

ENGLISH LEARNING  
FOR CURIOUS  
MINDS



Thank you - your ongoing membership makes Leonardo English possible.  
If you have questions we'd love to hear from you: [hi@leonardoenglish.com](mailto:hi@leonardoenglish.com)

---

## Episode #345

# The Golden Age of The American Serial Killer

## 28th Feb, 2023

[00:00:05] Hello, hello hello, and welcome to English Learning for Curious Minds, by Leonardo English.

[00:00:12] The show where you can listen to fascinating stories, and learn weird and wonderful things about the world at the same time as improving your English.

[00:00:22] I'm Alastair Budge, and today we are talking about a particularly [gruesome](#)<sup>1</sup> [phase](#)<sup>2</sup> of American history, a period that caused [panic](#)<sup>3</sup> and [paranoia](#)<sup>4</sup> across the country, and even changed the way Americans lived their lives.

[00:00:37] A seemingly nonstop series of murders that could, and likely would have, continued if not for advances in technology and crime scene investigation.

---

<sup>1</sup> extremely unpleasant, shocking

<sup>2</sup> period

<sup>3</sup> extreme fear, horror

<sup>4</sup> an extreme feeling that you are always in danger

The Golden Age of The American Serial Killer

[00:00:48] Yes, today we are going to be talking about the thirty or so year period between the 1970s and the 2000s - the so-called “Golden Age” of serial killers in the United States.

[00:01:03] This episode does come with a “parental guidance” warning, a warning that we are going to be talking about some nasty people who did nasty things, so if you don’t want to listen to that, well, I’d suggest you press pause now.

[00:01:19] So, let's get right into it and talk about the golden age of the American serial killer.

[00:01:28] It was August 1985 in east Los Angeles.

[00:01:32] For the last year, the city had been [terrorised](#)<sup>5</sup> by a serial killer known as the ‘Night [Stalker](#)<sup>6</sup>’.

---

<sup>5</sup> filled with terror or extreme fear

<sup>6</sup> a person who followed people in order to do harm

## The Golden Age of The American Serial Killer

[00:01:40] The Night **Stalker** randomly picked houses to break in to, and **raped**<sup>7</sup>, shot, **strangled**<sup>8</sup>, **stabbed**<sup>9</sup>, **bludgeoned**<sup>10</sup> and **mutilated**<sup>11</sup> women to death after killing any men in the house.

[00:01:54] He even cut out one of his victim's eyes, and sometimes **carved**<sup>12</sup> **satanic**<sup>13</sup> symbols into the body.

[00:02:03] Understandably, the city was **gripped**<sup>14</sup> by fear, but by August of 1985 the police were hot on the Night **Stalker's**<sup>15</sup> trail - that's to say, they were getting closer to catching him.

[00:02:17] Police were pretty sure they had their man, and the newspapers finally had a name and photograph of the suspect: Richard Ramirez.

---

<sup>7</sup> forced them to have sex with him

<sup>8</sup> killed people by squeezing or pressing their neck

<sup>9</sup> hit with a sharp object

<sup>10</sup> hit repeatedly with a heavy weapon

<sup>11</sup> injured very seriously, especially by removing body parts

<sup>12</sup> draw by cutting their body

<sup>13</sup> relating to the Devil or Satan

<sup>14</sup> affected strongly

<sup>15</sup> of the one who followed people to harm them

The Golden Age of The American Serial Killer

[00:02:30] On the morning of August the 31st, Ramirez, who was unaware that his face was on the front cover of almost every newspaper in the United States, went into a [liquor store](#)<sup>16</sup>.

[00:02:43] He picked up a newspaper, and was shocked to see his own face [staring back at him](#)<sup>17</sup> with the headline: The Night Invader.

[00:02:54] Slowly, the other shoppers noticed Ramirez.

[00:02:58] They looked down at the newspapers, and looked up at Ramirez, to see the very same face looking back at them.

[00:03:06] “It’s the killer!” someone screamed.

[00:03:09] Richard Ramirez - the Night [Stalker](#) - had been identified.

[00:03:14] He ran out of the store in a [panic, sprinting](#)<sup>18</sup> across the passing traffic.

[00:03:20] As he tried to [carjack](#)<sup>19</sup> a woman on the Santa Ana Freeway, Ramirez was attacked by the lady’s husband.

