

I'll Be Gone in the Dark

Michelle McNamara

About the Book: I'll Be Gone in the Dark: One Woman's Obsessive Search for the Golden State Killer is a true crime book by the American writer Michelle McNamara about the investigation of the Golden State Killer.

About the Author: Michelle Eileen McNamara (1970-2016) was an American true crime author. She was the author of the true crime book I'll Be Gone in the Dark: One Woman's Obsessive Search for the Golden State Killer and helped coin the moniker "Golden State Killer". Her book was turned into a 6-episode documentary series on HBO, by the same name 'I'LL Be Gone in the Dark' in 2020.

People/Victims

- Claude Snelling – (1975) – Murder victim
- Sheila – (1976) – Rape victim
- Jane Carson – (1976) – Rape victim
- Julie Miller- (1976)-Rape victim
- Fiona Williams – (1977) – Rape victim
- Kathy – (1978) – Rape victim
- Esther McDonald – (1978) – Rape victim
- Katie & Brian Maggiore – (1978) – Murder victims
- Debra Manning & Robert Offerman – (1979) – Murder victims
- Charlene & Lyman Smith – (1980) – Murder victims
- Patrice & Keith Harrington – (1980) – Murder victims.
- Manuela Witthuhn – (1981) – Murder victim
- Cheri Domingo & Gregory Sanchez – (1981) – Murder victims
- Janelle Cruz – (1986) – Murder victim

Investigators/Support

- **Sacramento County Sheriff Department:** Investigator Jim Bevins, Detective Ken Clark, Detective Carol Daly, Detective Richard Shelby
- **Contra Costa County Sheriff Department:** Detective Larry Crompton, Criminalist Paul Holes, Chief John Murdock
- **Visalia Police Department:** Detective Bill McGowen
- **Orange County:** Criminalist Mary Hong, Investigator Erika Hutchcraft, Investigator Larry Pool, Criminalist Jim White, Detective Fred Ray

- **Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office**-Detective Fred Ray
- **Golden State Killer** – Responsible for at 50 sexual assaults and at least 10 murders throughout Northern and Southern California. (5 jurisdictions) Active for nearly 40 years. First known as the East Area Rapist (EAR).
- **Paul Haynes** – “The Kid” – Internet researcher who frequently posted on the Golden State Killer Internet boards. Helped finish McNamara’s book after her death.
- **Billy Jensen** – Acclaimed investigative journalist. Helped finish McNamara’s book after her death.
- **Kathleen Lombardo** – Michelle’s neighbor who was murdered while jogging when Michelle was a 14 (in 1984). The crime was never solved.
- **Patton Oswalt** – Actor. Michelle’s husband. Helped finish McNamara’s book after her death.
- **Larry Pool** – Investigator in the Countywide Unsolved Crimes Unit. (CLUE). Helped link the Ventura crimes to the Orange County crimes.
- **Gillian Flynn**- Author.

Discussion Questions:

- What did you like about the book/dislike? Have you read the book before? What was your impressions the second time around?
- What did you think about the author going back and forth in the timeline? Why do you think that was?
- What do you think of the term “obsessive” in true crime? Do you think Michelle went to far with her research?
- What do you think of Michelle inserting herself in the story? Does it work? Why/Why not?
- What is your opinion about the detectives? The police? The investigation back in the 70’s and 80’s as a whole?
- What do you think of the “amateur sleuths/detectives” who help solve crimes?

Read Alike:

I know Who You Are by Barbara Rae- Venter

Unmasked: My life Solving America’s Cold Cases by Paul Holes

American Predator by Maureen Callahan