



0. Public Enemies - Story Preface

1. PUBLIC ENEMIES in the GREAT DEPRESSION
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Mug-shot image of John Dillinger from the United States Federal Bureau of Investigation. Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

*I stole
from the bankers
who
stole from the people.*

Harry ("Pete") Pierpont
Member, Dillinger Gang

Robbing banks and getting away in fast cars, John Dillinger was busy during a thirteen-month crime spree (in 1933-34). How did this gangster, also accused of murdering a police officer and designated "Public Enemy Number One," become an American folk hero? Because Dillinger was also a gum-chewing, easy-quipping, lopsided-grinning, charismatic guy - and journalists loved to write about him.

If it hadn't been for Harry Pierpont, John Dillinger may never have become a "Public Enemy."

If it hadn't been for Indiana's Pendleton Reformatory, the two pals might have never met.

If it hadn't been for a prison in Michigan City, Dillinger may not have learned Pierpont's bank-robbing skills.

And ... if it hadn't been for Dillinger's bank-robbing skills, he might have failed to become the Depression-era's "most wanted man" (whom Americans secretly, or openly, admired).

But ... this is not a story about might-have-beens. It's a story about what was - and what became of a group of gangsters who helped give birth to the FBI.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Public-Enemies)

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Pete Pierpont - Dillinger Gang Member

Photo of Harry ("Pete") Pierpont - mugshot from the Ohio Department of Corrections. Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

Quote from *Outlaws and Gunslingers*, by Alton Pryor, pages 163-64.

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John Dillinger - Age 21

Dillinger's "mugshot," from 1924, online courtesy Archives of the Indiana Department Of Corrections.

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Public Enemies

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