

Floyd was first arrested at the age of 18 after he stole \$3.50 in coins from a local post office. Three years later he was arrested for a payroll robbery on September 16, 1925 in [St. Louis, Missouri](#) and was sentenced to five years in prison. He served three and a half years before being granted [parole](#).<sup>[2][3][4]</sup>

When paroled, Floyd vowed that he would never see the inside of another prison. Entering into partnerships with more established criminals in the [Kansas City](#) underworld, he committed a series of bank robberies over the next several years...

In 1929, Floyd was wanted in numerous cases. On March 9, he was arrested in Kansas City on investigation, and again on May 6 for [vagrancy](#) and suspicion of [highway robbery](#), but he was released the next day. Two days later, he was arrested in [Pueblo, Colorado](#), and charged with vagrancy. He was fined \$50.00 and sentenced to 60 days in jail.<sup>[4]</sup>

Floyd, under the alias "Frank Mitchell," was arrested in [Akron, Ohio](#), on March 8, 1930, charged in the investigation of the murder of an Akron police officer<sup>[5]</sup> who had been killed during a robbery that evening.<sup>[4]</sup> The law next caught up with Floyd in [Toledo, Ohio](#), where he was arrested on suspicion on May 20, 1930.<sup>[6]</sup> He was convicted of the Sylvania Ohio Bank Robbery and sentenced on November 24, 1930, to 12–15 years in Ohio State penitentiary, but he escaped.<sup>[4]</sup>

Floyd was a suspect in the deaths of Kansas City brothers Wally and Boll Ash, who were [rum-runners](#). They were found dead in a burning car on March 25, 1931. A month later on April 23, members of his gang killed Patrolman R. H. Castner of [Bowling Green, Ohio](#).<sup>[7]</sup> On July 22, Floyd killed federal agent Curtis C. Burke in Kansas City, Missouri.<sup>[8]</sup>

In 1932, former sheriff Erv Kelley of [McIntosh County, Oklahoma](#), was killed while trying to arrest Floyd on April 7.<sup>[9]</sup> In November of that year, three members of Floyd's gang attempted to rob the Farmers and Merchants Bank in [Boley, Oklahoma](#).<sup>[10]</sup> Despite his life of crime, Floyd was viewed positively by the general public. When he robbed banks he allegedly destroyed mortgage documents, but this has never been confirmed and may be myth. He was often protected by locals of Oklahoma, who referred to him as "Robin Hood of the Cookson Hills".<sup>[11]</sup>

Floyd and [Adam Richetti](#) became the primary suspects in a June 17, 1933, gunfight known as the "[Kansas City massacre](#)" that resulted in the deaths of four law enforcement officers.<sup>[12]</sup> Though [J. Edgar Hoover](#) used the incident as ammunition to further empower the [FBI](#) to pursue Floyd,<sup>[12]</sup> historians are divided as to whether or not he was involved. Another more likely suspect was gang member Sol Weismann, who resembled Floyd. Floyd adamantly denied his involvement in this fiasco ...

...Shortly after the attack, Kansas City police received a postcard dated June 30, 1933, from [Springfield, Missouri](#), which read: "Dear Sirs - I - Charles Floyd - want it made known that I did not participate in the massacre of officers at Kansas City. Charles Floyd". The police department believed the note to be genuine. Floyd also reportedly denied involvement in the massacre to the FBI agents who had fatally wounded him. In addition, a recent book on the massacre attributes at least some of the killing to friendly fire by a lawman who was unfamiliar with his weapon, based on [ballistic tests](#).<sup>[18]</sup>

On July 23, 1934, following the death of [John Dillinger](#), "Pretty Boy" Floyd was named [Public Enemy No. 1](#). On October 22, 1934, Floyd was shot in a corn field behind a house on Sprucevale Road between [Beaver Creek State Park](#) in [East Liverpool, Ohio](#), while being pursued by local law officers and

FBI agents led by [Melvin Purvis](#).<sup>[12][19]</sup> Accounts differ on who shot him and the manner in which he was killed.

## Pretty Boy Floyd (Words and Music by Woody Guthrie)

<p>If you'll gather 'round me, children, A story I will tell 'Bout Pretty Boy Floyd, an outlaw, Oklahoma knew him well.</p> <p>It was in the town of Shawnee, A Saturday afternoon, His wife beside him in his wagon As into town they rode.</p> <p>There a deputy sheriff approached him In a manner rather rude, Vulgar words of anger, An' his wife she overheard.</p> <p>Pretty Boy grabbed a log chain, And the deputy grabbed his gun; In the fight that followed He laid that deputy down.</p> <p>Then he took to the trees and timber To live a life of shame; Every crime in Oklahoma Was added to his name.</p> <p>But a many a starvin' farmer The same old story told How the outlaw paid their mortgage And saved their little homes.</p>	<p>Others tell you 'bout a stranger That come to beg a meal, Underneath his napkin Left a thousand-dollar bill.</p> <p>It was in Oklahoma City, It was on a Christmas Day, There was a whole car load of groceries Come with a note to say:</p> <p>"Well, you say that I'm an outlaw, You say that I'm a thief. Here's a Christmas dinner For the families on relief."</p> <p>Yes, as through this world I've wandered I've seen lots of funny men; Some will rob you with a six-gun, And some with a fountain pen.</p> <p>And as through your life you travel, Yes, as through your life you roam, You won't never see an outlaw Drive a family from their home.</p>
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- (1) Why did Pretty Boy Floyd become an outlaw?
- (2) What virtuous qualities does Pretty Boy Floyd express?
- (3) Who/what is the villain?
- (4) To what extent is the presentation of Floyd in Guthrie's song consistent with Wikipedia article?
  - (a) What are three important similarities?

(b) What are three important differences?