John Wayne Gacy: The killer clown

By: Kayla Garcia
CRE101 31724
Professor Dey
11/9/2023
John Wayne Gacy: Quick Facts

Name: John Gacy
Full name: John Wayne Gacy
Occupation: Serial killer
Birth Date: March 17, 1942
Death Date: May 10, 1994
Fact 1: John Wayne Gacy murdered at least 33 young males.
Fact 2: Gacy worked as a clown at community events and parties.
Education: Northwestern Business College Chicago
Place of Birth: Chicago, Illinois
Place of Death: Statesville, Illinois

Source: John Wayne Gacy: Biography, Serial Killer, Killer Clown

John Wayne Gacy in 1978.

Source: https://www.britannica.com/biography/John-Wayne-Gacy#/media/1/1245860/226823
Interview with John Wayne Gacy

In a famous 3.5 hour interview that John Wayne Gacy did, he famously said, “I should never have been convicted of anything more serious than running a cemetery without a license.”

Source: John Wayne Gacy quotes : I should never have been convicted of anythin... (inspiringquotes.us)

Source: Alexa Danner Talks About John Wayne Gacy: Devil In Disguise (lrmonline.com)
Who was John Wayne Gacy?

Childhood: John Wayne Gacy was born into an upper-middle class family living in Chicago. Gacy was always overweight and lonely. He was subject to both physical and emotional abuse from his father. At the age of 5 and 8 Gacy was sexually assaulted by family friends.

Young Adult: Gacy failed to complete high school, but did however go to Northwestern Business College. He then met and engaged Marlynn Myers, and had two children with her. He ran her fathers chicken restaurants in Waterloo, Iowa.

Adult: Gacy became a successful independent contractor. He also became very involved in politics within his community. Gacy was admired by all. He also worked as “pogo the clown” at community events and children’s parties. At age 26 he was arrested for sodomy and sentenced to ten years, but got out for good behavior after a year and a half.

Senior: In December 1978, Gacy is arrested and later confesses to murdering 33 males. He is convicted in 1980, and is executed in May of 1994. He died at the age of 52.


Source: Conversations with a Killer | The New Yorker
What did John Wayne Gacy do?

John Wayne Gacy raped, tortured, and murdered 33 young males between 1972 and 1978. He lured them to his house with the intention of killing them. After murdering them through strangulation he either buried them on his property, mainly in the crawl space beneath his home, or he dumped the bodies into a nearby river.

Source: Killer Clown Gacy Claimed 33 Victims | True Crime Library
When did John Wayne Gacy commit his crimes?

Gacy’s criminal history started years before he took the life of his first murder victim. He was arrested for sodomy in 1968 where he is sentenced to 10 years in prison.

Unfortunately, he got out after just 18 months. A year after, a boy reports Gacy to Chicago police, but nothing happens.

January 3rd 1972, Gacy kills his first victim. For the next six years he goes on to kill 32 more young men. His last claimed victim was killed on December 11, 1978.

Source: John Wayne Gacy: A Timeline of the 'Killer Clown' Murders, Trial and Execution (biography.com)

Gacy’s mugshot.

Source: John Wayne Gacy - HubPages
Where did the crimes occur?

John Wayne Gacy committed all of his crimes at his house located in Norwood Park, a suburban community of Chicago, Illinois. He would select his victims from bus stations, bars, stores, and some were even his employees.
Why did he do it?

After his initial confession to his lawyers, John Wayne Gacy denied all crimes he was convicted of. In fact, he spent his entire prison sentence appealing his conviction over and over again, with no luck. Due to this, Gacy never explained why he committed his crimes. All we can do is speculate and theorize. For me, it is quite easy to piece together the rationale behind his actions. Gacy grew up lonesome, bullied, and abused by his father. He was always told by his father that he was never good enough. He was also clearly a closeted homosexual who had issues accepting his sexuality. All of these stressors are what pushed Gacy to kill and this is so obviously true when you realize that Gacy didn’t commit his first murder until his father had died.
How did he commit the crimes?

Gacy lured his victims through offering things like alcohol, drugs, payment for sex, but most of all he offered them high paying jobs. When he got them into his home he would get them drunk, drug them, tie them up or cuff them and then torture and rape them. When he was done he would strangle them with a rope and bury them in the crawlspace under his house. He buried 26 bodies in the crawlspace, three others in random places on his property, and dropped 4 bodies in the Des Plaines river.


On the 40th anniversary of John Wayne Gacy’s arrest SIX of his victims have still to be identified | Daily Mail Online
1. I think Gacy committed these crimes because he had no other way to come to terms with who he was. He struggled with accepting himself for who he was at a very young age. He suffered abuse and assault at a young age and that shaped his mind into suppressing his true self and always trying to fulfill the image that he knew the public liked.

