UC Berkeley

Title

Missing White Woman Syndrome: A Historical and Sociological Look Into the Case of Gabby Petito

Permalink

https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7qq295gk

Author

Chang-Yeh, Lark

Publication Date

2022-04-01

Undergraduate

MISSING WHITE WOMAN SYNDROME:
A HISTORICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL LOOK
INTO THE CASE OF GABBY PETITO

Abstract: True Crime is a genre that's invasiveness and narrative-like structures have persisted for centuries. It is a genre that is historically fluid, adapting from different mediums, from print to play to podcast. Of course, its digital presence--marked by conspiracy theories, viral videos, and frame-by-frame analyses--has both beneficial and dire consequences. But regardless of consequence, its adaptability and the human fascination with violence and the sublime ensure there will "always be a market for murder".

Keywords: Serial Podcast, seriality, Gabby Petito, Adnan Syed, true crime, Missing White Woman Syndrome, web sleuthing, internet culture, Durkheim and crime
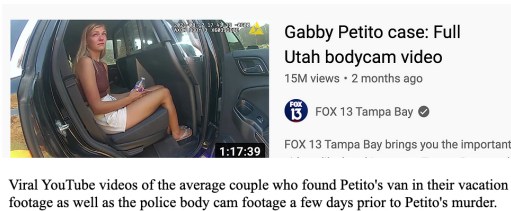
Chapter 1: The Case of Gabby Petito

In the late summer of this year, Gabby Petito was an early-stage Instagram and YouTube influencer who was documenting her life traveling across the country with her fiance. To the average person, she was unknown, and her following was quite limited--some Reddit users claim she had around eleven thousand followers at this time. Today, Petito's Instagram account has 1.3 million followers and her only Youtube video has over six million views. More impressive is the hashtag #gabbypetito, which has received over 1.8 billion views on Tiktok--comparable to that of A-list celebrities such as #adamsandler at 1.6 billion or #lizzo at 2 billion. These media trends indicate that Petito went viral quickly, something that
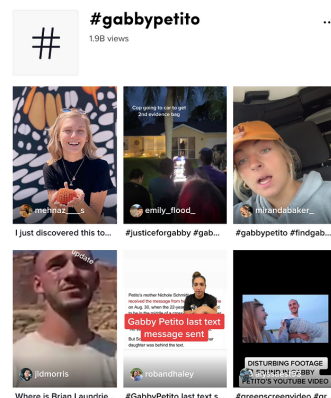
is now a quite common rise to fame--such as the 2018 "Yodeling Walmart Kid" who had the opportunity to sing at Coachella after one viral video. However, Petito went viral for a much darker reason than yodeling in an Illinois Walmart. Petito went missing.

   In the weeks after Petito went missing, her name spread like wildfire on Twitter, Instagram, Reddit, and Tiktok as people circulated news stories, opinions, and analyses of her social media (and even police) footage. Petito's name became so viral that a couple who was camping in a similar area as Petito saw the news and decided to look back at their own video footage. They happened to find a video with Petito's van in the background--the location of which was eventually used to locate Petito's body (Romano). An average couple, who would have otherwise likely never heard of the case, now contributed meaningful information to the investigation. Yet, of course, a lot of the resulting attention was also negative. After Petito was found dead, conspiracy theories flooded social media sites. People gained millions of Tiktok views for outlandish claims such as that her fiance, Brian Launderie, killed her because she was actually pregnant, or that Launderie lied about his age when they were together. Today, the subreddit r/gabbypetito has over 140 thousand members, as web sleuths (those who attempt to solve crimes on the internet) dissect every remnant of the last months of her life frame-by-frame. In fact, the seventy-seven-minute bodycam footage of police talking to Launderie and Petito after a domestic violence call during their road trip has over fifteen million views on YouTube. Although the media portrayal of her case has spurred discussions about domestic violence, and the virality has given some aid to the investigation, something that was utterly tragic has now become a spectacle, picked apart for entertainment and profitability. But how did we get here? How did we get to a point in which Average Joes can help police find dead bodies or where being murdered can spark a rise to fame? Although the internet has certainly made extensive true crime communities and access to the once-private lives of murderers and murder victims possible, the internet is only exacerbating ideas in our society about who we value and driving obsessions rooted in our culture-- and potentially human nature.

