



## Summary

In May 1996, two skilled backcountry leaders, Lollie Winans and Julie Williams, entered Virginia's Shenandoah National Park for a week-long backcountry camping trip. The free-spirited and remarkable young couple had met and fallen in love the previous summer while working at a world-renowned outdoor program for women. During their final days in the park, they descended the narrow remnants of a trail and pitched their tent in a hidden spot. After the pair didn't return home as planned, park rangers found a scene of horror at their campsite, their tent slashed open, their beloved dog missing, and both women dead in their sleeping bags. The unsolved murders of Winans and Williams continue to haunt all who had encountered them or knew their story.

When award-winning journalist and outdoors expert Kathryn Miles begins looking into the case, she discovers conflicting evidence, mismatched timelines, and details that just don't add up. With unprecedented access to crucial crime-scene forensics and key witnesses—and with a growing sense of both mission and obsession—she begins to uncover the truth. An innocent man, Miles is convinced, has been under suspicion for decades, while the true culprit is a known serial killer, if only authorities would take a closer look.

Intimate, page-turning, and brilliantly reported, *Trailed* is a love story and a call to justice—and a searching and urgent plea to make wilderness a safe space for women—destined to become a true crime classic.



## About the Author

Kathryn Miles is an award-winning journalist and science writer. She received a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy from Saint Louis University and took both her Master of Arts and Doctorate in English from the University of Delaware. The long-time editor of *Hawk & Handsaw*, Miles served as professor of environmental studies and writing at Unity College from 2001-2015 and has since taught in several graduate schools and low residency-MFA programs. Miles is the author of five books: *Adventures with Ari*, *All Standing*, *Superstorm*, *Quakeland*, and *Trailed: One Woman's Quest to Solve the Shenandoah Murders*. Her essays and articles have appeared in publications including *Audubon*, *Best American Essays*, *The Boston Globe*, *Down East*, *Ecotone*, *History*, *National Geographic*, *The New York Times*, *Outside*, *Pacific Standard*, *Politico*, *Popular Mechanics*, and *Time*. She currently serves as a scholar-in-residence for the Maine Humanities Council, a visiting professor at Colby College, and a member of the Eastern Oregon University MFA faculty. She is also a private consultant available for emerging and established writers. Kathryn lives in Portland, Maine.

## Discussion Questions

1. What are your initial reactions to the book? How did it differ from other true crime books you may have read?
2. Does anyone in the group remember first hearing about Julie Williams and Lollie Winans murders in 1996? Describe what you remember from that time.
3. What difficulties do you think law enforcement could face investigating any crime that occurs in the wilderness?
4. If a crime occurs in a national park, what would you want the protocol to be for notifying hikers or locals?
5. Bill Thomas is the brother of Cathy Thomas, a victim in the Colonial Parkway Murders. Miles and Thomas connect over the cases. What are ways you think either case could be solved?
6. Wendy Carr in “Mindhunter” is inspired by Dr. Ann Burgess. If you were able to sit in Dr. Burgess’ class, what case would you wish to discuss and why?
7. What do you think about the possible alternative suspect Miles explores, serial killer Richard Marc Evonitz?
8. Kara Robinson Chamberlain was kidnapped by Evonitz and escaped when she was 15 years old. She details getting away from the serial killer and her story of survival in Oxygen’s “Escaping Captivity: The Kara Robinson Story.” Has anyone in the group watched the documentary special?
9. Look up what is the closest National Park to your neighborhood. Discuss what would you like to see done to ensure the wilderness is safer and inclusive for everyone?

Courtesy of

<https://www.oxygen.com/crime-news/oxygen-book-club-trailed-discussion-questions>

## Reviews

"This fascinating if often grim story is a must for true crime buffs." - Publishers Weekly (starred review)

"Mesmerizing journalism... Utterly engaging and always respectful, Trailed is highly recommended for true crime fans." - Booklist (starred review)

"Gripping and thoughtful, this book will appeal to those with an interest in true-crime stories and unsettling truths about places deemed safe for all... Disturbing and provocative." - Kirkus Reviews

"In an outdoor atmosphere where women, BIPOC, and LGBTQ+ individuals are working hard for equal footing, Trailed explores the root of sexism and bigotry in the outdoor community and becomes a rallying cry for moving forward together." - Jennifer Pharr Davis, National Geographic Adventurer of the Year and author of The Pursuit of Endurance

"Beyond an illumination of the murders of two young queer women, this book is a deeply empathetic inquiry into who has the right to venture into the woods and to do so safely. Miles' book is nothing less than a parsing of the forces that have long stood between women and queer people and their physical freedom." - Emma Copley Eisenberg, author of The Third Rainbow Girl

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