

FINAL JUSTICE BOOK ONE



SARAH THORPE

FINAL JUSTICE

Book One

By

Sarah Thorpe



©2004 MAGS INC.

Written by Simon Wentluke Illustrations by Teeje

No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by information storage and retrieval system, without written permission by the author and Mags Inc.

All incidents and persons depicted in this book are fictitious. Any resemblance to persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental and unintentional and is intended for purely parody purposes.

Author's note:

This story is another Annie Wolfe story, although it doesn't look like it from the beginning. The story is therefore closely linked to the other Annie Wolfe stories I have written. In order to get the full background of Annie Wolfe and other persons in this book, I recommend that you also read 'The Elusive Strangler', 'The Ultimate Decision', 'The Case of the Living Dead', and 'Got You at Last'. All books are available from Mags Inc.

CHAPTER 1

20 years ago

It was a warm Monday morning in July. Everything looked quiet in the small California town. The local bank opened at nine, and at that same moment three motor-cycles parked outside. Three young men walked the few steps up to the door and walked in. When they entered the empty bank ski masks were covering their faces. Suddenly one of them shouted out: “Be still! This is a hold-up! Prepare to load these bags with money.” The three men threw three bags at the tellers.

The tellers were facing three guns and did as they were told. In the same moment one of the robbers noticed that the safe was open, and he jumped over the counter and into the safe. After about one minute he returned with a sack full of money. Once again he jumped the counter and headed for the door. At that same moment they heard sirens in the background, and the three robbers hurried out the door. As they exited, one of the robbers was about to shoot a warning shot at the ceiling, but he lost his footing for a second and the shot went wild. In fact it hit one of the tellers in the throat.

Once outside the robbers jumped on three motorcycles and sped off in three different directions.

The first police car to reach the scene was driven by young David Miller. He was just out of the police academy and had been stationed in the town for only one month. He saw the three cycles heading off in different directions and decided to go for the one heading the same way as he. Half a mile down the street the motorcycle turned right and headed out towards the desert. Before reaching the open lands, the motorcycle had to make a left turn. There he suddenly met an approaching car and had to make an abrupt maneuver, and the driver lost control and skidded out of the road. The driver and the cycle went in different directions. David had great difficulties keeping his car under control, but managed at last. He stopped the car and ran over to the guy lying there.

The first thing he did was to pick up the robber’s gun. He saw right away that it hadn’t been fired; in fact it wasn’t even loaded! Then he walked over to the person on the ground and took a look. The person didn’t move, his left leg was in an

awkward angle his right arm was broken and he was unconscious. David walked back to his car and called for an ambulance and some back up.

The ambulance and the back-up crew arrived shortly after. They took some pictures before the robber was taken to the hospital for treatment. After the police officers had finished their work, David returned to the police station. There he learned that the second robber had crashed into a truck while trying to avoid a pedestrian, and had been killed instantly. He had been identified as 17-year- old Carlos Sanchez, a student at the local High School! A few minutes later they called from the hospital and said that the guy David had followed was another local High School student, Andy McNeill! He was now on the operation table to be treated for his multiple fractures.

In the bank the police investigators were at work checking out any possible evidence. They had found the shell from the gun, and some finger prints several places in the vault. The teller who had been hit had been taken to the hospital as well, and he too was on the operation table. He was in a very critical condition and he might not live through the operation.

Back at the station the police officers were going through the case so far. Their first question was where the third robber had gone. None of them had actually seen him, but one eyewitness had pointed out that she had seen one motorcycle heading off in the direction of the police station. Then it dawned on David, he had actually seen the guy, but paid no attention to him since he was coming towards him! At the same moment the same revelation came to the driver of the second police car as well. The robber had actually escaped right under their nose! Immediately an APB was sent out, but considering the time that had elapsed since the robbery, he was probably long gone by now.

But who could the third guy be? Both Andy and Carlos were well known around town, and they were known to hang around with two other guys, Jack Frost and Keith Willard. “We can easily check on them,” one officer said, “they are supposed to work at the local warehouse this summer. If someone will come with me, we can go down and check right away.”

David volunteered to come along, and off they went. They were back an hour later, telling their colleagues that Jack and Keith had been at the warehouse since 8:30 that morning, and never left the building. At least a dozen people could verify their alibi. So who was the mysterious third person?

Late in the afternoon news came from the hospital. Both the teller and the robber had been through surgery- The teller was still in a critical condition while the robber was sound asleep after having been treated for three fractures, one leg, one arm and one rib. He would eventually come through with no further complications. The hospital had also done tests on the two robbers' blood, and found that they were both very high on drugs.

