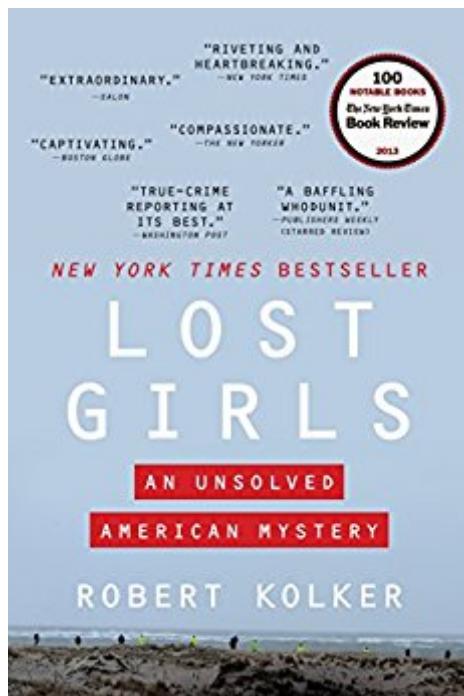


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Lost Girls: An Unsolved American Mystery



Synopsis

Award-winning investigative reporter Robert Kolker delivers a haunting and humanizing account of the true-life search for a serial killer still at large on Long Island, in a compelling tale of unsolved murder and Internet prostitution. One late spring evening in 2010, Shannan Gilbert, after running through the oceanfront community of Oak Beach screaming for her life, went missing. No one who had heard of her disappearance thought much about what had happened to the twenty-four-year-old: she was a Craigslist prostitute who had been fleeing a scene—of what, no one could be sure. The Suffolk County Police, too, seemed to have paid little attention—until seven months later, when an unexpected discovery in a bramble alongside a nearby highway turned up four bodies, all evenly spaced, all wrapped in burlap. But none of them Shannan's. There was Maureen Brainard-Barnes, last seen at Penn Station in Manhattan three years earlier, and Melissa Barthelemy, last seen in the Bronx in 2009. There was Megan Waterman, last seen leaving a hotel in Hauppauge, Long Island, just a month after Shannan's disappearance in 2010, and Amber Lynn Costello, last seen leaving a house in West Babylon a few months later that same year. Like Shannan, all four women were petite and in their twenties, they all came from out of town to work as escorts, and they all advertised on Craigslist and its competitor, Backpage. In a triumph of reporting—and in a riveting narrative—Robert Kolker presents the first detailed look at the shadow world of escorts in the Internet age, where making a living is easier than ever and the dangers remain all too real. He has talked exhaustively with the friends and family of each woman to reveal the three-dimensional truths about their lives, the struggling towns they came from, and the dreams they chased. And he has gained unique access to the Oak Beach neighborhood that has found itself the focus of national media scrutiny—where the police have flailed, the body count has risen, and the neighbors have begun pointing fingers at one another. There, in a remote community, out of sight of the beaches and marinas scattered along the South Shore barrier islands, the women's stories come together in death and dark mystery. Lost Girls is a portrait not just of five women, but of unsolved murder in an idyllic part of America, of the underside of the Internet, and of the secrets we keep without admitting to ourselves that we keep them.

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Customer Reviews

I was from this area, so decided to read this book. After awhile it became confusing, who was who's family and such. Interesting subject, but I found myself checking how many pages were left till I was done.

Very well written account of the 11 young girls who went missing on Long Island NY. It focuses on their lives, and what brought them to all wind up out there. One victim, Shannon, is the subject of debate, on whether she was murdered, or was it just an accident. Her family believes it was murder, and the evidence seems to point that way, or lack of it. The coroner didn't seem to do a very through job, nor did the police. These young girls were escorts, and to all, it seems they were throwaways, except for the families that loved them, and kept looking. This is this author's first book, and I cannot wait for his next.

This was a very good read. The author takes you into the lives of the victims so that you care about them - they're no longer just missing girls, they become real people. I feel we lose that in our society, especially when it comes to women who sell their bodies. I thoroughly enjoyed this book, despite a few errors.

This story is just that...sad. I gave it 4 stars because it took me quite a while to keep the people and their families and friends straight. I now understand why the author wrote it as he did. All lives matter, and the loss of any life is sad. This book takes you in depth into the lives of the victims, their families and associates. It provides multiple scenarios of possible motives and killers. It truly is a fascinating mystery, if only it had not occurred in our country. Did the police do enough or the FBI, or was it not a priority for them due to the victims? Well worth reading!

Excellent book about five women who were forgotten by so many others. This is not a criticism of the book, but of two of the mothers. Mari and Lorraine irked the hell out of me. Playing the grieving mothers when they never played the role of mother when their daughters were alive. The reasons that many young women end up working as escorts are many. But for two of the women, I blame the mothers - Mari and Lorraine. However, I have the deepest sympathy for Lynn and Missy. I wish them closure and the best.

It was ok but the book was very long and I felt that there was way too much detail which made it drag on a bit. If it was half as long with half of the descriptions left out I think it would have been a great book but I just started skimming it towards the end just so I could finish. Also, I didn't really like that it skipped around so much. The book focuses on 5 girls, but the story bounces around between all of them instead of just focusing on one at a time so you kind of lose track of who's who. So in the end, it wasn't a bad book but it wasn't great either.

After watching The Vanishing Women series I was interested in learning more about the LISK. While this book was informative it was written like a voiceover for a documentary and was very confusing to follow. Going through and telling each girls beginning, then each girls middle, then each girls end it was very confusing to keep each story straight. Switching back and forth between the girls stories, with all the people introduced, made it difficult to not mix up details.

This is a story about girls with an unloving childhood who turn to "escort" services. The story tells of all the "johns" they hook up with, the drugs they take and how they get beat up by their pimps. If you're into true crime books, this one is okay but I've read better.

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