[00:03:27] He escaped into a residential neighbourhood, where a group began to chase him.

---

<sup>16</sup> a shop selling alcoholic drinks

<sup>17</sup> looking back at him with his eyes wide open

<sup>18</sup> running fast

<sup>19</sup> steal her car

## English Learning for Curious Minds | Episode #345

### The Golden Age of The American Serial Killer

[00:03:32] “It’s the killer!” people shouted.

[00:03:36] More and more people [gave chase<sup>20</sup>](#), the crowd building in size.

[00:03:42] One of them hit Ramirez over the head with a metal bar, and he fell to the ground.

[00:03:49] They beat him, kicking and [stamping<sup>21</sup>](#) on him, and the crowd grew to several hundred people.

[00:03:56] Trying to protect himself, he shouted in Spanish: “It’s me! It’s me! It’s me! I’m lucky the cops caught me.”

[00:04:04] The police were called to the scene.

[00:04:06] When they arrived Ramirez was severely beaten and [bleeding<sup>22</sup>](#), and if the police officers had arrived just a few minutes later, it’s likely the crowd would have beaten the man to death.

[00:04:20] After a year of terror, the Night [Stalker](#) had been caught.

[00:04:25] But he was just one of many during what has been called the Golden Age of serial killers.

---

<sup>20</sup> followed

<sup>21</sup> Stepping with force

<sup>22</sup> losing blood

## English Learning for Curious Minds | Episode #345

### The Golden Age of The American Serial Killer

[00:04:32] Now, some background.

[00:04:34] Serial killers are, according to the FBI, killers who commit 'a series of three or more killings'.

[00:04:43] As such, the FBI [estimates](#)<sup>23</sup> that less than 1 percent of all murders in the United States are committed by serial killers.

[00:04:52] They might [feature](#)<sup>24</sup> frequently on the news, or in movies, but the reality is that most murders are committed by people the victim knows, sadly, friends or family, and more than 90% of these murders are committed by men.

[00:05:10] The term itself - "serial killer" - was only [coined](#)<sup>25</sup>, it was created, in the early 1980s.

[00:05:19] Serial killers have always existed, of course, and there are many [gruesome](#) examples of people who've murdered three or more people from throughout history.

[00:05:29] You might already know about Jack the Ripper, or perhaps you've listened to Episode number 30, where we looked at his [grisly](#)<sup>26</sup> life and crimes.

---

<sup>23</sup> calculates, judges

<sup>24</sup> appear, be presented

<sup>25</sup> invented, created (for a word)

<sup>26</sup> extremely unpleasant, bloody

The Golden Age of The American Serial Killer

[00:05:39] But there had never, and have never, been as many serial killers operating in the same place at the same time as there were in the United States between the 1970s and the 2000s.

[00:05:55] Indeed, criminal experts believe that more than 80 percent of all known American serial killers operated between 1970 and 1999.

[00:06:07] And how many did this 80% actually [equate](#)<sup>27</sup> to, you might be wondering?

[00:06:13] Well, it's thought that as many as 770 active serial killers were operating in the U.S. in the 1980s, and just under 670 in the 1990s.

[00:06:26] That figure fell to below 400 in the 2000s and, as of late 2016, thankfully just over 100.

[00:06:36] I don't think the idea of having 100 serial killers [on the loose](#)<sup>28</sup> makes anyone particularly comfortable, but at least it's better than almost a thousand.

[00:06:46] So, in this episode, we'll look at why there were so many of them, or at least, some of the theories about why this was, and look at some of the worst serial killers of the era.

---

<sup>27</sup> equals, is equivalent

<sup>28</sup> free to do what they want

[00:07:00] Now, assuming that you are not a serial killer, it might seem [inconceivable](#)<sup>29</sup>, completely impossible to understand, why someone would decide to go on a [killing spree](#)<sup>30</sup>.

[00:07:13] So, before we get into some of the stories of the killers themselves, let's look briefly at some of the theories that would cause these men, and it's almost exclusively men, to kill.

[00:07:26] Experts believe that serial killers develop a murderous personality and [compulsion](#)<sup>31</sup> long before they start killing, often during their childhoods.

[00:07:38] By the time they're 14, this murderous [compulsion](#) is fully-formed, fully developed, but most will only start killing in their twenties.

