

The Canyon That Justin Bieber Closed

In November 2015, global pop star Justin Bieber released the music video for his hit single *"I'll Show You."* The video featured stunning imagery of Iceland's untamed landscapes: rolling green hills, icy glaciers, and roaring waterfalls. However, one specific location captured the world's attention more than any other: **Fyath-raur-glyoo-vur**, a breathtaking, two-kilometer-long canyon in South Iceland that was formed during the last Ice Age. Before the music video was released, **Fyath-raur-glyoo-vur** was a peaceful, relatively unknown spot. Only local residents and a handful of adventurous hikers visited the area each year. The canyon's ecosystem was extremely delicate, covered by a thick layer of ancient green moss that takes decades to grow back once damaged.

The video transformed the location overnight. Within weeks, the music video accumulated over 450 million views on YouTube. Tourism boards in Iceland noticed an immediate surge in search queries regarding the exact coordinates of the canyon. Fans, travel bloggers, and influencers from across the globe began traveling to Iceland with one clear objective: to recreate Bieber's iconic scenes.

Between 2015 and 2018, annual visitor numbers to **Fyath-raur-glyoo-vur** skyrocketed from a modest 50,000 to well over 300,000. This massive influx of human traffic had a catastrophic impact on the site.

The narrow footpaths surrounding the gorge were completely overwhelmed. Visitors frequently ignored protective barriers and warning signs, stepping off the designated trails to snap selfies on the edge of dangerous cliffs. During the wet spring months, when the ground thawed, foot traffic turned the fragile moss into deep pools of mud. People walked around the mud, widening the paths and destroying even more of the surrounding vegetation.

By early 2019, the situation had reached a breaking point. The Environment Agency of Iceland realized that the canyon could no longer cope with the pressure.

In March 2019, **Gvooth-moon-dur In-gee Gvooth-brand-son**, Iceland's Minister for the Environment, made an unprecedented decision. He officially ordered the complete closure of **Fyath-raur-glyoo-vur** Canyon to all public access. Rangers installed heavy wooden gates and security personnel were posted to turn away disappointed tourists. The closure made international headlines. Media outlets from the BBC to CNN reported on the story, framing it as a cautionary tale of "celebrity tourism" and social media exposure.

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Naturally, many critics pointed the finger directly at Justin Bieber, accusing him of reckless behavior and blaming his video for triggering the ecological disaster. In the music video, Bieber was seen running across sensitive mossy hills, hanging off the edges of cliffs, and swimming in freezing glacial rivers—actions that local authorities strongly advise against due to safety and conservation concerns.

However, Minister **Gvooth-brand-son** took a more balanced approach when addressing the press. He refused to hold the singer solely responsible for the crisis. "It is a bit too simple to blame Justin Bieber," **Gvooth-brand-son** stated in a television interview. "Rash behavior by one famous person can certainly have a huge impact, but the underlying issue is how we manage public attention and visitor infrastructure. The responsibility lies with tourists who choose to ignore local rules, and with us as a government to protect our natural heritage.

During the four-month shutdown, environmental teams worked tirelessly to restore the damage. Rangers built elevated wooden walkways, constructed sturdy viewing platforms, and laid down protective mats to allow the vegetation to recover. Soil scientists worked on re-seeding the damaged areas and stabilizing the eroding footpaths.

The canyon was gradually reopened in the summer of 2019, but under strictly enforced regulations. Visitors were required to stay on the newly built wooden paths at all times, and heavy fines were introduced for anyone caught trespassing into protected zones. The story of **Fyath-raur-glyoo-vur** became a turning point for Iceland's tourism policy. The government recognized that promoting the country's natural wonders required equal investment in infrastructure and environmental protection. It also sparked a global conversation about "responsible travel ethics" among young tourists.

Today, **Fyath-raur-glyoo-vur** remains open to the public, but the experience is vastly different from what it was a decade ago. The new walkways keep visitors safe while allowing the ancient moss to heal underneath.

The episode served as a powerful reminder of how modern pop culture and digital media can transform a remote, fragile landscape in an instant—and why protecting nature requires constant vigilance, strict boundaries, and respect from every traveler.