

## Directions

Please scroll down to begin our journey. If for whatever reason the animation doesn't render properly, simply refresh the page.

Enjoy the show.

## Intro

This is an interactive dedicated to showcasing some of America's most notorious serial killers, including Ted Bundy, Jeffrey Dahmer, John Wayne Gacy, and more.

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## A Pilgrimage of Blood and Tears

Since the very founding of America, serial killers have relentlessly preyed upon both the vulnerable and unexpected.

The accompanying map illustrates just a handful of the hotspots where these monsters chose to terrorize.

Let's meet our subjects!

We begin in the Golden State.

Manson, a notorious cult leader who led the now infamous Manson family on a commune in southern California, convinced his followers to commit a series of 9 murders throughout the summer of 1969 in order to start a race war, in what would later be classified as 'Helter Skelter'. One of his most famous victims included the Hollywood actress Sharon Tate.

Richard Ramirez, otherwise known as the 'Night Stalker', was a sociopath known for burglarizing the homes of unsuspecting victims in the greater Los Angeles and San Francisco areas between 1984 and 1985. A self-proclaimed "Satanist", Ramirez murdered over 14 people by either shooting them, stabbing them, or sometimes both. He would later die of complications from B-cell Lymphoma while waiting to be executed on California's death row.

Not to be outdone, the world famous 'Zodiac Killer' also terrorized the San Francisco area, claiming to have murdered over 37 people. Known for luring and then shooting young couples throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the Zodiac Killer was never actually found and still remains at large. His pseudonym originates from the cryptic yet taunting letters he would send to the San Francisco Bay Area Press. To this day, only one has been definitively solved.

Moving on to the northern pacific area we have Gary Ridgway, a.k.a. "The Green River Killer". With a whopping 49 murders under his belt, Ridgway is the second most prolific serial killer in the history of the United States, only to be outdone by Samuel Little. A majority of Ridgway's victims included young women and teenage girls throughout Washington State in the 1980s and 1990s. He enjoyed strangling his victims and then dumping their bodies in heavily forested areas surrounding King County, sometimes even returning to have sex with their decomposing bodies.

Not to be outdone, we now aim our attention to the central midwest, in particular the Badger State, otherwise known as Wisconsin.

Ed Gein, known throughout the media as "The Butcher of Plainfield", enjoyed exhuming corpses from local graveyards and fashioning trophies from their skin and bones. This body snatcher confessed to two murders in the 1950s and was the inspiration behind popular Hollywood films including Psycho, The Texas Chainsaw Massacre and Silence of the Lambs.

And whoever said nothing exciting ever happens in the great city of Milwaukee? Well, come meet Jeffrey Dahmer, our local, exquisitely charming cannibal. Having both murdered and dismembered 17 young men from 1979 to 1991, Dahmer to this day is perhaps most well known for his favorite pastime hobby ... eating people. But that's not all, folks! Dahmer also enjoyed [[long walks on the beach]], necrophilia, [[writing letters to his grandmother]], decapitation, and [[assisting the disabled]] pouring hydrochloric acid into peoples' brains. Yay for fun!

But I hope you didn't think the party ended there. Because our next bogeyman actually specialized in parties! That's right. John Wayne Gacy, "The Clown Killer", fulfilled his nickname by dressing up as a clown and then attending birthday parties, children's hospitals and charitable events. Throughout the early 1970's, Gacy assaulted and murdered 33 young men in Norwood Park, just outside the metropolitan Chicago area. His favorite magic trick? Asking unassuming victims to strap on handcuffs before raping, torturing and eventually strangling them to death. Call me old fashioned, but this is a party I think I'll pass on.

Just a few miles away we have our most senior maniac, H.H. Holmes. Born in 1861 in the quiet town of Gilmanton New Hampshire, Holmes confessed to 27 murders which he all committed in a mixed use building he owned close to the famous Chicago World's Fair. While 27 victims puts Holmes on the higher side of the mortality count, it is speculated he may have killed as many as 200 people.

The next time someone says "the east coast is the beast coast", ask them if they are referring to our next schizoid of sorts, Albert Fish. A man of many nicknames including "The Gray Man", "The Werewolf of Wysteria", "The Brooklyn Vampire", "The Moon Maniac" and "The Boogey Man", Fish once claimed to have a child in every state. A notorious serial killer, rapist and cannibal, he one time stated his victim count surpassed triple digits, despite eventually only confessing to three he all committed in the 1920's in the city of Brooklyn New York.

Last but not least we have perhaps our most well known serial killer on our list, Ted Bundy. Known for his intellect, charm and dashing good looks, Bundy committed over 30 homicides across multiple states throughout the early 1970s. By meeting young women in public places and pretending to have a handicap or disability, Ted would lure his unsuspecting victims back to his home where he would murder, decapitate and then have sex with their headless bodies. His biggest crime? Attending law school. (I joke).

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### From Birth to Death: A Murder Migration

Perhaps it's amusing to visualize not just where our subjects murdered, but where they were born and raised before they really grew into their own. The following maps illustrates the geographical distance between where they had their first breath, and where they took their victim's last.

