

# High Profile Criminal Cases

# Craigslist Killer

# Overview of Crime

The "Craigslist Killer" is a term used to describe one a series of crimes committed by a Craigslist user in 2009.

The Craigslist Killer's crimes consisted of robbery and murder. The culprit robbed one woman at gunpoint, robbed and murdered another woman, and attempted to rob a third.

The crimes were linked together because of their proximity in time and similarity in M.O.

# Perpetrator and Sentence



Security camera footage, cell phone activity, and email evidence led police to suspect a man named Philip Markoff, and he was arrested on April 20, 2009.

He pled not guilty but committed suicide in August, 2010, before his trial.

While no one has been found guilty of these crimes since Markoff died before his trial, police consider this case solved and have no other suspects.

# How He Was Caught

Philip Markoff evaded police for weeks, despite appearing on surveillance footage in the hotels where his victims were staying.

However, Markoff left behind cyber evidence in the form of IP addresses, emails, cell phone activity, and Facebook activity. Markoff left this evidence on the Craigslist servers and in cell phone records while he was communicating with his potential victims.

**In your own words, explain the role that cyber forensics played in identifying the Craigslist Killer?**

Type your answer here.

# BTK

Note: This crime was solved primarily through cyber forensics. Thus, there is a lot more information about the ending stages of the investigation and how the perpetrator was finally apprehended.

# Overview of Crime

BTK is an abbreviation of the words Blind, Torture, Kill, which indicate this murderer's MO.

BTK's killings began in 1974 and continued off and on until the perpetrator was caught in 2005. He loved media attention and communicating with the police. His communication came primarily through digital media, although he didn't completely understand the basics of how his computer worked and cataloged information.



# Perpetrator and Sentence



Dennis Rader committed a series of gruesome crimes in Kansas between the years of 1974 and 1001. He also made a re-emergence in the year 2005.

He was apprehended in 2005 after a floppy disk contained hidden data that led the police right to him..

Rader received 175 years in prison without the possibility of parole.



# How He Was Caught

Floppy disks were used in the early days of computing but are rarely seen today. Floppy disks were a way of saving your computer files. The thumb drive and CD-RW's replaced floppy discs as preferred methods of saving electronic files, and it is difficult to find computers with built-in floppy disk readers nowadays.

Because BTK lacked the technological awareness and savvy to understand how data is cataloged and stored on a floppy disk, investigators were able to use his desire for media communication and attention

**Why do you think BTK liked to communicate with the media? How do you think this resulted in his downfall?**

Type your answer here.

# How He Was Caught

On January 8, 2005, Rader left a Special K cereal box marked with the words "BTK" and "bomb" in the bed of a pickup truck parked at the Home Depot on North Woodlawn in Wichita, Kansas.

The truck belonged to an employee of Home Depot. The owner of the truck was an employee at the store. When he saw the box, he didn't believe that it was anything important. Consequently, he decided to toss it into a trash can at his house.



**What would you do if you got off  
work and found a mysterious  
package in your vehicle?**

Type your answer here.



## How He Was Caught

A week or two later, Rader sent a letter to a local news channel asking if the police had found his package he left at Home Depot.

Detectives working on the BTK case knew that their best chance of catching him was to continue communicating with him. They figured he would slip up at some point.

When they learned of the existence of this package, they immediately rushed over to North Woodlawn to see if they could find anything. From their perspective, it was another potential lead in a serial killer case that had gone unsolved for more than 30 years.

After failing to locate the box, they put up fliers asking employees to come forward if they had seen anything unusual. By that stage, they were beginning to worry that someone had picked it up and thrown it away.

# How He Was Caught

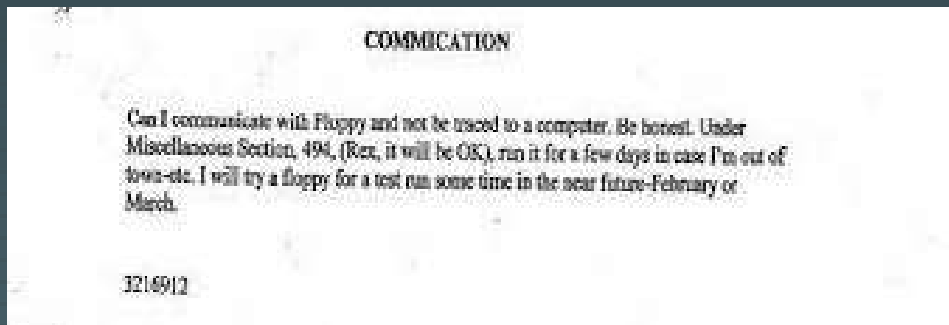
Shortly after posting the fliers, a detective received a phone call from a man who worked at the store. The man explained that he had found a strange cereal box in the back of his pickup truck a few weeks prior.

