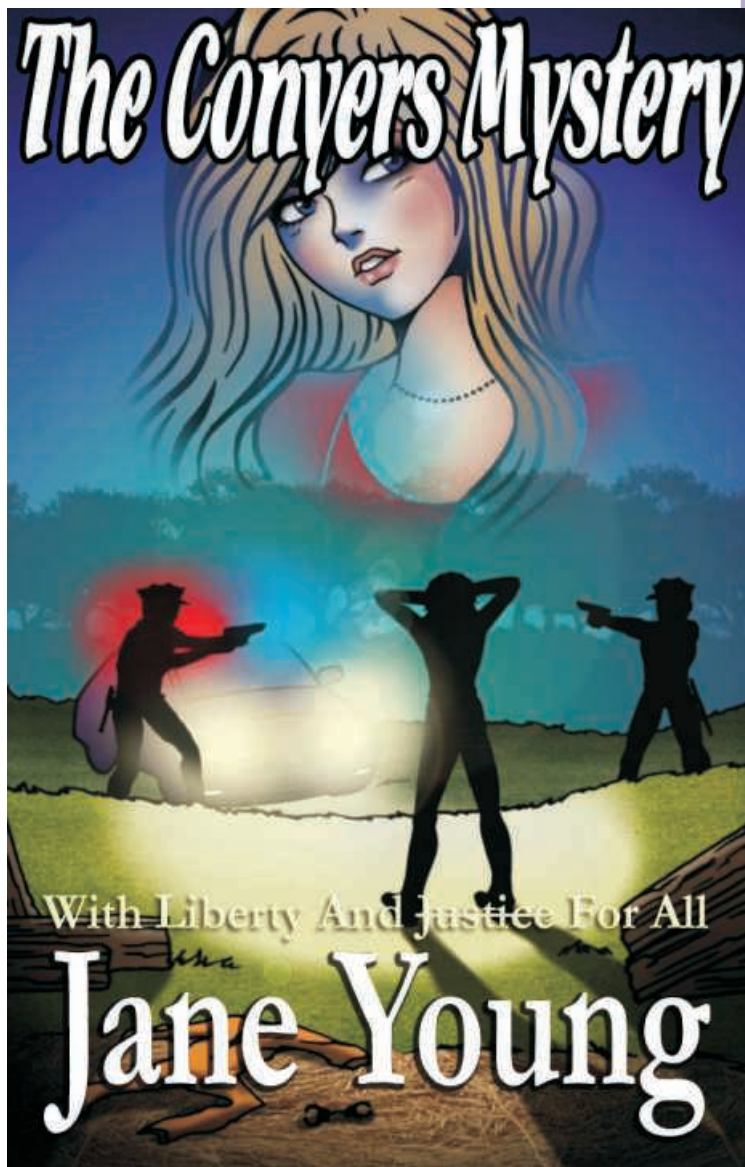


# The Conyers Mystery



With Liberty And Justice For All

Jane Young

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# THE CONYERS MYSTERY

(With “LIBERTY and JUSTICE” for All)

**By Jane Young**

2009

MacKendra Wilson sat at her desk writing a cover letter to the strangest story she had ever investigated. This was her third attempt to put a cover letter with this story. She had finished documenting the story the previous week. This mystery was to be put in an archive at the State University.

**The Conyers Mystery** could not be released from its prison until Marie Rebecca Conyers and Beverly

Ann Drake were deceased. I know those two principals have received payment from the state. A condition of that payment is their continued silence of the actual case events.

I have not been threatened, but promised a law suit by both Beverly and Marie should I try to publish the story at any time prior to their deaths.

Mac knew she could serialize the story in the newspaper and be protected by the freedom of the press provisions of the U.S. Constitution, but she liked both Bev and Marie and decided it should remain an enigma for about 50 years. She had therefore contracted with State University to be stewards of the tale.

MacKendra "Mac" Wilson, to her friends, put the cover letter aside. She sat drinking coffee and thinking about the tale. Although the mystery contains facts that are provable and the story should be regarded as a true crime, enough holes exist in the provable facts that it reads like fiction.

The whole package being turned over the University should be notarized Mac rationalized. That wouldn't provide copyright protection, but it was better than nothing.

Eventually, after contemplating on everything for a week, MacKendra put the Conyers package in a briefcase and headed off to see her lawyer. Once he read and approved the materials, it could be presented to the University.

**2069**

In the summer of 2069 while cleaning out some old files Tilly Grand came across the parcel donated to the library by one MacKendra Wilson. She never heard of

MacKendra Wilson and wondered why the University was in possession of something from an unknown writer.

Tilly put the parcel on her desk. She would check the contents later to determine why it had been kept all these years. Now, however, she needed to finish going through this cabinet to determine which originals should be kept and which could be put into a database and the originals destroyed.

Later, Tilly picked up Wilson's gift to the University and began reading. The parcel contained a cover letter and what appeared to be a notarized manuscript.

Letter: to file

From: MacKendra Wilson

Dated: September 23, 2006

Subject: Marie Rebecca Conyers

To whom it may concern:

I, MacKendra Wilson was an investigative reporter for many years, mostly with The Daily Recorder. I wrote this piece many years ago when I investigated the strange case of Rebecca Conyers. It has been told to me, that if I had submitted this story as a candidate for consideration by the Pulitzer Prize Committee, it would have been an important competitor.

The situation was such that I never published the complete story and its conclusions for the simple reason that I would have opened myself up to the possibility of a libel suit. My conclusions are based on facts that I learned by interviewing the people involved in

this charade and what I read from official records and rival newspapers. The problem this information projects in the legal arena is that almost every statement I learned and wrote in my column was a non-substantiated fact. I failed miserably in my attempt to have any principals verify any of the key statements made to me by or alluded to by other principals.

This is the tale of two Marie Rebecca Conyers', the original woman using the name of Marie Rebecca "Becky" Conyers and the second person using the name of Marie Rebecca "Marie" Conyers. The problem arises in the fact that both women weren't the same Conyers woman, but two different people were Conyers or so it appears.

