Ted Bundy was a killer. Not only was he a killer but he was a serial killer. He rampaged through a large part of the United States killing and brutalizing women from 1974 until his eventually capture in 1978 (Ramsland, 2004). He was captured twice and managed to escape twice. Under stress from life as a fugitive he made the fatal mistake which would lead to his conviction and eventual execution.

Ted Bundy bludgeoned, raped and tortured more than 30 women. Some estimates are closer to forty. Yet he did not fit the profile of a killer. He was intelligent and some say handsome. He seemed to have a future as a lawyer. He killed most of his victims without leaving any traceable evidence. In some cases, the bodies were not found until years later. In most cases he left no fingerprints or other traceable evidence. DNA was recovered but could not be matched conclusively to Ted Bundy (Ramsland, 2004).

There are many theories as to why a young intelligent man would become a violent, sadistic killer of young women. I personally think that as a shy young man he was frustrated by a relationship in which he felt inferior. When the woman of his dreams, who he had professed love, broke off their relationship the rage in him grew. He had worked as a volunteer counselor at a rape crisis hotline (Rule, 1991). In his rage against the failure of his relationship he sought to inflict the most pain he could on women especially those who looked like his ex-girlfriend. He had been dumped by a beautiful young woman fitting for his role as a lawyer (He studied law briefly but was not a lawyer). He had worked as a rape crisis counselor where he had the perfect opportunity to hear and feel what hurt women the most. He dearly wanted to hurt the woman who had hurt him. He couldn’t really hurt her, so he raged against women who looked like her in the beginning. In the end the thrill of the kill was what mattered to him, and the look of the victim no longer mattered. Maybe he was sexually aroused by the anger and pain of the rape crisis line victims he counseled. Ted Bundy’s motivation for his brutality will remain a mystery but it was probably a combination of these and other factors.

After escaping from custody in Aspen, Colorado not once but twice he fled to Florida. There he went on a deadly rampage at the Chi Omega Sorority house leaving two women dead and two badly injured all in a matter of hours. He succumbed to his rage and bit one of his victims on the buttock and once on the breast. Lisa Levy was dead but on her buttock, Ted Bundy had left a piece of evidence which could be used to link him to the crime. In conjunction with the testimony of witness who saw him flee the Chi Omega Sorority House his own dental impression helped convict him and sent him to the electric chair.

He did not bite Lisa Levy’s buttock once but twice. The first bite showed a full and complete bite mark. The second bite was rotated so that there were two impressions of the lower teeth. The top teeth stayed in place while the lower teeth where rotated (Ramsland, 2004). The second set of impressions gave investigators more points for comparison increasing the probability of a match. The analysis of the bite marks on Lisa Levy’s buttock was only possible because of the actions of a quick-thinking crime scene investigator who took pictures at the scene. The investigator had the forethought to include a ruler in the photo to show scale. The existence of this photograph was pivotal in convicting Bundy. Without the photograph he may have been acquitted. The bite mark had been incised from the buttock for analysis but had degraded and was no longer useful as evidence by the time of the trial (from www.crimelibrary.com). The only evidence of the original size and shape of the bite mark was the photograph taken at the scene.

After his arrest for the Chi Omega Sorority murders forensic odontologist (dentist) Dr. Richard Souviron examined Bundy’s teeth (with the aid of a warrant) and took photographs of his upper and lower teeth (Innes, 2000). In court he used enlarged photographs to show the jury the unique characteristics of Bundy’s teeth. Next, he used a transparent overlay of Bundy’s teeth and placed it over an enlarged photograph of the bite mark (Innes, 2000). The two seemed to match. Finally, the chief consultant in forensic dentistry to New York City’s Medical Examiner, Dr. L. Lavine, confirmed Souviron’s findings. He testified that from the position and measurements of the bite mark he could tell that Lisa was no longer struggling when it was made. The Jury was convinced that Bundy was the one who bit Lisa Levy. Bite mark analysis had shown that his teeth had created the injuries to Lisa Levy most likely after she was dead or near to death. According to the eyewitness account of Nita Neary Ted had run from the sorority house with a log wrapped in cloth (the weapon used to club his victims) (Innes, 2000). He was convicted and sentenced to die in Florida’s electric chair.

Questions:

1. What “impression” was left by Ted Bundy to help convict him?
2. When was the impression made on the victim?
3. What year(s) was Ted Bundy active?