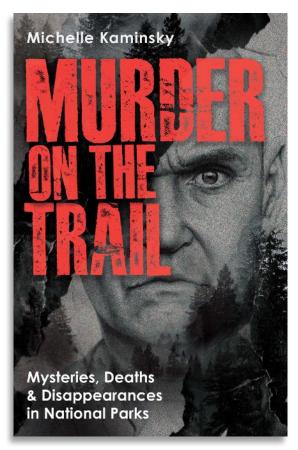


FROM YOSEMITE TO THE GRAND CANYON: MURDER ON THE TRAIL CHRONICLES TRUE CRIMES IN AMERICA'S NATIONAL PARKS



Murder on the Trail: Mysteries, Deaths, and Disappearances in National Parks (Featuring Gabby Petito, Toni Henthorn, Gary Michael Hilton, and More)

by Michelle Kaminsky Ulysses Press

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What dangers lurk in the wilderness? What could happen if you wander off the trail?

Discover the fascinating true crime stories that lay within the majestic landscapes of the United States' national parks, including the National Forest Serial Killer Gary Michael Hilton, the vanlife tragedy of Gabby Petito, murders in Yosemite, and more.

From the depths of the Grand Canyon to the towering peaks of Yosemite, *Murder on the Trail: Mysteries, Deaths, and Disappearances in National Parks (Featuring Gabby Petito, Toni Henthorn, Gary Michael Hilton, and More)* [Ulysses Press; December 2025] by Michelle Kaminsky tells the chilling stories of killers, mysterious disappearances, and other harrowing crimes that have occurred in US national parks, including those involving:

- · Cary Stayner, Yosemite Park Killer
- · Gary Hilton, National Forest Killer
- The tragic story of vanlifer Gabby Petito
- Toni and Harold Henthorn
- And more.

With meticulous research and compelling storytelling, best-selling true crime author Michelle Kaminsky guides readers through the hidden dangers, sinister secrets, and terrifying realities that lurk in America's most treasured natural wonders.

"The nine cases in this book span nearly a century of US history in national parks, from Bessie and Glen Hyde's mysterious disappearance in 1928 to Gabby Petito's murder in Grand Teton in 2021," Kaminsky says. "This timeline reveals how both the parks and their dangers have evolved. The earliest cases—the Hydes in the 1920s and Dennis Martin in 1969—occurred when national parks were less developed, with fewer visitors and limited technology."

For lovers of true crime and the great outdoors, this gripping book is a must-read for anyone drawn to the dark side of nature's most breathtaking, remote, and (mostly) serene landscapes.

"This collection tells the stories of people who met tragic fates while exploring some of the country's wildest and most unforgettable terrain," she says. "May their lives never be forgotten, and may their memories continue to remind us that extreme beauty can also hold a hidden darkness that always demands our utmost respect."



Established in 1890, Yosemite National Park is a nearly 1,200-square Enablished in 1890, Yosomic National Parkits an analyst 1,200-squared UNESCO World Hearings, Site mosted in Cultification's Sierca Nosada mountains. The park pretents significant columnal resources, including this uniquent to the Advantancedor people, who lived in the villey for thousands of years. It is also a prime wildomess area for rock climbing, hilding, phenography, and appreciating its natural monders. The twenting grantie monocilism of El Colpins and Half Dome, escending waterfulls, unclent sequela groves, and transcendent mist of Chesenile Falls draw about four million visitors a year. In the early months of 1990, as families posed for phetographic against the park's breatheraking visits and hillest reasses of its well-seon realis a predator moved in silence sumang them.

One evenine in February, as the citim air set in over the Color

One evening in February, as the crisp air set in over the Cedar Lodge in El Portsl, forty-two-year-old Carole Sund; her daughter Longs in Li Portial, iorly-two-year-oic Cariose Sunch, for daugust published California (April 2004) and the California California (April 2004) and the California California Polossos, elitera, the Argentine exclusing student who had been living with the family, were settling in for the night, Soon, a handyman who lived above the Cedar Lodge restaurant would come out the danklows and knock on their door. The three would never be seen alive again.

Dubruzdly quist and unassuming, Cary Stayner, thirty-seven, harbored violent fantasies and sadistic desires that would soon transform use of the country's most believed natural sanctuaries into the lackdep of a series of hereific crimes. After latting in the national park for years, wairing for his opportunity to attack, he noticed park for years, wairing for his opportunity to attack, the start formal so better flatting or the first flatting with the brutality of his marders, the stark contrast bettern Stayner's inner darkness and public personn rankes this case particularly huming among national park crimes. To those who encountered him daily at Godar Lodge, Stayner appeared rather curremarkshib—a reliable worker with an unsurprisingly strong interest in natura, as many people who work accordance and national strong interest in nature, as many people who work around national parks have. Behind his calm demeanor, though, luried a man who would later confess to fantasizing about murder since childhood and who methodically chose and stalked victims from among the park's visitors.