[00:07:49] So, if the psychological damage occurs in childhood and makes serial killers the way they are, what was going on in America when killers like Jeffrey Dahmer, John Wayne Gacy and Ted Bundy were children?

[00:08:04] There is a simple answer, perhaps: war.

[00:08:09] In cases like Dennis Rader, who was known as the BTK killer and killed 10 people in Kansas in the 1970s and 1980s, as well as the [Torso](#)<sup>32</sup> Killer, Richard

---

<sup>29</sup> completely impossible to understand

<sup>30</sup> a series of murders

<sup>31</sup> uncontrollable need to do something

<sup>32</sup> the human body without the head, arms or legs

## The Golden Age of The American Serial Killer

Cottingham, a man who killed 12 women and girls in New York and New Jersey in the 1960s and 1970s, their fathers were soldiers who returned from the Second World War with PTSD - post traumatic stress disorder.

[00:08:39] These boys, who would go on to become serial killers grew up in violent, [abusive](#)<sup>33</sup> or [unstable](#)<sup>34</sup> households, often with [traumatised](#)<sup>35</sup> fathers.

[00:08:51] And in some cases the violent horrors of war could have also helped create serial killers in another, more direct way.

[00:09:01] Whereas some killers grew up with former soldiers for fathers and [inherited](#)<sup>36</sup> their [trauma](#)<sup>37</sup>, some younger serial killers also [saw combat](#)<sup>38</sup> themselves, in Korea and Vietnam, and returned home with a murderous [impulse](#)<sup>39</sup> they couldn't turn off.

[00:09:21] There are countless Vietnam veterans who went on to become serial killers, including, just to name two, Joseph James DeAngelo, who was known as the Golden State killer, and Gary Ridgway, the Green River Killer.

---

<sup>33</sup> treating him badly

<sup>34</sup> not secure or reliable

<sup>35</sup> having been through a lot of emotional pain

<sup>36</sup> received

<sup>37</sup> emotional pain after bad experiences

<sup>38</sup> took part in fights as soldiers

<sup>39</sup> strong wish to do it

The Golden Age of The American Serial Killer

[00:09:37] In addition to this, experts also believe that head injuries in childhood can make it more likely.

[00:09:45] Richard Ramirez, for example, the man who we heard being captured at the start of the episode, suffered a [frontal lobe](#)<sup>40</sup> injury as a two-year-old when he fell from a chest of drawers.

[00:09:58] Medical experts and psychologists now understand that head injuries, and [frontal lobe](#) injuries in particular, can cause serious behavioural problems such as 'injury-[induced](#)<sup>41</sup> psychopathy'.

[00:10:13] For that reason, [frontal lobe](#) injuries are quite common in the childhood backgrounds of serial killers from this so-called Golden Age.

[00:10:24] So, these are some explanations for why experts believe people might develop the motivation to kill.

[00:10:33] There are also a few changes in American society that made it much easier for these serial killers to kill and keep on killing, for them to [evade](#)<sup>42</sup> capture from the police.

---

<sup>40</sup> part of the brain that controls important functions or skills

<sup>41</sup> caused by, created

<sup>42</sup> escape, avoid

The Golden Age of The American Serial Killer

[00:10:46] Firstly, in the 1960s and 1970s, as perhaps you may even remember from your own childhood, society [tended](#)<sup>43</sup> to be a lot more open and trusting. It was common for people in the American [suburbs](#)<sup>44</sup> and smaller towns to leave their doors unlocked overnight, something that might seem unthinkable to you or me today.

[00:11:10] The world of security systems and street-facing cameras was decades away, and breaking into homes and literally [getting away with murder](#)<sup>45</sup> was much easier.

[00:11:22] Secondly, [hitchhiking](#)<sup>46</sup>, that is, travelling around by asking strangers for a lift, in their car, usually by standing on the side of the road with your [thumb](#)<sup>47</sup> out, was also much more common.

[00:11:37] Many of the most murderous men of the Golden Age [preyed on](#)<sup>48</sup>, or targeted, innocent [hitchhikers](#)<sup>49</sup>, not only because they knew that it was unlikely anybody else

---

<sup>43</sup> usually was

<sup>44</sup> the areas on the edges of cities

<sup>45</sup> murdering someone and avoiding punishment

<sup>46</sup> travelling around by asking strangers for a lift

<sup>47</sup> the short, thick first finger of the human hand

<sup>48</sup> targeted

<sup>49</sup> people who travelled around by asking strangers for a lift

## The Golden Age of The American Serial Killer

knew where the [hitchhikers](#) were [headed](#)<sup>50</sup> but also because [luring](#)<sup>51</sup> them into their cars was relatively [straightforward](#)<sup>52</sup>.