Becky was convicted of first degree murder and sentenced to a 15 to thirty year term at Twin Valleys – Training Services - Women (TV/ TS = W), a prison by any other name. During her transfer from the county lock-up to the state prison an accident allowed her to escape and pursue a new life as Beverly Ann Drake. The prison guards in their zeal to recapture the escapee grabbed the first person they found in the vicinity of the accident. The only trouble with that action was that the replacement was a young boy. He was unsuccessful in convincing anyone in the search party that he wasn't a girl and definitely not Rebecca Conyers. The searchers found him near Becky's discarded prison uniform and fetters and the conclusion at the time was that she was trying to use "being a boy as a ploy to avoid incarceration." No one bothered to check his story and he was carted off to the women's prison.

I only learned of this tragedy when Marie Conyers was paroled after serving twenty-two years in prison in place of Becky.



Most of you are already saying this isn't possible. How could the prison officials keep a boy penned up in a woman's prison for all those years? Let me assure you that it did happen. The circumstances are described in the manuscript attached hereto.

Because I lack a witness, I am enjoined from publishing this story as factual lest I open myself up to libel action. Both Marie and Beverly have indicated to me that a suit will follow its publication, since each woman told me that the premise of my newspaper articles and this manuscript is fraught with factual errors. Therefore, the manuscript can not be published as a true account of events because libel hangs over my head. It doesn't qualify as fiction either. A good libel attorney would see through the thin veil trying to obscure "The Conyers Mystery" This would also land me in court. I would have trouble convincing any judge or jury that this was fiction since there would be too many similarities with known facts of the actual events.

Neither Beverly nor Marie intends to bring suit against anyone in the prison system hierarchy for this travesty of justice. After my articles appeared in the newspaper, the state prison commission awarded Marie a rather large settlement out of court and very quietly. They were afraid they may be liable for multiple millions of dollars in damages. Also they didn't want it known that corruption existed in the prison system to an extent that was unimaginable. Therefore, they made no attempt to put the real Conyers behind bars. All I can do is to finish this letter and enclose it with a copy of my manuscript and turn it over to a university library. If they choose to release it to the public after the remaining principals are deceased and all statute of limitations are reached that will be their choice.

When I view this tragedy I am reminded of the last phrase of the "Pledge of Allegiance" to the flag of the United States of America, which is "with liberty and justice for all". I would rather paraphrase it for the two Conyers and all of us who lose when our public institutions believe they are a law unto themselves and not



the servants of “We the people,” as “with liberty and in-justice for all” or as “with liberty and justice for none.”

Any abridgement of justice for anyone, in this case John Whittle, is an abridgement of justice for “We the people.” I think the important fact is that justice failed, so I opted to use the in-justice version as the subtitle to “The Conyers Mystery.”

*MacKendra Wilson*

Attachment: Manuscript, titled “The Conyers Mystery” aka “With “Liberty and In-Justice” for All”

Tilly put the letter aside. She knew she must read this entire story and report on the facts to the University president.

A week later, Tilly began reading MacKendra Wilson’s “The Conyers Mystery”.

Since you are reading this story it is obvious that Tilly had made a strong enough case to the university president that he had authorized its publication.

This is what Tilly Grand read.

## **THE CONYERS MYSTERY**

- a.k.a. - (With Liberty and In-Justice for All)

by MacKendra Wilson

### **Chapter 1**

The third complaint to the police of burglary in the Roselyn area of the city caused the Chief of Police,

Mark Anthony to call a meeting of his two detective teams. "Who is going to tell me why we are having a series of burglaries in Roselyn? Fred you start it off."

"Chief, I think this is the work of amateurs and I suspect young punks."

"Why do you say that, Fred?"

"They seem to be ignoring valuable jewelry in favor of petty cash and small electronic stuff."

"I hope you realize that Roselyn is a big political contributor to both parties. These folk expect this petty crime spree to end. Brad do you have any ideas?"

"I can't add much to what Fred has stated. I agree these robberies are probably school kids. Other than that I don't have anything original to add."

"Why do you think this crime spree is school kids?"

"The only time they strike is Friday and Saturday nights which is the most likely time for a school kid to be out late. Many of the kids in that area have little supervision on weekends. The parents tend to party with other adults after a hectic work week."

Kit said, "If I can put my two cents in here. I think Brad is on the right track, but I think we can eliminate high school juniors and seniors. Those kids would steal the more valuable stuff. Therefore, I think we need to be looking for twelve to fifteen year old kids."

"Does anyone think it could be a girl or girls involved in this crime spree?"

"Not likely chief, a girl would steal some if not all the jewelry," said Milton.

"How do the punks find the target families?"

"I thought they were random hits, Chief."

“They may well be random hits, but check it out anyway. Were the victims all members of a common group? Did they all leave their garage door open waiting for their return? Did they all have children who could have told the thieves that they were going to a movie and their parents to a party? In plain words investigate.

“Now I’ve heard that you think it is young kids without much home supervision. Is that the unanimous opinion of you all?” He looked about for dissent. Finding none he continued, “If that is the case then, what should we do to catch these punks that we aren’t already doing?” said the chief.

“I think we should talk to the principals of the middle schools to see if any kids are trying to sell music playing devices or disks.”

“I think that is a splendid idea. It’s your brainchild Milt, so you visit all the surrounding schools.”

“Yes sir, I’ll get on to it at once.”

“I want this mess cleaned up before I get a phone call from a councilman on behalf of an upset constituent and contributor. Remember if we are aware of three burglaries there may be many more that have not been reported. Some of these people may have fired innocent hired help and labeled them unreliable thinking they are light fingered. Innocent people have been paying the price of these punks including the family’s children, some of whom are probably under suspicion. This is a hot topic at cocktail parties.”

“Is that all, Chief? I think you gave us our marching orders?”

“Yes get to work and spend time on this case whenever you can spare it.”

The four detectives went down to an interview room. Fred was the ranking investigator said, "Milt, the Chief said you should visit the schools. I think you should try to do one first thing each morning. You should take a female officer in uniform with you. The sight of a uniform may cause the kids to speculate why the police are in the school. It may get a few tongues wagging and you may hear from the principal about facts or rumors floating about the school. Is that okay with you?"

"I agree Fred and I'll try to arrange an interview and kick off my campaign tomorrow."

