

Dante alighieri and his circles of hell

[Law](#), [Crime](#)



Dante's Inferno is a horrible, lurid, and ghastly place manifested by Dante Alighieri, author of the epic poem the Inferno from The Divine Comedy. Dante's underworld is specifically designed for non-repentive sinners who have committed sins against humanity. Through the use of poetic license, Dante manages to doom individuals from his time era to specific circles within the depths of the fiery pit for their sinful behavior. Twentieth century individuals that Dante would doom to the Inferno include Tiger Woods, Bernie Madoff, and Ted Bundy for their ungodly sins.

Tiger Woods would be placed in the Second Circle of the Inferno for his unfaithful, irresponsible, and scandalous behavior. Tiger Woods was born on December 30, 1975 in Cypress, California to Earl and Kultida Woods. Woods, now 34, who was married to Elin Nordegren, has two children, Sam Alexis and Charlie Axel. He is a very successful professional golfer to this date having won fifteen major titles since turning pro in 1996(" About"). On November 25, 2009, Woods' first affair was reported with a New York party girl, Rachel Uchitel. Two days later, Woods crashed his SUV into a fire hydrant and tree outside of his Florida home at 2: 25 am. Minutes later, police arrived and found Woods on the ground with his wife, Elin, standing over him. Woods was taken to a hospital, and later that same day, released a statement stating he was in a minor accident, was treated in a hospital, and then was released. After the incident, rumors were swirling about an alleged affair and a domestic dispute with Elin (" Tiger"). Much to the public's dismay, the rumors were confirmed from cell phone tapes that recorded Woods talking to his Uchitel. Day after day, numerous more affairs were reported and his list of mistresses grew to fifteen. Also, three of the fifteen

mistresses were porn stars, one of which was Devon James. James claims she bedded with Tiger for two and a half years, and Tiger paid her 2000 dollars for what she called “dirty” sex. James says she has phone records verifying her claim of a relationship with Woods including one that reveals Woods’ stating: “I want you to be my whore” (McShane). Additionally, Woods has been linked to porn stars Joslyn James and Holly Sampson. Woods and Elin met at the Bay County Circuit Court in Panama City, Florida for the execution of their divorce settlement (Helling).

The lustful in hell, whose actions often led them and their lovers to death, are “carnal sinners who subordinate reason to desire” (Inf. 5. 38-9). From these actions, it appears that for Dante the line separating lust from love is crossed when one acts on this misguided desire. Therefore, Tiger Woods would be placed in the second circle of hell by Dante Alighieri due to his adulteress actions. It is there that he would join Sir Lancelot and Queen Guinevere that Dante Alighieri already placed there due to their adultery during King Arthur’s Court at Camelot (“Circle 2”).

Another individual that Dante would doom to the Inferno is Ted Bundy. Bundy would be placed in the Seventh Circle for Violence for his abhorrent, disgusting, and appalling sins. Ted Bundy (Theodore Robert Cowell) was born on November 24, 1946 in Burlington, Vermont, under the belief that his grandparents were his real parents. In his childhood years, Ted Bundy was a very handsome and charming man, which easily attracted girls to him, but his shyness made him a frequent target of bullying (Jenkins). Ted Bundy was a good student in school and eventually became popular due to his good

looks (" Ted"). When he attended Washington University, Ted Bundy met Stephanie Brooks, a wealthy girl whom he fell in love with. Although Bundy passionately loved her, she did not reciprocate that love, and in 1968, the year she graduated, she abruptly ended their relationship. Bundy's devastation was palpable and it is believed that most of his future victims had many physical similarities to Brooks, who became a lifelong obsession of Bundy's. After their relationship ended, Bundy dropped out of college and it was at that time that he discovered that his grandparents, whom he believed were his parents, were not his parents after all, and that actually his sister was his mother, a huge psychological blow to Bundy.

Even after this devastating news, and to the surprise of his family, Bundy renewed his studies and became an honors student in the field of psychology, and then later became a charismatic campaigner for the Republican Party. Bundy started a new relationship with Meg Anders, but his obsession with Stephanie Brooks continued. In 1973, Bundy met up with Brooks again and she was amazed with the transformation in his fortunes and they rekindled their romance. Brooks began to believe that their relationship could possibly lead to marriage, but Bundy cut off all ties with her abruptly the same way she had previously done to him several years ago. " This revenge brought Bundy little comfort, however, and his rage was sublimated into a series of brutal attacks on women, who all shared Brooks' characteristics" (" Ted").