[00:11:56] And still on the subject of the roads, the development of America's interstate highway system gave killers a wider geographical area to [roam](#)<sup>53</sup> and kill, and [crucially](#)<sup>54</sup>, made it easier to disappear into the next state and between legal [jurisdictions](#)<sup>55</sup>.

[00:12:16] Another explanation for the Golden Age is to do with law enforcement, with the police.

[00:12:23] In this period, police forces didn't have the national computer systems and databases that could help them link crimes together and develop patterns of behaviour.

---

<sup>50</sup> going

<sup>51</sup> attracting, tempting

<sup>52</sup> easy, simple

<sup>53</sup> move around

<sup>54</sup> in a way that is very important

<sup>55</sup> systems of law

## The Golden Age of The American Serial Killer

[00:12:35] Similarly, at the crime scenes themselves, police forces were fighting an [uphill battle](#)<sup>56</sup>, the odds were against them, because DNA technology was incredibly new and wasn't even used for [forensic](#)<sup>57</sup> crime purposes until the mid-1980s.

[00:12:53] And there was another important [societal](#)<sup>58</sup> reason, one that provided easy victims for serial killers to [prey on](#)<sup>59</sup>.

[00:13:02] People were moving around the country more than ever before, whether this was looking for work, [new starts](#)<sup>60</sup> or anything in between.

[00:13:11] As such, it was much more common to find single men and women who would move into a new community without knowing anyone, without anyone who would [check up on them](#)<sup>61</sup> if they went missing, or didn't come back home at night, which made them ideal [targets](#)<sup>62</sup> to be taken advantage of, by these [bloodthirsty](#)<sup>63</sup> serial killers.

---

<sup>56</sup> very difficult struggle or task

<sup>57</sup> relating to the use of scientific methods and techniques for the investigation of crime

<sup>58</sup> relating to society

<sup>59</sup> target

<sup>60</sup> opportunities to start new lives

<sup>61</sup> find out what they were doing

<sup>62</sup> people selected as their victims

<sup>63</sup> wanting to kill

## The Golden Age of The American Serial Killer

[00:13:32] So, who were these people, these 800 or so known serial killers?

[00:13:40] Well, two of the most famous and most [notorious](#)<sup>64</sup> were Ted Bundy and John Wayne Gacy.

[00:13:49] In recent years these two killers have gained particular [notoriety](#)<sup>65</sup> because their crimes and stories have [captivated](#)<sup>66</sup> audiences in dramas and podcasts, so these are the two we'll focus on now.

[00:14:04] The first is Ted Bundy, a man who was a little different to most serial killers.

[00:14:11] He was university educated, known to be [charming](#)<sup>67</sup>, well-dressed, and handsome.

[00:14:18] But behind the smooth [persona](#)<sup>68</sup> was an incredibly cold and [calculating](#)<sup>69</sup> man who often pretended to be injured in order to gain the trust of his [unsuspecting](#)<sup>70</sup> victims - who were all young, attractive women.

---

<sup>64</sup> famous for something bad

<sup>65</sup> the state of being famous for something bad

<sup>66</sup> attracted their attention by being very interesting

<sup>67</sup> attractive, charismatic

<sup>68</sup> the part of himself that was presented to people

<sup>69</sup> using other people to get what he wanted

<sup>70</sup> not realising that there was danger

## The Golden Age of The American Serial Killer

[00:14:34] Bundy then used his [charm](#)<sup>71</sup> to ask for help with something, such as carrying things to his car, before attacking, [handcuffing](#)<sup>72</sup> and pushing them into the vehicle.

[00:14:46] He even removed the passenger seat so he could hide them more easily when driving away.

[00:14:53] Between 1974 and 1978, Bundy murdered at least 30 women in this way but as more and more of his victims were discovered, people began suspecting him.

[00:15:07] He was reported to the police but the officers, who were given the very best of Bundy's [charm](#) and manipulation, saw a well-dressed young man and repeatedly [ruled him out](#)<sup>73</sup> as a suspect, they didn't believe it was him. That was until 1975, when he was stopped by police and found with [handcuffs](#)<sup>74</sup>, rope, masks and a [crowbar](#)<sup>75</sup> in his car.