Bundy, a Burlington Vermont native, covers the most ground on our map by far, reaching all the way to Washington, Utah, Colorado, Florida, Oregon, Idaho and California.

Manson, hailing proud from Cincinnati Ohio, was able to extend his evil influence all the way to the city of Los Angeles. H.H. Holmes also makes good ground here, originating in New Hampshire and ending in Illinois.

Remember Richard Ramirez? From El Paso Texas to Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Gary Ridgway? Salt Lake City Utah to the Pacific Northwest.

Albert Fish (a.k.a. the man with many nicknames)? From Washington DC to Brooklyn New York.

How about that Zodiac character? Well, remember he was never caught, so we don't exactly know anything about him (or her).

But not all of our subjects like to travel. Some get homesick ya know.

Ed Gein, Jeffrey Dahmer and John Wayne Gacy all murdered in their own childhood backyards. Interesting enough, all three were born and raised in the friendly Midwest! What's also interesting here is a majority of the murder migrations start east and make their way out west. Perhaps In-N-Out isn't as good as the hype suggests it is.

What's that bar chart below the map you may ask? That can be used to answer the question, "In any given year, how many serial killers are active in the United States?" (Source: Radford University/FGCU Serial Killer Database). The 1980s were a weird time.

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## A Choropleth of Chloroform

Finally we get to our last map. But please don't be sad. We still have a ways to go.

While the previous illustrations were better accompanied with some text, this one is a bit more straightforward, simply measuring serial killer victims by state (Source: [Worldpopulationreview.com](http://Worldpopulationreview.com)).

I always knew to stay away from Texas.

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## A Spider Plot for Sociopaths

John Wayne Gacy may have depth, but Jeffrey Dahmer sure has breadth. This is a radar chart that illustrates each subject's proclivity to engage in that respective method of assault based off victim accounts, histories and various forensic reports.

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## Visualizing Distances with Arc Diagrams

Remember Ted Bundy? The charismatic, wanna-be lawyer? This wanderlust traveled close to 3000 miles (Burlington Vermont to Washington State) just to satiate his appetite for blood.

And that doesn't even include some of his other ambitious crusades, including homicidal trips to Idaho, Utah, Colorado, Florida, Oregon and California.

While he perhaps never accumulated the United Airlines miles Bundy accrued, Gary Ridgway was no traveling slouch either. This sicko traveled from his home town of Salt Lake City Utah to the great state of Washington to murder 49 people.

But we once again can't forget about our subjects who didn't exactly feel the need to travel cross country. Ed Gein, John Wayne Gacy and Jeffrey Dahmer all stayed close to home to fulfill

their favorite pastime hobbies. The other arcs represent all the other assassins who decided to split the difference.

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### America: Land of the Free, Home of the [[Brave]] Mentally Insane

Okay. I get it. The United States is filled to the brim with a lot of whackos with mommy issues. But isn't that the case everywhere?

Well, no. Not exactly. According to Radford University/FGCU Serial Killer Database which measured total serial killer frequency by decade, from 1900 to 2010, the overall International count amassed to 1157, while the United States alone reached a staggering 3092 counts.

Maybe it's time to pack up?

These numbers are even more terrifying when we combine them

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### Three Dimensional Coffins: Who Reigns Supreme?

Getting back to our villains, it's time we visualized total victim count in a different geometry. But first, just remember, while some prefer quantity, others take pride in quality. I'm looking at you Jeffrey Dahmer.

So the final tally is (Source: Wikipedia: Confirmed, Not Claimed and/or Suspected).

10th Place: Ed Gein: 2 Kills

9th Place: Albert Fish: 3 Kills

8th Place: Zodiac Killer: 5 Kills

7th Place: Charles Manson: 9 Kills (Despite not doing it himself)

6th Place: Richard Ramirez: 14 Kills

5th Place: Jeffrey Dahmer: 17 Kills

4th Place: H.H. Holmes: 27 Kills

3rd Place: Ted Bundy: 30 Kills

Runner Up: John Wayne Gacy: 33 Kills

Winner Winner Chicken Dinner: Gary Ridgway: 49 Kills

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### Outro

Well, that brings us to the end of our little journey inside the mystical mind of madness. Please feel free to reach out regarding any questions / comments / concerns you may have regarding this data visualization, or anything else for that matter.

I hope you enjoyed the show.

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### Data + Technology + Methodology

Data was collected from an array of sources, including the Radford University/FGCU Serial Killer Database, FBI.gov, worldpopulationreview.com and Wikipedia.

Technology included Adobe Illustrator, Adobe After Effects, (D3.js + Three.js for front-end Javascript), (Requests + BeautifulSoup + Numpy + Pandas + Matplotlib + Flask for back-end Python).

Methodology included scraping, cleaning, analyzing, serving and finally visualizing the data.

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### Disclaimer

The information displayed here is part factual and part exaggeration (for theatrical purposes) and expresses the views of The Deplorable Snowflake alone. Please do not use this piece as a source for any non-fictional purposes.