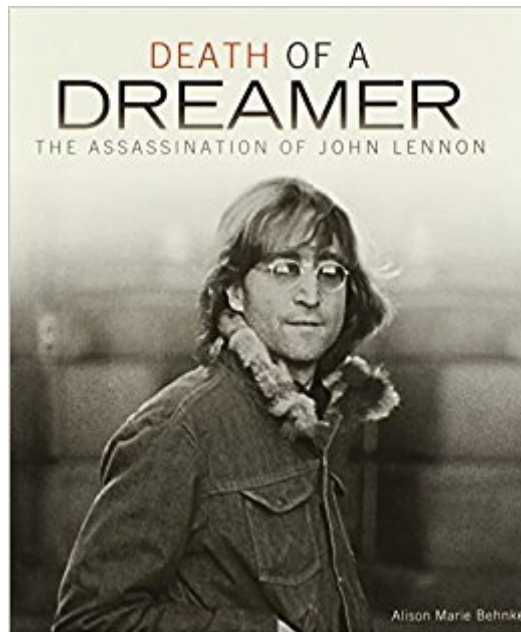


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# Death Of A Dreamer: The Assassination Of John Lennon (Single Titles)



## Synopsis

New York, December 8, 1980: The announcement shocked the world. Beatles founder and legendary musician John Lennon had been murdered in front of his New York home. With no warning, a lone gunman opened fire, shooting Lennon in the back just as Lennon returned from a recording session with his wife, Yoko Ono. Husband, father of two, cultural icon, and hero to millions, Lennon was dead. Around the globe, people mourned the loss of a man who had stood for peace, a man who had given so much joy to the world through his gift of music. No one had seen it coming—except one man—Mark David Chapman, Lennon's assassin. What drove this former Beatles fan to commit such a terrible act? Follow the lives of both Lennon and Chapman, learn about the political and cultural settings in which both grew up, and trace—step by excruciating step—the final moments of John Lennon's life.

## Book Information

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Age Range: 12 - 15 years

Grade Level: 7 - 10

## Customer Reviews

Alison Marie Behnke is an author and editor of books for children and young adults, as well as a photographer. Her books include biographies such as Jack Kerouac and Pope John Paul II and social studies titles including The Little Black Dress and Zoot Suits: Depression and Wartime Fashions from the 1930s to the 1950s, Kim Jong Il's North Korea, and The Conquests of Alexander

the Great. She loves to read, write, and travel. She lives in Minneapolis.

Purchased for a Christmas gift for a long time fan of John Lennon. Recipient of this as a gift was delighted.

Ms. Behnke imparts a sympathetic, yet detailed, treatment of the assassination of John Lennon. Starting with a concise biography of the iconic entertainer, she includes his childhood, the Beatle years, and the Yoko years through an impelling presentation of facts. She weaves the political and cultural environment of the times into her narrative, providing insight into the panoply of events for young readers. Her style is clear and positioned well for the young readers of today. The pictures and sidebars included with the text are tastefully illustrative. The writer offers a well-rounded description of Lennon, not sugarcoating his faults, but giving realistic explanations of who he was and the controversies surrounding him, especially as he joined with Yoko Ono. While there is a graphic description of Lennon's death, no gory photo is presented to mar the focus of the text. The author offers a thorough discussion of the life and psychology - at least as far as can be determined from psychological analyses at the time - of Lennon's killer, Mark David Chapman. It is particularly gratifying that, while the author's viewpoint is compassionate to Lennon, she does not try to mould him into a saint and the horror of the circumstances is not overplayed. Rather, the attitude left with the reader at the end of the book is that the death of the man who was John Lennon was a heartbreaking tragedy, but that his legacy continues to the current day. This is a book to give to young readers who are curious about whatever happened to the Beatles' John Lennon. Parental guidance is suggested for children under thirteen or fourteen.

