Conspiracy Of Silence Essay, Research Paper

The novel Conspiracy of Silence, written by Lisa Priest takes place in November 1971 in the Pas, Manitoba.

The main character in this book is Helen Betty Osborne. She was the nineteen-year-old victim who was murdered on the night of November 12, 1971. She was an intelligent Cree high school student from the Norway house.

Four secondary characteristics in this novel are Lee Colgan, Jim Houghton, Dwayne Johnstone and Norm Manger. All four of these people played a part in the Osborne murder.

The conflict of this novel starts when a young Cree woman got murdered in The Pas on a cold, dark night. The RCMP tried to get all the evidence they could find, but it was still very hard for them to find the murderers of the horrid killing.

This novel describes the murder and the outcome of the whole case. It was the night of November 12, 1971, when four drunken guys were driving the streets of The Pas. They find a Cree woman walking the streets by herself, returning to her home. They drive up to her and ask her if she wanted to go to a party. She said no, but the guys didn?t care. They threw her in the car and Helen started screaming at the top of her lungs. Dwayne, one of the men in the car and started to slap and punch her so she would keep quiet, but it didn?t work. The four drunken men then drove out of the town, so no one would hear all the noise Helen was making. When they reached the woods they stopped and two of the men took her outside. They continued beating her face. The men couldn?t leave her alive, or else they would be in great danger of her going to the police and telling them what had happened to her. One of the men went back to the car and found and took a screwdriver. Two of the men then started stabbing her non-stop in the stomach, chest and head area. IT was said that Helen was stabbed fifty times all over her body. Helen Betty Osborne finally died a very painful death. The men hid her near a pump, threw away the screwdriver and left the crime scene in fear and confusion.

It was the next day, when Helen?s body was found. The RCMP collected all the evidence they could find at the crime scene. There were no leads for them and were stuck on the question of who murdered this Cree woman.

Lee Colgan, Jim Houghton, Dwayne Johnstone and Norm Manger, the four drunken guy in the car, spoke to lawyer D?Arcy Bancroft, after the murder, so they would be more protected if anything ever did come up with the police. Bancroft told then to be quiet and never mention anything about the murder.

For Dwayne Johnstone, it was a hard promise to keep. He got drunk lots of the time and was always attending parties. At one party, it was said that Dwayne Johnstone kept mentioning that he had repeatedly stabbed a Cree girl. People got ideas of what he was talking about and soon the information spread all over the town.

The next couple of years most of the towns people knew the people who murdered the Cree woman. There was only one problem. Everyone was too scared to mention anything to the police and kept really quiet about it. Police still worked on getting more evidence, but they too had an idea who did it, but did not have enough evidence to take them to court.

For nearly sixteen years the crime still went unsolved until they reopened the case in the 1980?s. The police finally had enough evidence to take the four men to court. Lee, Jim, Dwayne, and Norm all had lawyers and the court session lasted six days. In the end, Dwayne Johnstone was convicted of murdering Helen Betty Osborne. The other men were considered not guilty and were let free.

There was no really exiting party in this book. It was very sad what the four men did to this Cree woman. I think all four men should of served time in prison and not just Johnstone because they were all there at the murder scene, and they did nothing to stop it. I also learned that lawyers could be very bad people sometimes. D?Arcy Bancroft should have reported the murder to the police, but instead he kept it a secret. I think ?some things? can?t be kept secrets, especially when you know murderers who killed an innocent person.

After reading this book I thought it was really well written and researched. I found some parts of the book really ?stomach turning? like when the author wrote about the four men stabbing the screwdriver in the victim?s head. Other than that, it was okay. After I read it, I felt like I learned some things about how police and people really work together in the real world. I recommend this book to someone who wants to learn about the great The Pas murder case or who just wants to read a very well researched real-life murder case.