

2 Who Set Out for Watkins Glen Are Still Gone

Bonnie Bickwit, 15 years old, and her boyfriend, Mitchell Weiser, 16, thanked the man for the ride into Narrowsburg, N.Y., and climbed down from his truck. The driver remembered that as he drove off he saw the two teen-agers dressed in jeans and T-shirts standing at the side of the road, sleeping bags on their backs, holding a cardboard sign that read, "Watkins Glen."

Six hundred thousand other young people completed the pilgrimage to Watkins Glen, N.Y., that Saturday, last July 27, for a weekend of rock music. But no one knows if Bonnie Bickwit and Mitchell Weiser arrived.

They still are missing. The truck driver who gave the two teen-agers a lift eight months ago is the last person known to have seen them.

An ad their parents have run in underground newspapers throughout the country is desperately succinct:

"Bonnie and Mitchell please call home. Your parents are frantic with worry."

"We just want to know that they're still alive," Mrs. Sidney Weiser, Mitchell's mother, said last week at the Bickwits' home in Brooklyn.

Across the country, tens of thousands of parents each year express the same hopes, for

the number of runaways is estimated upward of 600,000. In New York City alone, the police were notified last year of 14,171 runaways under the age of 18, more than 8,000 of them girls. In the city, 94 per cent of the cases are solved; the missing children are either found by authorities or they return home by themselves.

But Bonnie and Mitchell have proved elusive to their parents, the police and a private investigator.

"There are no real clues," said Edward Goldfader, president of Tracers Company of America, who was hired by the parents after friends of the missing teen-agers at John Dewey High School in Brooklyn raised \$675 to help the search. "All we can assume is that Bonnie and Mitchell are out there. The parents have run down every alley they can think of."

After notifying the Police Department's Bureau of Missing Persons, both families mailed out thousands of "missing" circulars describing 4-foot-11-inch, 90-pound Bonnie with the "long brown wavy hair" and 5-foot-7-inch, 140-pound Mitchell with "brown shoulder-length hair parted in the middle and tied back." And the parents have done their own detective work.

Last fall Mrs. Theodore Bickwit received a letter from an Indian reservation in South

Dakota asking for a contribution. "Bonnie and Mitchell were very interested in Indian affairs," Mrs. Bickwit recalled. "I thought that maybe they were at this reservation. After all, how did they get my address?"

Mrs. Weiser agreed. "It was very strange," she said.

The parents mailed 500 letters and circulars to reservations and mission schools throughout the country before they concluded that their children were not at the Dakota reservation.

And then there was the druggist in the East Village who thought he had filled a prescription for Bonnie. This, too, turned out to be a false lead.

Or the month last fall when the Bickwits had a mysterious phone call to Indiana charged to their bill. Perhaps Bonnie had made the phone call to a friend, Mrs. Bickwit reasoned. But this was not the case. The phone company decided the billing was an error and canceled the charge.

Or the call from a Mrs. Bromberg and a Mrs. Berkowitz who insisted they saw Bonnie and Mitchell in August on a bus from Boston to Dover, N.H.

"They were certain they had seen the chil-

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MISSING



Bonnie Bickwit

Female caucasian; 15 years old; 4'11" tall; 90 lbs.; long dark brown wavy hair worn parted in the middle; brown eyes; dressed in blue denim overalls and T-shirt; carried a sleeping bag.



Mitchell Weiser

Male caucasian; 16 years old; 5'7" tall; 140 lbs.; brown shoulder length hair usually worn parted in the middle and tied back; brown eyes; wears gold wire framed glasses; wearing blue denim dungarees and turquoise shirt; tan boots; carried a sleeping bag.

Part of circular distributed by parents of youngsters missing since last summer

said they had noticed the youngsters because they were so young looking. We spoke to the police in Dover and wrote to the newspapers there, but so far no one has reported anything."

Or the time Mrs. Bickwit and Mrs. Weiser took the train to Glen Head, L.I., to see the psychic who operated a storefront called Mind Control.

He told them to bring unwashed pieces of their children's clothing.

"He felt Mitchell's polo shirt," Mrs. Weiser said, "and told us he sensed illness around the ears and throat. I was very impressed because the last time Mitchell had worn that shirt he had been sick with a sore throat."

"After he felt the clothing, he said he could give us a good background," Mrs. Bickwit said. "He said he could feel they were in a cold area, perhaps Vermont or New Hampshire. And he saw Bonnie limping. He also asked if he could have some of their letters. He was going to sleep on them that night and get in touch with us. That was in December, and we haven't heard from him since."

When not searching for clues, the parents search for reasons why their children might have run away and never written or called home.

"The parents would like to believe their children have run away until they are 18 and are

too. I think they are surviving together."

Mrs. Bickwit said that the two teen-agers used to spend their afternoons together. "Last year was a party year," she recalled. "Every weekend there was another sweet sixteen. They were always going to parties together. They were very happy together."

Letters From Camp

"Just two weeks before Bonnie disappeared, we visited her at camp," Mrs. Bickwit said. "She was working as a baby sitter, and we took Mitchell up with us to visit. She made no complaints to us. She wrote us four times that summer and never complained. It was only after she disappeared that we found out she had been unhappy at camp. We had no inkling she was going to go to Watkins Glen. We thought she was at camp. Then on a Tuesday we got this call that Bonnie had left camp three days before and never returned. They told us someone from the camp had given Bonnie and Mitchell a lift in his truck into Narrowsburg. That was the last time they were seen."

"We knew Mitchell was going to Watkins Glen," said Mrs. Weiser. "He was working as a photographer's assistant for the summer in Brooklyn, and I guess he missed the country. He seemed upset that he was not in camp. He had bought a ticket to the rock festival for \$10, and a friend who

us he was going to meet Bonnie at camp and then take a bus the 75 miles to Watkins Glen. He never said anything about hitching.