[00:15:34] The serial killer's starter kit, if you will.

[00:15:39] In 1977 police charged Bundy with murder and he defended himself in court - meaning, he was his own lawyer.

---

<sup>71</sup> the quality of being attractive or charismatic

<sup>72</sup> putting two metal rings around their wrists, joined by a short chain, that were locked to prevent free movement

<sup>73</sup> thought it was impossible for him to be a suspect

<sup>74</sup> two metal rings, joined by a short chain, that are locked around someone's wrists to prevent free movement

<sup>75</sup> a heavy iron bar

## The Golden Age of The American Serial Killer

[00:15:48] He even escaped from [custody](#)<sup>76</sup> twice, and continued killing until he was finally caught again in February of 1978 after being pulled over for a traffic [violation](#)<sup>77</sup>.

[00:16:01] He was sentenced to death and eventually executed by electric chair in 1989.

[00:16:08] As to why he did it, well some people - including Bundy himself - have suggested that his murderous [impulses](#)<sup>78</sup> began when he was rejected by a college girlfriend.

[00:16:22] Indeed, many of his victims fit a particular profile - young, attractive, white, college-aged women who looked like the woman who rejected him.

[00:16:34] Similarly to how Bundy used his [charm](#) to [disarm](#)<sup>79</sup> people, the next killer, John Wayne Gacy, also had a way of putting people [at ease](#)<sup>80</sup> - in a rather [creepy](#)<sup>81</sup>, nightmarish way, in fact.

[00:16:49] In public, Gacy was thought of as a friendly man. He even dressed up as a [clown](#)<sup>82</sup> to entertain local children at birthday parties.

---

<sup>76</sup> being held by the police

<sup>77</sup> the action of breaking some rule or law

<sup>78</sup> strong wishes or desire to do it

<sup>79</sup> persuade, attract

<sup>80</sup> at a relaxed state

<sup>81</sup> strange and frightening

<sup>82</sup> a performer who wears funny clothes and bright make-up

The Golden Age of The American Serial Killer

[00:16:59] He was a respected and well-liked member of his community, but behind closed doors, in secret, Gacy was a truly [vile<sup>83</sup>](#) individual, he was a monster. He [raped](#) and murdered at least 33 young men and boys and buried most of them beneath his house.

[00:17:20] Often, Gacy would [lure<sup>84</sup>](#) his victims to the house before tricking them into wearing [handcuffs](#) as part of his [clown routine<sup>85</sup>](#) - claiming it was part of a magic trick - before he killed them.

[00:17:34] Fortunately, however, the police eventually caught up with him.

[00:17:38] Gacy was arrested in 1978, and claimed he was legally [insane<sup>86</sup>](#) in order to try to avoid the death penalty.

[00:17:47] It didn't work, and after a decade on death row - where they keep prisoners who are waiting to be executed - in May of 1994 Gacy was executed by lethal injection.

[00:18:01] By then the horrors of his crimes had become well-known, as had his former role in the community, which led to the nightmarish nickname of the 'Clown Killer'.

---

<sup>83</sup> very bad, evil

<sup>84</sup> attract, lead

<sup>85</sup> procedure, practice

<sup>86</sup> mentally ill, crazy

## The Golden Age of The American Serial Killer

[00:18:13] Experts believe that Gacy displayed behaviour **consistent with**<sup>87</sup> antisocial personality disorder, a condition that can be **triggered**<sup>88</sup> by childhood abuse, which was something Gacy suffered at the hands of his alcoholic **war veteran**<sup>89</sup> father.

[00:18:30] True to form, he never showed any **remorse**<sup>90</sup> for his crimes.

[00:18:35] Now, Bundy and Gacy are just a handful of examples of hundreds of serial killers during this so-called Golden Age, and I have actually **spared**<sup>91</sup> you the worst of the details about their **vile** acts.

[00:18:49] Fortunately, the particular set of conditions, or circumstances, that allowed them to **flourish**<sup>92</sup> during this Golden Age is no more.

[00:19:00] Firstly, the era of an entire generation of men returning from **traumatic**<sup>93</sup> wars is over, and there are better **safety nets**<sup>94</sup> in place to catch children who might be growing up in **abusive** or **traumatic** households.

