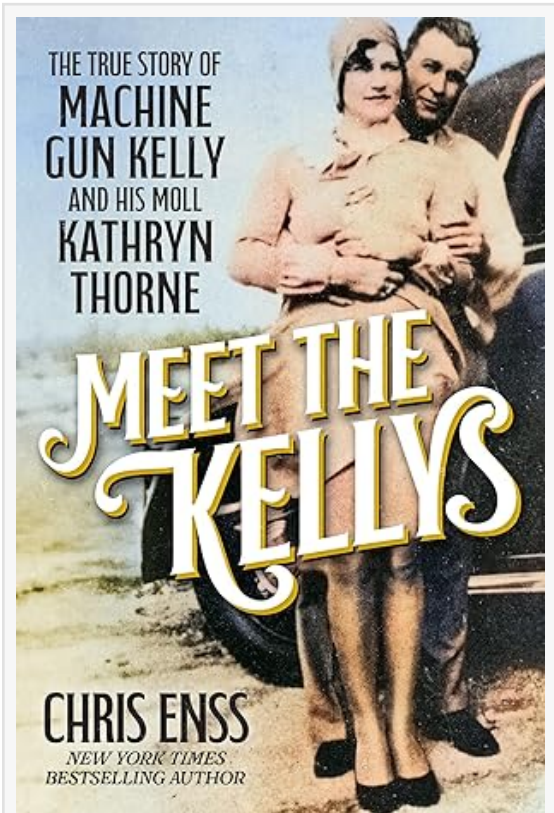


# Small-Time Bootlegger and Wife Who Became Outlaw Legends Investigated in New Book

GRASS VALLEY, CA, UNITED STATES, May 27, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Kidnapping was a lucrative, dangerous epidemic in the United States between 1925 and 1934. It was a quick, lawless way for desperate people, caught in the harsh times of The Dust Bowl and The Great Depression, to find a way out of crushing poverty. Few states were exempt from this shocking new type of crime, and victims and their families could not be spared. Limited resources and a lack of manpower inhibited local law enforcement agencies from effectively tracking criminals who had taken individuals and held them for ransom.

[MEET THE KELLYS](#) is a fascinating true crime narrative of the infamous husband-and-wife team, Machine Gun Kelly and his wife Kathryn, who would become America's most well-known gangsters of the 1930s, and whose exploits would transform American law enforcement. Graduating from bootlegging to kidnapping, the widely publicized case of their victim, oil tycoon Charles Urschel, would be their downfall.

After the horrific Lindbergh Baby kidnapping – the abduction and murder of the child of America's most famous aviator – the Bureau of Investigations worked swiftly to track and prosecute the perpetrators. While J. Edgar Hoover was handling the Lindbergh case, the Kellys were planning their next kidnapping.



Meet the Kellys

“

A pulpy true-crime account of one of America's most infamous kidnappings.”

*Kirkus Reviews*

Author Chris Enss, who has written dozens of books about remarkable women of The American West, is also a licensed private investigator and brings her talents in both fields to this gripping tale of one of America's most dangerous criminal couples. They say behind every great man, there's a great woman. George Kelly would have been

satisfied to be a third-rate gangster if not for his wife. Kathryn had ambition and desired more than the slim rewards to be made from bootlegging or robbing a bank. And he would pay for his

undying love for his wife. He would die in jail, and Kathryn would spend half her life in prison as a widow.

MACHINE GUN KELLY reveals:

- How then “Bureau of Investigations” director J. Edgar Hoover used the Kellys’ kidnapping case to bolster his own profile in the press by adopting entirely new ways of investigating, increasing manpower & new techniques like fingerprinting and arrests across state lines;
- How Kathryn was able to track down to the minute the whereabouts of Charles Urschel by reading the broadsheets, announcing his marriage, amassed wealth, honeymoon, vacation trips, even interior shots of their palatial house in Oklahoma City;
- Kelly and Thorne were the first criminals to be convicted under the Federal Kidnapping Act;
- In the midst of their trial’s media circus, Kathryn would throw her infamous husband under the bus, painting herself as a naïve young woman taken advantage of by her conniving husband, in order to avoid life in prison;
- The publicity surrounding this remarkable case would become an important windfall for Hoover’s agency, raising its profile as the nation’s government police force. Henceforth, it would become known as The Federal Bureau of Investigation.

About the Author:

Chris Enss is a New York Times bestselling author of more than 50 books. Focusing on extraordinary women throughout history, her work has been honored with nine Will Rogers Medallion Awards, two Elmer Kelton Book Awards, an Oklahoma Center for the Book Award, three Foreword Review Magazine Book Awards, the Laura Downing Journalism Award, and a Willa Cather Award from Women Writing the West for scholarly nonfiction. Enss’s books include *The Doctor Was A Woman: Stories of the First Female Physicians on the Frontier*, *An Open Secret: The Story of Deadwood’s Most Notorious Bordellos*, *Ma Barker: America’s Most Wanted Mother*, *The Trials of Annie Oakley*, and *Straight Lady: The Life and Times of Margaret Dumont “The Fifth Marx Brother.”*

Meet the Kellys: The [True Story of Machine Gun Kelly](#) and His Moll Kathryn Thorne is available everywhere books are sold at [Kensingtonbooks.com](#), [Amazon.com](#), [Barnes&Noble.com](#), and [Booksamillion.com](#).

For review copies, interviews, excerpts, or more information, contact: Ann Pryor, Senior Communications Manager, Kensington Books [apryor@kensingtonbooks.com](mailto:apryor@kensingtonbooks.com)/212.407.1526

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