Is this Gabby Petito's Van caught on Youtuber's...

2.6M views • 2 months ago

Gabby Petito case: Full Utah bodycam video
15M views • 2 months ago

FOX 13 Tampa Bay ✔

FOX 13 Tampa Bay brings you the important

Viral YouTube videos of the average couple who found Petito's van in their vacation footage as well as the police body cam footage a few days prior to Petito's murder.

Chapter 2: How did we get here? A Brief History of Missing White Woman Syndrome

Although technology has generated unprecedented levels of public attention towards criminal cases such as through large web sleuthing communities, conspiracy videos with millions of views, trending hashtags, and even Netflix documentaries, the true crime genre itself is not a new phenomenon. Joy Wiltenburg, in her publication True Crime: The Origins of Modern Sensationalism, describes during the rise of the printing press also came the rise of true crime. 16th century Germany, an early epicenter of printing, originated true crime pamphlets and broadsheets. These publications were frequently made and distributed by clergymen, and they often contained religious themes. For instance, Johannes Fuglin, a Protestant cleric, published a report of a murder in 1565 and attributed the cause of it to earlier sins of the murderer such as cursing, gambling, and drinking. In these early stages of true crime, Christianity made crime
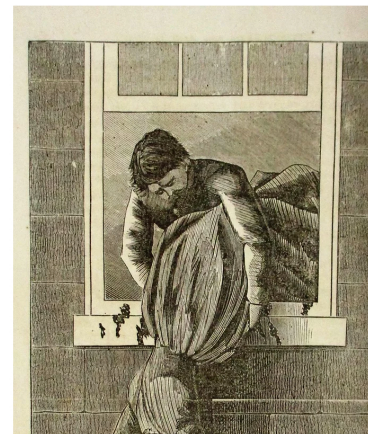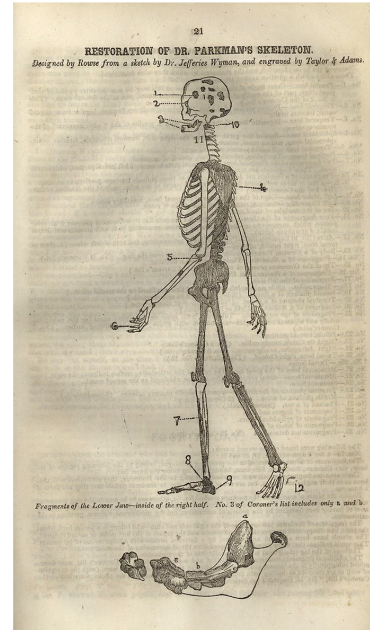
inherently a public and private matter. These Christian societies sought to exert public social control by depicting extreme violations of social codes such as murder and connecting crime as a wider social issue to the private inner nature and past sins of the criminal. This entanglement of public and private has been exacerbated with the rise of technology--as web sleuthers often defy the boundaries between the two.

Twitchell throwing his mother-in-law out of an upper window.

Early pamphlets of true crime accounts focussed on inner-familial crimes in order to generate sensationalism and inflict social order.

Throughout the 16th and 17th centuries, the most common theme of these true crime publications was familial murder. Half of true-crime reports detailed murders within families, with two-thirds of those reports about the murder of children. Another common theme in true crime was marital murder. Both of these common depictions emphasized intergenerational, familial betrayals, and reflected a changing social and familial order that Christians felt threatened by. Post-Reformation Protestant reformers attempted to curb this social and familial change through these emotional depictions of true crime--which often included dramatic dialogue and graphic depictions of violence, sometimes even including hymns and block printed imagery. True crime media was also accompanied by laws that made clandestine (secretive) marriages illegal and required parental consent for marriage. Of course, familial or marital murders were not the most common types of crime, but they were the ones that frightened and threatened society the most. Throughout history, the types of crimes documented often reflect social upheaval and change that authority and those in power feel threatened by. In this case, true crime was used as a method of social control that utilized emotive responses and religious themes to manage the public into stable families and "legitimate" marriages.

