

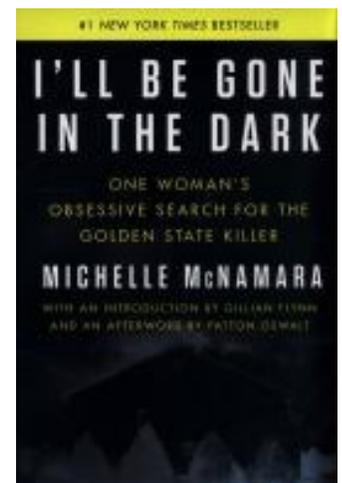


I'll Be Gone In The Dark: One Woman's Obsessive Search for the Golden State Killer

Michelle McNamara

Discussion Questions

1. The book's epigraph is the poem "Crime Club" by Weldon Kees. How does this poem set the tone for the story that follows?
2. Early in the book, Michelle McNamara writes, "I need to see his face. He loses his power when we know his face." What is the Golden State Killer's power, and how would he lose this if he was identified?
3. Michelle writes about an incident in her own neighborhood in Los Angeles, when her neighbor's house was robbed. "We make well-intentioned promises of protection we can't always keep. I'll look out for you." Do you think we, as a society, have lost a sense of neighborliness? What factors do you attribute to this loss? How have changes in technology, economics, architecture—house and planned community designs—impacted you, your neighborhood, and society? Is there a remedy to bring us closer together?
4. While *I'll Be Gone in the Dark* is a true crime story—a chronicle of the Golden State Killer—it is also a memoir. Why do you think she included the story of her childhood and relationship with her mother in this story? In the book Michelle confesses, "Writing this now, I'm struck by two incompatible truths that pain me. No one would have taken more joy from this book than my mother. And I probably wouldn't have felt the freedom to write it until she was gone." Why couldn't she write this book if her mother had still been alive? Why is it difficult for many people to reconcile parental expectations and disappointments with their own pursuits?
5. In following Michelle's search to unmask the GSK, what did you learn about her and the kind of person she is? How does getting to know her shape the story and your understanding of the case as it unfolds? Meeting Michelle in these pages, does she fit with your "profile" of a true crime obsessive? How would you characterize Michelle if you were introducing her to a friend?





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6. With the proliferation of genetic testing services, people can find out about their heritage and links to others who share their DNA. Currently, genetic testing services like 23andMe cannot upload the DNA of criminals for possible familial matches. The colleagues who finished the book after Michelle's death use a quote from Jurassic Park to highlight the issue: "Your scientists were so preoccupied with whether or not they could, they didn't stop to think if they should." Why can't law enforcement use these services as a tool? Should an exception be made in cases like GSK?

7. *I'll Be Gone in the Dark* is a living testament not only to Michelle McNamara and her unwavering commitment to this story, but to the law enforcement professionals who have pursued him. What are your impressions of the detectives? Did you find yourself judging them for failing to capture GSK?

About the Author

Michelle McNamara (1970-2016) was the author of the website Truecrimediary.com. She earned an MFA in fiction writing from the University of Minnesota, worked as a consultant for "Dateline NBC," and had sold television pilots to ABC and Fox and a screenplay to Paramount. She lived in Los Angeles, and is survived by her husband, Patton Oswalt, and their daughter, Alice.

This book is available for download as an eBook and eAudiobook. For more information, please visit lpl.overdrive.com or call 519-661-4600.

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