

## Paul Ferguson - A loner from youth

It looked like an allergic reaction, but the doctors weren't sure. The six-month old baby's tiny body was covered with hives. The doctors decided Baby Ted would have to be hospitalized.

He was pinned down in a spread-eagle position for an examination. Someone in the hospital took a photograph to record the baby's symptoms. It showed an infant's eyes brimming with terror.



His mother was not permitted to visit the sick baby, a standard hospital policy in 1943.

Baby Ted endured several more hospital stays over the following eight months.

His mother, now an 80-year-old widow in upstate New York, says she dwells on Ted's early hospital stays constantly.

"Baby home from hospital and is healthy but quite unresponsive after his experience," she recorded in a baby book on March 12, 1943. She turned the book over to the FBI last year.

Speaking with a Washington Post reporter soon after Ted Kaczynski's 1996 arrest, his mother Wanda said that unresponsiveness eventually grew like a cancer that consumed her son's mind.

It was the first of what would become more than 50 years of occasional lapses into an eerie stillness from her son. As he grew older, the "shutdowns," as the family called them, were increasingly accompanied with rage.

Ted's father wanted to help the extraordinarily shy 10-year-old get out more and socialize with other children.

He took him to a Boy Scout troop meeting, but Ted went into a shutdown. The scoutmaster was sympathetic, and said that it was probably better not to push the boy into doing something he apparently didn't want to.

Despite his parent's encouragements to go out and play with others, he remained aloof and a loner.

He was a brilliant boy, and passed his time with books, tinkering and with his trombone. It was clear that he lived a life of the mind, and approached his hobbies with tremendous intellectual rigor.

He composed music that he played with his father and David, his younger brother; dad played piano and David trumpet. His favorite composers were Bach, Vivaldi and Gabrielli.

The University of Chicago gave him a scholarship to take a summer course on Greek tragedy when he was only 15.

In those early years, the Kaczynski family found him to be a myriad of contradictions. His personality could be pleasant and compassionate at one moment, but flip into rudeness, gloom and unhappiness the next.

And then there were the shutdowns.

He was accepted to Harvard, but the offer of a solid education filled his parents with as much anxiety as pride. If Ted had difficulties with the Boy Scouts, how would he do going away to college?

A trip to look at colleges set off a shutdown. How would he handle the new environment?

Interviews with his former roommates show that he didn't.

Many had trouble recalling him. One remembered that Ted would march past the others and head straight for his room.

Another recalled that Ted's room was often an unreasonable mess that included cartons of sour milk on the floor.

But he graduated and entered a top graduate program in mathematics.

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