

# Son was precocious, hard to handle — and brilliant

► MINOR from 1D

cosmic soul, if you will, who believes in things like good energy and bad energy. And the energy around that day wasn't good.

Fletcher and another soldier knocked on Wirawan's door at an off-base apartment near Fort Hood, Texas. No answer.

They knocked again, and then they began to worry.

Maybe he was inside and needed their help?

So Fletcher and his buddy got the manager, who tried to unlock the door, but it was bolted from within. They broke the glass in the front window, immediately noticing the chaos inside, booze and bullets on a small, cluttered table.

And then — as changing energy goes — the rest of the glass from the window fell, creating unexpected noise, and the police arrived, blaring their sirens, and Wirawan lunged into action.

Luther has listened to every single, slow second on the 911 tape.

"He just snapped," she says.

And by this, she means Army Spc. Jody Wirawan shot her son five times in the head.

Dead.

Then he killed himself.

## Mother and son's 'trying' years

It wasn't always easy to love Bart Fletcher, his mother says.

"I thought he was going to be a serial killer."

When he was little, and she means little, he'd test her patience to the moon and back. The younger of her two boys

— she was pregnant with Bart when she and her first husband divorced — Bart was obviously brilliant.

There was no doubt about his IQ.

He was also precocious and stubborn and a disciplinary nightmare.

"He'd come down and say, 'I want candy for breakfast,' and if I said 'No,' that would start our day," she says.

A speech pathologist in public pre-K programs at the time, Luther was accustomed to working with special-needs kids. Through the years, she'd taught kids who had been physically abused, verbally abused. She'd worked with children who were so caught up in their own dysfunctions, they couldn't look her straight in the eyes.

Those students, she could handle.

But her own son scared the hell out of her.

"I was afraid of him," she says.

"I tried stickers. I tried stars. I tried timeout.

"I tried restraining him. I tried ignoring him. I tried every trick in the book, and nothing worked."

And then, along came that one moment of changing energy — and with it, clarity.

She was remarried by then, and she and her husband, Jack Luther, were living in Jensen Beach, raising their blended family of four kids.

Bart did something one morning, and Ginny Luther says she "acted like an emotional nut" — pulling out a wooden spoon and threatening him with a spanking. "I'd never done that before," she says.

And Bart, being Bart, being the guy who would eventually get it together, quite nicely, and be gutsy enough to march off to war, pulled down his trousers and said, "Spank me."

"That was a defining moment for me," Luther says.

"That was when I realized that this wasn't about him, it was

about me."

Within months, Luther had found a teaching technique that drove her onto a new, professional path. It's called conscious discipline, and it takes the science of the brain — real science, with researched results — and molds that with behavioral realities.

"I knew the best way for me to learn it, was to teach it," she says.

Today, Luther runs Peaceful Parenting, and is sought after as a lecturer, teacher and a so-called 911 nanny, who will parachute into families in crisis and help them muddle through the mess.

"A child who is out of control is a child who is scared," she says simply.

## Mother and son had found their path

It might sound like hogwash, touchy and feely, but Luther knows it saved her life. And it saved Bart's.

He graduated from high school, went off to college, joined the Army and rose through the ranks. He fell in love with his high-school sweetheart, put an engagement ring on her finger.

When he died that day outside Fort Hood, Texas, he was all the things she'd once dreamed he'd never be.

"I had a choice," she says. "I could try to control him, or I could take that energy and be positive and help him find his path to be a powerful leader."

In the years after her son's death, Ginny Luther has had a not-so-gentle reckoning, traveling around the country, helping parents and kids, teachers and students.

In essence, all these years, she's really been teaching herself — about being present and in control and living in the moment.

Sure, she was mad as hell — at the Army and its bureaucracy. At the circumstances.

At all the what-ifs.

But Army Spc. Jody Wirawan?

She was never mad at him, not once.

How could she be?

He was simply the man she thought her son would become, years and years ago, standing in the kitchen with that wooden spoon.

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