

Penn County, Indiana: 1986

Eleven-year-old Trudie Brice is strangled to death in her home two weeks before Christmas. The crime goes unsolved.

Twenty years later, writer Ray Krouse is looking for material for his next book and is mysteriously drawn to the little girl's gravesite. When Ray approaches the girl's mother to ask if she would like to know who killed her daughter, she tells him, "They know" — a term professional investigators say people use when they know who the "they" is.

Haunted by Trudie's spirit and believing that she deserves no less, Ray and his friend and publicist, Kick Jetton, set out on a long and trying two-year investigation to find her killer.

In a community where folks leave their doors unlocked, share their supper, keep an eye out for each other, Ray discovers the townsfolk have different theories about who committed the crime, and mixed feelings about discussing it. Some are reluctant to cooperate, though a handful eventually join Ray to put the pieces of the crime puzzle together.

Refusing to look at Ray's new and damning evidence, the Penn County Sheriff's Department continues to point an accusing finger at an Englishman who Ray discovers was out of the country at the time of the murder. The Department quickly informs retired officers not to talk to the writer. With that, the cold case murder of Trudie Brice is left back in the writer's hands.

Sorting through interviews, public information files, and newspaper stories filled with details of the day of the crime, and listening to rumors upon rumors, Ray eventually narrows his list to several suspects and finally to one key suspect — a man who still lives amongst them, a man whose family has been in the community for at least three generations. Was it chance, serendipity, or Divine intervention that led Ray to him?

Determined to push forward in the investigation on his own, Ray contacts the man he believes to be the girl's killer. Can Ray convince the killer to step forward and confess?

Inspired by true events, *The Passerby* has all the twists and turns of a cold case murder investigation, but with an entirely unique and powerful ending.