"Just before he left the house I told him that I wished he wouldn't go. But he told me he would be back by Monday." "Mitchell wanted to go to an out-of-town college," Mrs. Weiser said. "We told him we couldn't afford it. He was going to go to Brooklyn College when he graduated this January. It was only ten minutes from home. Perhaps he was resentful of that."

One Father Ill

The Bickwits and the Weisers had saved some money for their children's college education, but now they are spending that money looking for their children.

"The Indian mailing alone cost us over \$100," Mrs. Bickwit remarked. "The costs keep going up, but how can I put a price on my daughter?"

The Bickwits live in a three-family house in the Boro Park section of Brooklyn. The Weisers live in a two family house in the Midwood area. Mrs. Bickwit works at a retail store in Manhattan. Her husband suffers from a degenerative neurological disorder and remains at home. Mr. Weiser grinds glass for prescription lenses. Mrs. Weiser is looking for a job. "The search has cost so much. We really need some money," she explained. Both couples have older daughters in their twenties.

it would do to her father," Mrs. Bickwit said with emotion. "I know how she worried about him. Her friends at camp said she would cry at night when she talked about him."

"Maybe they wanted to go away from the old neighborhood," Mrs. Bickwit said. "Bonnie was beginning to explore the Village. She would go there to shop. She didn't like the stores around here."

There are not many stores in Boro Park where Bonnie might have shopped. The neighborhood is largely Orthodox Jewish. There are pizzerias, but the signs advertise "Kosher Pizza." A sign in the Carvel store a block from the Bickwits' home reads "Shomrer Shabos — Closed Saturdays." The streets in the neighborhood are filled with bearded Hasidim. Both the Bickwits and the Weisers say they are not very religious.

'Socially Involved'

Thomas Heinegg, a teacher at John Dewey High School who was faculty adviser of the Have-a-Heart Committee which raised \$675 for the two families by selling Valentine cakes and candies, described Bonnie and Mitchell, both students at Dewey, as "two extremely articulate, extremely intelligent, socially involved youngsters."

"They cared about all the causes," Mrs. Bickwit said. "They rang bells for McGovern, they were active in an ecology program, and Bonnie helped out at a kindergarten in an elementary school. She was very sensitive. One summer she went

vowed she would never eat meat again."

"They were two very determined youngsters," Mrs. Weiser said. "Not were, not were," corrected Mr. Bickwit. "They still are."

Small Disputes

"Perhaps they just couldn't handle their changes and their parents at the same time," Mr. Heinegg said. "Their parents are rather traditional. Bonnie and Mitchell are very modern." Both mothers have considered this explanation.

"Bonnie and I really didn't communicate too well," Mrs. Bickwit said sadly. "When your viewpoints differ, you just don't want to argue. I wasn't too happy about her wearing jeans and polo shirts and going without a bra."

"We would argue about her room," Mr. Bickwit remembered. "Last summer when she was at camp, I put up shelves in her room. Bonnie had told me she wanted shelves. I thought she would like them. But she made me take them down. Everything was put into

til she cleaned up those cartons. But the cartons are still there. She would play the radio all night while everything lay in cartons."

"I never knew the depths of her feelings," Mrs. Bickwit said.

Mrs. Weiser thought back. "Mitchell and I didn't have too many discussions," she said. "I tried to talk him out of being a vegetarian. Maybe I would nag him to brush his teeth. We didn't like his long hair. But still, he would call us up if he were going to be just a half-hour late. I just don't see how he could go off and just vanish."

And then there is the theme Bonnie wrote last spring entitled "Is the Traditional Marriage Dying?" The paper concluded with Bonnie's observation that "people are looking for alternatives to traditional ways, other ways of being happy."

The parents are hoping their children have found them, but four parents, "frantic with worry," would like to know for sure.

Shipping/Mails

All Hours Given in Daylight Saving Time

Incoming Passenger and Mail Ships

Ship	Passengers	From	Due	Will Dock
RAFFAELLO (Italian)		Madeira, April 4	10 A.M.	W. 45th St.
VISTAFJORD (Norw. Amer.)		Barbados, April 3	9 A.M.	W. Houston St.

Outgoing Passenger and Mail Ships

A former Republican party official in Massapequa Park, L. I., was arrested yesterday and accused of impersonating a Federal official in telephone calls he allegedly made relating to a Federal conspiracy-extortion case against Representative Angelo D. Roncallo and other G.O.P. officials in Nassau County.

The complaint against the arrested man, Walter W. Cox, charged that he had posed as a Federal official—a felony—in calls to a New York City newsman and to the sister of Peter R. Schlam, the assistant United States Attorney for the Eastern District, who headed the grand jury that indicted Mr. Roncallo and five town officials in Oyster Bay last Feb. 21.

Mr. Roncallo and four of the men were charged with forcing an engineering company to make political contributions. The other official, John W. Burke, Oyster Bay Town Supervisor, was accused of perjury. Mr. Cox was not available last night for comment. In the nineteen-sixties, Mr. Cox

calls and impersonations. They said the Federal Bureau Investigation had traced calls to him in a check of telephone records.

In a call last March 13 Mr. Schlam's sister, Mr. Cox was said to have identified himself as "George Good" from the Bureau," according to complaint. He allegedly asked her for Mr. Schlam's unlisted home telephone number and gave it to him.

Two days later, Mr. Cox presented himself as being from the United States Attorney's office, in a call to Brian Quinn, a reporter for CBS Radio who had been looking into alleged political corruption in Oyster Bay and Nassau County. He allegedly asked Mr. Quinn for a discussion on the Roncallo case, the sources said.

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