RESTORATION OF DR. PARKMAN'S SKELETON.

Designed by Rowse from a sketch by Dr. Jefferies Wyman, and engraved by Taylor & Adams.

Fragments of the Lower Jaw—inside of the right half.   No. 3 of Coroner's list includes only a and b.

Pamphlets also often block prints of details of the crime, such as of medical details and human bodies.

These depictions of crime create boundaries between the acceptable and unacceptable and enforce familial and social norms by depicting those "outside" of these norms as extreme, violent, and criminal. Durkheim, in Is Crime Always Functional, uses the sociological theory of functionalism to understand crime's purpose in society. He argues that under the theory of functionalism (the theory that all aspects of society have a role in shaping it), crime is necessary and if something is necessary for society, it must serve a purpose. He sees crime as necessary to develop culture, which, as a social construct, cannot exist without defining what is outside of it. Durkheim believes nothing is inherently criminal, stating that certain behaviors are labeled criminal by the public's collective consciousness--such as in the case of murder--in which the majority of people would agree on the immorality of this. However, in many cases, what is criminal is decided by those in power in order to exclude people from the inside of society--such as the War on Drugs. And, by deciding and declaring criminal actions as unacceptable and "outside", we simultaneously construct ideas of what is acceptable and "inside". James Derrida, another sociologist, argues that the way we construct meaning is through binaries, so we cannot understand what something is without knowing what it is not (Namaste). This theory helps us understand the societal purpose of the types of crimes that are represented in media throughout history and their consequences on society. Nowadays, the crimes that are most heavily represented in mainstream media are not murders between family members or a married couple but are still those that threaten white, suburban, middle-class life. These crimes threaten perceptions of "normalcy," often focusing on missing white women. As a white, petite, woman with a white, seemingly normal fiance, Gabby Petito is an archetype of normalcy and the epitome of the modern representation of true crime. It is no surprise that Gabby Petito's case took the internet by storm, rather than one of a missing Black person or a missing Indigenous person because her case has an element of shock and sensationalism that comes with the death of someone who symbolizes stability and order. In fact, the representation of white women in true crime is so disproportionate that it has been dubbed as "Missing White Woman Syndrome" by multiple scholars. In a Journal of Law and Criminology piece entitled "Missing White Woman Syndrome: An Empirical Analysis of Race and Gender Disparities in Online News Coverage of Missing Persons", criminal and law researcher Zach Sommers analyzes media news coverage of missing people on racial and gendered lines. Sommers argues that white women are much more likely to be represented by the news when they go missing, describing case studies

of two eerily similar cases with very different levels of coverage: one of a young Black man that receives close to no attention, versus one of a young white woman that is closely tracked on national media outlets. When analyzing internet media coverage of missing people, Sommers discovered that only 12.73% of media coverage represents Black people even though they make up 35.25% of FBI missing person cases. Instead, nearly 68% of media coverage is on white people, which is 8% more than their actual FBI representation. Larger disparities were found on gender lines, as 73.36% of cases in the media were about women, but women are only 48.48% of FBI missing person cases.

Table 6. Coverage Intensity: Race of Article Subjects as Compared to FBI Population

Race	Media	FBI
Black	12.73% (196)	35.25% (27,797)
Hispanic	18.44% (284)	----------
Other	1.69% (26)	4.43% (3,489)
White	67.73% (1,034)	60.32% (47,560)

n (Media) = 1,540
n (FBI) = 78,846

One of Sommers's tables in his research piece. This table displays the discrepancies along racial lines between media coverage and FBI case files.

Of course, just as historical true crime cases about familial and marital murders were about exerting social control, the over-representation of missing white women could arguably be about the same. True crime inflicts social order because people feel that stable, heteronormative, white suburban American life is endangered by outside "criminals" and they must protect their "inside". Thus, when white suburban women like Gabby Petito go missing, it inspires hysteria. Petito's body was eventually found (with the help of large search parties, a helicopter, dogs, and drones) in Wyoming, a state where 710 indigenous people were reported missing from 2011-2020--many of them unreported by news outlets and never found.