The man explained that he had forgotten to put his trash out for collection that week, and, as a result, he was able to fish the box out of the trash can.



# How He Was Caught

Inside the cereal box was the note seen in the image below. In the note, as you can see, BTK asked the police if they would be able to trace a floppy disk back to him and he requested them to respond to him using the classified ads in the Wichita Eagle newspaper (under the Miscellaneous section using his code name, Rex).



The cereal box also contained a list of more intended victims that he had watched or stalked and more of a fake autobiography BTK had written.



**Why do you think BTX trusted the  
police to give him tech advice?  
What could this indicate?**

Type your answer here.

# How He Was Caught

Detectives were able to narrow down the date that the box was dropped off and pull the security video footage from the store. The footage was grainy and fuzzy, but they were able to see what kind of vehicle the suspect was driving.

The vehicle was determined to be a black Jeep Grand Cherokee.



# How He Was Caught

On January 25, 2005, another cereal box from BTK was found leaning against a road sign on a desolate unpaved section of North Seneca to the north of Wichita city limits.

The local news station videotaped the box without touching it and notified the police. The box had a brick on top of it and appeared weathered.

Inside this second box, there was a doll with a rope tied around its neck and affixed to a plumbing pipe (a callback to one of his earlier murders).



# How He Was Caught

On February 3, 2005, another postcard arrived at the local news station. BTK wrote (text taken verbatim, including spelling errors):

“Thank you for your quick response on #7 and 2. Thank to the news team for their efforts. Sorry about Susan’s and Jeff’s colds. Business issues: Tell WPD that I receive Newspaper Tip for a go. Test run soon. Thanks. PS: May want to use KTV-PC-etc code # and Letters from me for my Verification code to you.”

BTK was referring to the newspaper ad in the Wichita Eagle placed there by detectives to answer his question about the safety of sending in a computer disk. The responding ad had assured him in agreed-upon code: “Rex it will be OK.”

# How He Was Caught

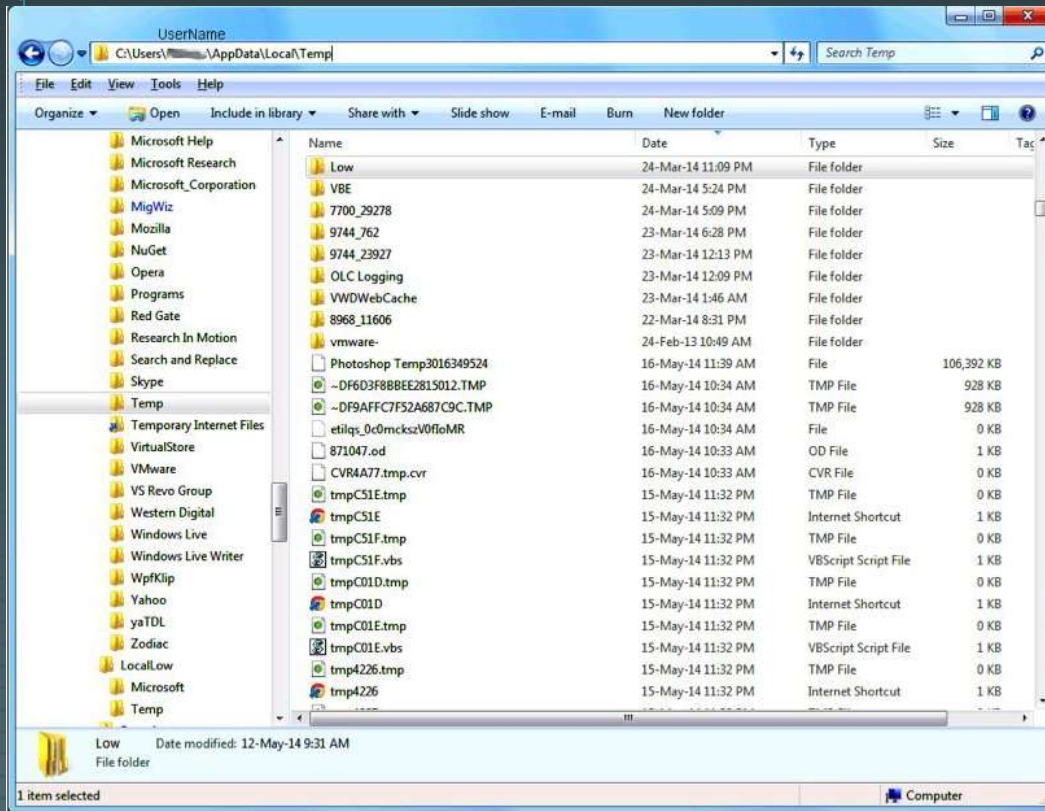
On February 16, 2005, a package was received at a different news station located in Wichita. It contained a letter, a piece of jewelry, and a purple floppy disk referred to as "Test Floppy for WPD review."