Julia was married to Alfred Lennon, a military man in Britain's Merchant Navy. When their son John was born on October 9, 1940, the "young, fun-loving, and not very responsible Julia struggled to care for her baby alone." John's Aunt Mimi, on the other hand, was responsible and soon took him home to raise him. He wasn't exactly an easy child nor a "model student," but his Aunt Mimi and her husband George Smith loved and cared for him. It wasn't until much later when John became interested in music that he and his mother Julia began to bond. When John was in high school he and several friends formed a band called the "Quarrymen." Skiffle, a popular type of music at the time, was based on a combination of "jazz, blues, and folk music." It even boasted a member who played a washboard, but soon John was looking for guitar players and a drummer. It wasn't long before Paul McCartney, George Harrison and Pete Best joined forces. When his mother Julia was

killed by a drunk driver, the seventeen-year-old "sought comfort in music." The band, renamed the Silver Beetles in May 1960, was soon in demand, playing more than two hundred shows at the Cavern. Richard Starkey, Ringo, replaced Best, John began a family, they gained a manager, Brian Epstein, and the band became known as the Beatles. Quickly and unexpectedly the band became famous and Beatlemania had set in. With their arrival in the United States, "the frenzy surrounding each public appearance," according to John, was "like being in the eye of a hurricane." The drudgery of playing soon set in and the "magic of playing live faded away." The band began to change with the death of Brian Epstein and, to the woe of the other band members, when John became enamored with the lovely Yoko Ono. Once the band disbanded, John began his life with Yoko and newborn son, Sean. Perhaps because he "grew up during a period of great change and upheaval," he became interested in becoming a figurehead for peace along with Yoko. The U.S. government was monitoring the couple and they were "judged as both undesirable and dangerous agents." Deportation seemed imminent. John claimed, "I am going into an unknown future, but I'm still all here. And still where there's life, there's hope." Someone else too was watching John closely and that was Mark David Chapman. In this book you will hear the rest of John's story and that of Mark's, the man who took his life in front of the Dakota on December 8, 1980. This is a fascinating look at John Lennon and Mark David Chapman, the man who took Lennon's life. In essence, this book is divided into two sections, the first covering John's life, the second Chapman's. The biographical material was drawn from several sources and masterfully blended into these pages. Many, who have formed their own opinions about Chapman, will find an unbiased look at his life and unfortunate obsession with Lennon. I enjoyed reading about Lennon's life and especially enjoyed learning about his activism. There are black and white photographs scattered throughout these pages and numerous informative sidebars. For example, under one entitled "Public Enemy," we learn about why Chapman was kept in solitary confinement. In the back of the book is an index, a timeline (1940 to 2011), a "Who's Who?" listing, extensive source notes, a selected bibliography, and additional recommended book, websites, discography, and filmography resources to explore. This book courtesy of the publisher.

In six chapters and a little over 100 pages, *Death of a Dreamer* deals with a whirlwind of interrelated topics: tumultuous political climate of the 1960s, the life and death of the late great John Lennon, and Mark David Chapman, the man who would stalk and murder one of the era's most influential musicians in cold blood. Placing an age range for this book is problematic. Based on the picture-book layout, one could say that it's targeted at children and young adults, especially since it

goes out of its way to define terms like ASSASSINATE, GIG, and CAPITALISM. However, the process of plowing the chapter on capitalism's battle against communism will definitely lose the attention of anyone in the 9 to 12 age range. It also covers more "adult" topics, such as Chapman's depression and questionable mental state, and Lennon's drug use and posing nude for Annie Leibowitz. The slow pace of these beginning chapters will require the reader to have the patience of a young reader who doesn't mind wading through the slow parts. The ending, however, is quite dramatic. Like any Beatles fan, I actually found myself gripped and somewhat saddened by the book's narration of Lennon's final hours. An ambitious work for a semi-picture book of only 112 pages, it will be of particular interest for anyone who's interested in, as I like to call it, the day that music died. Recommended for 12-18 year olds who have an attention span that lasts longer than 10 seconds.

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