"Don't forget to see when Doris or Peggy will be available before you call the schools."

"I'm on it Fred. I'll talk to Steve to arrange for Doris or Peggy to go to the schools with me."

"Tell Steve to check with Chief Anthony, if he has anything negative to say against the idea. Ken you interview the Weeks', Brad the Lords' and I'll talk to the Spencer's. Set up the interview for as soon as possible. Try to schedule your meeting when both parents are home. Each parent may have differing lists of contacts. It may mean you'll need to take a few hours off during the day because you'll need to interview your family in the evening."

"Remember we don't know what the common link is that ties these cases together. So pursue any and every line of questioning. Don't leave them with the thought that the interview is over when you run out of questions the first day. It is possible that when we compare notes at the end of all the interviews we may have other lines of questioning that need exploration. Okay,

let's get to work. If you don't have any additional questions, this meeting is ended."

Milt and Doris walked into the principal's office of Madison Middle School. Their arrival was timed to coincide with the arrival of a majority of the pupils.

"Dr. Billet, it is kind of you to see us on short notice. Officer Doris Drake is in uniform because we want your pupils to see us as police. We are hoping they will speculate why the police were in the office. I will explain the problem in a minute, but first I would like to know if you or any of your teachers have noticed a pupil or pupils selling music or music playing machines or devices within the last month? The other option is some type of bartering for sports gear."

"I'm at a loss to understand what you are driving at Sergeant Olson?"

"A series of burglaries have been occurring in the Roselyn area over the last five or six weeks. The things that have been taken make the police believe the guilty person or persons are middle school age kids."

"I understand better what you are saying detective. I haven't noticed anything and no teacher or pupil has reported anything out of the ordinary."

"That would have been our guess also; however, we have been fooled by the actions of youngsters in the past."

"The children who attend Madison would not need to steal to get anything they want. The parents tend to indulge our student body."

"We are aware of that fact Dr. Billet. We are trying to get the kids talking among themselves. The thieves

may be trying to sell “hot” goods to your pupils after school in the playground or possibly at a scout meeting. The main thing we want is for the young people to talk to their friends. I imagine it has already started. I don’t think it would be a good idea for a general announcement to be made to the student body. If you tell my tale to your staff, it would be helpful if a couple of the kids were to overhear about the thefts.”

“Why did you select Madison to make this announcement, sergeant?”

“Dr. Billet you are not being singled out. When we end talking to other principals we will have spoken to your counterparts at every school within a ten mile radius from Roselyn. You are in the center of the area where the thefts have been occurring. That is why I am here today with Officer Drake.”

“You never mentioned if you have any leads.”

“I am unable to discuss that aspect of the investigation at this time. If one of your pupils is a prime suspect we will be talking to you and his teachers.”

“You said him. Was that an oversight on your part? Many young women are becoming quite brazen these days.”

“That was not an oversight on our part. We feel that girls are not involved. The availability of jewelry at the crime scenes has eliminated young ladies. Girls would have pilfered at least some pieces of jewelry for their own usage. Most of the jewelry would have been inappropriate for young girls.”

“I will see if I can learn anything for you, detective. I wouldn’t get my hopes up considering our demographic population. Is there anything else I can help you with today?”

"I think we have used enough of your time Dr. Billet. Thank you for your attention. Good day."

When Milt and Doris were riding back to their headquarters, Doris said, "Why was I there Milt? I sat like a dummy and didn't make a single statement."

"Doris, I wanted a uniform presence to be seen by the pupils. You were that presence while you observed my talk with Dr. Billet. Tomorrow you will visit Jefferson on your own to have a similar conversation. Do you have any additional questions now, Doris?"

"Just one, do I wear 'civies' or my uniform?"

"If you are going alone, which is what I propose then by all means wear your uniform?"

"Thank you for your confidence in me Milt. I thought you might have been patronizing me. It wouldn't have been the first time that has occurred."

"You do your job as well as I think you are capable Doris and I won't use you to enhance my career or to detract from yours. I want you involved because I need you involved. If I were to visit all the schools on my list, it would take me three weeks. I want the process completed by early next week. It is important to solve these thefts quickly. The Chief doesn't want any Council members calling him on behalf of rich constituents and contributors who have been robbed."

"Mr. and Mrs. Spencer, I am Detective Karl Fredericks. Everyone calls me Fred so please feel free to use that name. I read the report of Officer Donahue who answered the call when you reported your break-in. I have assumed responsibility for investigating your robbery. Officer Donahue was unaware that there were other similar robberies in Roselyn at about

the same time and he didn't obtain enough information for us to move forward with the investigation. Would one of you describe the events of that day to me? If I have questions, I'll raise them."

"I think you should tell Fred about our day, Sandy. I was at work until 5 p.m.. So possible you saw something I didn't," said Rich.

"We arose at our normal time. Rich left for work at 7:15 and I had a leisurely bath after which I went to the beauty parlor to get ready for the Gibson's party. Charlotte and Tom caught the school bus at 7:thirty. I went to the mall and was looking for a perfect top to go with a skirt I had purchased and was waiting for the perfect opportunity for wearing. The Gibson's parties are such nice affairs, that one tries ones best to look nice. At 2:15 I went to the beauty shop. I came directly home from there. I got here at 5 p.m. The kids were home so I took them to McDonald's to get them something to eat. I seldom cook on Friday. Our schedule usually doesn't permit it. I took the children to the mall and gave them money to go see a film and get a snack before catching the bus home. When I got home Rich was in the bedroom getting dressed after finishing his shower. We chatted about nothing in general until we went to the restaurant to meet Henry and Ada Enders. We often had a light meal together if we were going to the same party. Perhaps you should continue from then on Rich, since we were together until we returned home about one-thirty a.m."

"When I got home from work I put Sandy's car in the garage. We were using my car that evening. We went to the restaurant, met the Enders and had a light meal. Then we drove to the Gibson's party arriving about 8:thirty. We remained at the party until the fes-



tivities broke up and we went home. I drove directly into the garage. We entered the house, checked to see the kids were in bed. I toured the house making sure all the doors were closed and locked and that no appliances were left turned on. I joined Sandy in the bedroom and we retired for the night. Is that what you wanted to hear Fred?"

