

World Encyclopedia of 20th Century Murder

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The twentieth century has witnessed an unprecedented explosion of violent murder that has affected levels of society throughout the world and transformed what was once a distant threat into a constant reality, lurking around the corner, living down the block making everyone vulnerable to the unthinkable. *World Encyclopedia of 20th Century Murder*, an alphabetical excursion through the most celebrated and historically important murder cases in this century, seeks to explain the reasons behind these shocking and celebrated killings. More than just a staggering chronicle of chilling events, this remarkable book by Edgar Award-winning author Jay Nash, is the definitive reference to modern worldwide murder.

The over one thousand entries and over four hundred illustrations found in this volume represent all manner of slayers and all types of homicides, with varying degrees of motivation and a grim diversity of methods. From the lone, sensational jealousy murders by Walter A. Kurtz and Jean Harris to the perverse slayings by British sex murderer John Christie, serial killer Ted Bundy, and fanatical religious mass murderer Jim Jones in Guyana, each case represents a unique and fascinating story. For each entry, an in-depth portrait of the killer is provided, including their childhood history, work and marital experience, and social history. The entries then graphically follow each case from the flowering of the killer's motivation, the circumstances of the actual murders, the drama of the police investigation and trial, to the nature of the inevitable incarceration or execution.

The cases select for this work encompass the most important and sensational murders of our time. By dint of sheer numbers, all mass murderers and serial killers of note have been included—Albert DeSalvo (the so-called Boston Strangler), John Wayne Gacy, Juan Corona, and the dangerously prolific Henry Lucas, among others. Scores of renowned and spectacularly horrific cases are offered, such as misogynistic murderer Coral Eugene Watts, who killed forty women simply because he felt that women were evil; the cannibal killers Albert Fish, Ed Gein, and Fritz Haarmann; Belle Guiness of Indiana, who advertised in lonely hearts columns for suitors and then murdered them by the dozens; Jack Henry Abbott, a jailed murderer whose literary talents brought him to freedom, acclaim, and then more murder in New York City; and Harry Thaw, the arrogant and demented millionaire who shot a man dead in front of hundreds of spectators. Also included are cases of teenagers and even children who murdered with motives as petty as losing a game or suffering a verbal insult.

In addition to being a vital and informative historical and sociological reference work, *World Encyclopedia* of 20th Century Murder will provide gripping reading for anyone interested in true crime, law, law enforcement, and penology. More than that, it provides insight into a social problem that has spread to almost epidemic proportions around the world. Rather than viewing these men and women as strangers from distant lands and social pariahs, this book presents them as the real and present danger they are.

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