
BASED ON HUNDREDS
OF EXCLUSIVE
INTERVIEWS, THE
DEFINITIVE ACCOUNT
OF THE MURDERS OF
FOUR UNFORGETTABLE
COLLEGE STUDENTS BY A
COLD-BLOODED KILLER

The Idaho Four

*An
American
Tragedy*

James
Patterson

Vicky
Ward



The
Idaho
Four

An American Tragedy

James Patterson
and Vicky Ward



Little, Brown and Company
New York Boston London

Copyright © 2025 by James Patterson
Cover design by Gregg Kulick
Cover photograph by Hunter Johnson
Cover © 2025 Hachette Book Group, Inc.

Hachette Book Group supports the right to free expression and the value of copyright. The purpose of copyright is to encourage writers and artists to produce the creative works that enrich our culture.

The scanning, uploading, and distribution of this book without permission is a theft of the author's intellectual property. If you would like permission to use material from the book (other than for review purposes), please contact permissions@hbgusa.com. Thank you for your support of the author's rights.

Little, Brown and Company
Hachette Book Group
1290 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10104
littlebrown.com

First ebook edition: July 2025

Little, Brown and Company is a division of Hachette Book Group, Inc. The Little, Brown name and logo are trademarks of Hachette Book Group, Inc.

The publisher is not responsible for websites (or their content) that are not owned by the publisher.

The Hachette Speakers Bureau provides a wide range of authors for speaking events. To find out more, go to hachettespeakersbureau.com or email hachettespeakers@hbgusa.com.

Little, Brown and Company books may be purchased in bulk for business, educational, or promotional use. For information, please contact your local bookseller or the Hachette Book Group Special Markets Department at special.markets@hbgusa.com.

ISBN 9780316572866 (ebook)

LCCN 2025932205

E3-20250620-JV-NF-ORI

Contents

[Cover](#)

[Title Page](#)

[Copyright](#)

[Epigraph](#)

[Authors' Note](#)

[**PROLOGUE**](#)

[One](#)

[Two](#)

[Three](#)

[**PART ONE: The Innocents**](#)

[Chapter 1](#)

[Chapter 2](#)

[Chapter 3](#)

[Chapter 4](#)

[Chapter 5](#)

[Chapter 6](#)

[Chapter 7](#)

[Chapter 8](#)

[Chapter 9](#)

[Chapter 10](#)

[Chapter 11](#)

[Chapter 12](#)

[Chapter 13](#)

[Chapter 14](#)

[Chapter 15](#)

[Chapter 16](#)

[Chapter 17](#)

[Chapter 18](#)

[PART TWO: Inception](#)

[Chapter 19](#)

[Chapter 20](#)

[Chapter 21](#)

[Chapter 22](#)

[Chapter 23](#)

[Chapter 24](#)

[Chapter 25](#)

[Chapter 26](#)

[Chapter 27](#)

[Chapter 28](#)

[Chapter 29](#)

[Chapter 30](#)

[Chapter 31](#)

[Chapter 32](#)

[Chapter 33](#)

[Chapter 34](#)

[Chapter 35](#)

[Chapter 36](#)

[Chapter 37](#)

[Chapter 38](#)

[Chapter 39](#)

[Chapter 40](#)

[Chapter 41](#)

PART THREE: The First Six Weeks

[Chapter 42](#)

[Chapter 43](#)

[Chapter 44](#)

[Chapter 45](#)

[Chapter 46](#)

[Chapter 47](#)

[Chapter 48](#)

[Chapter 49](#)

[Chapter 50](#)

[Chapter 51](#)

[Chapter 52](#)

[Chapter 53](#)

[Chapter 54](#)

[Chapter 55](#)

[Chapter 56](#)

[Chapter 57](#)

[Chapter 58](#)

[Chapter 59](#)

[Chapter 60](#)

[Chapter 61](#)

[Chapter 62](#)

[Chapter 63](#)