---

<sup>87</sup> that matches with

<sup>88</sup> caused

<sup>89</sup> a person who had served in the armed forces during a war

<sup>90</sup> feeling of being sorry for what he had done, regret

<sup>91</sup> hold back and kept them to myself in order not to cause unpleasant feelings

<sup>92</sup> develop

<sup>93</sup> causing emotional or mental pain

<sup>94</sup> protective conditions

## The Golden Age of The American Serial Killer

[00:19:15] So, at least in theory, there will be fewer children who grow up wanting to commit these [vile](#) acts.

[00:19:23] And secondly, much of Western society at least is much less trusting of strangers. People lock their doors at night and don't accept [lifts](#)<sup>95</sup> from strange men. Of course, there are some disadvantages to this, but making life harder for potential serial killers certainly isn't one of them.

[00:19:45] What's more, law enforcement is simply much better at catching criminals. Modern technology and crime scene investigation techniques mean that it's now harder than ever to get away with murder.

[00:19:59] Unfortunately, history suggests that there will always be damaged people who make up their minds and decide that the only way to [fulfil](#)<sup>96</sup> some [warped](#)<sup>97</sup> desire is through ending the life of an innocent stranger.

[00:20:14] And it seems that never before have there been more of these people [wandering](#)<sup>98</sup> the streets than in 1970s America.

---

<sup>95</sup> free rides

<sup>96</sup> satisfy, realise

<sup>97</sup> strange and unpleasant, distorted

<sup>98</sup> moving around

The Golden Age of The American Serial Killer

[00:20:24] Thankfully, this era, this “Golden Age” of the American serial killer, is long gone, these bloody three decades of history are behind us, and one can only hope it’s a chapter never to be opened again.

[00:20:42] Ok then, that is it for today’s episode on the “Golden Age” of the American serial killer.

[00:20:48] A bit of a **gruesome** topic, I know.

[00:20:51] I hope it was an interesting one in any case, and whether you’re a True Crime **aficionado**<sup>99</sup> and you knew a lot about serial killers already, or this was the first time you’d heard anything about this so-called “Golden Era”, well I hope you learned something new.

[00:21:08] As always, I would love to know what you thought about this episode.

[00:21:12] Which of the reasons do you think best explains the Golden Age?

[00:21:16] Do you think this is an era that will truly never be repeated?

[00:21:20] Are there any **gruesome** tales of serial killers from your country?

[00:21:24] I would love to know, so let’s get this discussion started.

[00:21:28] You can head right into our community forum, which is at [community.leonardoenglish.com](http://community.leonardoenglish.com) and get chatting away to other curious minds.

---

<sup>99</sup> a person who is very knowledgeable and enthusiastic about it

**English Learning for Curious Minds | Episode #345**  
**The Golden Age of The American Serial Killer**

[00:21:37] You've been listening to English Learning for Curious Minds, by Leonardo English.

[00:21:42] I'm Alastair Budge, you stay safe, and I'll catch you in the next episode.

[END OF EPISODE]

---

## Key vocabulary

<b>Word</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Gruesome</b>	extremely unpleasant, shocking
<b>Phase</b>	period
<b>Panic</b>	extreme fear, horror
<b>Paranoia</b>	an extreme feeling that you are always in danger
<b>Terrorised</b>	filled with terror or extreme fear
<b>Stalker</b>	a person who followed people in order to do harm
<b>Raped</b>	forced them to have sex with him
<b>Strangled</b>	killed people by squeezing or pressing their neck
<b>Stabbed</b>	hit with a sharp object
<b>Bludgeoned</b>	hit repeatedly with a heavy weapon
<b>Mutilated</b>	injured very seriously, especially by removing body parts
<b>Carved</b>	draw by cutting their body

The Golden Age of The American Serial Killer

<b>Satanic</b>	relating to the Devil or Satan
<b>Gripped</b>	affected strongly
<b>Stalker's</b>	of the one who followed people to harm them
<b>Liquor store</b>	a shop selling alcoholic drinks
<b>Staring back at him</b>	looking back at him with his eyes wide open
<b>Sprinting</b>	running fast
<b>Carjack</b>	steal her car
<b>Gave chase</b>	followed
<b>Stamping</b>	stepping with force
<b>Bleeding</b>	losing blood
<b>Estimates</b>	calculates, judges
<b>Feature</b>	appear, be presented
<b>Coined</b>	invented, created (for a word)
<b>Grisly</b>	extremely unpleasant, bloody
<b>Equate</b>	equals, is equivalent

