



Killer Clown: The John Wayne Gacy Murders

Terry Sullivan , Peter T. Maiken

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Who was John Wayne Gacy?

The model citizen whose business skills were admired by his peers?

The hospital volunteer whose sweet-faced clowning lightened the patients' days?

The member of the Jaycees who was a civic-minded friend of the community?

The depraved maniac who sodomized, tortured, and killed thirty-three young men and boys?

Shortly before Christmas of 1978, a teenage boy disappeared from the drugstore where he worked. He would be the final victim of John Wayne Gacy's horrifying compulsion.

Then, ten days after the boy's disappearance. Detectives, finding a human bone in the crawl space of Gacy's house, dug into the lime-covered ground. With mounting horror, they pulled bone after bone from Gacy's suburban home until finally they had gathered the remains of twenty-eight more youths who had fallen prey to the killer clown.

16 Pages of Shocking Photos!

"An unnerving true story of murder, terror and justice." –*The Dallas Morning News*

Killer Clown: The John Wayne Gacy Murders Details

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Author : Terry Sullivan , Peter T. Maiken

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From Reader Review Killer Clown: The John Wayne Gacy Murders for online ebook

Ruthie Jones says

Scared the heck out of me when I read this years ago! This book "cured" me of my obsession for true crime novels, although I still read them occasionally. I couldn't stand being alone while I was reading this gruesome story.

Ethan Hval says

True Crime is one of my guilty pleasures. I usually pick up these types of books for some light reading in between works that I consider more artistic. However, from the moment I picked this book up I couldn't put it down. It is a fast paced, suspense filled ride written by one of the lead prosecutors for the case.

I'm always a fan of good reporting and courtroom drama. But the whole tone of this book brought me inside and I connected emotionally with many of the people involved including the monster himself. It is a very real account and provides excellent insight in the day to day police work involved in an investigation of this magnitude.

If you, like many, in today's society look at the process of law and order with any suspicion or mistrust I recommend you give this book a read. The actions of everyone involved - including (dare I say it) the defense attorneys proves once again that in America we do have a system that when implemented properly and with great care and dedication...works.

My copy is a little longer than the copy advertised on Goodreads. It includes 2012 update section in which the author interviews key players and asks for their insight. A sort of where are they now feature that I found quite interesting. Also new DNA evidence is explored among many other extra tid-bits for the true crime fanatic.

Overall I was impressed with the style and presentation of the material. Usually, I get bored quite early on with most true crime stories (no matter how intense or strange the crime examined is) this was entirely different. One thing is for sure: this book kept me up at night...only because I couldn't put it down.

Shira says

Interesting story, of course, and having the first person account made for some excellent details, to be sure. On the other hand, this is a book written by the prosecutor. It has an awful lot of details. Prosecutors do that. Basically, this story is so very horrifying, and yet this book didn't affect me emotionally as much as some others have, which I think is because the writing just wasn't quite as good. That being said, JWG is so awful that maybe that is a good thing?

Ti.Me says

A key player in John Wayne Gacy's arrest and conviction gives a mind-blowingly detailed account of his life, crimes, apprehension, and punishment.

Among the most complete true crime books I've ever consumed, Killer Clown pulls you deep into the background, relationships, victims, and mindset of this notorious serial killer.

AC says

Well written, most procedural on stakeouts and trial..., not much in the way of psychological analysis. The standard sicko, Gacy.

D'Anne says

I was warned by reviews on Amazon that this book was really heavy in the police and trial procedural stuff, and not the psychological aspect of Gacy himself. I was largely okay with this since I am usually really interested in the workings of the criminal justice system. But this book got pretty boring pretty quickly. The first half of the book is essentially a play-by-play account of undercover officers tailing Gacy. They watch his house, they follow his truck, they play a computer football game in their cars - a lot. They engage in many high speed chases because Gacy is apparently a reckless driver. One of them spills coffee on his crotch. They have beers with Gacy. They hang out in his house. Something smells funny. Sometimes Gacy is nice to them. Sometimes he isn't. Etc. Then there are little things that the author just kind of glosses over - for example, one of the witnesses pukes during his testimony, which strikes me as unusual and warranting some explanation, but it's just casually mentioned as if the witness just sneezed or something. The writer doesn't know how to tell a story, he just relays facts, which doesn't make for compelling reading.

