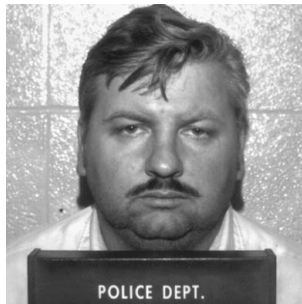




HISTORY &  
CULTURE  
**The  
Importance of  
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**Geena Davis**



## John Wayne Gacy

Murderer (1942–1994)

John Wayne Gacy was a U.S. serial killer who was found guilty of killing 33 boys and young men.

### Synopsis

Born on March 17, 1942, in Chicago, Illinois, John Wayne Gacy faced an abusive childhood and conflict over his sexuality. After being convicted of sexual assault in 1968, it was discovered that he had gone on to kill 33 young males, burying most under his home. He was found guilty in 1980 and given multiple death penalty and life sentences. He was executed by lethal injection on May 10, 1994.

### Background and Early Life

Notorious serial killer John Wayne Gacy was born on March 17, 1942, in Chicago, Illinois. The son of Danish and Polish parents, Gacy and his siblings grew up with a drunken father who would beat the children with a razor strap if they were perceived to have misbehaved; the man physically assaulted Gacy's mother as well. Gacy's sister Karen would later say that the siblings learned to toughen up against the beatings, and that Gacy would not cry.

The boy suffered further alienation at school, unable to play with other children due to a congenital heart condition that was looked upon by his father as another failing. Gacy later realized he was attracted to men, and experienced great turmoil over his sexuality.

**NAME**  
John Wayne Gacy

**OCCUPATION**  
**Murderer**

**BIRTH DATE**  
**March 17, 1942**

**DEATH DATE**  
**May 10, 1994**

**PLACE OF BIRTH**  
**Chicago, Illinois**

**PLACE OF DEATH**  
**Crest Hill (Stateville  
Correctional Institute),  
Illinois**

**AKA**  
"Pogo the Clown"  
John Gacy  
Jack Hanson  
Killer Clown

**FULL NAME**  
John Wayne Gacy

### History of Sexual Assaults

Gacy worked as a fast-food chain manager during the 1960s and became a self-made building contractor and Democratic precinct captain in the Chicago suburbs in the 1970s. Well-liked in his community and a clown performer at children's parties, Gacy also organized cultural gatherings. He was married and divorced twice and had biological children and stepchildren.

Yet Gacy had a highly disturbing history. He was convicted in 1968 and given a 10-year prison term in relation to the sexual assault of two teen boys. He was released on parole in the summer of 1970 but was arrested the following year again after another teen accused Gacy of sexual assault; the charges were dropped when the boy didn't appear during the trial. By the middle of the decade, two more young males accused Gacy of rape, and he would be questioned by police about the disappearances of others.

It was later discovered that he had committed his first known killing in 1972, taking the life of Timothy McCoy after luring the teen to his home.

## Serial Killings

On December 11, 1978, 15-year-old Robert Piest went missing. It was reported to police that the boy was last seen by his mother at the store he worked at as he headed out to meet Gacy in relation to a potential job. On December 21, a police search of Gacy's house in Norwood Park Township, Illinois, uncovered evidence of his involvement in numerous horrific acts, including murder. It would later be determined that Gacy had killed 33 boys and young men, the majority of whom had been buried under the house and garage, while others would be recovered from the nearby Des Plaines River.

Gacy lured his victims with the promise of construction work, and then captured, sexually assaulted and eventually strangled most of them with rope. When he killed, he sometimes dressed as his alter ego "Pogo the Clown."

## Question of Sanity

Gacy's trial began on February 6, 1980, with a prosecution team headed by William Kunkle. With Gacy having confessed to the crimes, the arguments were focused on whether he could be declared insane and thus remitted to a state mental facility. Gacy had told police that the murders had been committed by an alternate personality, while mental health professionals testified for both sides about Gacy's mental state.

## Imprisonment and Death

Ultimately found guilty of committing 33 murders after a short jury deliberation, Gacy became known as one of the most vicious serial killers in U.S. history. He was sentenced to serve 12 death sentences and 21 natural life sentences. He was imprisoned at the Menard Correctional Center for almost a decade and a half, appealing the sentence and offering contradictory statements on the murders in interviews. Though he had confessed, Gacy later denied being guilty of the charges and had a 900 number set up with a 12-minute recorded statement of his innocence. He took up visual art as well, and his paintings were shown to the public via an exhibition at a Chicago gallery.

With both anti-death penalty forces and those in favor of the execution making their opinions known, John Wayne Gacy died by lethal injection on May 10, 1994, at the Stateville Correctional Center in Crest Hill, Illinois.

There have been lingering concerns that Gacy may have responsible for the deaths of others whose bodies have yet to be found, with the Cook County sheriff's office pushing to search a Chicago apartment building where Gacy once worked as a maintenance employee.

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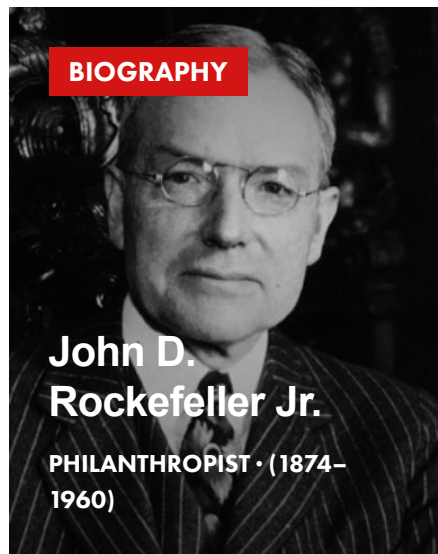
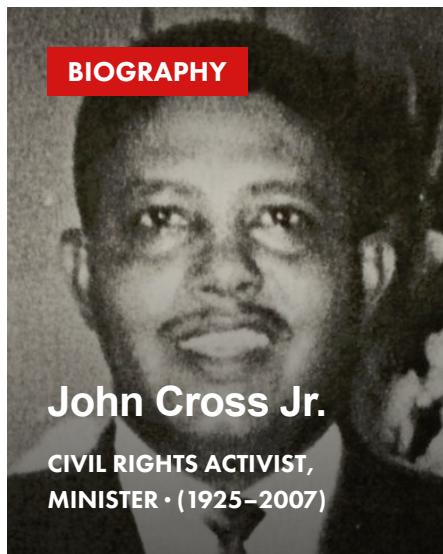
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