"That is exactly the routine I wanted to hear about. Now for a few questions on my part, at what time did Charlotte and Tim arrive home and did they have other kids with them?"

"Charlotte and Tom not Tim and I don't know when they go home from the mall. Do you need to know that information?"

"Yes, I need to know the answer. I am trying to determine precisely when the house was empty so I can try to tie down the time of the burglary."

"I'll get that information for you Fred," said Rich.

"I would rather that you get your children and let's all hear the answer at the same time."

"I'll get them Rich," said Sandy. "Would you like something to drink Fred? I'm going to have coffee myself."

"A cup of coffee would be fine for me," said Fred."

"I'm about to have a martini if you would prefer something a little stronger."

"Coffee will be fine," repeated Fred. "I, all police refrain from alcohol while they are working."

Sandy and Rich went about their assigned tasks. Fred sat twiddling his thumbs waiting for the questioning to resume. In a minute a teenage girl and boy entered the room and seeing a guest said "hello" and sat

side by side on the sofa. They had puzzled looks on their faces wondering what this was all about.

Sandy returned with a tray holding but two coffee cups, napkins, spoons, creamer and sugar bowl, which she offered to Fred. Rich returned with his martini.

“Charlotte, Tom, I am Detective Karl Fredericks. Do you recall the day your house was burgled?”

Charlotte spoke first. “How could I forget that?” Tom nodded his agreement.

“After you mother dropped you off at the mall, did you meet any friends or what did you do from then on until you arrived home and retired for the night?”

“We headed to the food court where we expected to find friends. I met Becky Toomey and we went window shopping,” said Lottie.

“I saw Jocko and Walter Hazard and we just hung out until it was time to go to the movie. After it ended, Mr. Hazard picked us up and took us home. I was home by 10:15. I noticed the broken glass in the kitchen door window, but I didn’t do anything about it until Lottie got home about ten minutes later.”

“Becky and I couldn’t agree on which film to see so we just shopped. Neither of us had much money so we didn’t make any big purchases. Becky bought a lipstick and I think all I purchased was some chewing gum. About 9 o’clock we returned to the food court. We didn’t see anyone we knew so we hopped a bus and went to the Toomey’s where we listened to a few records until it was time for me to go home. Mrs. Toomey drove me home and I arrived as Tommy said just before 10:thirty. Tom showed me where the break in occurred. We tried to call Mom and Dad at the Gibson’s, but no one answered the phone.”

“I said I think we should call someone so I called Grandma and Grandpa Spencer. We were told not to touch anything until they arrived. It would be about ten minutes.”

“When they arrived Grandpa said he had called 911 and the police would be here ASAP. It was almost an hour until they arrived. The patrolman said something to the effect that this was a typical Friday night. They were extremely busy. We were asked what was missing, but we really didn’t know. We just sat in the family room waiting for their arrival. After police asked what was missing Grandma and I went through the house looking for what might be missing. I noticed my piggy bank was broken and the money was missing. When we got to Tommy’s room, he said his walkman and disk player were missing. In Mom and Dad’s room a number of purses were thrown from the closet shelf to the floor. Other than those few things we didn’t notice much if anything had been disturbed.”

“The thieves were mostly looking for money. Did you have any money in any of your purses Mrs. Spencer?”

“I suspect there was a change purse with some coins in every purse. Most of them probably had bills in them also. I normally keep them prepared and ready for use except for my billfold which contains my credit cards and my driver’s license. It contained most of the things common to billfolds. All I needed to do when I was going out was to put my billfold and my keys in whatever purse I was using and I was ready to go.”

“When you went out for the evening did you leave the garage door open?”

“We generally leave the garage door open when we are out and that evening was no different.”

“Don’t do that ever again. With the garage door open the crook can see your car is stored for the time being. However, if a crook rides around the street multiple times looking for houses to rob yours is an ideal target. Some crooks keep notes. One time he comes by and he sees one car in the garage and one in the driveway he knows you have two vehicles. Another time he goes by he sees no cars and he thinks no one is home. This would be a good time to burgle this house.”

“But with a car in the garage he must know the possibility exists that someone is home, won’t he move on to a safer house?”

“That would be the case if it was a professional crook, but in this instance, we think it was kids who robbed you. They know Roselyn people tend to party on weekends and they know teenagers go on dates or to the mall. A kid rides his bike down your street and sees you depart with Charlotte and Tom. Later he sees you return alone. Then he sees two adults get into the car in the driveway. This house is now ready to be broken into. The boy will return when it’s dark and ride his bike into your garage and park it like it belongs there. He goes into your back yard, busts the window and robs you. He is gone in five minutes. If any neighbor saw the boy ride out they would assume it was Tom or Charlotte going to stay at a friend’s for the night.”

“But our neighbors know both of our kids.”

“They know your kids, but if you want to see something normal that is what you’ll see most of the time. We sit in the house reading, sewing, watching TV and we hardly ever look out unless something disturbs us. Most of us don’t even check to see who is racing a car down the street with a radio blaring. That is common

street noise and we tune it out. On the other hand, if someone kicks a garbage can, we may wonder what fool is doing that and get up and have a look."

"Now that you mention it Fred, that is exactly how we react."

"Criminals know that and that fact lets them be more brazen in their actions."

"What else can we help you with today?"

"I would like each of you to make a list of all the people you met that day. Also I would like to know, who you would have expected to see, but who was a no-show. I don't want a list of the kids at school, but those you met at the mall. For you Mr. Spencer, I don't care about your work colleagues except those you met after the end of the work day."

"May I ask what these lists are for, detective?"

"Yes, you may ask but I'm not going to answer at this time. That is all I expected to learn today. Thank you for your time and the coffee. I'll have your lists picked up in forty-eight hours," said Fred as he rose and departed.

"Ken, how did it go for you with the Woods'?"

"It went well. I get you a copy of my notes. I am expecting lists from both of them in a day or two."

"That is fine Ken. Now, Brad how did you do with the Lords'."

"I didn't learn anything significant unless we hit gold when we compare our lists as soon as they are all available."

