

MISSING IN THE MIDWEST

What happened to Joelle Lockwood?

A Documentary by Harper Brock

DIRECTED BY HARPER BROCK EXECUTIVE PRODUCER HARPER BROCK & AARON CECIL PRICE

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EDITED BY LANA SOBEL DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY ANTHONY PEZNOLA MUSIC BY BEN GORELICK

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Filmmaker Harper Brock journeys back to her roots to learn what happened to her cousin Joelle Lockwood whose 2014 abduction case shocked southwestern Indiana.

In addition to Joelle's first ever public interview, the documentary features discussions with law enforcement and her loved ones as they question the lines between good, bad, and evil.





EXCLUSIVE ACCESS

Our crew shot this short documentary in June of 2022. Due to my personal connection to my cousin Joelle, I have exclusive access to this story and all of its subjects. Joelle and the subjects of this documentary will only grant interviews regarding this case to our project. Additionally, due to Joelle's approval of the project, she allowed the sheriff's office to give us access to all the evidence, including crime scene photography from the kidnapping and torture that has never been seen by the public. This is also exclusive to our project.

WHAT HAPPENED TO JOELLE LOCKWOOD?

This story is not a whodunit, but rather an exploration into the psychological perspective of true-crime told in a non-exploitative way.

The documentary follows the pacing and narrative of a traditional true-crime film; however, Harper's journey to understand her cousin's abduction tells another story, one of survival and hope.