Petito's search deployed a much larger amount of police forces and resources than an average missing person's case. Especially compared to non-white counterparts.

According to Lynette Grey Bull, founder of the non-profit Not Our Native Daughters, when indigenous people go missing, people often label them as "drug addicts" or assume it was their own fault they went missing or were murdered. These types of cases are not covered because they do not have a shock factor to the public, and because these types of people are historically and sociologically not valued by our society. White women, on the other hand, are free from these "drug addict" labels, as they are often seen as vulnerable and in need of saving--a result of their femininity and the patriarchy. Femininity is associated with whiteness, and women of color--particularly Black women--have historically been separated from ideas of femininity in order to justify their enslavement, exploitation, and abuse (Eversley).

In particular, nineteenth-century comparative anatomy attempted to name and analyze sexual differences between white and African women and constructed notions of femininity and beauty based on white bodies. The 1867 "Account of the Dissection of a Bushwoman" claimed that African women had "bulging buttocks" and extra long labia, characteristics which made them gender "inverts" and thus defeminized (Somerville). Historically, our notions of femininity have been associated with white women--and this

white femininity is deliberately tied with the patriarchy.

Below is a quote from the "Account of the Dissection of a Bushwoman"

> The remarkable development of the labia minora, or nymphæ, which is so general a characteristic of the Hottentot and Bushman race, was sufficiently well marked to distinguish these parts at once from those of any of the ordinary varieties of the human species,

In the post-Civil War era, anti-Black white politicians utilized their desire to protect white femininity in order to justify violence and white supremacy. In Angels in the Machinery: Gender in American Party Politics from the Civil War to the Progressive Era by Rebecca Edwards, she recounts how James Vardaman, a Mississippian governor in the early 1900s, stated that a "vote for Vardaman is a vote for white supremacy...a vote for the safety of the home and the protection of our women…" (140). He references the patriarchal duty to protect the "home" and "our women" as justification for white supremacy--as he feared Black men would endanger white women. This need to protect white women has been pushed to extreme levels throughout history, as even the Tulsa Race massacre--which resulted in around three hundred deaths--began because a Black man stepped on a white woman's toe (Oklahoma Historical Society). Now, when a white woman goes missing, it can culminate in a 140 thousand member subreddit group and a hashtag with billions of views, something that is largely attributed to our America's long racist and gendered history of portraying white women as a population to be protected from outside threats.

The very public reaction to Gabby Petito's murder is a consequence of this endangerment of white femininity. Gabby Petito is not seen as a person, but rather as a cultural object--a perfect archetype for normalcy that is reinforced by her digital presence. Her existence is blasted on public display as vacation moments with her fiancee are dissectable Instagram posts and her day-to-day life is a fifteen-minute Youtube vlog. This ease of access to Petito's cookie-cutter, digestible life makes her seem like an object of analysis for web sleuthing. She does not seem like a real person because she doesn't seem whole; her online self is only smiley, photogenic, and relatively one-dimensional. It lacks nuance, reality. Petito and Launderie have a very curated presence on social media, and this characterizes them as a normal, picture-perfect couple that went horribly, shockingly wrong. Petito became a picture-perfect character in a story, and was treated as such. And it is this blurriness of fiction and fact, public and private, that hooks others into conspiracy, breaches of privacy, analytics, and web sleuthing.

Chapter 3: Serial and Seriality

A clear example of the true-crime converted into a story comes from a prominent true crime pop culture staple: This American Life's podcast Serial. In fact, Serial does not even try to hide its story-like structure, as its Apple Podcast description reads "Serial unfolds one story--a true story--over the course of a whole season. The show follows the plot and characters wherever they lead, through many surprising twists and turns". Serial's first season documents the murder of Hae Min Lee, a popular high schooler who mysteriously disappeared fifteen years before the recording of the first podcast episode in 2014. The podcast closely interrogates the investigation and legal case--which eventually led to the arrest of Lee's ex-boyfriend Adnan Syed, who has maintained his innocence since 1999. The case, although completely nonfiction, replicates this "Dateline-esque" plot in which a jealous ex-boyfriend murders his ex-girlfriend in

"Serial unfolds one *story*--a true story--over the course of a whole *season*. The show follows the *plot* and *characters* wherever they lead, through many surprising twists and turns"

a rage set off by her dating someone new.