“That is how I feel too,” remarked Fred. “Milt, how are you coming with the school visits?”

“I haven’t had any luck yet, but Doris here may have a gotten us a lead. I’ll let her tell you about it.”

Doris said, “I was at Jefferson when I heard that a teacher noticed a kid showing a walkman to a couple of other kids at his locker. They are trying to identify the students involved. The teacher knows the area of the lockers. He didn’t notice anything specifically. He only remembered the incident after a teacher meeting discussing the burglaries. The circumstances were leaked to some students and the principal is waiting to see if he gets any feedback. ‘til then ours is a waiting game.”

“Doris does Jefferson have surveillance cameras in the halls.”

“Yes, but no good luck, Fred. Since nothing noticeable had occurred and the disk was over written.”

“Then we have a couple of days to wait until everything comes to a head.”

When kids’ lists were being compared Fred noticed one name on two different lists. He approached Doris and said, “We have a possible for you at Jefferson by the name of Mark Enders. Can you go to the school and talk to the principal and the teacher, who may have witnessed a walkman changing hands?”

“I’ll go out there today. Maybe we got the break we are looking for.”

Doris was sitting in the office of Principal Evelyn Byers. She was ready to quiz her about Mark when the principal said, “I am bring a student in for you to question. We heard a rumor that he was trying to sell his

walkman. The problem is no one remembers Mark ever having a walkman."

"That is a coincidence. I came here to ask you about one Mark Enders."

"The really interesting thing about Enders is his locker is right where the possible transaction occurred."

About this time a secretary knocked and entered with a young boy in tow.

The principal said, "Mark this is Officer Drake. She wants to ask you a few questions."

"Yes, Mrs. Byers, I understand."

"Now Mark, do you want to tell me about that Friday night when you found your walkman at the Spencer home when they were out?"

"What are you talking about, ma'am?"

"The game is up Mark. We have finger prints from the back door of the house and from Tom's room where you picked up the walkman."

The expression on Mark's face changed markedly. "I thought you couldn't catch me because my finger prints weren't on file. I never did anything else."

"Mrs. Byers, do you have a day number to reach the boy's father? All I have is their home number. I must turn Mark over to the juvenile authorities."

"I'm sure it is on file. Mark, I am disappointed in you," said the principal as she picked up the phone and asked for the requested information."

In a few minutes Officer Drake was talking to the boy's mother. "Mrs. Enders either you or your husband

will need come to police headquarters. Your son just admitted to theft."

At headquarters, Doris said, "Fred, Mark Enders has admitted to stealing the walkman from the Spencer's home."

"Did he confess to the other burglaries?"

"I didn't quiz him about them. I didn't have the specifics on the dates so I passed until his parents arrive. The juvenile authorities are watching him at the moment."

"Doris, talk to the parents first and tell them he may have been involved in another half dozen crimes. Let them talk to Mark before you ask him about the other crimes."

And so it came to pass that Mark confessed to five burglaries. He was released to the custody of his parents. If he keeps his nose clean his record will be sealed and no one will know he was involved in a crime spree as a juvenile.

Why was Mark released to his parents? If it had been you or I we would be in detention of some type.

## **Chapter 2**

At the same time on a small estate on the outskirts of the county seat a special, very special meal was in progress. Maria Rebecca Conyers was sitting at the dinner table with her parents finishing their dinner. This was Becky's sixteenth birthday and the meal was one of her favorites. Her parents were pleased with their only child.

Mr. Stephen Conyers was speaking. "Rebecca, your mother and I are very proud of you. We want you to have a special remembrance of your transition from



girlhood to that of young womanhood. Therefore we are giving you the right to earn a new car. If you maintain your grades at the current level until you graduate from high school you will earn the keys. The grades shouldn't be a problem for you. You are a good studious girl. The only other condition to prevent you from taking possession of the keys will be your failure to pass the driver's test and earn an operator's license.

Your mother insists I tell you, we expect you to continue your education. That is the end of my lecture, Happy Birthday sweetheart."

"Oh, Daddy you make the sweetest lectures. I don't know if I can live up to your and Mom's expectations for me. I'll try my best to make you proud of your confidence in my abilities. Does this mean that my party this weekend is canceled?"

"No, of course not honey. Nothing in your daily life is changed. The rhythm of life goes on for our family. The automobile is a special event for a special daughter."

Rebecca did prosper. Her school grades were superior. The weeks and months passed and soon Becky was ready for graduation.

Rebecca graduated and had the keys to a set of new wheels. Things began to go badly for Becky. She wasn't aware of the changes that were occurring to her. Since Rebecca had "wheels", some "fast" and not so nice boys were coying up to her. Her long-time friends were drifting away from her by finding trivial excuses to be doing other things when she tried to make arrangements to do anything with them because of these new less than savory friends.

Rebecca had begun seeing Mark Enders. Mark and his friend Calvin Reynard were no good-nicks. They used her as a cabby to take them from one place to another to party, do drugs or to play games for fun or money.

Rebecca's first unknown problem occurred when she pulled into a convenience store for Mark to buy some cigarettes. Mark and Calvin, however, had other ideas and were in fact robbing the clerk. Becky drove them away not knowing what they had done. The clerk had not resisted their strong-arm tactics and escaped with only the loss of some money and his pride hurt along with a pair of jeans that now needed washing where he had wet himself.

The trio of robbers got away scot-free. No one other than the clerk realized a robbery had happened. Therefore the rather new beige coupe disappeared into normal street traffic and was quickly lost in the night.

A few weeks later the same scene was replayed at another convenience store. At the repeat of the robbery the third time, the clerk was also the store's owner and he started to resist this assault on his business. Mark and Calvin smacked him a few times, raided the till and departed. This time although the trio wasn't seen fleeing the scene someone did notice a beige car speeding along a highway. The police were interested in catching the two young men who made a specialty of knocking off convenience stores and now had reverted to violence in committing the crime.

They started an intensive search for the two young men. They were driving by convenience stores at regular and irregular hours. The victims had given the police a description of the pair. They varied to some extent but they did know they were looking for two

males between the ages of fifteen and forty-five. Similarly their weights varied by as much as thirty pounds. The eye colors for one varied from gray to gray-green to blue and the other had a shade of dark brown eyes.