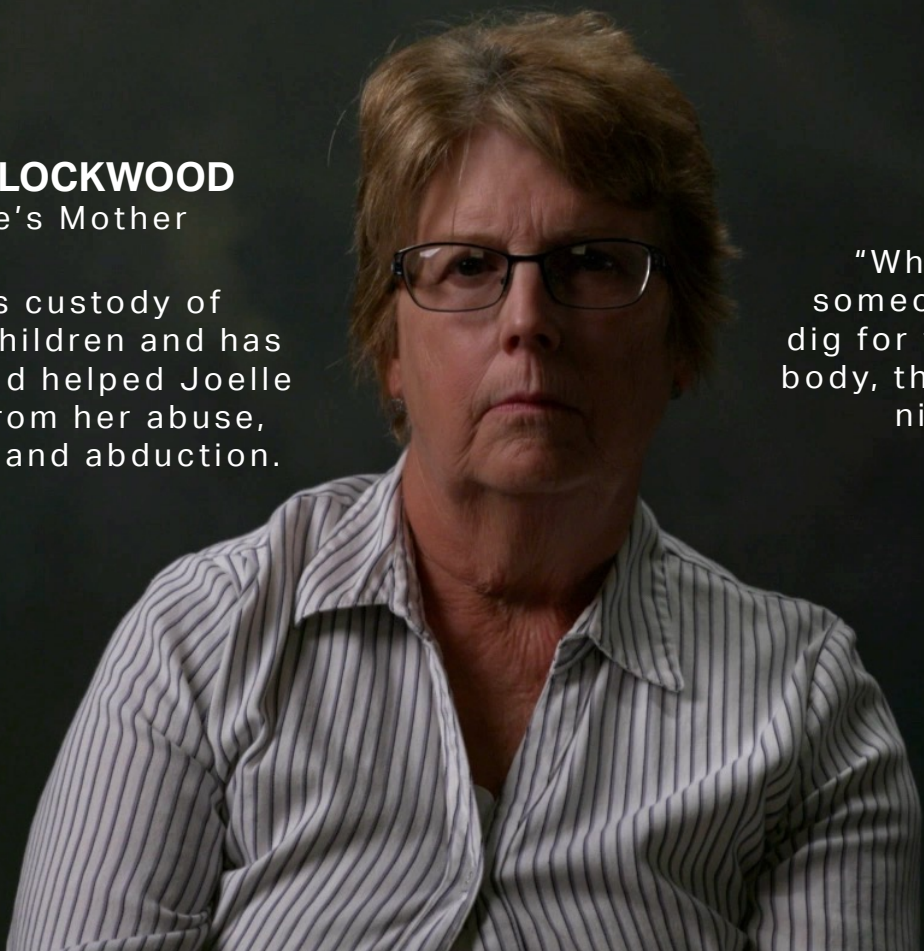
THE GIRL IN THE CAGE

Joelle Lockwood was born into a middle-class family on January 2nd, 1984. Growing up, Joelle was a cheery and pleasantly social young girl, involved in soccer and cheerleading. Joelle began struggling with drug addiction in high school, after being introduced to the act by her brother and boyfriend. In 2002, at the age of 18, Joelle gave birth to a baby boy. Three years later in 2005, Joelle had a baby girl. Joelle was not her children's primary caretaker but was actively involved in their lives. Joelle never missed her children's milestones; so when she didn't show up her daughter's birthday at the Evansville Otters game in July 2014, Joelle's family began to worry. It wasn't until later that the reason for her absence that day was uncovered.

On July 9th, 2014, Joelle was last seen walking near Park Street and West Florida Street in Evansville – clearly intoxicated. She was picked up that same night by Ricky Roy House Jr., who she thought she was friends with, and then held captive in his trailer by him and his girlfriend Kendra Sue Fox at 9800 block Story Street in Stewartsville, Indiana. Joelle was repeatedly raped, living in a cage, and being fed consistent doses of methamphetamine.



Ron Higgs, the ex-husband of Kendra, arrived at the trailer to sell her narcotics. It was then that he saw Joelle, begging him to help her escape. He returned the following day and offered Ricky money for Joelle. Ricky refused and an argument ensued, culminating in Ricky putting a shotgun in Ron's face. Thankfully, Ron was able to escape with Joelle and led her to safety. Joelle Lockwood escaped on September 6th, 2014, 59 days after she was abducted. Joelle had a second baby girl in April of 2017, living out a brighter future.


A portrait of Candy Lockwood, a woman with short brown hair and glasses, wearing a white and black striped button-down shirt. She has a serious expression and is looking directly at the camera.

CANDY LOCKWOOD

Joelle's Mother

She has custody of Joelle's children and has watched and helped Joelle recover from her abuse, addiction, and abduction.

"When you have someone starting to dig for your daughter's body, that is your worst nightmare."


A portrait of Amanda Crowe, a woman with long brown hair, wearing a light-colored top. She is smiling slightly and looking off to the side.

AMANDA CROWE

Joelle's Friend

She saw Joelle's addiction spiral and was heavily involved in the community search for Joelle.

"At first, it was kinda just like 'oh she will just pop back up in a couple of days' ... Candy had a gut feeling that something was different this time."

A middle-aged man with short, light-colored hair, wearing a red polo shirt. The shirt has "T. MAYHEW" embroidered on the left chest and the Evansville Police Department badge on the right chest. He is looking directly at the camera with a serious expression.

TONY MAYHEW
Lead Investigator

The Evansville Detective assigned to Joelle's case. He was heavily involved in the search for her during the 59 days she was missing.

"I guess in my mind I couldn't imagine any human being would be so messed up they could do that to another person."

A man with a shaved head and a goatee, wearing a dark polo shirt. He is looking slightly to the right of the camera with a serious expression. A Posey County Sheriff's Office badge is visible on his chest.

JEREMY FORTUNE
Detective

A Posey County Detective involved with Joelle's case. For the documentary, he showed us the evidence from the case such as the cage Joelle was kept in.

"As far as seeing actual human suffering, this was the worst I'd seen. And I've still seen in my career."



JOELLE LOCKWOOD

The survivor of the 2014 abduction case "the girl in the cage", she is a recovered drug addict, survivor of domestic abuse, and loving mother of three.

"It was horrible. I mean stuff you see in movies...I mean I don't even think they have it in movies...It definitely changed me the rest of my life. At the same time, though, it didn't change the person that I am. "

SYNOPSIS

What happens to those who survive these crimes of torture and abuse once the reporters pack up their bags for the next breaking story? *Missing in the Midwest* is a short documentary that offers insight into the life of a true-crime survivor, and the lives of those around them, as they try to move on from the events that made them a household name.



Referred in the media as “the girl in the cage”, Joelle Lockwood, remains in southwestern Indiana in the same town where she was abducted, raped, and abused back in 2014. She has never given a public interview...until now. Through Joelle’s optimistic, upbeat attitude and the testimonies of her loved ones and local law enforcement, our documentary creates a thrilling, suspenseful true-crime story that keeps the audience engaged and on the edge of their seats while also offering the psychological perspective of a violent crime told in a non exploitative way.