Although the podcast's virality might be partially due to a similar sense of threat to normalcy--as Hae and Adnan seemed like any other high school relationship, Hae lacked the whiteness common in many victims of viral true crime cases like Gabby Petito or those killed by Ted Bundy. So, part of this normalcy--this whiteness--had to be constructed in a fictional manner. Similar to Petito, Lee was petite, young, and female, and while she did immigrate from South Korea as a pre-teen, these details were left undiscussed by the podcast's narrator Sarah Koenig (IE Staff). Instead, Lee is presented in a generic way that "compresses Hae's personality into a racelesss, 'typical American teenager' narrative" (Sorren). In the first Serial episode, Lee is described as "smart, beautiful, cheerful, and a great athlete", and her personality or family background is hardly discussed or given nuance throughout the twelve-episode installment. So, a first-generation Korean immigrant is cast as raceless, better fitting this narrative of violence disrupting normalcy, which arguably fuels entertainment and virality. Furthermore, because Lee is seen as this typical American teenager, her victimization has a degree of generalization, meaning that Lee could be a representation of nearly anyone. Criminologist Zach Sommers believes that whiteness has this effect, as it is "very easy for us to see a young white woman and say that used to be my cousin or that person I used to babysit for or my neighbor" (Eversley). Lee's lack of racial characterization gives her this relatable, "girl-next-door" quality as well. Because of these "fictionalized" characterizations, Serial can be considered entertainment instead of pure journalism. Koenig's narrative style gives this tragic nonfiction case a character of fiction, and her presentation of both Syed and Lee as unsuspecting and normal elicits fear, confusion, and obsession from the public.

Adnan and Hae as a "typical high school couple" at their prom.

Part of what converts reality to fiction is the way in which the podcast is told. The podcast, whose first season has garnered over three hundred million downloads, is unraveled serially, meaning that each week the listeners are given a new set of information, clues, and questions about the case. This serialization of true crime media is certainly something unique to Serial, as true crime stories are normally compressed into long documentaries, movie adaptations, or books. However, it is quite common with television shows, as many fictional actions and dramas such as Game of Thrones, Breaking Bad, and Lost are told serially. Some scholars suggest that serialization of media "preys upon anxiety to drive consumption", meaning that the cliffhangers each podcast episode ends on drive further consumption as people can ease their anxieties and uncertainties by listening to the next episode (McCracken 3). Furthermore, serialization encourages listeners to discuss and investigate details of the "story" before they find out the answers in the next episode--pushing the story to other sites and mediums such as subreddits and social media. Throughout the release of the first season, Redditors would swarm in the r/Serialpodcast subreddit to dish out conspiracy theories, predictions, and opinions after each episode. One popular post on the r/Serialpodcast subreddit states,

An instance of a fan spending the week between each episode to an extreme extent, by visiting the locations from the podcast.

"I remember the times when my days and nights were

I remember the times when my days and nights were consumed by Adnan and Hae. I would spend all day, and night listening to serial, reading court transcripts, reading old Reddit posts about this case, coming up with different theories, telling everything about Serial, and debating whether Adnan was guilty or not. My life was 89.9% serial at one point, and I miss it…".

In a collection of essays about the podcast, The Serial Podcast and Storytelling in the Digital Age, the authors document the history of the "serial" narrative form--tracing it back to the late eighteenth century. The proliferation of print materials, such as newspapers, periodicals, etc allowed crimes to be documented serially as the investigations played out. Wolfgang Iser, a twentieth-century literary critic, suggests that this delay of presentation of materials leads to a "deeper imaginative engagement", meaning that those who engage with these materials are forced to spend time speculating and imagining rather than finding out answers right away. Without this deeper engagement, a lot of these discussion forums and theories would not be as necessary. One of the authors, Ellen McCracken, compares Serial's form to that of an 1823 murder case committed by John Thurtell. Thurtell murdered a successful gambler named William Weare who notoriously kept his lavish savings on hand. As the Thurtell crime became retold serially through multiple mediums, including newspaper stories and a collection of plays, the crime became reinvented as a story, something that happened with Adnan Syed's case in Serial. Fiction intertwined with nonfiction as the format of the Thurtell plays fictionalized dialogue, character, and the timeline of the murder. According to McCracken, the seriality of the recounts on the Thurtell murder fostered a sense of intimacy with the "characters" in the story because they kept reappearing in the audience's lives week after week.