er's murders of Carole, Julie, Silvina, and Joie remind us

Trugic stories like these should always frence on the victims, the innecest lives lost, as well an the deventating impact on their lowed mose, in this instance, the recounting would not be complete, bowever, without oddiving into what readermed Stayer from the park product that he became, His possible promotes history—bizarm wast of fine that links him to a neutronic Sulformin inhibatogaing ease—solds a further deeply unsettling element to his crimes. His younger bornter Steven that how an abstead as a child and held captive for seven years before making a dramatic energe, Steven became a national have through model attention and a movie-of-the-week, while Caryly path took bits in the opposite of the release an artismable violence. This justaposition of bretches—one whe was a victim, edibrated for his wellance, and the other, a proportion, condamned for his depression—existing a large of the size wellance, and the other, a proportion, condamned for his expension, as the condition of the size wellance, and the other. a perpetrator, condomned for his depravity—provides a layer of psychological complexity that continues to bount those who study

A JOURNEY CUT SHORT IN GRAND TETON: THE MURDER OF GABBY PETITO

peagos who converted wheeles into motion tomus, allowing them to travel indefinitely and work remotely. Galaky's following gross stendily as she shared their travels through some of the rountry's most beautiful landscapes, including the monstrous sand deposits of Great Sand Dones National Park, Zion National Park's rust-colored chiffs, and the otherworldly termin of Bryce Canyon National Park, When not out adventuring, Gabby edited her photos and videos from inside the cramped quarters of

the van.

On August 25, Gibby posted her last Instagram carousel—a series of photos featuring her beaming (sometimes holding a erocheted pumpkin) in front of a batterfly mural. The caption read, "Hoppy Halloween," 200 There was no notice to followers that she would be

Socy canacter modelge, revealed the beams-the-scenes of categy and flatina file topical relating to recovering, and the images are both tragic and humiling.

By the time the public saw that video, Gabby was already gone, but she had not sit behind abilitional recordings—ones of which had already been policited on the transgram and Yord Hae accounts.

R wasn't that Gabby's peals weren't tree, but—as is often the case em-sorial media—fleely did it tell the white a bory of what able accounts. Cabby's disoparomize quickle object a bory of what about Cabby's disoparomize quickly dominated the media, and in turn, from law enforcement personnel to sorial media sleatile, peagle accoss the country done into the task of parama (positive what had happened to her. Now, Gabby's spirit fives on through the Cabby Petitor Foundation, established by har bord ones to humo-ber memory and raise tensies de violence assurements. But to better understand Gabby's storie, it is essential to go lack and trained materials of daby's stories in forcing, on the silts of the read in Great Telson National Park with the person the trained most in the worl— the person who would come and har life.

taking a break—to indication that anything was amiss. After that post, Gubby went silent. She had simply vanished from social media and, asher bread ones would some radies, also from their own worlds. When Brian returned to his pureast's house in Berirks with the was abose on September 1, with no explanation as to where Gubby was, the efficience began to row. What followed was a case that highlighted the cumples intersection of national park beauty, the digital age, and domestic violences. Additation police accounter in Monly, Ulast, augusted on body camera footage, revealed the behind the scenes of Gubby and friends high template relation show quarter from the control of the scenes of Gubby and highest friends in the template relation shows the receiver of the high the scenes of Gubby and highest relation shows the receiver of the highest resources for the highest resources and the highest resources for the highest resources and the high scenes of Gubby and highest relationship to the highest resources and the highest resources are the highest resources and high resources are the highest resources and highest resources are the highest resour

m's life together when she wasn't recording, and the images are

THE LIFE OF GABBY PETITO

In his enlogy for his daughter, Gabby's father, Joseph Petito, said that her "ridiculously blue eyes" matched her personality—clear and bright with a knack for seeing the beauty in everything a her. Gabby grew up on Long Island's South Shore in a close-knit

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Michelle's true crime writing is driven by a lifelong fascination with criminal minds, motivations, and MOs. Her books include Serial Killer Trivia (2019), Serial Killer Trivia: Cold Cases (2021), and The Big Book of 1980s Serial Killers (2024). Michelle is the mom of a human kid and a rescued hound, and she is probably listening to a true crime podcast right now. You can find her at michkaminsky throughout social media.

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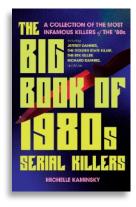
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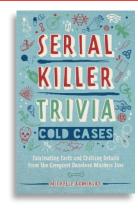


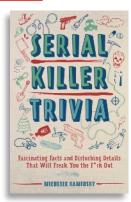
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Review copies of *Murder on the Trail* are available upon request. For excerpts and/or interview queries, please contact Kourtney Jason at kourtney@pacificandcourt.com.