Bundy seemingly lost control, and in 1975, was arrested on a kidnapping charge and was awaiting his trial for murder in 1977 when he escaped from

custody, making him somewhat of a celebrity. After his escape, Bundy went on a spree of killing and rape. Bundy strangled and mutilated his victims, displayed their lopped-off heads in his apartment, and slept with their corpses until it became unbearable (Chua-Eoan). One night, he broke into a Florida State University sorority house and bludgeoned and strangled two women to death, raping one of them and brutally biting her on the buttocks and on one nipple, and he beat two other women on the head with a log. On February 9, 1978, Bundy killed a twelve year old girl, Kimberly Leach, who he kidnapped and mutilated. Ironically, Bundy was arrested in 1978 in Pensacola for driving a stolen vehicle (Montaldo), and was put on trial for the murders he had committed; he was sentenced to death twice in 1979 for the killing of the two sorority sisters and Kimberly Leach, a twelve year old girl (“1989”). “Despite the horror of his acts, he proposed marriage to and wed a former coworker from behind bars” (Chua-Eoan). Additionally, Bundy received letters from thousands of female fans (Chua-Eoan). “Bundy confessed to 30 murders but admitted in detail to only a handful in an orchestrated effort to trade information for two or three months of life” (“1989”). Eventually Bundy’s attempts to manipulate the system failed, and he was executed on January 24, 1989 via electric chair (“1989”). Before his execution, his wife divorced him and took custody of their child (Chua-Eoan).

Ted Bundy would, according to Dante, be sentenced to the Seventh Circle for Violence for his unforgivable sins where he will join the King of Thrace who murdered the Trojan prince, Polydorus for his riches. It is here that these murderers will be guarded by the Centaurs, men from the waist up with

lower bodies of horses, as they are immersed in the river of blood. It is in this river of blood where Ted Bundy will suffer for all of eternity (" Circle 7").

Bernie Madoff would be condemned to the eighth circle of hell which is fraud due to his Ponzi scheme that cost many people and organizations billions of dollars. Bernie Madoff was born on April 29, 1938 in Queens, New York a predominately Jewish neighborhood (" Madoff"). As a child and throughout his teenage years, Madoff showed no interest in finance (" Bernard"). Bernie Madoff attended Hofstra University in 1960 and received a degree in political science (Hinton). He married to his high school sweetheart, Ruth and they had two sons, Mark and Andrew (Hinton). Ruth landed a job on the Stock Market, while Bernie began to study law, but later he quit to open up his own investment firm- Bernard L. Madoff Investment Securities, LLC, with his wife. Madoff began to amass an impressive client list which included Steven Spielberg, Kevin Bacon, and Kyra Sedgwick due to the help of his father-in-law, who attracted customers by word of mouth. Also, Madoff's client list grew as his fame did too, for his ability to consistently give ten percent returns year after year, and through good or bad times. As his success continued to grow, Madoff Securities began using computer technology to develop stock quotes which eventually helped to create the National Association of Securities Dealers Automated Quotations, or NASDAQ, which Madoff later served for as the president of the board of directors (" Bernard"). Other firms became increasingly suspicious and questioned Madoff's ability to pay returns of over ten percent a year for decades, and that is what tipped investigators on to Madoff's scheme (" Bernard Madoff Biography").

“ The Securities and Exchange Commission investigated Madoff numerous times over the years and rarely found anything of suspicion until December 2008. After the stock crash of November 2008, many investors wanted to cash out their funds. In fact, individuals and institutions wanted to withdraw over seven billion dollars from the firm, a sum that was impossible to pay” (“ Bernie Madoff Biography”). Knowing that he couldn’t pay back his investors with money that wasn’t there, Madoff suggested that the firm pay out bonuses (“ Bernie Madoff Biography”). The way his scheme worked was that he would attract the first investor and say he can get him a good return and then when it came time for Madoff to return the money to the first investor, he attracted other investors to pay off the first investor. This moving of money from person to person with no real money in the business, continued into a 50 billion dollar Ponzi scheme. In December 2008, Madoff admitted to his two sons, who worked for him, that he had been running a massive fraud scheme, and they called the authorities. Madoff was arrested the next day and was charged with an account of fraud. Madoff’s Ponzi scheme, which was the largest of all-time, affected banks, businesses, and charities all over the world with some recording multi-billion dollar losses (Hinton). Madoff pleaded guilty to investigators telling them that the money just simply wasn’t there. “ In June 2009 federal judge Denny Chin gave Madoff the maximum sentence of up to 150 years in prison”(“ Madoff”).

The eighth circle of hell is second to the lowest circle due to that fact that Dante considered fraud a form of malice unique to humans and therefore more displeasing to God than sins of violence. It is here that Dante would place Bernie Madoff for eternity due to his extreme acts of fraud. Mr. Madoff

will join Benedetto Caetani, a talented and ambitious scholar of canon law, who rose quickly through the ranks of the church and was elected pope. He became Pope Boniface VIII, soon after the abdication of Pope Celestine V in 1294. It was believed that Benedetto committed a fraudulent act against Celestine to trick him into abdicating so he could become pope himself. It is in this eighth circle which contains ten concentric ditches that Bernie Madoff's and Pop Boniface VIII's guilty souls will suffer and remain.

Although Dante Alighieri's epic poem the Inferno was written over a century ago, it is apparent that the sins that existed then are still prevalent in today's society as demonstrated in the actions of Tiger Woods, Bernie Madoff, and Ted Bundy. Dante would place these individuals with their historic counterparts of Sir Lancelot, Queen Guinevere, Pope Boniface VIII and the King of Thrace in the circles of hell where they will be doomed for all eternity (" Circle 8").