THEMES

IT'S ALL ABOUT **HOPE**. Statistically after two months of being missing, Joelle was not supposed to return to her family alive; however, the police, her friends, family, community of southwestern Indiana and Joelle herself never lost hope. Joelle has finally begun to process the events of 2014 and used the filming of this documentary as a therapeutic experience. Candy elaborates on this saying, "I felt that whatever horrors she had endured that, with her family and with the correct help, that we could help her get through whatever she would need to address in the coming months...there were times whenever the old Joelle would come out and I knew there was hope."



IT'S A STORY OF **SURVIVAL**. Joelle Lockwood has survived many traumatic experiences in her life. Before her abduction, Joelle had overcome domestic abuse and persevered through a challenging time and lifestyle. This documentary will never shine a dim, victimizing light on Joelle, rather a bright beam illuminating her survival, strength, and endurance. Joelle describes herself as a survivor rather than a victim and states, "My name is Joelle Lockwood, and I'm a survivor. Um, I'm a mom. I'm a daughter. I'm a aunt. I'm a sister. I'm a cousin. I'm a friend, a real good friend...And made it. I mean, I guess. Yeah, I made it."

IT IS A STORY ABOUT **TRANSITIONING INTO ADULTHOOD**. When you are thirteen you don't understand everything adults are talking about. They try to shelter you in order to protect you. Revisiting this story, eight years after, allowed Harper to close her childhood chapter and move forward from an event that shattered a part of her family.



IT'S SHOWING **COMPASSION AND CREATING A SENSE OF EMPOWERMENT FOR SURVIVORS**. Part of the reason Joelle agreed to do this documentary was because she wanted to reclaim her narrative and address some of the victim blaming. Joelle wanted to feel empowered when shooting this documentary. Many companies and networks have profited off of her horrors; however, Joelle was not just in charge of her story on screen but also off screen.

CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

TRUE-CRIME IS AS POPULAR AS EVER. However, with this rising trend there has come growing criticisms. The central opprobrium viewers often have with true crime is exploitation of the victims, without the family or survivor's consent.

For *Missing in the Midwest*, survivor Joelle Lockwood and her family have had complete transparency during the nearly two year process. Additionally, the true crime genre rarely focuses their story on the victim or how they are doing after the crime, commonly choosing to focus on the criminals. In our documentary, the scope of the story is structured around Joelle Lockwood's life, before, during, and after the abduction. The **audience of Gen-Z and millennial women** will be drawn to the honorable way Joelle's story was handled both on and off the screen.



Many true crime survivors rarely want to speak out in fear of not controlling their own narrative and facing the backlash of **victim blaming**. Victim blaming is a topic of conversation in this project and one of the main reasons why Joelle decided to do an interview and speak her truth. She wanted everyone to know that despite her past drug addiction, she was and is a good person, and a loving mother and no one deserves anything like what she went through.

ARTISTIC APPROACH

The story is told through the documentary lenses of expository and observational with reflexive moments. It is told through sit-down style interviews, various observational footage, archival photos, recreations, and news coverage. The reflexive moments force viewers to ponder the question: How can filmmakers create a safe space survivors of a horrific crime to feel comfortable enough to share their story?

The interviews are shot with an interrotron and in a studio, aside from Joelle's who is outside with a beautiful landscape behind her. This is meant to symbolize her freedom and also per her request. Aside from interviews, there are different observational moments such as visiting Candy and Amanda at home as they go through old pictures of Joelle and going to the evidence room with Detective Fortune to see the cage Joelle was held in and other various pieces of evidence.

I am also adding my personal ties to the story through first person narration. This allows the audience to attach themselves to a clear narrative train throughout the documentary and feel as if they are taking this journey with me.

-Director Harper Brock

KODAK PORTRA 400

43

KODAK PORTRA 400

12



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Growing up some of the most horrific, heinous, and inhumane crimes were presented to me as bedtime stories. My mom was the city criminal prosecutor of our small Midwestern town, and my father was a city police officer and detective. Despite my parents often talking about their work around me, I never felt like any of these evil acts could happen to me or someone I loved. I mean they were just stories, right?



