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[Investigative reporter Kristin Thorne brings her Medill skills to another level: making a true crime series come to life](https://magazine.medill.northwestern.edu/2023/investigative-reporter-kristin-thorne-brings-her-medill-skills-to-another-level-making-a-true-crime-series-come-to-life/) < <https://magazine.medill.northwestern.edu/2023/investigative-reporter-kristin-thorne-brings-her-medill-skills-to-another-level-making-a-true-crime-series-come-to-life/>>



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“Can you imagine waking up every day and not knowing where someone you loved is, even if they’re dead?” Thorne asked.

Kristin Thorne, an investigative reporter for WABC-TV Eyewitness News (MSJ05), has made a name for herself in the journalism industry with her in-depth reporting on local and national issues. Kristin’s latest project, a true-crime series called “Missing”, has gained attention and critical acclaim since its debut in December 2021.

Thorne joined the Eyewitness News team in January 2012, after working as a reporter at News 12 Westchester and WHTM-TV ABC 27 in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. She was promoted to the 7 On Your Side Investigates team in January 2022 after serving 10 years as the station’s Long Island Correspondent.

Thorne was initially inspired to shine a light on the stories of missing people after covering the disappearance of Gabby Petito. As the lead reporter for all of ABC News on this case, Thorne put her investigative skills to work, following the investigation to Florida to cover the search. At one of the press conferences, Joe Petito, Gabby’s father, looked over at the media and said, as Thorne recounted, “You need to do a better job of covering missing people, because more people should be getting the attention as my daughter did.”

“I remember having this lightning bolt moment where I thought, he’s absolutely right,” Thorne said.

Today, Thorne creates, writes, and produces “Missing”, which investigates the disappearances of people from the New York City area. Each episode explores

the story of a person who has gone missing.

As a journalist, Thorne has utilized the skills she has learned over the years, such as investigation and research, and describes herself as a detective and journalist.

“I am working as a detective for these families,” she said. “I search, investigate, knock on doors, doing anything a detective would do.”

For each case, Thorne puts together clues that lead to the missing person, and although she hasn’t found anybody yet, she believes in many of these cases, people have been killed, and she assumes that their bodies have been hidden, so she is tracking down murderers.

“That’s what I’m doing, I’m putting together clues that are going to lead me to the person who disposed of this person’s body,” Thorne said.

The alleged murderers from these cases have gotten away with their actions for many years, yet Thorne still has hope.

“Do I expect the person who killed these individuals to come forward? No, I don’t,” she said. “They’ve gotten away with it for this many years. What I’m hoping is that the people around them, after this amount of time, may have a piece of heart left in them that they can come forward and say, ‘I didn’t tell the truth back then.’”

While working on the next episodes of “Missing”, Thorne is still investigating and providing updates on past cases.

“These investigations keep going,” Thorne said. “It’s very challenging, but they’re always in my head.”

Thorne struggled to find the first case that she worked on. She called private investigators throughout New York City and ended up finding a private investigator on Long Island who got her in touch with the family of Leanne Marie Hausberg, a 14-year-old girl who went missing in 1999. She is the first episode of “Missing” and the youngest victim that Thorne has ever worked on. This family took a chance with Thorne without even knowing who she was, but because of this, the Hausberg family led her to the next cases she worked on.

“I always tell people I had no idea how easy it is to disappear,” Thorne said. “Even with cameras and phones, women have disappeared into thin air in New York City. And it’s not crazy, it happens all the time.”

Thorne’s passion for journalism began at Georgetown University in Washington D.C., where she graduated magna cum laude. She went on to earn her master’s degree in broadcast journalism from Medill. Thorne now shares her expertise with aspiring journalists as an adjunct professor at Hofstra University, teaching journalism at the Lawrence Herbert School of Communication.

“Medill formed me, it gave me the foundation that I needed to be in this line of work, and I still go back to concepts and techniques that I learned from my professors at Medill,” Thorne said.

When Thorne first got to Medill, she thought about doing production, but she was not sure if she wanted to be on air. Thorne refers back to former faculty member Anne Johnsos, who told her to try being on air, and if not, she could go

back to production. After giving it a try, she decided that was exactly what she wanted to do.

“That’s why I love the series,” Thorne said. “It allows me to do everything, I’m in the series, and I produce it, so it allows me to use all those skills.”

Thorne’s dedication to her work has not gone unnoticed, as “Missing” was recently nominated for Best Local TV News Series by the New York City Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists and won a New York Emmy Award in 2022 for best crime program. She has also earned an Emmy Award and numerous Emmy nominations, as well as two regional Edward R. Murrow Awards and several Folio awards, which honor the best of Long Island journalism. With her commitment to investigative reporting and compelling storytelling, Thorne has established herself as one of the most respected journalists in the industry today.

You can watch Missing on Hulu, on the ABC7 New York app on Roku, Amazon Fire, Apple TV, Google TV and at www.abc7ny.com/missing < <http://www.abc7ny.com/missing> >. Missing’s third season will premiere in May.



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