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### Bonnie and Clyde: The Uncredited Heroes of their Time

When one thinks of a hero, one might think of people like Ghandi, Mother Teresa, or Martin Luther King. However, for some, people like Bonnie and Clyde come to mind. Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow were famous robbers from the era of the Great Depression. But why would people consider Bonnie and Clyde as heroes? Well, during that time, the public loved hearing about Bonnie and Clyde: they loved the fact that they were lovers who were on a mission to escape poverty, and who were on the run from the police. Though they were known criminals, responsible for multiple burglaries and killings, they were nevertheless endeared to the public. They were rebels, who were in love, and to this day they are still talked about by many. **Bonnie and Clyde can be considered important heroes in American history based on the pair's love affair and crime spree during the Depression, and even to this day, they continue to spark interest.**

### HOW BONNIE AND CLYDE CAME TO BE

Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow seemed to always be exposed to crime. For Bonnie, she married into it. Just a sixteen-year-old from Rowena, Texas, she and her boyfriend Roy Thornton, dropped out school together despite the fact that she was a good student. Soon after dropping out, they got married. Roy Thornton was a well-known robber of small stores and he stole cars as well. Their marriage didn't have the chance to go any further; Roy was always gone

for long periods of time, and Bonnie was vexed with it. He was eventually caught by police for a robbery that he took part of, and was sent to jail. Although their marriage fell apart and although she wanted to, they never divorced; Bonnie believed that it would have been unfair to divorce Roy when he was away in prison. She still had her wedding ring on her finger when she died.

Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow in March 1933 in a photo found by police at the Joplin, Missouri hideout. (Wikipedia.org)



For Clyde, his exposure to crime was more understandable. Clyde grew up near Tellico, Texas, into a poor farming family. In 1921, his family gave up farming and moved to West Dallas, where his father opened up a service station. He would be arrested three times for suspicion of stealing cars and safecracking, but was let go. A few years later, in 1930, while visiting a friend, he met Bonnie Parker for the first time. However, their budding romance would be short-lived; the police came and arrested Clyde for stolen merchandise and cars. He would be sentenced for two years in prison. While in prison, Bonnie made sure to visit him every day, and even managed to smuggle a Colt pistol into the prison. Clyde and a couple of other prisoners managed to escape that night, thanks to Bonnie. And so began the story of Bonnie and Clyde.

It's not very often that there is a romantic side to a crime story. However, Bonnie and Clyde were the epitome of a couple head-over-heels in-love with one another. "They were Romeo and Juliet with guns" (mirror.co.uk). They say that the reason Bonnie joined Clyde's group, the Barrow Gang, was because she was so in love with him that she did not want to leave him. People really loved hearing that side of the story; they fantasized about Bonnie and Clyde as a couple, completely and utterly in love, together on the run from the police. The public brushed away the fact that Bonnie and Clyde were responsible for 13 deaths. This story was a love story; there was no room for negativity. They romanticized the story, made it seem less ugly and more like a romantic movie than an actual crime story. Bonnie and Clyde's reign was in the middle of the Great Depression, a time when many lost everything they owned, were unable to find jobs and blamed the government for it. So, with a very frustrated public, seeking to blame the government for the hard times that had fallen upon them, it is easy to understand how the criminal duo of Bonnie and Clyde could take on a heroic aspect to them.

## THE PUBLIC ENEMY ERA

The Public Enemy Era took place during the years of the Great Depression, in the United States. It was a time where people were financially in trouble and would do just about anything to make some money. When the words Public Enemy Era are brought up, one automatically thinks of gangs and robberies. A lot of people turned to a life crime. Bonnie and Clyde's crime spree was set in the early 1930's, during the Public Enemy Era. Bonnie and Clyde were among many who took part in the criminal activity of the time; people like Al Capone, Baby Face Nelson or John Dillinger, to name a few. Bonnie and Clyde were known for robbing small stores

and gas stations, and they even stole their own get-away cars. They were a pretty impressive couple. Though their crimes included killing 13 people, many of them police officers, Bonnie and Clyde became folk heroes to a country starving for a wonderful, exciting adventure. Their crime splurge lasted two years before they were ambushed by police and were instantly killed in a hail of bullets. “After tracking Bonnie and Clyde for four months, former Texas ranger Frank Hamer and five officers finally caught up with them on May 23, 1934, in Louisiana.

The lawmen surrounded their Ford V8 car on a rural road and pumped it full of 187 bullets.”  
([mirror.co.uk](http://mirror.co.uk))

In a twisted way, Bonnie and Clyde were comparable to a modern day Robin Hood; stealing from the rich and keeping the money because they were poor. A lot of people could relate to them, in that respect. After all, it was the Great Depression; people did what they needed to do to survive, even if that meant breaking a few rules: like stealing, murder or kidnapping. Desperate times called for desperate measures.

## BONNIE AND CLYDE TODAY

It really means something when an old story is brought up over and over again. There have been movies, TV series and documentaries produced over the years, immortalizing Bonnie and Clyde. They were a young couple in love, on a grand adventure and to this day, they continue to fascinate. Bonnie and Clyde managed to grab people’s attention from the beginning, and despite having died almost eighty years ago, we still hear their names mentioned. People were in complete awe at their audacity, at their grand escapes time and again. They quickly

became folk heroes to the public at large who never seemed to dwell on the fact that they had killed in cold blood. “Their names have become synonymous with an image of Depression-era chic, a world where women chomped cigars and brandished automatic rifles, men robbed banks and drove away in squealing automobiles, and life was lived fast because it would be so short.”(biography.com). In fact, police were able to improve their investigational skills, as well as their tactics to capture would-be criminals based on what transpired with Bonnie and Clyde. The police force of today has evolved to a certain extent because of the two-year crime spree instigated by the duo.

## CONCLUSION

Bonnie and Clyde can be considered heroes based on the fact that many became captivated by their story of love and crime. Running from the law in an era when people distrusted those in power furthered the public’s support of them. They became folk heroes by evading capture for two long years. People appeared to disregard the fact that they were criminals, killers. Even today, we still consider them as being important figures in American history. In the end, police officers did gain some insight in the development of investigational skills while pursuing the pair. If it weren’t for Bonnie and Clyde’s crimes, the police force of today would not have been able to move forward in its evolution.

Works Cited

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