

"the catcher in the rye" and impact on the media

[Literature](#), [American Literature](#)



The novel *The Catcher in the Rye*, by J. D. Salinger, had a huge impact on the media in the past 30 years. Two of the most famous ones are the assassination of John Lennon and the attempt assassination of President Reagan. The assassins of the two men were Mark David Chapman and John Hinckley, Jr. , respectively. They were obsessed with the character Holden and used the concepts of the book in their reasons of murder, or in John Hinckley's case, attempt murder. Mark David Chapman was obsessed with two things: *The Catcher in the Rye* and John Lennon.

After he read the novel for the first time, the story took a great personal significance on him, to the extent that he wanted to model his life after Holden Caulfield. He signed letters and statements with " Holden" and " the Catcher in the Rye". In 1979, two years after his release from Castle Memorial Hospital, for clinicaldepression, he wrote a letter saying that he's going crazy again, and heard voices in his head. In October of 1980, Chapman went to New York City to kill John Lennon. He left the city for a short time to get ammunition from his friend in Atlanta.

He moves around again and when he comes back to NYC, he reenacts some scenes from *The Catcher in the Rye* in a taxi cab. He leaves Sheraton Hotel in the morning of December 8th, and leaves all his stuff there for the police to find. He left his new copy of his favorite novel with the words " This is my statement" and signs it " Holden Caulfield". He waits for Lennon outside his The Dakota apartment but misses him when he was in a conversation with other fans and the doorman. Later that morning, he meets Lennon's housekeeper and Lennon's 5-year-old son and shakes hands with him.

When John and his wife came back around 5 p. m. , Chapman held out an album for Lennon to sign and the couple left. Mark reported, " At that point my big part won and I wanted to go back to my hotel, but I couldn't. I waited until he came back. He knew where the ducks went in winter, and I needed to know this. " Later that night, when Lennon was coming back, Chapman shot his gun five times and hitting John with four of them. Until the police arrived, Mark sat and read his copy of *The Catcher in the Rye*. John Hinckley's crime did not relate to *The Catcher in the Rye* as Mark David Chapman's.

John Hinckley's attempt assassination of President Reagan was to impress Jodie Foster, an actress from *Taxi Driver* that John stalked. He wrote letters to her, even made phone calls, and by assassinating the president, he thought that he could win her love and respect. The day before the attempt, he wrote a letter to Jodie detailing his plan to kill the president. The next day, he stood in the crowd surrounding Reagan's limousine. John fired several shots at the president but missed and hit him once under his armpit, injured the press secretary, a Secret Service agent, and a Washington DC police officer.

A copy of *The Catcher in the Rye* was found in John's hotel room. I infer that he related himself to Holden, who was also in love with Jane Gallagher and was also sort of a rebel of society. Both of these assassins have obviously took the book too seriously, even though it was a realistic book. They found the wrong message in the novel by J. D. Salinger and should be in a mental hospital for their mental disorders. Although their crimes are extremely

serious and deserve to be punished for, the two men weren't in their right minds when they tried or did murder a person. The Catcher in the Rye was truly a tool of a madman in these two cases.