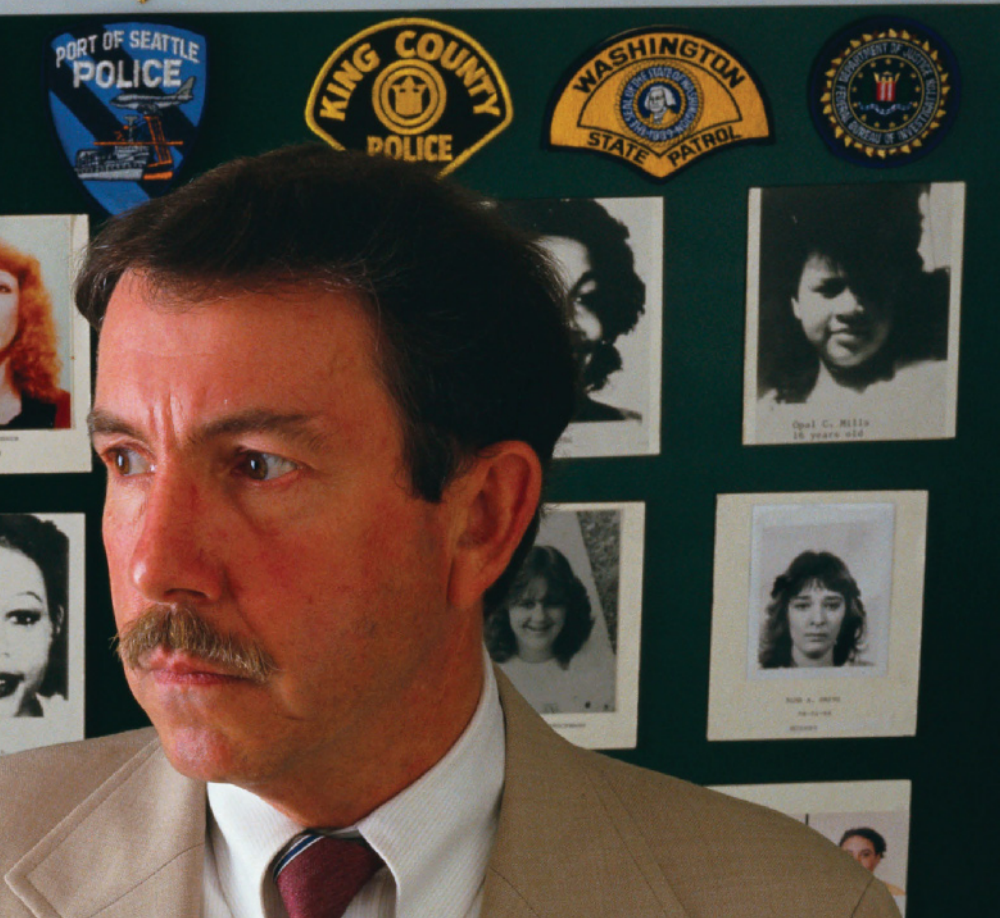
'BIG BROTHER' BUNDY'S HELPING HAND

When Gary Ridgway's case left the police baffled, Theodore 'Ted' Bundy stepped in. Bundy was a boyishly handsome ex-law student and political advisor turned convicted kidnapper, rapist, murder and necrophile. Like many serial killers, he was not above seeking aggrandisement for his crimes and so wrote to the Green River Task Force to offer his 'expertise' in finding the murderer whom he called 'The Riverman'. This romanticised, mysterious moniker suggests that the press attention generated by his involvement would be key in the decision-making. Bundy duly met with serial killer profiler Dr Robert D Keppel; his insights fed into the findings of the Green River Task Force and would be published in the book, *Ted Bundy and the Hunt for the Green River Killer*. It details how psychological profiling became based on building a relationship with suspects to understand their minds. It also details Keppel's shock when Bundy started to confess to his own crimes for the first time in the hope of comparison with the soon-to-be infamous Ridgway.



How much Bundy helped in the investigation was as dubious as his motives

GREEN RIVER VICTIMS



LEFT It's 1987 and King County police department has a wall covered with photos of victims, of what police lieutenant Dan Nolan and his team have established as a single serial killer. Remains from Ridgway's most prolific, 1982-1984 killing period were still being found well into 1990.

VICTIMS OF SOCIETY

Gary was right about one thing: they were victims. The women he picked up were the sex workers of The Strip. Rather than working in the sex industry as escorts or entertainers for enjoyment or fame, the women were working for money. They were often runaways or had fallen on hard times due to misfortune or addiction. They were trying to provide for themselves and, sometimes, for families. Many felt there were no other options left for them.

Gary, like many other serial killers, knew they would be the simplest targets to catch because there would be fewer friends and family members to fuel a media storm. Public servants, such as the police, have historically avoided dealing with the policing of problems as losing control can create public relations nightmares between themselves and the electing public. It was therefore harder for law enforcement to trace the women because, as the sex workers were law breakers themselves, they had avoided notice until it was too late. The women would actively hide from the police who were trying to catch the killer simply to ensure that they could earn the money necessary to live. To them, abject poverty seemed on balance a more likely (and indeed state-sanctioned) outcome than meeting their end with one elusive guy out of the thousands of men who passed through the city streets each night.

With the increasing death toll, the police swung into action. They established the Green River Task Force, a 50-strong unit of officers complete with a tip-off hotline to field calls from members of the public. According to task force member Dave Reichert, they had between 12-15,000 suspects and at one point actually interviewed Ridgway after a sex worker was seen getting into his truck before vanishing. As George Johnston of the Washington State Patrol Crime Lab reported, investigators were also combing the crime scenes looking for "hair transfers, paint chips, glass, clothing damage", anything that might lead them to the perpetrator. But all they had to go on were semen swabs from some of the bodies and the knowledge that the culprit was abnormal; who would leave rocks inside their victims' sexual organs, like storing marbles in a bag after play?

The problem was that the person who was committing the crimes was – is – Mr Nondescript. Ridgway is utterly unremarkable to look at and exploited this through the methods he used to evade capture. He would use different vans to swamp the city streets and would happily chatter about his little son to the women to convince them that they were safe. Gary even passed a polygraph test on the basis that the machine picks up on physical indicators of emotional discomfort and, quite simply, he displayed none. He relished his hollow victories.



LEFT King County investigators search for the remains of one of the Green River Killer's victims. The majority of Ridgway's murders were concentrated in the early 80s - a turbulent time in his marriage, when his insatiable carnal urges were not being satisfied.