One of the fictionalized scenes depicted of the Thurtell crimes.

And, of course, this serialization expanded greatly with the development of technology. After the development of DVR, stand-alone soap opera episodes became week-to-week action storylines (Auerbach). One of the first major serialized television shows was the 1990s show Twin Peaks, which told a story of a murdered "innocent" high school girl (who happened to be white, feminine, and conventionally attractive). The true crime genre fits serialized formats quite well, as clues and leads can be unraveled episode-by-episode. Soon, serialized television shows evolved into serialized podcasts, serialized Youtube series, and even Tiktok videos that end in "come back for part 2". This serialization incorporates narrative techniques to create an intimacy with characters that is often only seen as a feature of fiction or fantasy, and thus, fans treat real criminals and victims like characters. Petito's case was told serially as well. Her case became viral when she went missing, and the public tweeted updates and made Tiktoks debriefing news as it came out. This serialization encouraged random people to investigate the murder, come up with theories, and discuss on online forums such as Reddit. The way in which those involved in real crimes become characters--cultural objects for us to pick apart, stalk, and over-analyze--is due to the sense of normalcy they represent as well as the ways in which technology (and serialization) tailor these narratives for consumption. It is such a transformative method of narration that on the Serial subreddit, people even compare Serial to fictional pieces such as Law and Order and CSI. The notion that a real person's murder was altered so significantly by this narrative medium that it became comparable to popular television shows is quite telling to the power of serialization.

Chapter 4: Does this make us Disturbed?

Are we wrong--maybe even disturbed--to have made a spectacle of murder?

Historically speaking, true crime has had a growing place in our culture since the development of the printing press. Arguably, it would not have had the same popularity if the crimes featured were simply factual or void of songs, characterizations, and captivating visuals. The genre also would have lacked its popularity had it represented crimes of underrepresented communities. It owes its success to histories of white supremacy and patriarchy that have formulated our concepts of American-ness over time as an ideal worth protecting (and agonizing over on a subreddit). The missing white woman trope represents something deeper about enforcing social order, relatability, and an eerie illustration of who our society has valued throughout history. Gabby Petito is not just another girl who went missing and happened to go viral. Her whiteness, femininity, middle-class identity, and petite figure made her an archetype of typical American life. When we see our socially constructed notion of normalcy upended by something so unfathomable and incomprehensible as murder, it is difficult not to get attached. Maybe we are not disturbed; maybe we are just victims of societal structures of power that tell us to fear and fret when whiteness, white femininity, and order are disrupted.
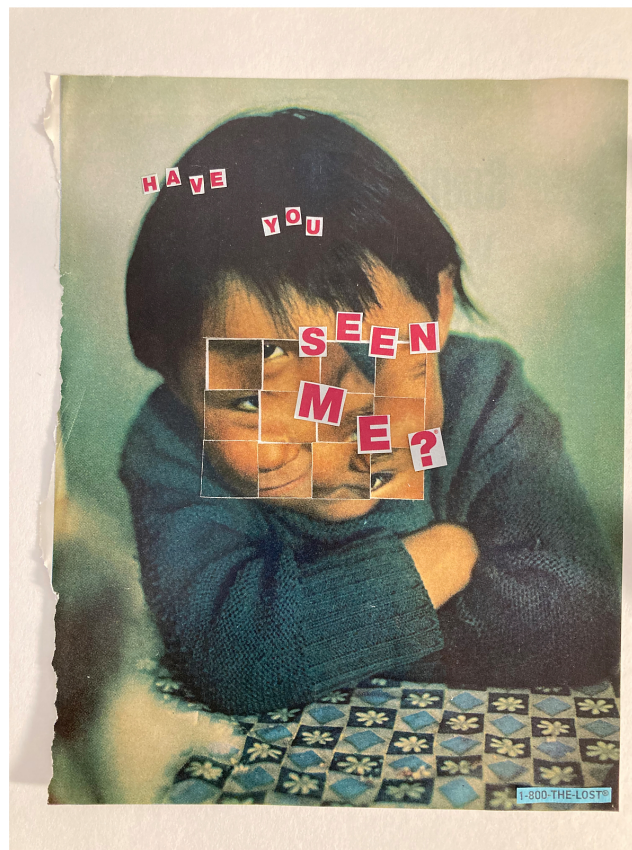
A collage piece I made on how there are so many missing people of color, especially missing indigenous people who are never accounted for or mentioned in the news. Everyone can recognize Gabby Petito's face, but nobody can recognize, or even name the names of countless missing indigenous people.

