

Hayden Panettiere, Brian Hickerson and their complicated relationship

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AI Overview

Hayden Panettiere's tumultuous relationship with Brian Hickerson, marked by multiple domestic violence

[Full Summary](#)

2026 memoir and her death on Aug. 16, 2026.

What did Hayden Panettiere detail in her memoir about Brian Hickerson? →

What legal setback did Brian Hickerson face before Hayden Panettiere's death? →

Why did Hayden Panettiere and Brian Hickerson reportedly reconcile before her death? →

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[Hayden Panettiere](#) and [Brian Hickerson](#) shared a turbulent, yearslong relationship that repeatedly made headlines.

The "[Nashville](#)" actress, who died Aug. 16 at 36, began dating Hickerson in 2018 following the end of her relationship with former fiancé [Wladimir Klitschko](#), with whom she shared daughter Kaya.

Over the years, Panettiere and Hickerson's on-again, off-again relationship became increasingly complicated as he faced multiple arrests and criminal charges stemming from incidents involving the actress.

Panettiere later detailed the alleged abuse she endured during their relationship in her [2026 memoir](#), "[This Is Me: A Reckoning](#)," describing a dark period in her life that unfolded alongside her struggles with alcohol and drug addiction.

Hayden Panettiere's mom breaks silence: ['Nashville' star's mother slams Brian Hickerson](#)

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Hayden Panettiere, Brian Hickerson's relationship marred by domestic violence allegations

In May 2019, police arrested Hickerson following an alleged altercation with Panettiere, and he was charged with felony domestic violence. A judge issued a protective order barring him from contacting or coming [within 100 yards of the actress](#). The case was later dismissed on the grounds that prosecutors "could not secure a material witness."

Hayden Panettiere death updates: [Brian Hickerson was with actress when she died](#)

Hickerson was arrested again in Wyoming on Valentine's Day [2020 following another alleged altercation](#) with Panettiere. Months later, Los Angeles prosecutors charged him with four counts of injuring a spouse or cohabitant, two counts of assault with a deadly weapon, one count of dissuading a witness and one misdemeanor battery count, stemming from several alleged incidents involving the actress between 2019 and 2020.

In April 2021, Hickerson pleaded no contest to two felony counts of injuring a spouse or girlfriend and was [sentenced to 45 days in jail](#), four years of probation and 52 domestic violence classes.

"I am coming forward with the truth about what happened to me with the hope that my story will empower others in abusive relationships to get the help they need and deserve. I am prepared to do my part to make sure this man never hurts anyone again," Panettiere said on an [Instagram post](#) from July 2020. "I'm grateful for my support system, which helped me find the courage to regain my voice and my life."

Hayden Panettiere alleged Brian Hickerson abuse in memoir

The actress described several alleged violent incidents with Hickerson in her memoir and reflected on the difficulty she faced trying to leave the relationship.

Hickerson later publicly acknowledged his arrest in connection with the abuse allegations involving Panettiere, during an [interview with TMZ](#) in May. "I got arrested for abusing her and I wouldn't blame her friend for being pissed off," Hickerson said. "I don't really have much to say on that."

When asked about certain segments of Panettiere's new memoir where she details the abuse she endured, Hickerson said. "She wasn't talking about me, she was talking about [her terrible mother](#)."

Hayden Panettiere, Brian Hickerson reportedly reconciled before her death

More recently, Panettiere and Hickerson fueled speculation that they had reconciled after they were photographed together at Los Angeles International Airport in March. Hickerson also told TMZ he still had feelings for Panettiere and had not ruled out the possibility of marrying her one day.

Reports following Panettiere's death indicated the two had [allegedly rekindled](#) their romantic relationship privately. They reportedly traveled from Los Angeles to South Carolina the day before Panettiere died, according to [E! News](#).

Brian Hickerson faced court setback days before Hayden Panettiere's death

Three days before Panettiere's death, Hickerson suffered a legal setback connected to his previous domestic violence case involving the actress. A Los Angeles judge on Aug. 13 denied Hickerson's request to have his felony convictions reduced to misdemeanors and to have the convictions expunged, according to court documents obtained by [TMZ](#).

Panettiere was found unresponsive at a residence in Greenville, South Carolina, on Aug. 16. She was pronounced dead on the scene Greenville Police Sgt. Jonathan Bragg told USA TODAY in a statement. *If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, you can call the [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Helpline](#) at 800-662-HELP (4357).*

If you or someone you know is experiencing abuse, call 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or text "START" to 88788.

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