



***Through The Mirror Go  
Round:  
coincidences and synchronicities in  
the murder of John Lennon***

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**This free excerpt contains the last section, “The Final Year”.**

## **The Final Year:**

By the end of 1979, John Lennon is thinking of getting back into the studio and recording again. Next Autumn, he will have finished the self-imposed five year period of looking after his son Sean.

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In February 1980, Todd Rundgren releases "Adventures in Utopia", an album that has an inner cover design like television test cards, and an opening track that is a high-pitched signal. Mark Chapman is excited - is this what he has been waiting for? He listens to it over and over again, and decides the message is a "Wait and see", a call for him to adjust the fine tuning and just be patient.

By July 1980, Mark Chapman has real problems at work - there have been a spate of break-ins and he feels the others are blaming him for being sloppy and inefficient. In one apartment, the mirror has been scratched with obscenities and the family moving in are upset - especially the children. Mark feels he has let down the children, he has not been able to protect them from the evils of this world.

He is reminded of the scene in "The Catcher in the Rye" when Holden regrets not being able to protect his sister from the offensive graffiti. Mark buys a copy of the book and begins reading it.

Walking home one day from work, Mark feels faint and nauseous at the kerbside - again, he is reminded of the scene in the "Catcher" where Holden feels he is fading into nothingness.

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John Lennon sails to Bermuda for a holiday. There, he works on the lyrics and arrangements for a number of songs planned for the new album. He visits a botanical garden and sees a beautiful flower called "Double Fantasy" and thinks that would be a wonderful title for the album - it is to be a joint venture with Yoko, and the songs will outline the loving relationship between the two of them.

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By September 1980, Mark Chapman is alarmed at his own mental instability. He paints a picture of a sunset over Diamond Mountain and signs it "The Catcher in the Rye, Mark". He now identifies strongly with the hero of "The Catcher in the Rye" and tells his wife that he wants to change his name to Holden Caulfield.

In October, John Lennon and Yoko Ono appear on television to promote their forthcoming new album. They describe it as a "Heart Play", a dialogue of love between the two of them.

Mark Chapman watches with a cold detachment.

Amid the growing media interest in the new Lennon album, in October 1980 Esquire magazine features an article titled "John Lennon, Where Are You?", describing the rock superstar as a virtual recluse, frightened to leave his multi-million dollar apartment. It highlights the discrepancy between the so-called 'Working Class hero' and the multi- millionaire.

Mark Chapman reads the article with growing anger.

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Chapman watches a television adaptation of "Paul's Case" by Willa Cather. It is the tale of a young man for whom the real world is mundane and dead, but the world of the theatre is alive and attractive. He steals money and runs away to New York to live in luxury at the Waldorf-Astoria hotel, and when the law catches up with him, he commits suicide.

Mark Chapman is inspired by the tale: he plans a trip to New York, and books a room at the Waldorf-Astoria. Not for the first time, Chapman has identified with a fictional character (at the age of 15 he ran away from home to join the circus, after watching the Disney film "Toby Tyler") He intends to re-enact the role of Paul, and go to New York - but also, he has identified with Holden Caulfield, who drifts around New York after being expelled from his High school. Mark Chapman is reading "The Catcher in the Rye" constantly, and he has insisted his wife reads it too - she tells him he reminds her of Holden.

Meanwhile, in response to the Esquire article, Mark Chapman researches John Lennon's life. From the Library, he takes Anthony Fawcett's "John Lennon: One Day At a Time". The book shows Lennon in his apartment, and Lennon and Yoko as dark figures in the sky over New York: Chapman is convinced that Lennon is an impostor and phoney. He is so angered by the image of Lennon that he openly talks of killing the rock star.

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Mark Chapman signs out from his job as "John Lennon" then crosses out the name. He hears the new Lennon single "(Just Like) Starting Over" and hears the delicate chiming bell - this is the signal he has been waiting for.

On 29th October 1980, Mark Chapman flies to New York to confront John Lennon. He is armed.



He stays in the Waldorf-Astoria, and he walks to the Dakota Building. But, although he waits, he does not see John Lennon. With the gun in his pocket seemingly weighing more and more, he goes to the top of the Empire State building, takes out the gun and tries to kill himself. But he cannot do it, and he breaks down in tears. He knows there is a wicked little child inside himself, battling with the adult Mark, and the child is insisting he do something evil.

He flies back to Hawaii on 13th November.

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In his book, "The Last Days of John Lennon," Fred Seaman, his personal secretary and chauffeur, states that Lennon was increasingly obsessed with astrology, numerology and had a morbid fascination with death. In the last months of 1980, John Lennon talked about death constantly, and what it felt like when you were shot.

"He said he dreamed of getting shot. He had nightmares of violent death - weird, recurring dreams, as he put it, about dying, about getting shot. He talked about getting shot as a modern form of crucifix - the best way of moving on to the next life with a clean Karmic slate."

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On 17th November, "Double Fantasy" is released.



Mark Chapman listens in wonder at the lyrics. Not only is there the chiming bell, there is reference to "watching the wheels" of the Carousel (from the final scenes of "Catcher in the Rye") and songs about the child in the man, the man in the child. Lennon seems to be claiming that he will send all the monsters away and he will protect the children from harm - in other words, Lennon will be the new "Catcher in the Rye". Chapman feels these are the final pieces of the jigsaw: the synchronicity cannot be ignored.

