



Prologue

APRIL 1, 1959

The driver checked the time ... 3:00 A. M., as the dark, late model sedan pulled to a stop beside the dry creek bed located fifteen miles from the city limits of San Angelo and less than a hundred yards from the banks of the Concho River. Although deserted now, the area was a favorite gathering spot for keg parties that the students from the local junior college frequented. It was the perfect place to hide something ... if you wanted it found later, that is.

The driver got out, opened the back door, and retrieved the shovel and flashlight that lay on the back floorboard; then, the figure walked around to the rear of the car, moving cautiously towards the edge of a five-foot embankment that dropped off at a precipitous slant into the dried up creek bed. The figure slid down to the bottom, found a soft spot near the center of the ravine, and started digging. *Not too deep, now. Hey, Sweetie?* Once done, the dark shadow returned to the car and maneuvered the lifeless body of Rachel Combs from the trunk; she was wrapped from head to toe in a thick canvas tarp, secured by a thin rope that spiraled around her body from head to foot.

The figure dragged her to the edge of the embankment, bent down, and unceremoniously shoved the body off the lip of the ravine and watched it roll to the bottom of its own momentum. Satisfied, the figure followed. Rachel Combs landed close to the edge of the grave that had been dug, making it easy for the figure to give her one last nudge with a solid kick to the ribs. Her body fell awkwardly with a dull thud into the shallow grave. *Nice. Just what you deserve. Comfy?*

When the last scoop of dirt was finally tossed on the small mound, the figure returned to the car and threw the flashlight and shovel back into the trunk, giving one last look into the black void of Rachel Combs's final resting place.

“See you soon, Sweetie.”