Bibliography

Auerbach, David. "The Cosmology of Serialized Television." The American Reader,

theamericanreader.com/the-cosmology-of-serialized-television/.

Bella, Timothy. "Gabby Petito Was 'Crying Uncontrollably,' Had Argued with Fiance before
    Disappearance, Video Shows." The Washington Post. Washington, D.C: The Washington Post, 2021.

Binik, Oriana. The Fascination with Violence in Contemporary Society: When Crime is Sublime. Springer
    Nature, 2019.

Blow, Charles. "How White Women Use Themselves as Instruments of Terror." The New York
    Times, 27 May 2020, www.nytimes.com/2020/05/27/opinion/racism-white-women.html.

Burger, Pamela. "The Bloody History of the True Crime Genre." JSTOR Daily, 24 Aug. 2016.
    "Durkheim and the Functions of Crime." Academic Video Online, ShortCuts TV, 2020.

Chan, Melissa. "'Real People Keep Getting Re-traumatized.' The Human Cost of
    Binge-Watching True Crime Series." Time, 24 Apr. 2020,
    time.com/5825475/true-crime-victim-families/.

Durkheim and the Functions of Crime. Leicester, England: ShortCuts TV, 2020.

Edwards, Rebecca. Angels in the Machinery Gender in American Party Politics from the Civil
    War to the Progressive Era . Oxford University Press, 1997.

Eversley, Melanie. "When women of color disappear, who says their names?" The Guardian, 4
    Oct. 2021,
    www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/oct/04/when-women-of-color-disappear-who-says-their-names.

Flower, W H, and J Murie. "Account of the Dissection of a Bushwoman." Journal of anatomy and
    physiology 1, no. 2 (1867): 189–208.

FOX 13 Tampa Bay. "Gabby Petito case: Full Utah bodycam video." YouTube. n.d.
    https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fCGsW41aQEw.

Franks, Rachel. "True Crime: The Regular Reinvention of a Genre." Journal of Asia-Pacific
    Pop Culture, vol. 1, no. 2, Pennsylvania State University Press, 2016.

Hermann, Peter and Chang, Young. "Body Found in Park Is Missing Woman, 18; Police Don't KnowHow
    Woodlawn Student Died; Investigating as Homicide: FINAL Edition." The Sun (Baltimore, Md. :
    1837). Baltimore, Md: Tribune Publishing Company, LLC, 1999.

IE Staff. "Who Was Hae Min Lee? Remembering 'Serial' Victim as Her Family Slams New
    Trial." Inside Edition, 8 Feb. 2016,
    www.insideedition.com/14546-who-was-hae-min-lee-remembering-serial-victim-as-her-
    family-slams-new-trial.

Issamistry. "Days Consumed by Serial." Reddit, 2019,
    www.reddit.com/r/serialpodcast/comments/dygqgv/days_consumed_by_serial/.

Garcia, Venessa, and Samantha G. Arkerson. Crime, Media, and Reality: Examining Mixed Messages
    About Crime and Justice in Popular Media. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017.

