

Intense Hunt Futile

Mother of Missing Fairfax Girl 'Knew Something Was Wrong'

By William N. Curry

Washington Post Staff Writer

Out back, Jim Moore was working on the porch of his small, white frame house in Fairfax County, on Clifton Road, just east of the town of Clifton. His wife, Judith, was in the kitchen doing the dishes, and daughter Patty, 10, was talking on the phone.

Patty was making plans with Alice Goetz, an 11-year-old playmate who lives about a half-mile from the Moore home. They were making arrangements to play: Patty was to walk down Clifton Road and Alice was to walk up Maple Branch Road, and they would meet as usual, where the streets form a T-intersection.

Moore looked through the back door and saw Patty hang up the phone. Patty told her mother where she was going and left. It was 10:45 a.m. last Wednesday.

Soon after, Alice Goetz was at the Moore's front door saying, "Mrs. Moore, is Patty here?"

"When I saw Alice at the door, I just had a terrible feeling," Mrs. Moore, 27, said. "I knew something was wrong."

Somewhere along Clifton Road, a well-traveled road bordered by dense woods, Patricia Ann Moore vanished. "She went out the door and that was it," Mrs. Moore said.

In the first agonizing moments the Moores did what they could: a phone call to Mrs. Goetz—Patty had not missed Alice along the road; calls to neighbors—no one had seen her; and then the call to the Fairfax County police.

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Fairfax County Search Fails to Find Girl

"She wasn't gone that long, a total of 15 minutes, and we were looking for her," Mrs. Moore recalled.

Suspensions rose immediately. Patty is not the runaway type, her parents told police and reporters. "She's on the shy side," Mr. Moore, 32, said. "She can meet people, but she's reserved."

And then Mrs. Moore related a recent incident: Patty was walking home in a rainstorm when a woman in a car pulled to a stop and offered to drive her home. "She wouldn't get in," Mrs. Moore said. "She came home soaking wet."

She went on, "Patty always let me know where she was going, and she would call me if she was going to be home late. She didn't go off that much, just out to play."

By late Wednesday afternoon, two dozen county policemen began searching the area around the girl's home at 7359 Clifton Rd. Pictures and a description of the girl were circulated almost immediately to news media.

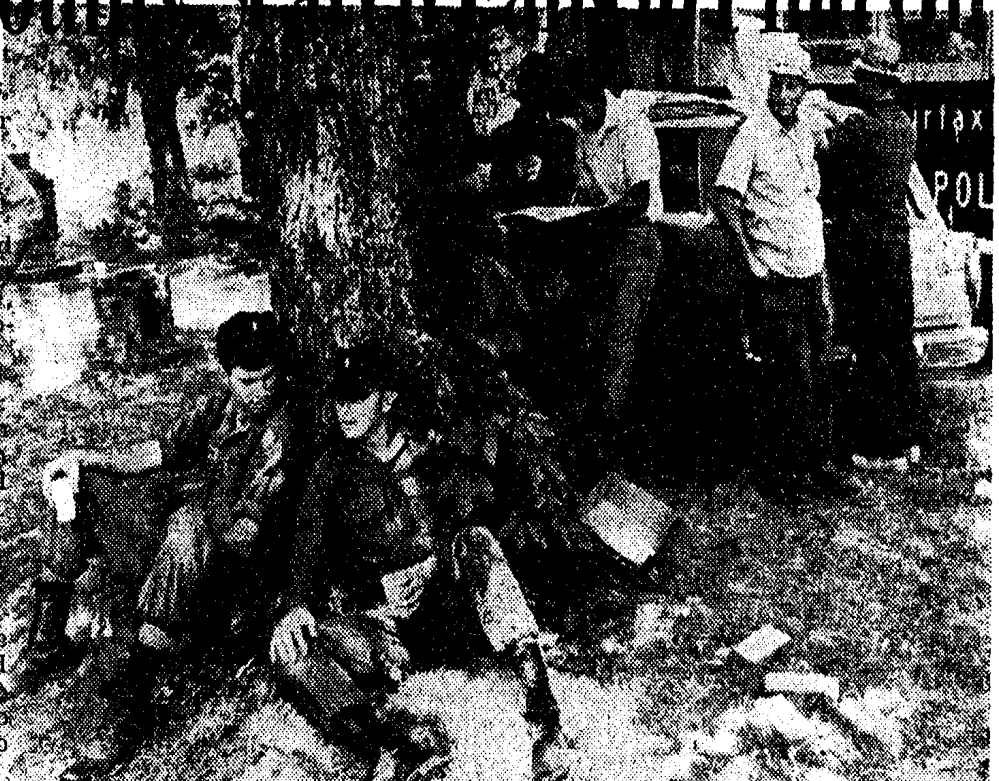
They described her as a feisty 2-foot-7-inch, weighing 70 pounds, with brown hair and brown eyes. She was wearing orange shorts, an orange and white striped shell pullover and green sneakers. Patty has pierced ears and was wearing tiny, gold stud earrings.

