

OUTDOORS

When options run out

BY WAYNE THOMPSON

Over the course of time, many stories are documented pertaining to survival in the most challenging environmental conditions. Whether they be part of movie settings or real life situations, they attract big audiences and trigger many questions.

As the whole episode dissolves into the annals of crime mystery/history, it is appropriate to briefly recap the lead-up events to one of America's most publicized CSI cases ever documented.

It was late June when Brian Laundrie and Gabby Petito set out on a romantic dream journey to and through the Big Sky country of America's West.

The trip was documented day by day on cyber and other electronic media. But somehow, the dream adventure was to turn into a nightmarish ending.

By late August, the romance turned sour, with Laundrie returning home to Florida alone. A few weeks later, Petito's remains were discovered at the edge of a national park.

Local police and the FBI took on the investigation with input by multitudes of arm-chair detectives and as the search mounted for Laundrie, who had left for a supposed hike in a wilderness area, not to return, survival experts took to the media to speculate on possible outcomes.

Survival depends on many situational conditions. We are all told it depends on a subject's previous training and experience, in addition to equipment carried.

It was said by some that Laundrie could survive for weeks, maybe months. Family members admitted that Laundrie's survival skills were "mediocre" at best.

A month later, his body turned up in a swamp. And so the media coverage thus ends.

Although never mentioned in various media reports, the above episode strikes back to a similar case in northern Manitoba two years ago, when two young men suspected of (correction – "persons of interest" in) the murder of three people in northern BC were on the lam in the Gillam area. That too brought on much specu-

lation on possible survival scenarios of the pair - living it out in the wild like the bears, stealing a boat and heading up to Fort Churchill to climb aboard a ship heading back to Europe. In the end, the two were found dead, just on the outskirts of town.

There are many other stories of criminals and suspects - oops, "persons of interest" - in crimes, using their survival skills to evade capture. Some are caught within a short time while others remain on the loose for years.

Take the case of James Earl Ray, accused of killing Jack Ruby, charged with the murder of JFK back in 1963, who evaded the police network till he turned up in Toronto some five years later. He had finally run out of options.

It was the same with the Edwin Alonzo Boyd gang, who terrorized the Toronto area in a series of bank robberies and the murder of a Toronto police detective in 1953.

The gang managed to elude police forces till ultimate capture while sleeping in an abandoned barn on the city's outskirts.

Locally, a couple of crime scene episodes come to light. In the mid-1980's, three men who had escaped from penitentiary were nabbed in a rented house at the end of Law Road, outside of Chalk River, after being on the lam for a year - till options ran out.

The same could be said for Basil Borutski, who murdered three women in the Madawaska Valley area in 2015, who was caught hiding out at a brother's camp near Ottawa. His options had run out.

In any survival situation, lighting a fire, signalling, being visible, and good access to food, water and shelter are the means of getting through.

But for those on the CSI wanted list, the above only leads to early detection and capture.

Trying to hide out, especially for any length of time, proves to be especially challenging, even if impossible. As options run out, you're either caught, or end up dead.

County marks 100 days to Ontario Winter Games

With 100 days remaining until the opening ceremonies of Renfrew County 2022 Ontario Winter Games, politicians, sponsors and games' volunteer chairs gathered last week at the Best Western Hotel and Conference Centre in Pembroke to celebrate the importance of the milestone.

Over 2,300 athletes and about 1,000 coaches and officials from across Ontario will visit the county on the weekends of February 24-27 and March 3-6, 2022.

Another 5,000 visitors are anticipated to visit the region to support these young athletes.

The Honourable Lisa MacLeod, Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries, the ministry that oversees the Ontario Winter Games, was on hand to address the 70+ guests in attendance.

"Seeing social and economic activity come back post-Covid-19 through opportunities like the Ontario Winter Games is a sure sign of recovery. A true reflection of the double bottom line in action," said Minister MacLeod.

"On the social side we will once again see safe interactions and a return to sport the way we love it, while on the economic side the visitor economy will fill hotels, restaurants, and shops.

"The Ontario Winter Games in Renfrew County will be a turning point for our province."

Minister MacLeod also announced an additional funding block of \$400,000 being added by her ministry to assist

the Games' committee overcome budget challenges that they are experiencing due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Along with Minister MacLeod were MPP John Yakabuski's representative, and County of Renfrew Warden Debbie Robinson.

Yakabuski, who was not able to attend, shared his enthusiasm.

"As the Member of Provincial Parliament for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, I am ecstatic that the Ontario Winter Games will be held in Renfrew County.

"This is a wonderful opportunity to showcase Valley hospitality," he said.

"The athletes and their families will have the opportunity to experience the culture and beauty of the many communities in the county who will be hosting these athletic events.

"A big thank you to everyone who is contributing so much to making these games a success here at home."

"Organizing such a large event has been a lot of work for the volunteer chairs, and that effort, especially in these challenging times, has not gone unnoticed by council," said Robinson.

Youth athletes were represented by nine-year-old fencing prodigy Scarlett Aiqiqi of the Deep River Fencing Club.

Scarlett and her coach John Wills gave the attendees a fencing demonstration while Scarlett was cheered on by those in attendance.

Winter driving

Winter weather conditions are forecasted and the Upper Ottawa Valley detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) would like to remind motorists that adverse weather conditions put extra demands on you as a driver and on your vehicle's performance.

Police urge drivers to "stay alert, slow down, stay in control. These are three key elements to safe winter driving." Drive according to current road and weather conditions. Reduce your speed when adverse weather conditions arise.



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