The police were looking for toughs or kids who thought they were tough. It was the opinion of the investigating detective that the violence with these thugs was escalating with each job they pulled. If they were not found quickly, they would eventually kill someone.

They pulled this caper again and with an uncooperative clerk, Mark started hitting the hapless clerk. The clerk gave the interlopers some money he had in his pants pocket. He was about to be pummeled additionally but another car was pulling into the parking lot. The two punks quickly departed and Becky drove them away once again. She still was not able to associate the stop at the convenience store with the robberies. Since no one was seriously hurt, these heists didn't rate more than a few lines in the newspaper and were totally ignored on the TV newscasts.

The thugs luck was soon to take a turn for the worse. A month later on a dark and misty night Mark and Calvin planned to get some money by sticking up another convenience store. This time however they got careless and stopped at a store at the intersection of two busy roads. While the two thugs went inside to get their "cigarettes", Becky got out of the car after moving to a gas island. She began filling the tank with gasoline.

While Becky was topping off her fuel supply another car pulled in to get gas. The second customer was a boy who had attended the same high school as Becky. He was ahead of her a couple of years. They were only nodding acquaintances not being on a first name basis.

Upon completing her chore, Becky headed to the door of the store to pay for the fuel.

Inside the two thugs were disappointed with the contents of the cash register and began trying to get the clerk to tell them where the rest of the money was. When he insisted that was all the cash he had since the owner had departed within the last five minutes and he had removed the day's receipts for deposit in a bank.

Calvin, on a head nod signal from Mark, pulled out a gun and began striking the hapless clerk. The boys looked around the shelf under the counter and cash register. After not finding any additional cash they started beating the clerk once again.

As Becky reached the door she met Mark and Calvin coming out. Mark said, "Where are you going Becky?"

"I got \$10 worth of gasoline and I want to go in and pay for it."

"Calvin, you treat Becky to the gasoline."

"Sure Mark, it's my treat Becky," said Calvin as he reentered the store. Mark and Becky walked casually back to her car. Quickly Calvin caught up to them and they drove away.

Meanwhile the second customer headed into the store to complete his transaction. He saw the blood and immediately raised the alarm. When the detective questioned him about anyone else who had been at the convenience store, he reported the coupe and the girl who was pumping gas when he arrived. He mentioned the girl was joined by two young men when they departed.

The detective was questioning the witness about the automobile, which was a new coupe. The color was beige, tan or pale yellow. It was difficult to see the color in the dark misty fog under the pale neon lights. All at once the young man jumped up with a strange look on his face. "I've got it detective. Can we go to the high school? I finally realized where I had seen the young woman. I think she was a year or two behind me. If I look at a couple of yearbooks I might be able to spot her."

The detective said, "Follow me." They drove to the school and soon found a number to phone in an emergency. After a couple of quick phone calls the detective located the school principal. They explained the situation to him and he said he and the librarian would meet the detective and his witness at the school. The witness was seated at a desk in the library scanning the yearbooks supplied by the librarian.

When at last he pointed to a picture he remarked, "That is her. She was pumping gas when I arrived and she drove away with two young men."

The librarian and principal responded almost in unison. "She isn't mixed up in anything bad, is she detective? It is so out of character for her. She is Rebecca Conyers and the family is a pillar of the community."

"I don't know if she is involved in anything. It is possible she was an innocent victim of circumstances. In any case I must talk to her about the young men with her. Would one of you be kind enough to take this young man home? I must get moving," said the sergeant.

"Have you considered that she might be the victim of a kidnapping, detective?"

“That is something I hadn’t thought about.” He quickly departed to let the others put things away and lock up the school.

The detective rushed back to headquarters to report the latest developments. The Captain of Detectives said, “We do have problem detective. The Conyers are a well-connected local family. If a daughter of theirs has been kidnapped, then we must get her back unharmed.”

“What if she is involved with the robbery and beating?”

“She will be charged with those crimes and others as the District Attorney deems appropriate. First you and I must visit the family to learn the facts.”

“Mr. and Mrs. Conyers I am William Aspers, a Captain of Detective for the local police.”

After the introductions were completed Mr. Conyers said, “What can we do for you Captain? Our family has always supported the police in their time of need.”

“I’m afraid we aren’t here on a social call or for goodwill. This is an official inquiry about an ongoing investigation. When is the last time you saw your daughter Rebecca?”

“She is in her room at the current time.”

“Thank goodness she is safe. Can we talk to Rebecca please?”

“What is the meaning of your inquiry?”

“Rebecca was seen driving away from a convenience store late last night. The fact that she was there about the time the store was robbed means she and her

friends may have noticed something out of the ordinary.”

Mrs. Marie Conyers rose and went to fetch her daughter. When they returned the conversation continued. “Honey these police want to ask you about your activities last evening,” said Mr. Conyers.

“Sure Dad”

“Miss Conyers, would you please describe to me your activities yesterday from about 9 p.m. until midnight?”

“I was with Mark my boyfriend and another friend Gloria who was with Calvin.”

“Where did you go and what did you do?”

“We were going to go to the movies but the boys didn’t have enough money to do that and get a coke later so we passed on the movies. We went to Gloria’s and listened to some music and played cards. About 10 o’clock we decided to go to the drive-in on Perry road to get a snack. Gloria said she wasn’t feeling well and she opted out. The three of us piled into my car and headed over to the drive-in.”

“Who is this Mark?”

“He is Mark Enders. The others are Calvin Reynard and Gloria Herman.”

“Please continue Miss Conyers. I believe you were on the way to the drive-in.”

“Like I said Gloria didn’t go with us. As we headed toward the drive-in, I believe Calvin said he needed cigarettes. We stopped at a convenience store and the boys went to get their cigarettes and I decided to fill up with gas and moved my car up to an island and topped off my tank. I was headed to the store to pay for the

gasoline when Mark and Calvin came out. Mark asked what I was doing and I told him I was going to pay for the gas I got before we could go. Mark told Calvin to treat me to the gas and he went back into the store while Mark and I returned to the car. When Calvin rejoined us I we drove to the hangout and we each ate a snack. About eleven-thirty we left and I dropped Calvin and Mark off at Mark's place and I came home. I got here before midnight."