Police checked all Washington area hospitals—possibly a car had hit Patty and she had been taken to one.



PATTY MOORE

... vanished Wednesday



Some members of the search party looking for Patty Moore rest under a tree at the home of her family. Others scan maps of the area and plot their next move.

Police began questioning known sex deviates. "Those who have alibis are cleared, those who don't get further checking," said Capt. Richard H. Lester, who's overseeing search operations. Thursday, Police turned in force. Sixty-five gray-shirted officers walked through 28 acres of dense woods next to and across from the Moore home. They pushed their way through saplings, cobwebs and undergrowth, turned around and went back through it.

Nothing. Then they went up Yates Ford Road, behind the house, through more woods, turned around and walked back to Rte. 645—Clifton Road—and walked on into Clifton.

Nothing. Twelve motorcycle patrolmen left the main roads to scour the network for dirt roads that meander through woods and fields.

"I put 73 miles on this thing and didn't ride the same road twice," said Pt. R. C. Lincoln as he rested on his motorcycle.

The tall, husky policeman was asked where all those back roads go. "To other

They go back so far that some policemen brought their own, lightweight motorcycles to get back where the big 850-pound police Harleys can't negotiate the narrow paths and mud holes.

The land in the area—in the southwest quadrant of Fairfax—complicates searching. Unlike the close-in portions of the county, where commuters have rushed to town houses, garden apartments, high-rises and housing subdivisions, the Clifton area has remained largely undeveloped.

Its character is rural, but not farm. A bearded old man frequently squats by the road and hawks tomatoes and corn-on-the-cob—home grown, he assures motorists. Horses roam through a field, and a few cows graze.

In parts, luxury, custom-built homes on 5-acre sites are going up, so painters, plasterers, carpenters and equipment operators pass through the area. So do boaters who use Clifton Road to get to the Bull Run Marina.

Moore was standing in the shade in front of his house

"This is rural, but it's not some isolated country road," he said. "And the houses are close together."

He noted that from his driveway, you can see the mailbox of the house next door. And from there, you can see the house at Clifton and Maple Branch Roads, where Patty was to meet Alice.

"If this were isolated, we wouldn't have let Patty walk by herself," he said.

Yesterday, some 300 Army troops from Ft. Belvoir joined the search, which included dragging nearby ponds and the Bull Run Marina. They went over much of the same ground.

"The more we look, the less we find," said one detective.

Police are assuming there was an abduction—without a witness, without leaving a clue—but have not ruled out other possibilities.

Meanwhile Mr. and Mrs. Moore wait. Patty's tether ball and swing set stand unused, and her 5-month-old brother, Jamie, cries in the house.

"We haven't given up hope," Moore said. "You can't do that."

By Jim McNamara—The Washington Post Staff Writer
Clifton Rd. to Clifton Road.