Upon analysis, detectives were able to find software from Christ Lutheran Church in Wichita. The software was registered to a man named Dennis.

Rader apparently thought that he had erased the original contents of the floppy disk, but detectives were able to find files in the temporary storage on the disk that were not erased. Rader had no idea this folder was even on the disk as it didn't appear in the list of files. However, it was still stored on the disk's memory and hadn't been overwritten.



# Temporary File Folder



This is the temporary file folder. Rader had no idea it even existed.

# Temporary File Folder

One thing many users had an incredibly hard time understanding was the file system of their desktop or laptop computer and how permanent or not a file was, especially on PCs. Rader did not understand his trash, temporary files (and their folders), and recovery of files. He was so “in the dark” that he even relied on the police to advise him on computer usage and file traceability.

Rader thought he had completely removed the file from the disk. He had not. When he sent police the floppy disk, a file on it could still be recovered from his temp folder. The police found a file there that pertained to his church and his job at the church and other pertinent information. They identified him with this information and arrested him.



# How He Was Caught

After finding this data hidden on the disk, police did a bit of research and found a website for the Christ Lutheran Church mentioning its current president, Dennis Rader.

Detectives then drove by Rader's house and saw a black Jeep Cherokee parked in the driveway. Rader was placed under surveillance while a subpoena was obtained for a DNA sample of his daughter from medical records.

The familial DNA was a match to DNA found at BTK crime scenes.

On February 25, 2005, Rader was driving home when he noticed he was surrounded by police. He surrendered quietly and was led to a waiting police car, handcuffed.





**in your own words, explain the role that cyber forensics played in finally identifying BTX?**

Type your answer here.

# Golden State Killer

# Overview of Crime

The Golden State Killer, whose true identity is Joseph James DeAngelo, was a notorious serial criminal who committed a series of heinous crimes in California during the 1970s and 1980s.

Crimes include sexual assaults, burglaries, and murders.

# Perpetrator and Sentence



Joseph James DeAngelo Jr was determined to be responsible for three known separate crime sprees throughout California between 1974 - 1986.

He was not apprehended until 2018.

Advancements in DNA technology, combined with cyber forensic techniques, led to his identification.

DeAngelo pled guilty to 13 counts of first-degree murder and special circumstances, as well as 13 counts of kidnapping. Due to the statute of limitations on rape cases, DeAngelo could not be prosecuted for any suspected rapes.

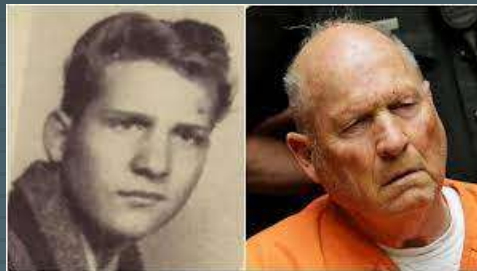
DeAngelo received 12 consecutive life sentences without the possibility of parole, plus 8 years.

# How He Was Caught

In April, 2018, police solved the case using a revolutionary DNA technique.

Searching for a DNA sample match in existing databases turned up nothing, but a search through a public DNA database located 10 – 15 possible distant relatives, which allowed the police to narrow down a suspect list and ultimately gave them what they needed to identify the perpetrator.

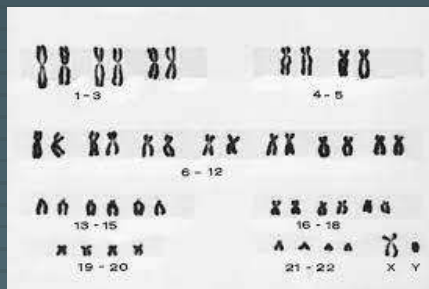
Familial DNA testing is a break from conventional DNA testing, which looks for positive matches, like matching the DNA from a bloody glove to the DNA from a specific suspect. Crucially, a match can only be made if the suspect's DNA can be collected.



# How He Was Caught

Familial DNA searches have been done before. These searches look for partial matches, which could indicate that the sample comes from a sibling or a parent rather than the same person. That's not enough to conclusively identify a person on its own, but it can give police a crucial lead that can lead to further testing down the road.

The groundbreaking part of this identification was that the suspect's DNA was submitted without any idea of who his family was. The search was broadly looking for family members of the suspect without having any idea who the suspect was in the first place.



**in your own words, explain the role that cyber forensics played in finally identifying the Golden State Killer?**

Type your answer here.

# Activity

Choose one of the following cases listed below.

- Scott Peterson
- Oscar Pistorius
- Stephen Allwine

Create a timeline of investigative events that outlines the importance cyber forensics played in solving the case.

In your timeline, include:

- The date (year, data, month if known)
- A description of the event (i.e. when evidence was received, data recovery, the evidence's role in the investigation, etc.)
- Explanation of why this evidence was important to the investigation

An example timeline of the BTK investigation has been included for you to view.