"Did you see anyone or talk to anyone at the convenience store Miss Conyers?"

"I don't think so. I did nod to a man I recognized, but I can't quite place. That was when I was pumping gas."

"It is important for you to try to remember any little detail. About the time you were there, the clerk was robbed and beaten. Didn't Mark or Calvin mention it to you? They must surely have seen something. The robbery happened before you left the store because when the other gasoline customer went into the store to pay his bill he found the clerk on the floor beaten and bloody."

"I don't know anything about that and neither Mark nor Calvin mentioned anything was out of the ordinary when they came out of the store."

"Thank you all for your cooperation. Please don't leave town without notifying us Miss Conyers. We may need you to answer more questions."

After tying down all the loose ends as to times for all the events the police departed.

"Becky you aren't involved in any of this are you?"

"No father. Everything happened just as I explained to the police."



"That's good Becky. I was worried about that Mark character. I don't like you associating with him."

"Oh, Daddy you worry too much. Mark is okay."

"Why didn't he tell you there was an injured man lying on the floor of the convenience store then?"

"I believe he must have been protecting me and himself. He got into trouble as a juvenile I believe. He probably was going to deny we were ever there, but that clerk's condition has changed all that."

"Until this situation is cleared up I want you to stay away from Mark and Calvin. Do you understand me, young lady?"

"I'm over eighteen and as an adult I can go and come as I please, but to make you happy I'll keep away from Mark and Calvin."

"You are only an adult in the eyes of the law if you leave my protection. Therefore technically while you are a college student you are still a minor and I make the rules while you are in our home Becky."

"I understand Daddy. You worry too much about me. I don't intend to get into trouble."

A few days later the clerk died and the investigation intensified. A search warrant was easier to obtain and thorough examination of Reynard's place turned up a gun with blood on it. Mark and Calvin were forced to give fingerprint samples. The match was quickly made placing Calvin at the murder scene.

The fingerprint was in blood. The reason the match wasn't made before was that Calvin's prints were not on record and Mark's were sealed because his age caused the court to seal his record as a juvenile.

With possession of a weapon that had some of the victim's blood on it and his fingerprints at the scene Calvin, on the advice of his lawyer, admitted his part in the robbery and murder. He implicated Mark as his co-conspirator and on the lawyer's advice, Rebecca. The lawyer's reasoning was that even if she didn't have a hand in the caper, she was culpable as the driver of the getaway car. Her family's influence might allow for a lesser charge, possibly second or third degree murder or possibly manslaughter.

Mark and Calvin were arrested and charged with murder. On the advice of their court appointed lawyer they decided to turn on Becky in the hope that her family's influence would protect them from the death penalty. Mark, the nice boy, in Becky's eyes told the police a bold faced lie. "Rebecca Conyers cased these places and decided when we should hit each convenience store. She was our leader," he said.

Marie Rebecca Conyers was arrested and charged with first degree murder. Later the influence of the family did come into play. Rebecca earned a separate trial. However, she was unlucky in the judge she drew to hear her case. Becky drew Judge Terry Martin who was better known to the legal community as Judge "hard time" Martin.

When her case came to trial the Conyers lawyer grilled Mark and Calvin relentlessly to try to break their fabricated story. He thought he had succeeded and they were all surprised when the jury came back with a guilty on all counts. No one except the DA could believe the outcome.

Judge Martin revoked Becky's bail now that she was a convicted murderer. She set the sentencing for sixty days later. As Becky was led away in irons Mr.

and Mrs. Conyers listened to the lawyer tell them, he saw no reason why the jury had believed those young punks. He told them he was not allowed to introduce any information he had learned about Mark and Calvin. The earlier information was sealed as is the custom in juvenile cases. Even though their private investigator learned of the earlier troubles these boys had been involved in Judge Martin prohibited their introduction.

A few weeks later a pro-forma trial was held for Mark and Calvin. They pled guilty to lesser charges and would also be sentenced in sixty days.

Rebecca sat in her cell contemplating her fate. She decided to estrange herself from her family. She had no intention of dragging them down with her. She knew her family wouldn't be happy with her decision, but she got into this mess without assistance while ignoring the warnings of family and friends that Mark was bad news. With this decision made in her mind Becky told her lawyer on his next visit that she was not interested in any further contact with her family.

The attorney tried to talk Rebecca out of this estrangement but without success. He was aware that when she got to prison, it would be her prerogative to see or refuse to see any caller.

About this time a headline appeared in the local newspaper. The single column story was headed, "Trio Convicted in Vicious Attack." With the second trial at which the two young men pled guilty, they joined the society debutante Rebecca Conyers who had admitted her part in the murder at a previous trial. The story ended by stating that the two men, Mark Enders and Calvin Reynard and Maria Rebecca Conyers had all been convicted with yesterday's guilty plea of Enders

and Reynard in Criminal Court. The trio will each be sentenced in a few months.

### Chapter 3

John Whittle became a teenager in 1964 when the "Beetles" were big hits in the British Isles and were climbing the "pop" charts in North America. It was Ed Sullivan's variety show that introduced the "Fab Four" to the American public via television. John became infatuated with the 'far out' appearance and in particular the longer "mod" hair styles. John began to let his hair grow since he wanted one of the new long length hair-style for himself. He was praying his hair would grow faster. He was impatient with its slow growth, which was average for kids his age at slightly over a half-inch per month.

James Whittle became more agitated with his son's growing locks each time he returned from a business trip. He conveyed his disapproval to both John and Louise. John was protected from his father's wrath by Louise's explanation that many of the boys in the neighborhood and at the area schools were sporting the new longish hairstyles.

As the school year approached its end, Mr. Whittle told John to get a haircut. John didn't want to get a haircut and he knew if he stalled for just another few months he could have it cut and or styled into a pageboy type bob. He reasoned that maybe his father could live with this if he kept it clean and well groomed. John also knew that if he didn't keep it neat he might lose his Mother's support in his crusade to emulate his idols, "The Beatles."

