

"How 'Missing White Woman Syndrome' Has Real Life Implications"

Link: ([770](#)) [How 'missing White woman syndrome' has real life implications - YouTube](#) [Sept. 22, 2021 (6 mins)]

[NOTE: Coined in 2004 by Gwen Ifill (journalist and co-anchor of PBS Newshour), the term “Missing White Woman Syndrome” refers to the overwhelming media coverage of that story. CNN and other media outlets repeatedly ran the Gabby Petito missing story often prioritizing it above all other news coverage. During that same time, over 700 million viewers watched coverage on Tik-Tok.]

While all agree that Gabby Petito and her family deserve answers and justice, this segment of CNN addresses the over representation of *missing white woman* in media coverage while missing Black and Brown women [and men] go unnamed and forever “missing”. This practice of prioritizing has implications including sending the message that Black, Indigenous, Latinx and other People of Color will not be searched for and thus are easier to abduct and “disappear”; their stories will not be covered; their trails will not be searched. Another factor highlighted is that over representation of “missing white woman” places pressure on law enforcement because the light is shining on them to find missing white woman—often young, pretty and of a higher social class. Rewards for these women also begin to rise as coverage expands. Ultimately, society’s value system is reflected again as BIPOC women’s families remain without the media resources to find their loved ones.

Gabby Petito Case Prompts 'Missing White Woman Syndrome'

Link: ([770](#)) [Gabby Petito Case Prompts 'Missing White Woman Syndrome' - YouTube](#) [Sept. 21, 2021 (8 mins)]

The Damage Report with John Iadarola and Nina Turner reacts to Joy Reid’s assertion that implicit bias places a missing white, young, upper-class woman above BIPOC women, as well as above other important news happening at the same time. Status is key here. Ms. Turner highlights a story from Cleveland where women—Black and often drug addicted—were being held captive; when one escaped and ran to the police, she was returned to her captive—likely because of her low status (think “caste”) which left her without the social capital to even be believed. How do “we see and respond” to all people, not just in the legal system but also in the media?

Lord Jamar on VladTV Not Contributing to "Missing White Girl Syndrome"

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U-qQDjU0AeY> [Sept. 2018 (4 mins)]

Warning: this link contains profanity. Three years before Ms. Petito went missing, American rapper, DJ, record producer, actor, social commentator, and podcaster Lord Jamar responds to interviewer Vlad regarding VladTV’s decision to not cover “missing white woman”. The two discuss this phenomenon as well as the overrepresentation of media coverage of men of color as criminals.

Additional Resources:

As Gabby Petito’s case continues to dominate the daily news cycle, Indigenous people are asking why their cases aren’t worthy of similar attention. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2021/09/24/gabby-petito-indigenous-people-missing-white-woman-syndrome/5846283001/>

Why Do Missing White Women Get More Media Coverage? Can We Convo | The Daily Show [Sept 30, 2021 (5 mins)] Using humor to make a painful point, Dulce Solan and Roy Wood, Jr talk about what the vast number of missing persons and what to do if you want your loved one (non-white, blond woman) to be searched for. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_bIEL7cSgFc

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r2aYUjr2Jag> [Sept, 30, 2021 ((27 mins)]

Democracy Now convenes a panel of experts to address the issues of how media and policing coverage practices vary widely when it comes to missing Americans, with a strong weight toward finding and protecting (young, affluent) white women. One member discusses the lack of coverage of missing Indigenous persons and the relationship that has to finding those persons. Another panelist, the Executive Producer of a podcast “Black Girl Gone,” highlights Black women and People of Color and describes how she tries to make those victims “relatable” – similar to practices in the coverage of Gabby Petito.