The Golden Age of The American Serial Killer

<b>On the loose</b>	free to do what they want
<b>Inconceivable</b>	completely impossible to understand
<b>Killing spree</b>	a series of murders
<b>Compulsion</b>	uncontrollable need to do something
<b>Torso</b>	the human body without the head, arms or legs
<b>Abusive</b>	treating him badly
<b>Unstable</b>	not secure or reliable
<b>Traumatised</b>	having been through a lot of emotional pain
<b>Inherited</b>	received
<b>Trauma</b>	emotional pain after bad experiences
<b>Saw combat</b>	took part in fights as soldiers
<b>Impulse</b>	strong wish to do it
<b>Frontal lobe</b>	part of the brain that controls important functions or skills
<b>Induced</b>	caused by, created
<b>Evade</b>	escape, avoid

**The Golden Age of The American Serial Killer**

<b>Tended</b>	usually was
<b>Suburbs</b>	the areas on the edges of cities
<b>Getting away with murder</b>	murdering someone and avoiding punishment
<b>Hitchhiking</b>	travelling around by asking strangers for a lift
<b>Thumb</b>	the short, thick first finger of the human hand
<b>Preyed on</b>	targeted
<b>Hitchhikers</b>	people who travelled around by asking strangers for a lift
<b>Headed</b>	going
<b>Luring</b>	attracting, tempting
<b>Straightforward</b>	easy, simple
<b>Roam</b>	move around
<b>Crucially</b>	in a way that is very important
<b>Jurisdictions</b>	systems of law
<b>Uphill battle</b>	very difficult struggle or task
<b>Forensic</b>	relating to the use of scientific methods and techniques for the

The Golden Age of The American Serial Killer

investigation of crime

**Societal**

relating to society

**Prey on**

target

**New starts**

opportunities to start new lives

**Check up on them**

find out what they were doing

**Targets**

people selected as their victims

**Bloodthirsty**

wanting to kill

**Notorious**

famous for something bad

**Notoriety**

the state of being famous for something bad

**Captivated**

attracted their attention by being very interesting

**Charming**

attractive, charismatic

**Persona**

the part of himself that was presented to people

**Calculating**

using other people to get what he wanted

**Unsuspecting**

not realising that there was danger

**Charm**

the quality of being attractive or charismatic

**The Golden Age of The American Serial Killer**

**Handcuffing** putting two metal rings around their wrists, joined by a short chain, that were locked to prevent free movement

**Ruled him out** thought it was impossible for him to be a suspect

**Handcuffs** two metal rings, joined by a short chain, that are locked around someone's wrists to prevent free movement

**Crowbar** a heavy iron bar

**Custody** being held by the police

**Violation** the action of breaking some rule or law

**Impulses** strong wishes or desire to do it

**Disarm** persuade, attract

**At ease** at a relaxed state

**Creepy** strange and frightening

**Clown** a performer who wears funny clothes and bright make-up

**Vile** very bad, evil

**Lure** attract, lead

**Routine** procedure, practice

The Golden Age of The American Serial Killer

<b>Insane</b>	mentally ill, crazy
<b>Consistent with</b>	that matches with
<b>Triggered</b>	caused
<b>War veteran</b>	a person who had served in the armed forces during a war
<b>Remorse</b>	feeling of being sorry for what he had done, regret
<b>Spared</b>	hold back and kept them to myself in order not to cause unpleasant feelings
<b>Flourish</b>	develop
<b>Traumatic</b>	causing emotional or mental pain
<b>Safety nets</b>	protective conditions
<b>Lifts</b>	free rides
<b>Fulfil</b>	satisfy, realise
<b>Warped</b>	strange and unpleasant, distorted
<b>Wandering</b>	moving around
<b>Aficionado</b>	a person who is very knowledgeable and enthusiastic about it

**English Learning for Curious Minds | Episode #345**  
**The Golden Age of The American Serial Killer**

*We'd love to get your feedback on this episode.*

*What did you like? What could we do better?*

*What did you struggle to understand?*

*Let us know in the forum [community.leonardoenglish.com](https://community.leonardoenglish.com)*