The month ended and John was sent to “Gloria’s Glamour World” for a professional feminine hair care treatment. He had about a year of hair growth and now he could have a Beetle’s Bob. On this visit, in addition to a shampoo and set Gloria plucked his eyebrows. It was explained to him as just a tidy-up.

Day following day, John became more and more in-tune with his new lifestyle. As his mother predicted his friends were finished elucidating their cutting remarks about his feminine hairstyle. Now he was treated totally as if his growing hair event had never occurred. In a nut shell John was his former self in the eyes of his friends. His father’s plan to embarrass him into getting a haircut had failed.

While the murder trials were going forward events were also happening in the Whittle household. Louise had been researching to locate a summer camp with tutorial services or a summer school with lots of opportunity for recreational activities for John. For some unknown reason John’s grades were falling. The Whittles assumed the hair issue was detracting their son. Acting on behalf of James and herself Louise had been asking friends for recommendations and reviewing the catalogs with lists of prep schools available at the local public library.

She had identified six possible schools, sent for information about each institution and had received and reviewed the proffered brochures and literature. Louise had selected two possible institutions as candidates. One was 1,000 miles away. That was a big negative in the Whittle’s estimation. For a variety of reasons Louise eventually opted for a New York school. She had a heart-to-heart talk with assistant headmistress Dr. Mar-

tha Wiggins. The school was Pine Wood School, once a school for girls that had recently started recruiting boys as a requirement to meet federal guidelines for “grant eligibility”. They had accepted boys since about 1920 but made no effort to recruit any of them. The family known as Pine Wood School continued to believe they were primarily chartered to accept girls and educating them. The school not only had superior academic credentials, but they worked extremely hard to create well turned out proper young ladies.

‘Pine Wood’ as it was familiarly known among the campus community past and present, was located on a six hundred acre Long Island campus. For the summer session the pupils attended classes in the mornings and participated in camping and recreational activities in the afternoon and evening. The Pine Wood School program past and present was focused on girls and their emergence as proper young ladies. Louise learned that John would be expected to attend the one class, which his current school deemed him to need the most immediate additional instruction and a class of penmanship and spelling. This class was a requirement for all incoming first year Pine Wood School attendees, be they six or sixteen, male or female.

A decision needed to be made quickly if “Pine Wood” was to be the Whittles choice since schedules need to be set and the required teachers and councilors put in place.

John would be required to conform to the standard school dress code. Boys John’s age and older could adopt a modified uniform of shorts, white blouse with either a tie or a silk ribbon tied in a bow. The younger boys were attired identical to the girls. This standard uniform consisted of pleated shorts and lace trimmed

blouses with silk ribbons tied in a bow under the collar, lace trimmed anklets and Mary Jane shoes. When viewed from more than about twenty feet the flared pleated shorts appeared to be a short pleated skirt. The older boys could opt for this uniform if they so desired (Forced by parents or guardians was the usual reason for acceptance of this option). Attendance at the evening meal required the girls to wear party-dresses or uniforms, which was also an acceptable option for the younger boys in lieu of a suit and tie. Many mothers selected this option for their sons. They were well aware of the discomfort the boys would experience wearing suits in the hottest summer weather but neatness was required for the regular school year.

For afternoons, the attire had to be appropriate for the selected camping activities. John would be expected to participate in an instructional swimming program until he demonstrated to the instructor a required swimming proficiency to her satisfaction. Since John had long growing hair he needed to wear swim cap. Dr. Wiggins stated that since he would look like one of the sissies with a swim cap, he could also wear girl's swimsuits if desired and any visitors would assume he was a pre-teen girl and not pay any attention to him.

Louise also learned that they did not have a barber-shop on campus and therefore the hair care needs of boy's grooming needs were also handled at the beauty shop. This was acceptable to Louise because of John's growing mane.

The school year was drawing to its conclusion. Louise explained to John "that he would be attending a summer school and camp on Long Island. The Pine Wood School is a former girl's school that has been admitting boys to its summer program for a number of

years and to its regular school year program as full-time day pupils."

"I don't want to attend a girl's school, Mom."

"In conjunction with your education you will have afternoons to enjoy camping activities." Louise told John that, "He had been entered into the regular program rather than the program designed for sissies."

John asked, "What is the meaning of the regular program?"

He was told it meant only a few differences from the "boys" routine for him. One change is because of your long and growing hair you must wear girl's swim attire for your swim instruction.

When younger John had worn girl's swimwear and it didn't cause him a problem. A swim instructor wished for the six year old boy to learn to swim as a safety measure as the camp girls were required to do.

Mom was busy when the boy's first swim lesson was imminent, Barbara the instructor asked John where his swim trunks were located. He shrugged his shoulders to indicate he didn't know. Barb had no intention of entering the Whittles quarters to search for them; therefore, she took him to the lost and found supply and fitted him with a girl's swimsuit targeted to go to the Salvation Army.

John's mother was a nurse at a girl's camp as a substitute for the regular nurse who was selected as a chaperone of a youth tour to Europe.

This year what he wore for swimming wouldn't make a difference to John, but others would view him as a sissy.



John said, "He already was a good swimmer." He learned that if he passed a proficiency test he would be allowed to discontinue the instruction and the girl's swimsuit. His long hair would require that he continue to wear a swim-cap to protect the filtration system.

"Tomorrow we will go to a department store and start selecting your camping clothes John," stated Louise.

"If this is one of those snobby Prep Schools, don't the pupils wear uniforms," asked John?

"Yes uniforms are the normal attire for the school associated activities; however, the uniforms are available at the campus Clothing Store."

"Hello ma'am," said an approaching clerk. "How may I help you?"

"I need some swim clothing for my son here."

"I would gladly sell you swimsuits but this is the girl's wear department. I don't have any boy's trunks here. You'll need to go the children's wear or boy's department."

"I quite understand where I am. Due to the boy's growing hair, he must wear a swimming cap and his instructor recommended a girl's swimsuit so he won't be made fun of and classified as a sissy during his required swim lessons."

"I can understand the bathing cap to keep hair out of the filtration system, but why the need for the swimsuit," remarked the saleslady?

"The school officials have faced this situation previously and they have found it far easier to have visitors and parents believe long-haired boys are girls. This prevents them from being labeled "sissies"."