

**John Albert Gardner III Case**

Final Draft

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The case I choose to do is the John Garder III case. John Alvert Gardner III is a repeat convicted sex offender who abducted and murdered two teenage girls in California back in 2009. The two teenage girls were Amber DuBois, who was 14 years old, and Chelsea King, who was 17 years old. Amber DuBois went missing February 13, 2009 in front of Escondido High School located in Escondido, California. A year later Amber DuBois' body was found and pronounced dead. The same year DuBois's body was found, Chelsea King went missing on February 25, 2010 at Rancho Bernardo Park in San Diego, California. Chelsea King's body was found a month later and was pronounced dead at the scene also. In the end, both victims had an active and bright future ahead of them before they unfortunately lost it to Gardner III.

As I mentioned before, Amber DuBois was a 14 year old girl who attended Escondido High School. DuBois was very much loved and liked among her family, friends, and community members. According to CBS NEWS, Carrie mentions "She has friends at school and stuff, but she doesn't go to the mall. She hates to shop. She doesn't wear makeup... she's a bookworm,"(CBS NEWS, 2010). Following that, it also mentions that DuBois always had a passion for animals, as the science project she was doing involved raising a baby lamb (CBS NEWS, 2010). In one of the last sentences DuBois said to her mom on the day she went missing was "Thanks Mom, I love you so much, thank you for the lamb" (CBS NEWS, 2010). Gardner III's reasoning for choosing DuBois to be one of his victims was simple—predator vs. prey. He saw DuBois walking alone to school, which to him made her vulnerable and therefore led to Gardner III's impulses taking over (ABC News, 2010). That being said, from the research I have done there seemed to be no relationship between Gardner III and DuBois before the incident. DuBois was a sweet, caring, and loving person who loved the outdoors and seemed to just want to do good in this world.

The next victim was Chelsea King, who as previously stated before, was a 17 year old girl who attended Poway High School. King lived a very active lifestyle as she was an outstanding student, athlete, and a member of her school's cross-country team (King, n.d.). With how active King was, it unfortunately led her to her disappearance as on the day of the incident she was in the midst of doing her routine. According to the article by ABC News (2010), “Chelsea King went missing when she went for a run in a park near her home last week, the San Diego County sheriff said.” In questioning why Gardner III chose to attack King, the reasoning was similar to his previous victim Amber Dubios. She was alone which left her vulnerable and easy prey for Gardner III. Chelsea King was left missing for five days before her body was found. King will always be remembered in her community as they would always see her striving for success in her community by running.

When it comes to the suspects for this case, it's quite interesting as it starts with the disappearance and murder of Chelsea King. Gardner III was suspected already because of how close he lived in the area of both attacks. Adding onto that, Gardner III was the primary suspect because he was a convicted sex offender. He was a convicted sex offender as he was charged for molesting a 13 year old female neighbor in 2000 (Perry, n.d.). In 2008, he was put on parole and would violate the terms of his parole often. For example, he would live too close to schools and use drugs. That being said, police already had eyes on Gardner III; they later found DNA evidence on King's clothing near where police believe she was abducted (ABC News, 2010). This led to the arrest of Gardner III with the cause of suspicion of rape and first degree murder (ABC News, 2010). When it came to DuBois' body being found and getting justice, it was rather quick. According to ABC News, Three days after Gardner was arrested in connection with King's death, police were led to DuBois' body (ABC News, 2010).

As there was no complete witness for this case, Gardner III himself confessed that he was aware of what he had done and the crime he committed. Ultimately, he ends up pleading guilty to both murders of Amber DuBois and Chelsea King. Gardner III expressed that what led to him committing these crimes was him not being able to control his impulse and having no self control (ABC News, 2010). According to ABC News, Garden III says "I was aware of what I was doing, but I could not stop myself," he said in a jailhouse interview with San Diego television station KFMB. "I was in a major rage and pissed off -- pissed off at my whole life and everybody that's hurt me and blew up, and I hurt the wrong people" (ABC News, 2010). Gardner III also expressed that school budget cuts lead to the death of DuBois as if she had been on a bus and not on foot he wouldn't have murdered her (ABC News, 2010). According to ABC News, Gardner III also says when being interviewed that "I told them with no promise of a deal," he said. "I had no promises, and I showed them where Amber was because I felt bad" (ABC News, 2010). It is believed that the reason he told the police where Amber DuBois' body was because he was scared of the death penalty.

The case was concluded on April 16, 2010. John Albert Gardner III pleaded guilty to both murders, raping, and kidnapping with the result of being sentenced to life behind bars. (Sederstrom, 2022). As of today, there has been no new information about this case as Gardner III is in prison. Focusing on how this case has affected society, I would argue that it has led people to be more aware of their surroundings and making sure everyone makes it to their destination safe. In order to do so, people have been looking at the national or state sexual offender registry to see who in their neighborhood or close circles are on the list. It can also mean parents using apps or appliances, such as Life360 or sharing location, to track their child. This case also affected schools as it forced schools to create and follow safety precautions more

seriously. A result of this case was a book being made about this story called “Lost Girls” by Caitilin Rother. This book was made to bring awareness of violence against women.

My final thoughts on this case is how sad it is to see the lengths people will go to in order to satisfy their needs. In my eyes, John Albert Gardner III is a terrible and disgusting man who should have gotten the death penalty. It would not bring back Amber DuBois or Chelsea King but based on his history—he should have never gotten the opportunity to be free after the first time. Knowing his history and what he has done, including his actions towards DuBois and King, he is a threat to the public and children of all ages. And I do believe that the right person was apprehended, as Gardner III admitted his crimes and could tell law enforcement where one of the victims were buried.

## References

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