

Led Mother To Seek and Find Her Kidnapped Son

By Sister Geneva 2X Smith

(Chicago, Ill.)

Islam brought me and my lost child together after being separated 16 years. I had given up all hope of finding him before joining the Faith. But when I accepted Islam, the teachings of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad provided me with the strength, determination and faith I needed to renew the search for my only child.

He had been kidnapped at the age of three by a woman who was baby-sitting for me in my home town, Winder, Georgia. I was working five days a week in Atlanta and returning to Winder on the weekends.



Sister Geneva 2X

One Friday night in January, 1950, I came home and the woman, her husband and my beloved child, Johnny, were gone.

At first I couldn't believe it. It actually took a few days for the full impact to reach me. Then it seemed as though the world was at an end. My husband and I were divorced. All I had was my son and now I had lost him.

I searched and searched but could not even get a hint as to where the woman had taken Johnny. The police were notified of the kidnapping, but they didn't seem to even try to find the woman and my son.

Losing Hope

As the years passed I began losing all hope. I started spending more time in church but it didn't seem to fill my loneliness. I stopped attending church altogether when I found out that the preacher was a drunkard.

He used to take a glass and pitcher to the rostrum when he was going to preach. He usually brought them down after services, but he forgot once and I discovered that the pitcher contained corn whiskey.

After that I started watching him. I noticed that he always had whiskey on his breath. His clothes even began to smell of it. One night I left church and never returned.

I was reaching the point where I didn't want to live. I had been deserted by my husband, my only child had been stolen from me and now my faith in God had been destroyed. I was lonely and heartsick.

I was introduced to Islam in Athens, Georgia. I became more and more interested and finally, in November, 1957, I was accepted in the faith.

Sudden Change

All of a sudden there was

a complete change in me. I had a new outlook toward life and a renewed faith in Allah, the true name of God. A short time later I came to Chicago and attended Temple No. 2.

The Messenger teaches us that great strength and the ability to do great things is within each of us. But we must go forth in faith, determination and dignity. After listening to his teachings, a new and burning urge to find my son began to glow within my heart.

I started traveling through the South. I went to Charlotte and Greenville, North Carolina, Greenburo, South Carolina, Atlanta, Athens and back to Winder, Georgia.

In 1962, while I was in Winder, I finally got my first encouraging lead. I found the mother of the woman who had kidnapped Johnny. She would not give me the address of her daughter, but I looked straight in her eyes

and told her that I was determined to find my son. She told me that her daughter lived in Ohio, but got the names mixed up. She said Morristown, but it was Middletown.

I wrote to the postmaster in Middletown, Ohio, asked him for the address of the woman (her name was Annabell Williams), and he sent it to me. I obtained her phone number and called her long distance. She refused to talk. I wrote her and she sent the letters back.

Finally, I got on the bus and went to Middletown, Ohio.

(To be continued next week)

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SUNDAYS
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Islam Inspiration

Helps Mother Find Her Son

In her first installment, Sister Geneva described the kidnapping of her only child, Johnny and her final disgust with Christianity. She explained how the Messenger instilled in her a burning urge to find her son and how she searched throughout the South for years before getting her first lead. She found the mother who had kidnapped her son and, eventually, learned that the woman lived in Middletown, Ohio.

By Sister Geneva 2X Smith
(Chicago, Ill.)

Finally, I got on the bus and went to Middletown, Ohio. When I confronted the woman, she told me that Johnny was in the hospital. But she would not give me the name of the hospital. She begged me to give her money which, she said, would be sent to Johnny. I refused.

I went to see a lady who lived next door to this woman, hoping she would know Johnny and have some idea of where he was.

As soon as I walked into the lady's house, she asked me if I was related to Johnny. She said the woman who had been keeping Johnny (the same woman who kidnapped him) was very mean and beat him all the time. She said that the city officials



Geneva

had taken him from the woman and put him into a home. But she had no idea which home.

In Children's Home

The next day I called hospitals, juvenile homes and police stations. Finally a police officer told me that a John Henry Williams had been in Juvenile Court but was now in the Children's home in Hamlin, Ohio.

I called the home and they told me Johnny was there because he had no family and no one to properly take care of him. The welfare agencies had referred him to the home. I could not go to Ohio at the time because I had to return to work in Chicago.

But I wrote to the Children's Home and they sent me a form to fill out. In turn, I sent it to the Honorable Elijah Muhammad.

He told me not to worry, that I would see my son

very soon. The very next day I got a letter from the Chicago Children's Family Court. They said they had heard from Hamlin and that they would make arrangements for my son to visit me on the weekends. On the fourth of March, 1965, the people at the Children's Home in Hamlin said I could come down and visit.

The ride from Chicago to Ohio seemed like the longest I've ever taken. I couldn't believe that, at last, I was going to see my son again. It had been almost 16 years since he was kidnapped.

But I could have picked him out of a million teenagers. As soon as I looked at him, tears came into my eyes. I could hardly talk.

Tried To Kill Him

He told me that the woman who had kidnapped him had tried to kill him three times. Twice she tried to throw ammonia in his face. Once she tried to smother him.

The woman had told him three different stories about how his real mother had been killed. Johnny said he began to doubt that his real mother was dead at all.

The woman who kidnapped Johnny was a member of a religion which Johnny found completely to his disliking. The so-called religion called for him to do things which I can't even mention here.

Messenger's Faith

From me, Johnny wanted to know all about Islam. I told him about how Mr. Muhammad had encouraged me to renew my search for him and how Islam was respon-

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sible for my being in touch with him at all.

I told him of how, since

I've been in Islam, I've never been hungry or in any kind of need, and that I've

received much more respect from people wherever I went.