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Author Suzanne McConnell

Believes her book *The Still Before Dawn* was the inspiration behind John Grisham's first novel, *A Time to Kill*.

Independence, Virginia, February 4, 2013 -- Believed to be the story that inspired John Grisham's "*A Time to Kill*"; this fictionalized autobiography is centered on a true life rape victim's story heard in a Mississippi court room. However, unlike the novel where the girl is wrapped in the loving arms of her family and her honor is defended by her father, the real little girl was handed back to the very perpetrators of the crime committed against her. Over the next ten years she struggled to grow up in an environment of horrendous abuse, isolation and psychological manipulation. This is her story as she remembers it. Written as a fictionalized narrative changing names and some circumstances in order to protect the innocent, this book explores the psychological mechanisms of disassociation and memory repression and delves deeply into the family dynamics when incest, abuse and betrayal replace the love and security that childhood is supposed to offer. This is also the story of a young woman's journey from the devastating effects of a life lived in the shadows of her own partially repressed memories into the light of reality where she learned to accept herself and love the world around her.

“Survival is what we all did when we made it through the abuse. Living is what we do when we realize that the abuse was never about us and we are not to blame.” Says Suzanne McConnell.

Any dispute about *The Still Before Dawn* being the inspiration behind *A Time to Kill* could be quickly resolved by John Grisham releasing details about the real trial he said inspired his book. Author Suzanne McConnell wrote a letter to Mr. Grisham through his publisher in 2003 asking for help in piecing together the memory of these events. While her letter was ignored, information on Grisham's official website was quickly altered. While doing her research and coming to the conclusion that Grisham's inspiration certainly could have been her own story, Ms. McConnell read Grisham's Biography page and it simply stated that he overheard a twelve year old girl testify to the rape that happened when she was ten years old. After author Suzanne McConnell sent her letter, in which she claimed to have testified in 1976 and thought it unlikely that the same sequence of events would have happened to two little girls in the same geographical location within the same decade, she was shocked to find that Grisham's website had been updated to say that he heard the testimony in the early eighties.

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It cannot be ignored that Grisham was attending Mississippi State University in the very same town at the very same time as these events were unfolding. It also should not be a surprise to learn that it was in and around this time that Grisham changed his major from accounting to law. Also, people who knew Grisham at MSU have said that he was working on something when he was at school but that he kept his writing private at that time. Clearly he was inspired by something. Later, in an interview in the nineties Grisham claimed that he thought about the story for a long time before actually writing his first novel A Time to Kill.

Apart from the possible link to Grisham's famous novel, *The Still Before Dawn* stands on its own merits as being one of the best books written this year. Suzanne McConnell's story gives a long awaited voice to the children of a cult group called *The Move* where she and so many others suffered unspeakable abuses at the hands of their parents and men who claimed to be men of God. It is an inspiration and will make an indelible impression on everyone who is fortunate enough to read it.

<http://www.thestillbeforedawn.com>

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