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# Serial killer fears grip Texas community after dozens of bodies pulled from lake: 'Cannot be ignored'

Forensic psychiatrist questions authorities' dismissal of Lady Bird Lake serial killer theory as another young man is found dead



By **Julia Bonavita** · Fox News

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Over a dozen bodies found in Austin, Texas's Lady Bird Lake

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The waters of [a Texas lake](#) remain shrouded in mystery as dozens of young men's bodies continue to be pulled from the depths, putting a community on edge as rumors of a serial killer continue to swirl.

Last month, authorities discovered yet another man's body in Austin's Lady Bird Lake, bringing the total count to a whopping 38 individuals recovered from the waters since 2022.

Officials responded to an early-morning 911 call reporting a body in the water and subsequently located the deceased man, the [Austin Police Department](#) (APD) said in a statement to Fox News Digital.

[BODY FOUND IN SAME AUSTIN LAKE WHERE 6 OTHER DECEASED INDIVIDUALS WERE FOUND IN 2024](#)



The shore of Lady Bird Lake in Austin, Texas on May 15, 2025. (Jay Janner/American-Statesman/USA Today Network)

There was no trauma to the body, and police do not suspect foul play was involved, the APD said. The department is currently working to determine whether the body recovered is a 17-year-old male reported missing two days earlier.

The teen's family called police after he got out of his kayak without wearing a life jacket and subsequently disappeared while enjoying a day on the lake, authorities said. Investigators believe he had unknowingly stepped on an underwater shelf and failed to resurface after his kayak was later recovered with his backpack and life jacket still inside.

Police revealed that the individual found in the lake was wearing the same clothing as the missing teenager, but identification is pending.

#### **AUSTIN SERIAL KILLER FEARS: POLICE PULL CAR FROM LADY BIRD LAKE**



Kayakers and paddleboarders gather together on Lady Bird Lake to celebrate Memorial Day in Austin, Texas on May 27, 2024. (Jay Janner/American-Statesman/USA Today Network)

The discovery comes as fears of [a serial killer](#) lurking in the community's midst continue to loom over the area, with local authorities continuing to downplay the risk.

"The denials by law enforcement and other authorities that these cases are murders or the work of a serial killer are premature," Dr. Carole Lieberman, a forensic psychiatrist and expert trial witness, told Fox News Digital. "They don't want the public to panic about a possible serial killer, so they are making light of all the deaths."

Since 2022, at least 38 bodies have been recovered in or around Lady Bird Lake, [according to data](#) obtained by Fox 7. Of the nearly three dozen bodies found, 30 have reportedly been men, with approximately 60 percent between 30 and 49 years old.

#### **IS THERE A NEW ENGLAND SERIAL KILLER? FORMER FBI AGENT WITH REGIONAL TIES REVEALS HIS THEORY**



Police patrol downtown Rainey Street after several bodies have been discovered in nearby Lady Bird Lake in Austin, Texas. (Matteo Cina/Fox News Digital)

Despite local authorities' insistence that there is no ongoing risk to the public, Lieberman points to the sheer amount of consistencies among the victims' ages and gender.

"The fact that 30 of the 38 bodies found in and around Lady Bird Lake since 2022 are male does suggest that this could be the work of a serial killer whose preferred target is men," Lieberman said. "If the deaths were simply due to accidental drowning or suicide, there would not be a preponderance of one gender over the other."

One [common theory](#) circulating throughout the community suggests the deaths are a result of date-rape drugs slipped into the drinks of victims visiting bars on nearby Rainey Street – a popular hotspot for partying near the water.

#### **BODY OF MISSING FATHER OF FIVE FOUND IN GEORGIA LAKE AFTER KAYAKING TRIP**

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In February 2023, the body of Jason John, 30, was pulled from the lake one week after he [was last seen](#) on Rainey Street. Two months later, Jonathan Honey, 33, was found one day after he was last seen visiting a food truck parked on the popular street.

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"[Date-rape drugs] could render them easy prey for a thief and killer," Lieberman said. "Older men could similarly be easy prey."

Throughout the past three years, the primary cause of death of the bodies pulled from Lady Bird Lake has been attributed to accidental drownings, Fox 7 reported. Suicide reportedly remains the second leading cause, as well as natural causes and drug overdoses.

**[NEW ENGLAND SERIAL KILLER FEARS: MASSACHUSETTS INVESTIGATORS IDENTIFY BODY PULLED FROM RIVER](#)**



Of the 38 deaths, only one has been [ruled a murder](#) – with roughly half a dozen cases remaining unknown.

"One cannot rule out that a so-called 'accidental' drowning isn't the result of a murderer unless there were witnesses," Lieberman told Fox News Digital. "Murderers can use drowning as their [modus operandi]. Similarly, suicides must be proven, not just assumed if someone has been depressed."

Additionally, Lieberman pointed to the attractiveness of disposing human remains in bodies of water.

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"Water can cause decomposition of the body and can wash away evidence, from fingerprints to DNA," Lieberman said. "If the water has movement, such as a river or stream, it can propel the body far from the actual scene of the crime, making it more complicated to find the killer. Some killers choose water-based crime scenes with the hopes that their murder will be misconstrued as drowning, which can make it harder, because it can be difficult to differentiate drowning from murder."

In [a 2023 statement](#), APD looked to quell the public's fears surrounding the possibility of a serial killer targeting men in the area, citing the lake's dangerous conditions when mixed with alcohol.

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"One common theme of the drownings in Austin [in 2023] is the combination of alcohol and easy access to Lady Bird Lake, which has numerous access points," the department said.

Police pointed out that the vast majority of deaths at the time occurred after the park's closing time and encouraged community members to be mindful of local rules.

"APD has not found any evidence to support that these deaths are suspicious or connected to criminal activity," the department said in a statement to Fox News Digital. "All of these incidents have been thoroughly investigated, and the vast majority have been determined to involve factors such as mental health issues, natural causes like heart attacks, inability to swim, substance use or underlying medical conditions."

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However, as more and more victims continue to fall to the waters of Lady Bird Lake, Lieberman calls on authorities to not turn a blind eye to the morbid coincidences surrounding the deaths.

"Unless law enforcement finds some other explanation for the large number of deaths in and around Lady Bird Lake in recent years," Lieberman said. "Then I think that the likelihood of a serial killer cannot be ignored."

*Fox News Digital's Michael Ruiz contributed to this report.*

Julia Bonavita is a U.S. Writer for Fox News Digital and a Fox Flight Team drone pilot. You can follow her at [@juliabonavita13](#) on all platforms and send story tips to [julia.bonavita@fox.com](mailto:julia.bonavita@fox.com).

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Other than age, which is quite broad, the story leaves out all other demographics. It does seem like something is amiss with such a high body count though.

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