Reflection On Bonnie and Clyde: Personal Opinion

For this assignment, I was able to fulfill a dream of mine to visit the grave of an infamous outlaw named Clyde Barrow from the Bonnie and Clyde duo. Since Bonnie and Clyde were separately buried due to their parents' objections to their relationship, I soon made it a personal goal to pay an in-person visit to each burial site. Located in Western Heights Cemetery, a heavy feeling of anxiety consumed me way before entering the cemetery because of the research I conducted on Clyde's gravesite; online reviews left by other visitors were detailing on stopping by in the mornings since his grave is located in a dangerous part of Dallas. The car ride was confusing at first since I relied on user-submitted directions to find the cemetery tucked in the city, but I eventually found my destination within the first ten minutes of driving around the area. As a result, the visit was short once I was able to find his grave on the far left-hand area inside the cemetery.

Barrow's gravesite had been kept clean, with past visitors leaving shotgun shells and flowers behind to pay their respects. However, the cemetery has not been tended to recently, considering that I had to maneuver through the tall grass. A clear path serves as a guide to the location of the Barrow family gravesite. From inspecting the plot, Clyde was buried in the same plot as his brother Buck Barrow, and to the left of their grave were his parents, Henry and Cumie Barrow. Clyde and Buck share a marker since Buck was killed in a shootout with the Missouri police in 1933, a few weeks shy of Clyde's death. Their graves were placed on the far left side of Western Heights Cemetery, held by gates that are usually chained but a stairway to the entrance made the opportunity simple enough to make a quick visit. A sign was posted on the fence marked as "no trespassing", which did not bother me since cemeteries are open to the public. An inscription was included that read as, "Gone but never forgotten", meaning that the world will remember his name even after his death.

Born in 1909 from a family of nine, the Barrows spent their first months in West Dallas taking shelter underneath their wagon until they saved up plenty of money to purchase a tent. Barrow's parents eventually moved from the squatter's camp to purchase a home, located in present-day Singleton Boulevard. Barrow spent his teenage years committing crimes, and soon getting arrested at the age of 17 for neglecting to return a rental car. His time in jail led to sexual assaults from other inmates, but he was released from parole soon enough as a hardened and bitter criminal. With Bonnie Parker, his partner-in-crime, Buck Barrow, his brother, and his wife, Blanche Barrow, they instigated a string of robberies, kidnappings, and murders around the nation with the police on their tail during most of their journey. Their reign of terror officially ended when deputy officers, led by Francis A. (Frank) Hamer and FBI special agent L. A. Kindell, were able to finally track down the Barrow gang at a farm near Arcadia, Louisiana. On May 23, 1934, Bonnie and Clyde were killed in a shootout, firing around 167 bullets in their direction.

Bonnie and Clyde's misconduct received scrutiny and recognition from the American public and journalists during a time where notorious fugitives were targeted for crimes they were charged from 1931 to 1934, where their crime spree led to the murders of at least nine policemen and four civilians. After scouring through news articles, the only ones I could find were about their deaths. I found a news article from the 1920s with real estate for sale in New York, showcasing

what people were interested in during that time. The dedication to a page just for real estate showed that people had a high interest in finding affordable, safe places to live, and the reports of a crime spree only fueled public speculation on updates to the news. The constant attention given to their crimes only romanticized their image, as seen in later depictions of their history that cast them in an idolized light. During their funerals, thousands flocked to catch a glimpse of their bodies and take souvenirs such as clothing or hair from the location of their death.

The public interest reflects a desire to read stories and live vicariously through people who carried a dangerous element, especially for star-crossed lovers running from the law. Their lives in the media were far from the truth; before their romance, Parker made a living as a waitress while Barrow was working odd jobs aside from his petty crimes. In addition, their biggest heist resulted in a haul of $1,500. In the end, these two ordinary people were heightened to a status of notoriety as a way of creating a media frenzy for newspaper sales and unionizing against a common enemy.