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True Crime

Finding Amy: A True Story of Murder in Maine
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On a late October night in 2001, twenty-five-year-old Amy St. Laurent disappeared from the Old Port section of Portland, Maine during a night out with an acquaintance who was visiting from Florida. He returned to her apartment with her coat, backpack, and cell phone, but Amy was never seen alive again. Her family, acutely aware of her responsible habits, immediately became concerned and posted flyers bearing her picture. A phone call to an off-duty Portland police detective introduced the officers to Amy, whom they soon referred to as "Our Amy," so dedicated were they to finding her and prosecuting her killer.

The authors (Flora is a former assistant attorney general in Maine and the author of seven mystery novels, and Loughlin is a twenty-four-year veteran of the Portland Police Department) combine their viewpoints to tell the story of Amy and of the men and women who worked together, often in unprecedented ways. Public safety organizations are often territorial and protective of their cases, but during this investigation, the Maine Search and Rescue Service (with cadaver dogs) and the Maine Warden Service joined forces to find "a needle in a haystack" and give Amy the proper burial she deserved. At the painstakingly slow pace of proper evidence retrieval, technicians and detectives worked all night to recover Amy's body methodically.

The book tells the suspenseful story of the trail of Jeffrey “Russ” Gorman, the young man accused of Amy’s brutal murder. Gorman takes advantage of the lack of a body and leaves for Alabama. Fortunately for the detectives, he talks about his crime while he’s there. After Amy’s body is found, Gorman calls his mother and confesses. This remains a contentious point throughout the case. The detectives hope that all their hard work will be rewarded with a guilty verdict, but when Gorman’s mother suddenly “can’t recall” her grand jury testimony of her son’s confession to her, no one is at all sure of the outcome of the trial.

Readers of true crime will find this chronological tale of the search for Amy and her killer especially compelling because of the personal account of Loughlin, who was lieutenant of the Criminal Investigation Department when Amy disappeared. Loughlin’s journal, woven into Flora’s painstaking recreation of the work of the detectives, highlights the intense discussions that took place among the key players and gives readers a look at the slow, steady progress of real detectives on a real case. There are no “CSI solutions” that wrap up the case in a conveniently short time. There are no magic findings of DNA. What takes place in this true story is the passionate belief that they will find Amy, bring her killer to justice, and give closure to her family and to the people of Maine.

Lynn Evarts