

Mark David Chapman Biography

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Biography

Mark David Chapman was born May 10, 1955, in Fort Worth, Texas. Subsequent to his crime, he resided in New York's Attica State Prison, serving twenty years to life after pleading guilty to second-degree murder in the killing of singer/songwriter John Lennon. Chapman was believed to have a history of mental illness dating back to around age 10. He suffered from depression and paranoid schizophrenia and attempted to kill himself at least once. He created a fantasy world of "little people", who he ruled over. This fantasy lasted until Chapman was 25 and killed Lennon, but apparently it disappeared once he became incarcerated. He was also unnaturally fascinated by J.D. Salinger's novel *The Catcher in the Rye*, and identified with Holden Caulfield, the alienated teen protagonist.

On December 8, 1980, Chapman murdered Lennon. After getting a personal autograph from Lennon, Chapman waited outside Lennon's residence and shot him four times in the back. When police responded to the scene they found Chapman waiting for them and reading *The Catcher in the Rye*. According to his confession, Chapman felt that by shooting Lennon he would "become something." Also, the character of Holden Caulfield raged against what he perceived as "phonies", and Chapman had decided that Lennon was such a person.

On August 3, 2000, Chapman was denied parole at his first hearing. Lennon's wife, Yoko Ono, a celebrity in her own right, wrote a letter to the parole board requesting that for her safety, her children's safety, and the safety of Chapman himself, Chapman be denied parole. Chapman, who during his years in prison has become a born again Christian, told the parole board he would tour churches to speak about his past should he be released, in hopes of helping others avoid his fate. Chapman's safety outside of prison would be difficult to ensure, as he has received numerous death threats since entering prison. He has been kept in protective confinement to ensure his safety from the prison population. Chapman will be eligible for parole again in 2002.

Recent Updates

October 5, 2004: Chapman was denied parole for the third time. **Source:** CNN.com, <http://www.cnn.com/2004/LAW/10/05/chapman.p parole/index.html>, October 6, 2004.