



The Topography of Evil: Notorious Northern California Murder Sites (Volume 1)

Mr. Marques Vickers

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The Topography of Evil: Notorious Northern California Murder Sites (Volume 1) Mr. Marques Vickers “The Topography of Evil: Notorious Northern California Murder Sites” is author and photographer Marques Vickers’ visual return to 43 infamous crime scenes detailing the shocking narratives behind each tragedy. Over 95 visual images amplify the experience by escorting the reader to the precise physical location, offering a critical context and perspective for understanding. Obscured by time and collective memory, revisiting a dormant crime scene is a process of comprehending the convergence of evil absorbed into a physical space. Crime scenes typically revert back into unremarkable landscape or unassuming buildings over the ensuing years and decades. Many are passed daily by pedestrian and vehicular traffic unaware of a location’s unique significance. The captured snapshots portray searing testimonies of extinguished lives removed by acts of violence. Northern California has been the residence for many notorious individual and serial killers including the Zodiac, Ted “Unabomber” Kaczynski, Dan White, Edmund Kemper III, Jim Jones, Richard Allen Davis, David Carpenter, Juan Corona and Scott Peterson. The media has renamed some such as the Trailside Killer, Co-ed Killer, Children of Thunder, Vampire of Sacramento, Zebra Killers and the Death House Landlady. Over 40+ convicted or deceased murderers are profiled including 24 who remain incarcerated and 5 awaiting execution at San Quentin Prison. The region has also buried notables among the profiled victims including San Francisco Mayor George Moscone, Supervisor Harvey Milk, Black Panther Huey P. Newton, Journalist Chauncey Bailey, Oscar Grant III, Polly Klaas, Lacy Peterson and 412 unclaimed bodies from the People’s Temple Massacre in Jonestown, Guyana. The Topography of Evil edition is segmented into seven categories including assassinations, abductions, historical legacies, reckless homicides, unsolved murders, rampage and serial killers. Within the context of each profile, crucial issues and questions are raised regarding capital punishment, American racial perceptions, parental influences, media reporting, public bias, self-incrimination protections and the fairness of judicial sentencing. A controversial alternative of voluntary euthanasia for the condemned is raised following the observation of California’s hopelessly backlogged number of inmates awaiting execution. Currently 743 inmates are sentenced to Death Row. Florida is second with 403 and Texas third at 276. The last California execution was in 2006. An extensive listing of fatality victims is included along with convicted and deceased killers. Each living convict still registered in the California penal system is identified by their respective current penitentiary, verdict and length of original jury sentencing. Vickers’s own introduction to the consequences of murder commenced with the 1968 killings of David Faraday and Betty Lou Jenson by the Zodiac killer in the author’s hometown. Faraday was an acquaintance of the author through Boy Scouts and his older sister knew both victims. His reflections on the trauma inflicted on his intimate suburban community correspond with the realization that a single homicide affects far more individuals than simply the victim. Hundreds and ultimately thousands may be touched by the arbitrariness and unfairness of life being terminated abruptly and prematurely. While acknowledging that some of the killings defy understanding and others may not properly be defined as evil, each remains uniquely tragic and generates substantial consequences. Remembering the legacies of the slain can seem uncomfortable for the living. Although absent from immediate view, the author stresses these victims should never be forgotten and merit our remembrance. Their legacies and the acts that ultimately killed them were final and irreversible. History weighs the significance.

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