Next day at noon words came from the hospital that Andy was awake and could talk. David hurried to Andy's bed to make a formal arrest. He found Andy literally covered in plaster. His left leg was covered in plaster from hip to ankle and it was hung up to keep it away from moving. Andy's right arm was plastered almost from the shoulder and down to his wrist. It too was kept in a position so it couldn't move. "Hello Andy," he said, "How are things?"

"Not bad considering the situation," Andy replied.

"I guess you know why I'm here."

"I do. You are here to make a formal arrest."

"That's right." David went on to read Andy his rights in order to make it all formal. Andy couldn't be taken to jail in his current condition, so the hospital had to serve as a temporary prison. An officer would be stationed in the room just in case.

When the formalities were over, Andy asked David: "What has happened to Carlos and Jack?"

"Carlos is dead. He drove straight into a truck. Jack is at the warehouse working."

"I'm so sorry for Carlos, he was after all such a good friend. But how can Jack be at the warehouse? He was with Carlos and me yesterday."

"Sorry, but Jack was at the warehouse working the whole morning. We have several witnesses who can verify that."

“But I saw him put on his ski mask and helmet. There must be some mistake here.”

“No mistake. Jack was at the warehouse with Keith and at least a dozen others.”

“Then he’s playing some kind of trick on us. I can swear he was with us.”

“Maybe, but I advise you to say no more. Wait til you have a lawyer present.”

At that moment a young girl came through the door and threw her arms around Andy. It was Cecilia, Jack Frost’s sister and Andy’s girlfriend. “Why could you do such a stupid thing,” she said, “now we will have no chance to get married and get children. And what about school? You have one year left in High School and had planned to go to college and study electronic engineering. And I bet that stupid brother of mine had something to do with it. He’s been acting so strangely the last year. It is as he is almost another person.”

“I’m sorry, darling, but it is all our own fault. We had joked about doing something daring one day, but never anything like this. I guess the drugs we took over the weekend had something to do with it.”

“Maybe, but don’t say no more while the police is here. I will find a good lawyer for you. One that can help you out of the mess you’re in.”

At this moment David stepped out of the room and called up his colleagues at the station. He told the men what Andy had said, and proposed that someone went to the warehouse to take Jack’s fingerprints, just in case. If they didn’t match the ones that were found in the vault, he would be cleared for good.

David was relieved from the hospital duty at six in the afternoon. By then a lawyer had been in contact with Andy, and they had started to prepare Andy’s defense.

Next morning a team went to take Jack’s prints. Just in case they took Keith’s as well. Back at the station they decided to check Carlos and Andy’s prints also, just in case one of them had been in the vault. All tests came out negative. This meant that an unknown person had been in the bank with Andy and Carlos, a person they both had believed was Jack.

Three days after the robbery, the wounded teller died from complications following the strains after the operation. This meant that the town now had a murder case on its hands.

Andy stayed in bed for a couple of weeks. When school started again he was allowed to follow classes, but not to speak with any of his classmates or teachers. In the beginning he needed help to get around, but it didn't take long before he could move around on his own. In class he was always accompanied by a police officer that made sure he didn't violate the restraining orders he had been given.

The trial started in October. By that time there were no clues about the whereabouts of the third person, so Andy was the only one being charged. The prosecutor tried to get him convicted for accessory to murder, but with the help of a clever attorney and Police Officer David Miller's testimony, he was not found guilty in those charges. He was, however, convicted in committing bank robbery and was sentenced to 20 years in a minimum-security prison. This meant that he could receive visitors regularly and sometimes also be on the outside as long as he was accompanied with a warden. He was also given the permission pursue a college education while in prison.

Andy served his sentence full time. Cecilia paid him frequent visits and she stayed loyal to him all these years. They even managed to get married while Andy was still in prison, and once they had some time for themselves, Andy managed to get Cecilia pregnant, not only once, but also twice. Andy also got his college degree in Electronic Engineering and he was able to prove many times that he was a clever and ingenious engineer.

Through all the years he spent in prison, there was one thing that bothered him. How could Jack Frost seemingly be at two places at the same time? He knew that Jack had been with him on the robbery, so how could he be at the warehouse establishing a perfect alibi? Even his fingerprints didn't match the ones in the bank's safe. He vowed to himself that he one day would find Jack and confront him. He wanted the truth from his old buddy.

David also wondered about Andy's strong statement that Jack was there at the robbery. He thought some kind of trick was involved, but couldn't understand how.