BookLady says

En 1994, John Wayne Gacy fue ejecutado por inyección letal después de su sentencia a muerte por el asesinato de 33 hombres jóvenes y muchachos durante los años 70's. La gran mayoría fueron enterrados en el "sótano" de su casa y otros en el jardín bajo el asador. Y hay algunos de ellos aún pendientes por identificar. Evidentemente que los engaños y patrañas de Gacy sobre sus víctimas me recordaron a IT de Stephen King. Gacy decía que Pogo el payaso era su lado cómico y agradable que le permitía acercarse a los niños de un modo entretenido e inocente. Creía que sufría de una doble personalidad estilo Jekyll y Hide que lo volvía violento y sadista sexual sobre sus víctimas. Pero nada fuera de la verdad, ya que no demostró arrepentimiento alguno por sus crímenes. Un libro entretenido que por momentos se vuelve un poco repetitivo.

Lisa says

Proof that you shouldn't judge a book by its cover, inside the shrieking, tabloid style cover of *Killer Clown* lies a sober account of the investigation into and prosecution of John Wayne Gacy for the murders of at least 33 young men and boys. Co-written by Terry Sullivan, a State Attorney who was involved in the case from the very beginning when the case simply appeared to be the disappearance of 15 year old Robert Piest, he then lead the investigation which eventually saw the recovery of the bodies of Gacy's victims (26 of which were discovered in the crawl space beneath his home), before serving as a member of the prosecution team at his trial.

Clear and precise (no doubt thanks to Sullivan's experience in front of juries), we get lots of information on legalities such as what to specify in search warrants to ensure that any evidence recovered is admissible in court, the painful process of retrieving records pre-computers, how to make someone think they can't leave a police station without ever actually detaining them, the effects of constant, overt surveillance on both the surveillance teams and the suspect, the bizarre behaviour exhibited by a manipulator who thinks he's far cleverer than he actually is, and the legal chess games played by both sides (Gacy would first try (and fail) to exhibit signs of multiple personality disorder, and then his legal team attempt to have him found not guilty by reason of insanity - he'd apparently been temporarily insane on 33 different occasions, slipping back out of insanity once the murders were committed and the bodies buried, alternatively they would also claim that the deaths were 33 cases of accidental auto-erotic asphyxiation. Thankfully, the jury decided this was all bullshit.)

Mr Sullivan thankfully isn't interested in trying to put you into the victims' shoes or into the mind of the killer, thereby saving the material from becoming too harrowing and upsetting (if that's what you're after, trying listening to *Suffjan Stevens' John Wayne Gacy Jr* instead) and instead presents a clear and detailed illustration of the work that goes into trying to catch and put away terrifying people.

****Also posted at Randomly Reading and Ranting****

Janet says

I decided to finally read this book after reading *Devil in the White City*. Both books are about mass murderers in Chicago and both highlight a bit of Chicago in the process. Unfortunately, *Killer Clown* struck a little too close to home and it took me a long time to read it and even longer to review. I was about 10 when I watched the body count each night on the news. I knew Gacy lived only 2 miles away and I knew he only killed teenage boys. At the time I didn't understand why. It was eerie to read that he liked the same shrimp shop I still frequent, that one of the many car chases went right past my house, that we have relatives in the same cemetery, etc. He appeared as a "normal, nice guy" to many people and he was one of the most prolific killers in Chicago history. One of my good friends remembers him being the clown at a neighbor's birthday party and he was horrified that I was reading the book. I don't think I could have read it from any other point of view than the prosecutor's because I was rooting for him the whole time. A good true crime story. Well written, but very disturbing.

Rebecca McNutt says

Words cannot even describe how much John Wayne Gacy creeps me out. I mean, I've hated clowns for years

(not because they're scary but because they're annoying and weird), but that's beside the point - this book has very little to do with clowns. The only reason it's titled as such is because it gets attention, and because Gacy often worked as a "professional clown" at a children's hospital. The sad and disturbing irony is that he was also a molester, a twisted perv who killed off over thirty men and boys and decided to lay them to rest under his house in the dank soil of the crawlspace. The book describes very well, in incredibly vivid and horrific detail, how the cops could smell the stink of rot and mold from Gacy's air ducts, coming up from the basement. Ugh.

Two years after this crime happened, Stephen King's novel *It* was released. I can't help wondering if the case added to his inspiration.

Killer Clown is undeniably gripping, but beyond disturbing, that an all-American suburbanite who owned a KFC and entertained young children could be keeping a stash of thirty three stiffes under his own home.

Alex findingmontauk1 says

2.5 out of 5 for me. Not nearly as interesting/entertaining as I had hoped. Just a little dry for my tastes when it comes to a book about a notorious serial killer.

