



Bundy

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rest of his practice to defend Bundy at the state-approved (and state-funded) rate of \$45 per hour, with some clerical help and an investigator from Thomas' staff.

Ted Bundy and his defenders fought almost continuously to hide the Chi Omega case from the press, including television. They claimed that the presence of cameras in the courtroom prevented him from getting a fair trial and threatened their ability to draw an unprejudiced jury in the Lake City case. Publicity was one of the 35 reasons Bundy cited as grounds for requesting a new trial.

Despite his own repeated efforts — many of them successful — to use the press for his own purposes, Bundy denounced "a bloodthirsty and pitiless press. . . . The coverage of the news media has been a constant threat to me," he told Cowart. "It has jeopardized, and I think succeeded in influencing the outcome of this case. Their vilification of me and their attempt to make me a celebrity or notorious infamous character," he said, began long before his indictment in July, 1978.

Yet, it was Bundy himself who filed numerous motions that he be allowed to conduct news conferences and interviews with the press. Most of them were denied by the courts. It was Bundy himself who violated court guidelines and used his trial telephone to conduct interviews with numerous reporters for newspapers and TV stations throughout the country. It was Bundy himself who initiated these contacts, to the great surprise of the reporters involved. It was Bundy himself who started up an impromptu news conference in his Miami courtroom during a brief recess in the trial. He began it with a few kidding remarks to Miami Herald reporter Gene Miller, a man Bundy later denounced violently for printing pretrial stories about evidence in the case.

Paradoxically, the Leach trial might stay in Lake City because of — not in spite of — all the publicity from Miami. The reasoning is that the entire state — indeed the entire country — was so saturated with coverage of the Chi Omega trial that no city in Florida would offer much of an improvement over Lake City itself.

Bundy told Judge Cowart bitterly in Miami that press coverage of that trial "reaffirms a lesson I learned long ago — that the news media is (sic) out for blood." Yet, Bundy appears to be preparing to become an author.

His close friend Carole Ann Boone, of Seattle, his mother and other members of his

family have formed a non profit corporation in Washington state, the "Would Be" Corporation. Its purpose is to hold and administer any and all funds which Bundy may earn by selling books and articles, or rights to interviews in print or television. The funds, according to the charter, would be used to assist other penniless defendants in capital cases obtain good legal counsel.

The defense team's dislike of the press — especially television — is shared by Assistant Columbia County State Attorney George Robert "Bob" Dekle Sr., who appears to be in his 30s, with curly light brown hair and a perpetual gob of chewing tobacco in his right cheek.

Dekle, a 1973 graduate of the University of Florida Law School in Gainesville, and former Assistant Public Defender in Columbia County, speaks with a north Florida drawl which almost defiantly proclaims him a "cracker" — the north Florida brand of "country boy."

Dekle's rustic manner conceals a sharp mind and a bulldog tenacity. He has been involved in the Leach case right up to his boot tops from the very first day. He personally participated in the long search for the body. He is personally familiar with every witness and every scrap of evidence.

He has plenty of time for his slow speech because he has very little to say to reporters — especially reporters who want to talk about the

case. He won't do it — except to recite what is already on the public record.

Dekle spent several weeks in Miami observing the Chi Omega trial.

He has had a long time to prepare his case. Is he ready for trial? "We'll be ready." Dekle unloads some tobacco juice into a plastic cup.

How long will it take to put on the prosecution's case?

"Oh, a month. Six weeks."

The prosecution has released a list of 103 witnesses for the trial. Will he call all of them? "Those are the witnesses we have put under subpoena for the trial."

Asked about cameras in the courtroom, Dekle becomes almost garrulous. "I don't like people taking pictures of me when I don't want 'em to take pictures of me. The still cameras aren't as bad as the TV cameras."

In all his five years of law practice, he said, "99.9 percent of all my cases were tried to an empty courtroom." He leaves the distinct impression that he thinks there is something unhealthy about all the public interest in the Leach case. He would prefer the obscurity of his empty courtroom.

But Judge Jopling doesn't think it will work out that way. "I'm not yet convinced that cameras in the courtroom are best, overall," Jopling mused. "They have an unknown impact on witnesses and jurors, primarily, and secondarily on lawyers and judges."

But he noted that televi-

sion coverage of the trial "was not in any way disruptive. There was certainly no problem of decorum. I'm not inclined to ban cameras from the Leach case."

As for Dekle, there is probably nothing he would rather do than sit down with his boots off and talk about the case for hours with his friends. He probably will, when its all over.

EPILOG

Kimberly Leach's family has retained a Jacksonville attorney and served notice on the Columbia County Board of Public Instruction (the school board) that it intends to file suit against the board claiming damages of \$1-million.

The attorney, Charles B. Lembcke, said the suit will not be filed until completion of the Lake City murder trial. Six months advance notice of intent to file such a suit against a public body is required by Florida law.

Lembcke refused to discuss specifics of the suit, but he indicated that it would charge that the board was "negligent" in its supervision and failed in its duty to protect Kimberly Leach while she was on the school premises.

Lembcke said he will wait until completion of the murder trial because many of the witnesses he plans to call will also be witnesses in the murder trial and serious conflicts could arise. Also, with the murder trial complete, volumes of sworn testimony will be available from the trial record to be used in the civil suit.