Greenberg, Bradley S., and Edwin B. Parker. The Kennedy Assassination and the American Public: Social
    Communication in Crisis. Stanford University Press, 1965.

McCracken, Ellen. The "Serial" Podcast and Storytelling in the Digital Age. London: Routledge, 2017.

Namaste, Ki. "The Politics of Inside/Out: Queer Theory, Poststructuralism, and a
    Sociological Approach to Sexuality." Sociological Theory, vol. 12, no. 2, 1994,
    p. 220.

Oklahoma Historical Society. "Tulsa Race Massacre | The Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History
    and Culture." Ok History, 2020,
    www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry.php?entry=TU013.

Romano, Aja. "Gabby Petito's disappearance, and why it was absolutely everywhere,
    explained." Vox, 21 Sept. 2021,
    www.vox.com/22684204/gabby-petito-missing-updates-internet-web-sleuthing.

Roseman, Katherine. "How the Case of Gabrielle Petito Galvanized the Internet." The New York
    Times, 20 Sept. 2021,
    www.nytimes.com/2021/09/20/style/gabby-petito-case-tiktok-social-media.html.

Somerville, Siobhan B. Queering the Color Line: Race and the Invention of
    Homosexuality in American Culture. Duke UP, 2000.

Sommers, Zach. "Missing White Woman Syndrome: An Empirical Analysis of Race and
    Gender Disparities in Online News Coverage of Missing Persons." Journal of Criminal
    Law and Criminology, vol. 106, no. 4, Spring 2016,
    scholarlycommons.law.northwestern.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=7586&context=jclc.

Sorren, Martha. "The Case Against Adnan Syed Gives Hae Min Lee More Of Voice. Here's Who She
      Was." Refinery29, 10 Mar. 2019,
      www.refinery29.com/en-us/2019/03/226144/who-is-hae-min-lee-case-of-adnan-syed.
Stoddart, Scott F., and Michael Samuel. True Detective: Critical Essays on the HBO Series. Lanham:
      Lexington Books, 2017.
Stoneman, Ethan, and Joseph Packer. "Reel Cruelty: Voyeurism and Extra-Juridical Punishment
      in True-Crime Documentaries." Crime, Media, Culture, 2020.
This American Life. "Serial." Season 1, 3 Oct. 2014, Spotify.
      open.spotify.com/show/5wMPFS9B5V7gg6hZ3UZ7hf?si=7531963e00cc4b29.
Wiltenburg, Joy. "True Crime: The Origins of Modern Sensationalism." The American
      Historical Review, vol. 109, no. 5, Dec. 2004.

Media Bibliography

"A Narrative of the Mysterious and Dreadful Murder of Mr W Weare." Law Book Exchange. 1824.
      https://www.lawbookexchange.com/pages/books/71688/trials-john-thurtell-william-probert-j-
      hunt/a-narrative-of-the-mysterious-and-dreadful-murder-of-mr-w-weare.
Love and Beauty--Sartjee the Hottentot Venus. [England] : Pubd. October 1811 by Christopher
      Crupper Rumford, 1811
Red White & Bethune. "Is this Gabby Petito's Van caught on Youtuber's Camera? READ
      DESCRIPTION." YouTube. n.d. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PBp3aNAGuFM.
Taylor, and Adams. "Restoration of Dr. Parkman's Skeleton." JSTOR. 1850.
      https://daily.jstor.org/bloody-history-of-true-crime-genre/.
"The North Port Police Department and other law officials search the vast Carleton Reservein Sarasota,
      Fla., for Brian Launderie on Sept. 18." USA Today. n.d.
      https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2021/09/19/gabby-petito-mystery-prompts-searches-
      police-social-media-sleuths/8410170002/.
This American Chart. "How Unhealthy is Your Obsession with Serial?" Twitter. Last modified
      December 11, 2014. https://twitter.com/ThisAmerChart/status/543159880056467456.
Trial and Conviction of Geroge S. Twitchell, Jr., for Murder of Mrs. Mary E. Hill, His Mother-in-Law.
      Barclay & Co, 1869.

GIVE ME YOUR DATA

Email *

SUBSCRIBE