To have the answer to that question we must go back in time to the day Jack Frost turned 16 years old. On that day his parents revealed the secret that he was not their biological child, but had been adopted at a very young age. The reason was that his parents had tried for more than ten years to get a child, but to no avail. They then contacted an adoption agency and they promised to help them. Before the baby was handed over to them, Jack mother had become pregnant the normal way, and gave birth to Cecilia three months before Jack was handed over from the agency. At this time Jack was already 14 months old. Two years later another baby was born to the Frost family, a boy that was named Charles. The information that Jack was adopted, would not be told to anybody outside the closest family.

After having learned that he was adopted, Jack sat out on a search to find his real mother and father. He managed to get in touch with the adoption agency, and after some deliberations he got some information. He was told that his real parents were petty criminals and drug addicts. His parents had never married. His father was shot in a gang shoot-out two years after he was born while his mother died of an overdose about the same time.

This came as a chock to Jack; he who had led such a sheltered life was actually son of criminals! It was hard to believe. One thing though, despite their lifestyle, they must have been intelligent. Jack's school records proved that. But he learned another thing that surprised him even more; he learned that he had a twin brother. They were identical twins and his brother lived not too far away from him. In addition he had a sister only one year younger than him and who had been adopted along with his twin brother. He just had to meet them!

The opportunity came two weeks later. Jack was in the town where his twin was living and suddenly saw him walking down the street all alone. He took a good look at him and could see right away that they looked exactly alike. They walked in the same way; they had the same haircut and wore similar types of clothes. Jack studied him for about ten minutes before he dared to approach him. At that moment they were in a park and Jack walked up to him and said: "Hi, do I know you from somewhere?"

The guy looked up and looked straight into Jack's face.

After a few seconds he realized what he saw and looked more and more perplexed. He was looking into his own mirror image! When he regained his posture he managed to say: “Who are you? You look just like myself.”

“I am your twin brother,” Jack replied.

“How can that be?”

“Do you have some time and I can explain it all.”

The guy nodded and they found a bench in a quiet part of the park and sat down. There Jack explained everything he had found out so far. His newly found twin had a lot of questions. And Jack had an answer to nearly all of them. After some minutes nature took over and it was as if they had known each other for a long time. The guy’s name was Bob, and his sister’s was Eve. From that moment on they promised to stay close the rest of their lives.

Bob had to go home for dinner, but returned afterwards with his sister. The girl was also Jack’s sister of course. The rest of the weekend the three of them spent almost all their time together. They also agreed to keep the news away from their families.

Over the next months Jack and Bob spent lots of time together. Just after Christmas they got more audacious and started to switch places; Jack stayed at Bob’s place and vice versa. None of the parents seemed to notice a thing; and neither did any of their friends. They even switched schools without anybody noticing. Even Jack’s three very close friends couldn’t tell them apart. This is how this alibi thing came about. Jack, Keith, Andy and Carlos laid the plan for the robbery one day when they were high on drugs. Since only three was needed, Keith was drawn out to not participate. So on the day of the robbery Keith was surprised to see Jack at the warehouse, but he was just told that Carlos and Andy could do it on their own, and he settled with that.

It was Jack that was in the bank and climbed the counter and took the money from the safe. Bob doubled for him at the warehouse and thereby giving Jack a perfect alibi. After Jack escaped from the town, he drove to an abandoned mine he knew about and dumped the bike in a deep hole several hundred feet inside. Then he started waiting for the news and friends. He soon learned that his friends would

never show up, so he decided to spend some days in the wilderness alone. Early Saturday morning Bob arrived on Jack's own bike. He gave Jack the status of the situation. After that they drove to Bob's hometown where he received a considerable amount of money, money he stored away in a safe place.

Jack returned home the same day. He hid the rest of the money where nobody but himself could find it. He never visited Andy at the hospital, he was afraid he might create a scene. Neither Jack nor Keith was charged with anything concerning the robbery; they weren't even called in as witnesses. Keith never received any money from Jack. For him Jack never participated and thereby didn't have any money. He was just as puzzled as the rest of the community who the third person had been. Jack didn't tell his story to Keith; officially Andy and Carlos had decided to go on their own. The fact that a third person was there, he didn't know anything about.

The following spring Jack and Keith graduated from High School. Jack went to college to study law, while Keith went to a university to study geology. At Christmas Jack dropped out of college and left for Europe. No one ever heard from him since. The fact that Bob and Eve went with him was something that nobody took notice of.