Leslie says

Amazing book about a serial killer. Includes the bizarre story of his reaction to 24-hour surveillance for a month while they figured out what he had done - speeding, inviting the police to lunch, inviting them into his house. Gacy was the first serial killer I had ever heard of, and he still fascinates me.

Jessica says

This book was... unnerving. It really drives home the point that monsters DON'T live under your bed. They could be our neighbors, relatives, friends and we're completely ignorant to it because they look so normal. Creepy! *Killer Clown* is very detailed, which may get boring for some - especially the court proceedings. I liked it though. A must-read for fans of true crime.

Jenn says

I've read a lot of true crime in my lifetime. But I had never read the details about Gary's killing spree. I knew he played a clown for children but that was about it. I found this tale to be very very long. Too long. It took half a novel to talk about the police following him. And the dinners they ate, the booze they drank. The book could have easily been cut in half and still made sense while advising of the vital details.

Jason Schneeberger says

One of the best - and also scariest - true crimes books I've ever read. I knew Gacy was a monster hiding in human flesh, but I had no idea just how evil he truly was.

Susan says

Back of Book:

WHO WAS JOHN WAYNE GACY?

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I had read this book many years ago. I was a pre-teen when this all went down. I remember the newscasts from the scene and my mother sending me out of the room quickly whenever Gacy's name was mentioned or photo shown.

Recently, I had occasion to watch GACY: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0330181/> and the distorted facts of the case the movie presented made me want to find the book and read how it really went down.

The author, Terry Sullivan, was the district attorney and involved in the case almost from the get-go when Rob Piest was reported missing in December 1978. He presents what seems like a very accurate account of the surveillance and what led to Gacy's arrest as well as what led Gacy to the murderous path he chose.

The very idea that this man could have gotten away with an insanity defense and been out on the street again one day makes me shudder. Mr. Sullivan and the rest of the prosecution team proved their case as the last of the book shows.

Gacy was executed May 10, 1994, eight of his thirty-three victims were never named. And whether thirty-three was the total number in his murder spree is not known for sure.

Bellezza says

From the front of the book: The shocking true story of the man convicted of more murders than any other person in United States history!

Some might think that back to back books on the same person would be boring, but each author has his own style. Terry Sullivan was one of the District Attorney 19s who help prosecute John Wayne Gacy. He was in on the investigation from the beginning.

This is a very detailed account. The investigation is broken into days. It was 10 days from John Gacy 19s last victim being reported missing to the first human bone being found in his crawl space. Terry Sullivan relates where Gacy went and the numerous problems the surveillance team experienced along with the investigation being conducted during these same 10 days. Then begins the recovery process and the preparation for trial.

There is a break right now to go back in time to consider Gacy 19s life. The trial is broken down into weeks, again very detailed, with who testified to what at times with word for word transcript. Terry Sullivan does a good job of giving us the meat of the trial without being boring and tedious. Since this book was written in 1983 there is no follow up after Gacy is sentenced.

Killer Clown gives us a very different perspective on Gacy that is informative and interesting.

I really enjoyed this book and recommend it to true crime fans.

True Crime, Non-fiction

Page count: 375

Stars: 4

Copyright: 1983

Konnie Jones says

The book is pretty good for the most part, but towards the end when it got to the trial, it became quite boring. I would've like to have read more about Gacy's side, but it was written by the prosecutor. And what's written on the cover is pretty cheesy. "He murdered 33 boys...now he will die for his crimes!" You can tell this was re-released before his execution. I think there may be better books on Gacy than this one.

David Corvine says

Predominately concerned with the police investigation and surveillance operation and then the subsequent trial. Balancing one person's right to freedom against another's is really the crux of libertarian thought but when one person has a compulsive desire to strangle another and then sodomize the corpse before burying it under his house then the choice seems quite clear cut to me. It is largely academic whether Gacy was mad or bad he clearly could not be allowed to remain at liberty. The fact that he was allowed to do so for such a length of time was largely due to the incompetence and homophobia of various law enforcement agencies. If Gacy had restricted his victims to marginal people such as hustlers and pick-ups from gay bars and cruising grounds then the death toll would not doubt have been considerably higher.

Fishface says

Horrifying, dreadful, shuddery. Excellently written and hard to put down. This story, full of the gallows humor that allows the police on the scene to cope with what they saw, would have been a laugh a minute if so many people hadn't really died. I wish I had learned more about the lives of the victims in here. That's my only real complaint.