2. Therapy could have very well helped Gacy. I think if he had spoken about his issues with somebody early on, his crimes may have been prevented.

3. Make no mistake, the victims are the ones that we should absolutely feel sorry for. Thirty three men died at the hands of Gacy. They had no clue they were in the hands of someone dangerous, and I feel sorry for what they endured in their final moments.

4. The victims absolutely did not deserve any of what they got. Nobody deserves to get murdered. Much of his victims trusted him and thought they knew the type of man he was because they were close.

5. It’s clearly important to have critical thinking skills in any situation because you need to evaluate your surroundings, especially when they are unfamiliar. You have to always critically evaluate where you are, who you’re with, and any possible dangers. Critically thinking about these things helps to keep your head on a swivel.
Demographics

Timothy McCoy
- Gacy picked up his first victim from a greyhound bus station. He takes the teenager to his house, gets him drunk, does sexual things with him and then stabs him to death.
- Timothy McCoy was murdered on January 3rd, 1972 just outside of Chicago.

Source: [John Wayne Gacy Victims: The Known and Unknown Men He Murdered | Crime News](oxygen.com)

Robert Piest
- Robert Piest was Gacy’s final victim. Piest went over to Gacy’s house to talk about working for him when Gacy tricked the boy into putting handcuffs on for a magic trick. He then raped the boy before suffocating him with a rope.
- Robert Piest was murdered on December 11th, 1978. Gacy dumped his body in an Illinois river.

Source: [John Wayne Gacy Victims: The Known and Unknown Men He Murdered | Crime News](oxygen.com)

Headshots of some of Gacy’s victims.

Source: [Photograph: John Wayne Gacy victims - Las Vegas Weekly](oxygen.com)
Distorted thinking, reasoning, and intellectual standards

HERBFLEW: The most obvious distorted reasoning showcased by Gacy is egocentricity. Meaning that Gacy only saw things from his point of view. This is understandable as Gacy refused to admit he committed the crimes even though there was mountains of evidence, he had confessed prior, and the bodies were buried beneath his home. He saw his indictment as people attacking him because they didn’t like him.

8 Critical Thinking Intellectual Standards: Of the 8 standards of critical thinking, I believe that Gacy had logical correctness missing from his line of reasoning. He was in denial of his crimes so much so that he said he should only have been convicted of running a cemetery without a license. Which shows he acknowledged all of the bodies found under his house, but instead of admitting to what he did he said something illogical like he was simply running a cemetery and didn’t know how the bodies got there.

15 Distorted Thinking Skills: Out of all distorted thinking plots, the biggest one Gacy displayed was always believing he was right. When he was first detained for the murders he told his lawyers with confidence that he would not see a minute of jail for his crimes. Throughout the trial he believed he was going to win, and appealed every verdict. Even when sentenced to the death penalty he stated that he’d never get killed for his crimes, yet he did.
Interesting Information

Interesting information I found out about Gacy was:

- He was a democratic precinct captain in the county
- He was part of the Jaycee organization (18-35 year old men) who volunteered in the community
- He had 2 kids, Michael and Christine, with his first wife Marylynn Myers

These facts were most interesting to me because they all show how involved and how trustworthy John Gacy seemed to the public eye. He was looked at as a family man, a reliable businessman, and a pillar in his community. Knowing this, it makes sense that people were hesitant to believe he could commit such heinous crimes. The most interesting thing to me is how he was able to infiltrate these groups so well that he actually seemed to have authority.

Source: John Wayne Gacy: 15 Facts You Probably Didn’t Know - The CrimeWire
Work Cited:

John Wayne Gacy: Biography, Serial Killer, Killer Clown

John Wayne Gacy quotes: I should never have been convicted of anything... (inspiringquotes.us)

https://www.aetv.com/real-crime/john-wayne-gacys-childhood

John Wayne Gacy: A Timeline of the 'Killer Clown' Murders, Trial and Execution (biography.com)

John Wayne Gacy Victims: The Known and Unknown Men He Murdered | Crime News (oxygen.com)

John Wayne Gacy: 15 Facts You Probably Didn’t Know - The CrimeWire


Image Cited:

John Wayne Gacy | Biography, Murders, Execution, & Facts | Britannica

Alexa Danner Talks About John Wayne Gacy: Devil In Disguise (lrmonline.com)

Conversations with a Killer | The New Yorker

Photograph: John Wayne Gacy victims - Las Vegas Weekly

John Wayne Gacy - HubPages

On the 40th anniversary of John Wayne Gacy's arrest SIX of his victims have still to be identified | Daily Mail Online

Killer Clown Gacy Claimed 33 Victims | True Crime Library

Photo of john wayne gacy's house (photonshouse.com)
Thank you!

Kayla Garcia    kay2212040@maricopa.edu