[Chapter 64](#)

[Chapter 65](#)

[Chapter 66](#)

[Chapter 67](#)

[Chapter 68](#)

[Chapter 69](#)

[Chapter 70](#)

[Chapter 71](#)

[Chapter 72](#)

[Chapter 73](#)

[Chapter 74](#)

[Chapter 75](#)

[Chapter 76](#)

[Chapter 77](#)

[Chapter 78](#)

[Chapter 79](#)

[Chapter 80](#)

[Chapter 81](#)

[Chapter 82](#)

[Chapter 83](#)

[Chapter 84](#)

[Chapter 85](#)

[Chapter 86](#)

[Chapter 87](#)

[PART FOUR: On the Run](#)

[Chapter 88](#)

[Chapter 89](#)

[Chapter 90](#)

[Chapter 91](#)

[Chapter 92](#)

[Chapter 93](#)

[Chapter 94](#)

[Chapter 95](#)

[Chapter 96](#)

[Chapter 97](#)

[Chapter 98](#)

[Chapter 99](#)

[Chapter 100](#)

[Chapter 101](#)

[PART FIVE: Blame Game](#)

[Chapter 102](#)

[Chapter 103](#)

[Chapter 104](#)

[Chapter 105](#)

[Chapter 106](#)

[Chapter 107](#)

[Chapter 108](#)

[Chapter 109](#)

[Chapter 110](#)

[Chapter 111](#)

[Chapter 112](#)

[Chapter 113](#)

[Chapter 114](#)

[PART SIX: Warpath](#)

[Chapter 115](#)

[Chapter 116](#)

[Chapter 117](#)

[Chapter 118](#)

[Chapter 119](#)

[Chapter 120](#)

[Chapter 121](#)

[Chapter 122](#)

[Chapter 123](#)

[Chapter 124](#)

[Chapter 125](#)

[Chapter 126](#)

[Chapter 127](#)

[Chapter 128](#)

[Chapter 129](#)

[Chapter 130](#)

[Chapter 131](#)

[Chapter 132](#)

[Chapter 133](#)

[Chapter 134](#)

[Chapter 135](#)

[Chapter 136](#)

[Chapter 137](#)

[Chapter 138](#)

[Epilogue](#)

[Acknowledgments](#)

[Discover More](#)

[Notes](#)

[About the Authors](#)

I couldn't wrap my head around—there can't be this kind of evil in our midst... I just couldn't bring myself to do it, to think that. There's no way. This person *can't* be amongst us.

—Evan Ellis, *Morning News*,
Pullman Radio (Washington)

What's coming next from James Patterson?

Get on the list to find out about coming titles, deals, contests, appearances, and more!

[The official James Patterson newsletter.](#)



LITTLE, BROWN AND COMPANY

Authors' Note

This book reads like fiction, but none of it is made up. Every detail in these pages has been meticulously sourced through interviews or has been factually documented.

Bryan Kohberger has been charged with murdering Ethan Chapin, Xana Kernodle, Maddie Mogen, and Kaylee Goncalves, who became known as the Idaho Four, on November 13, 2022. His criminal trial is set to begin in August 2025. Of course, he is innocent until proven guilty.

The book does not offer a view on what the verdict will be. Rather, it is the story of four tragic murders and the impact of the crimes on a small American town.

This book could not have been written without the help and support of hundreds of people, including the 320 individually interviewed (some many times) by Vicky Ward.

We'd especially like to thank the victims' friends and family for giving us so much precious time, hospitality, and insight: the Chapin family and Hunter Johnson for sharing about Ethan; the Goncalves family for sharing about Kaylee; Ben Mogen and Kim Cheeley, aka Deedle, for sharing about Maddie; and the Alandt family—Karen, Matt, and Emily, Xana's best friend—for sharing so much about Xana.

Moscow, Idaho, police chief James Fry, now retired, generously gave his time and shared his insights on dealing with the most horrific crime of his