In 2014, my cousin Joelle Lockwood went missing. I was only thirteen and did not fully understand the events that took place revolving around her abduction. My curiosity as a documentarian and family member of Joelle has led me right back to my roots in Southern Indiana where I will discover more about what it means to go missing as a woman in a rural town in the Midwest.

HARPER BROCK

DIRECTOR/EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Harper Brock is an alternative and unscripted producer based out of Los Angeles. She has worked as a production intern, documentary intern, post-production and outreach associate, and production coordinator for companies like 13th Gen, Visual 14, The Years Project, and Motto Pictures. Her most notable work was as the executive producer of Rural Revival, an award winning environmental short documentary that opened the North Dakota Environmental Film Festival and is being used as curriculum across the country at colleges such as the University of Cincinnati. She is currently employed by Archer Gray.

AARON CECIL PRICE

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER/POST SUPERVISOR

Aaron Cecil Price is an award-winning documentary film producer, currently producing four documentary films. Aaron was first interested in editing and post production but soon found his way into producing as a result of being an Associate Producer on the award-winning environmental documentary Rural Revival. Aaron worked with Volvo Cars, producing and editing a short documentary on the world-famous Carlisle Car Show in Carlisle, PA. Additionally, Aaron worked at the start-up tech company Jiive.

LEGAL REPRESENTATION



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Southwestern Law School (LA) is a top ten school for Entertainment and Media Law, Music Law, and Diversity according to The Hollywood Reporter. Their clinic provides pro bono legal services to independent filmmakers, series creators, writers, actors, legit stage producers, artists, and musicians.

FULL CREW LIST

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Aaron Cecil Price

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Williams

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D.W. Moffett

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Peznola

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DIT: Katrin Baum

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Noel Thompson, Palmer Brock

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DRONE OPERATORS: Megan Mullen, Sean
Murphy

RECREATIONS CREW

DIRECTORS OF PHOTOGRAPHY:

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GAFFER: Preston Leiner

KEY GRIP: Inês Sommer

GRIPS: Marin Rivera, Lena Faeskorn

DIT: Jacob Oliver

RECREATIONS CAST

JOELLE LOCKWOOD: Shannon Dempsey,
Joselyn Leon

PROM DATE: Eoin Crew

CANDY LOCKWOOD: Cara Shockley

TONY MAYHEW: Christopher Olszewski

RICKY HOUSE JR: Kevin Williams

SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER: Christina Caralis

GRAPHIC DESIGNER: Noel Thompson

BEHIND THE SCENES PHOTOGRAPHY:
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ADVISORY BOARD: Katie Bell, Kelsey Kline,
Jane Conn, Roy Lutz, Karen Grooms

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Andrea and Chris Brock, Doug Bracken, Elvin
Price, The Grays, Shane Ryan-Reid, Tim Lesiak



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A True Crime Documentary

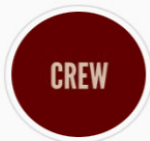
After years of silence, Joelle Lockwood and the community of Southwestern Indiana recount her 2014 abduction case that shocked the world.

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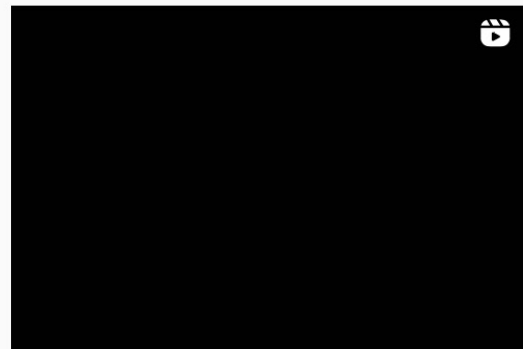
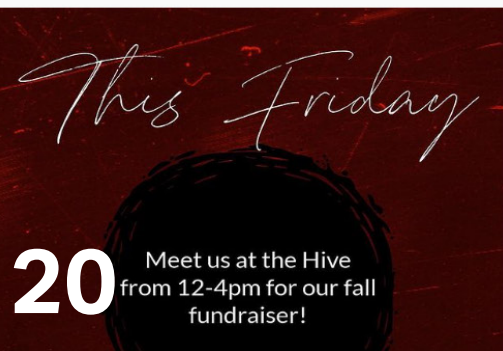


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