

H.h holmes: serial killer



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

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Herman Webster Mudgett better known as H. H Holmes was one of the first serial killers in America. He was born on May 16, 1861 in Gilmanton, New Hampshire, to a wealthy family (H. H. Holmes). As a young boy Holmes was constantly bullied. His bullies found out about his fear of the local doctor's office so they took him there and forced him to touch a human skeleton. Instead of getting scared he was fascinated by the experience. Since that day his interest in human anatomy was born. Holmes became obsessed with death, he started dissecting dogs, cats, or any homeless animal he could find. His experiments with animals were just a rehearsal for what was yet to come. On July 8, 1878, New Hampshire, Holmes married Clara A. Lovering of Alton. She was the daughter of a rich local farmer. They had a son named Robert Lovering Mudgett, he was born on February 3, 1880, in Loudon, New Hampshire. His marriage with Clara had failed apart.

One year later he left New Hampshire to attend the University of Michigan Medical School. It was there that he gave himself his own nickname " Dr. Henry Howard Holmes." He stole corpses from medical laboratories. He disfigured the corpses and planted them where they would be found as accidents. He collected the insurance money from policies of the corpses and then he would claim they were the relatives of H. H. Holmes. He graduated from Medical School in 1884 (Herman Webster Mudgett).

After graduating he moved to Chicago. There he was involved in some businesses like real state and promotional deals. He married Myrta Z. Belknap on January 28, 1887, in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Although he was

still married to Clara Lovering this made him a bigamist. He had a daughter with Myrta named Lucy Theodore Holmes, born 4 July 1889 in Englewood, Illinois. Myrta's father was a wealthy businessman, a man Holmes had unsuccessfully tried to kill. The family of three lived in the Chicago suburb of Wilmette. Holmes started working at a pharmacy. The owner was Dr. E. S. Holton who suffered from cancer and his wife was in charge of the pharmacy. She was an old woman that needed an assistant. Holmes got the job and manipulated her into selling him the pharmacy. They made an agreement that she could still live in the upstairs apartment even after Holton died. When Holton died, Holmes murdered Mrs. Holton. She became Holmes first known killing. He told people that Mrs. Holton moved to California (H. H. Holmes – Serial Killer – Part 2 of 4).

Holmes bought a lot across from the pharmacy, where he built his three story building that was later nicknamed “ Murder Castle.” This hotel was designed by Holmes and was opened in 1893 for the World's Columbian Exposition. His sole purpose for the hotel was to lure, trap, dismember, and murder guests. During the construction of the hotel he often fired builders as they became suspicious about the design of the hotel. From the outside the building looked like a Medieval fortress, complete with turret. The first floor had Holmes relocated drugstore and various shops like a jeweler. The other two upper floors contained his office as well as a maze of trap doors, secret compartments, and hidden stairways. The most disturbing room was the basement which was equipped with medical tools, poisons, torture devices, and acid filled pits. From his bedroom Holmes controlled gas pipes that led up to the basement to specific rooms so he could put his victims

unconscious. For a period of three years, Holmes picked female victims from among his hotel guests, employees, and lovers to torture and kill them. Some were locked in soundproof bedrooms shaped with gas lines that allowed him to asphyxiate them at any time. Others were locked in a vast bank vault near his office so he could sit and enjoy the show as they screamed, panicked, and suffocated due to the soundproof vault. The bodies of the victims went by a secret chute to the basement, where some were dissected, stripped of flesh, crafted into skeleton models, and then sold to medical schools. He also placed the bodies in lime pits and cremated them for destruction. Holmes performed hundreds of illegal abortions and some of his patients died during the procedure. He was able to easily sell skeletons and organs because of the connections he made through medical school (A Double Dose of Macabre).

Following the World's fair, with the fall of the economy and with creditors closing in, Holmes left Chicago. He moved to Fort Worth, Texas where he inherited property from two sisters, he had promised one of them marriage but he murdered both of them. He planned to construct another castle but he abandoned the idea because he found the law enforcement climate in Texas inhospitable.

In July 1894, Holmes was arrested for the first time, for a horse swindle that ended in St. Louis. While in jail he met a convicted train robber named Marion Hedgepeth. Later he was bailed out of jail. Holmes had a plan to bilk an insurance company out of \$20, 000 by taking out a policy on himself and then faking his death. He promised Marion a \$500 commission in exchange of a lawyer he could trust. He was led to Colonel Jephtha Howe who found

Holmes plan brilliant. But his plan failed when the insurance company became suspicious and refused to pay. He made another plan with his sales associate Pitezel. Pitezel agreed to fake his own death so that his wife could collect the \$10, 000 policy, which she had to split with Holmes and Howe. The plan would take place in Philadelphia and Pitezel would set himself up as an inventor, named B. F. Perry, and then be killed and disfigured in a lab explosion. Holmes had to find a cadaver to play the role of Pitezel. But Holmes killed Pitezel and collected the policy of his corpse. He then manipulated Pitezel's wife into allowing three of her five children to stay in his custody. Only the oldest daughter and baby remained with Mrs. Pitezel. He traveled through the northern U. S. and into Canada with the rest of the children whose names were Alice, Nellie, and Howard. He lied to Mrs. Pitezel about her husband's death and her children whereabouts. A detective from Philadelphia had tracked Holmes and found the decomposed bodies of the two Pitezel girls in Toronto. He then followed Holmes to Indianapolis where Holmes had rented a cottage. He was reported to have visited a drugstore where he purchased the drugs that he used to kill Howard, and a repair shop to sharpen the knives he used to chop the body before he burned it. Howard's teeth and bits of bone were discovered in the cottage's chimney (Herman Webster Mudgett).

In 1894 the police were tipped off by Marion because Holmes refused to pay him the \$500 that he promised him. Holmes was finally arrested in Boston on November 17, 1894. The police investigated the castle and uncovered Holmes methods of committing murders and the disposing of his corpses. In

August 19, 1895, a fire of mysterious origin consumed the castle. The site now serves as a U. S. Post office building.

While Holmes was in prison in Philadelphia the Chicago police began to unravel what really happened to Pitezel and his three missing children. Holmes was put on trial for the murder of Pitezel and he confessed to 27 murders in Chicago. He was paid \$7, 500 by the Hearst Papers in exchange for his confession. One of Holmes most famous quotes published in the North American Philadelphia on April 11, 1896, was “ I was born with the devil in me. I could not help the fact that I was a murderer, no more than the poet can help the inspiration to sing — I was born with the “ Evil One” standing as my sponsor beside the bed where I was ushered into the world, and he has been with me since” (Mysterious Chicago Tours).

On May 7, 1896 Holmes was hanged at Moyamensing Prison. Before his death Holmes remained calm and affable. He showed few signs of fear, depression, or anxiety. His neck didn't snap immediately, he died slowly, strangling for fifteen minutes before being pronounced dead twenty minutes after the trap was sprung. He requested that he be buried in concrete and that no one would be allowed to dissect his body. His request was granted.

On March 7, 1914, a story in the Chicago Tribune reported the death of the caretaker of the castle, his name was Pat Quinlan. He committed suicide by taking strychnine and the newspaper reported that his death meant the mysteries of the castle would remain unexplained. Quinlan's relatives claimed that he had been “ haunted” for several months before his death and that he couldn't sleep (The San Francisco Call).

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