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Two days later, on 20<sup>th</sup> November, he is watching television, when the picture goes blank and "Thou Shalt Not Kill" appears across the screen. It is the sixth Commandment, as written in The Gospel of St. Mark - his Gospel, and Mark Chapman is shocked at the intensity of the experience, and sees it as an example of synchronicity, giving him a message to go back to reading the Bible. He does, looking closely at both The Gospel of St. Mark, and also The Gospel of St. John.

Mark's Gospel is the book of unclean spirits, about the house divided, about when Heaven and earth shall pass away - "And what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch". Mark Chapman is reminded of the Abraham Lincoln connection (the "house divided" speech) and the lyrics of Todd Rundgren about the end of the world. The instruction to "Watch" seemed particularly apt, considering that Mark Chapman was watching television, waiting for a sign.

St. Mark's Gospel is all about casting out demons and being possessed: John's Gospel is all about identity, and how nobody knew Jesus, even those closest to him: even Mary at the end fails to recognise him. Both gospels together seem to present the two sides of his troubled personality, the identity crisis he is going through and the feeling he is possessed by evil spirits.

Saint Mark and Saint John in opposition.

For Mark Chapman, the message is clear: both he and John Lennon have their own Gospels, but the books are in opposition, are in conflict, presenting as they do, two very different pictures of Christ.

The opposition of himself and John Lennon is mirrored in the opposition of their two Gospels, and it confirms his feeling that Lennon is his doppelganger, and therefore he must be eliminated.

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Increasingly depressed and troubled, and once again suicidal, Mark Chapman makes an appointment to see a counsellor at the Makiki Clinic - but not until 26th November.

On 22nd November, Todd Rundgren releases "Deface The Music" and Mark Chapman sees it as the final signal. He sees it as a clear denial of The Beatles and Lennon, and a call to him to deface their music and their influence. He signs himself off from his job as "John Lennon" and flies to New York a week later on his mission to kill this other John Lennon, this other "Catcher" who is an arch phoney.



He arrives in New York as "Holden Caulfield", and by now there is a three-way split that mirrors Norman Rockwell's "Triple Self Portrait" print: Mark Chapman, Holden Caulfield and John Lennon.

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Mark Chapman stays at the West Side YMCA, where he watches ghostly figures on the broken television set in his room. Once again, he is struck by the symbolism of the moment: two ghost-like figures, himself and Lennon, are acting out their parts in this unfolding drama.

He stands outside the Dakota building and feels an overwhelming sense of déjà vu, and then spots Mia Farrow walking by. She starred in the film "Rosemary's Baby", a film about a young woman impregnated by the Devil. The film was shot at the Dakota, and was directed by Roman Polanski, whose wife Sharon Tate was murdered by the notorious Manson family. They claimed inspiration for the killings came from the Beatles' "White album", and in particular, the tracks titled "Helter-Skelter" and "Piggies".



For Mark Chapman, this is another example of synchronicity, linking Lennon's songs to a fiendish murder and ideas of being possessed by the Devil.

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Mark Chapman goes to a bookstore to buy a copy of *The Catcher In The Rye* but he is confronted by giant posters of Lennon, advertising his latest interview published in *Playboy* magazine. It seems to him that Lennon is everywhere, and that he has somehow replaced Holden Caulfield, that Lennon has become Holden Caulfield and therefore become the "Catcher".

When he eventually does buy a copy of Salinger's book, the next day, it is the last one on the shelf, and is beautifully bound in red. Again, Mark Chapman sees it as significant, as if that last book is meant to be his, and its red cover signifies the blood he must shed killing this phoney "Catcher".

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Chapman wanders around Central Park and goes to the Carousel, which is featured in the final chapters of *The Catcher In The Rye*. He watches the Carousel going round and round, and is reminded that Lennon sings about "Watching the wheels go round.." on *Double Fantasy*.

While at the Carousel, Chapman catches sight of a girl in a red hat; it is just like in *The Catcher in the Rye*, where Holden is waiting to catch sight of his sister Phoebe wearing the red hunting hat she loved to wear.



He goes back to his hotel and calls for a prostitute to come to his room. He is amazed that when she appears, she is wearing a green dress, just like the prostitute who comes to Holden's room in *The Catcher in the Rye*.

This further synchronicity convinces Mark Chapman that he is the new "Catcher" and that his mission is to kill John Lennon, the phoney "Catcher".

Chapman arranges a "tableau" of important items in his hotel room. They include all the things that define who he is or who he was: photos from his happy days at Fort Chaffee; a tape of favourite Todd Rundgren songs; a still from "The Wizard of Oz" showing Dorothy comforting the Cowardly Lion; airline tickets; a copy of The Bible opened at John's Gospel, but changed to read "The Gospel according to John Lennon"...



Before he is satisfied with the final arrangement, he checks by entering the room a number of times, trying to see the items as the Police will see them. He knows, when he leaves his hotel room that morning, he will never return.

This collection of items is like a grand suicide collage of items that have been important and significant in his life, and it is Chapman's way of signing himself off, of saying that the life of Mark David Chapman is over: it ends when the life of John Lennon ends.

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THE END

Thank you for taking the time to read this excerpt from my book on the murder of John Lennon.

I acknowledge help and support from my family and many friends for helping me get this far. I also pay tribute to the following authors for blazing a trail I have travelled:

Fenton Bresler, for "The Murder of John Lennon"

Jack Jones, for "Let Me Take You Down"

Ray Coleman, for "John Lennon"

Anthony Fawcett, for "One Day At A Time"

Paul Du Noyer, for "We All Shine On"

I hope you have found it interesting and thought-provoking, and I hope it has helped you understand why this shocking murder happened.

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