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PHOTO TAKEN BY GABBY PETITO SHOWS SHE WAS VIOLENTLY ASSAULTED AND WAS LIKELY STRANGLED AND/OR SUFFOCATED PRIOR TO HER INTERACTION WITH MOAB POLICE ON AUGUST 12, 2021



The photo above, found on Gabby's cell phone, was taken by was taken by Gabby in the back of her van in Moab, Utah, on August 12, 2021, prior to her stop by Moab City Police. According to available data, the image was taken a 4:37 PM, at or before the approximate time of the initial 911 call.

As alleged in the [Complaint](#), filed on November 3, 2022, “Gabby took a photograph of her injury, which shows blood across her nose and left eye. Gabby pointed out the injury to Officer Pratt, but he ignored her and did nothing more to investigate or document the injury.” The photo demonstrates the cut previously noted on her left cheek as well as blood smeared from her forehead, across her left eye and cheek and over her nose, indicating that she was grabbed over her face in such a way that her airways were likely obstructed. Gabby documented the injury and, during the stop, attempted to tell the Moab officers, however, the seriousness and significance this type of assault and injury was completely ignored.



Petito: "He like grabbed my face, like, I guess. He didn't like hit me in the face. He didn't like punch me in the face."

Officer: "Did he slap your face or what?"

Petito: "Well, he like grabbed me, like, with his nail, and I guess that's why it hurts. I definitely have a cut. Like, I can feel it."

The officers ignored this critical evidence and did nothing to follow up on, or to further investigate, Gabby's report that Brian had violently grabbed her face and cut her cheek. The Utah Criminal Code's definition of aggravated assault includes any act that impedes the breathing or circulation through an act of violence by "applying pressure to the neck or throat" or by "obstructing the nose, mouth, or airway." UCA 26-5-103 (b). Domestic violence experts who have reviewed the evidence have stated that ["all the clues lead us to conclude that Gabby was most likely strangled and/or suffocated by Brian before the police arrived on August 12, 2021."](#) Domestic violence research shows that if a victim of intimate partner violence is strangled or suffocated even one time, she is 750% more likely to be killed by that person.

This tragic photo of Gabby makes several critical points clear:

- Gabby was NOT the “predominant aggressor” when she was assaulted by Laundrie on August 12, 2021.
- Gabby was likely strangled and/or suffocated by Laundrie before the police arrived on August 12, 2021.
- Moab Police failed to recognize the violent grabbing of Gabby’s face and obstruction of her nose, mouth, and airways as a critical precursor to her eventual death by strangulation that occurred a short time later.
- Moab Police failed to listen to Gabby, failed to investigate her injuries and the seriousness of her assault, and failed to follow their own training, policies, and Utah law.

The Petito family is heartbroken to see how Moab police officers failed to recognize the danger Gabby was in, they remain committed to making sure legislators and law enforcement will have the necessary training and resources to identify and prevent similar tragedies in the future. Last week, while in Utah to support passage of a law to require use of training and procedures to more effectively identify and assess these dangers, Nichole Schmidt gave the following statement: “Our daughter, Gabby, died as a result of intimate partner violence that could have and should have been identified by law enforcement using the lethality assessment. We believe that if the lethality assessment had been properly used in her situation, together with the recommended support and resources, Gabby would still be alive today.”



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