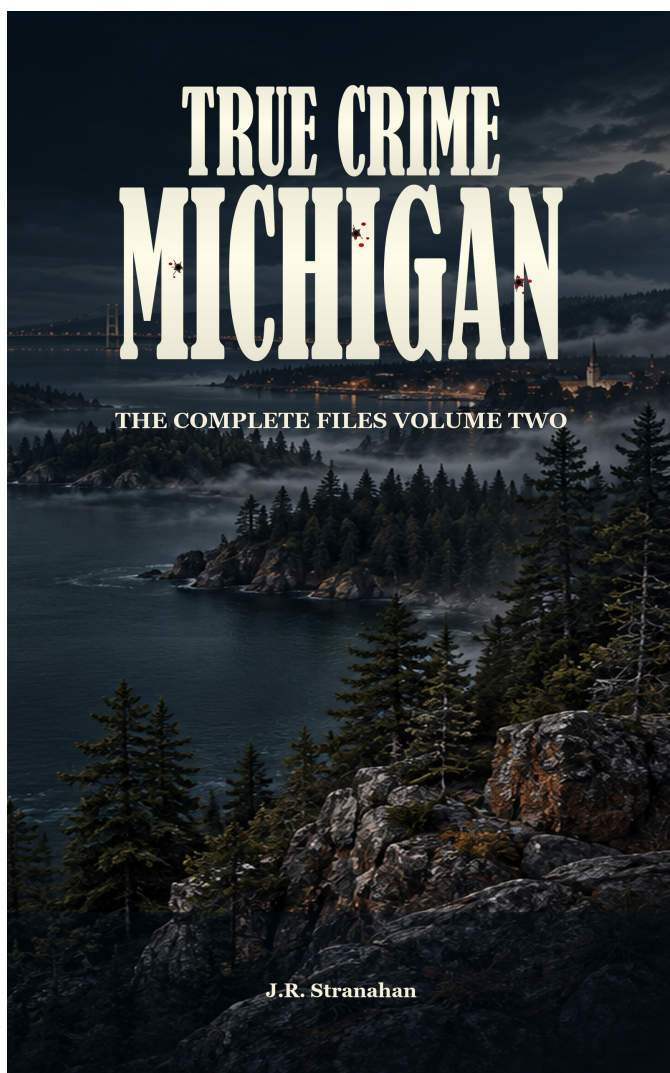




True Crime Michigan: The Complete Files, Volume Two

J.R. Stranahan

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The Michigan Murders and John Norman Collins

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File 1: The Michigan Murders and John Norman Collins

Place and period: Washtenaw County, 1967-1970

Present legal status: John Norman Collins was convicted of murdering Karen Sue Beineman and sentenced to life. He was not convicted of the other deaths commonly grouped as the Michigan Murders.

This file belongs first to Karen Sue Beineman, the other young women whose deaths were investigated, their families, and the university community. The public record is necessarily organized around investigation and adjudication, but a criminal case is not the measure of a life. The account uses the available record to describe what happened and how institutions responded, while avoiding invented biography where sources are silent.

The human scale

Young women disappeared and were found dead across the Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti area. That fact is the fixed point for this portion of The Michigan Murders and John Norman Collins. Begin with the person harmed, the routines interrupted, and the community that had to live with the absence. In Washtenaw County, later retellings sometimes collapse the investigation and the judgment into one continuous story. The public record does not. It preserves the order in which information appeared and the forum in which it was tested. The present legal posture is stated separately: John Norman Collins was convicted of murdering Karen Sue Beineman and sentenced to life. He was not convicted of the other deaths commonly grouped as the Michigan Murders.

For Karen Sue Beineman, the other young women whose deaths were investigated, their families, and the university community, the procedural vocabulary cannot be allowed to eclipse consequence. Agencies

created a coordinated investigation across jurisdictions. The detail belongs here because it changes the chronology, not because it supplies atmosphere. Begin with the person harmed, the routines interrupted, and the community that had to live with the absence. Keeping that boundary visible lets the reader understand both the institutional response and the loss that made the response necessary.

The 1967-1970 record from Washtenaw County contains a point that resists shorthand: Evidence in the Beineman case led to Collins's trial. The present legal posture is equally specific: John Norman Collins was convicted of murdering Karen Sue Beineman and sentenced to life. He was not convicted of the other deaths commonly grouped as the Michigan Murders. Begin with the person harmed, the routines interrupted, and the community that had to live with the absence. One proposition may be established while a neighboring proposition remains disputed. Treating them separately is not hesitation; it is accurate reporting.

A headline can make this episode appear settled in a sentence. The underlying record is narrower. The jury convicted him of Beineman's murder. From there, the inquiry moves through source, timing, corroboration, and legal consequence. Begin with the person harmed, the routines interrupted, and the community that had to live with the absence. None of those steps authorizes invented dialogue or a claim about what Karen Sue Beineman, the other young women whose deaths were investigated, their families, and the university community privately thought.

Location matters in this file. Washtenaw County determined which agencies, courts, and communities carried the case, while 1967-1970 marks the span over which the public learned it. Historical attribution of other deaths is broader than the single adjudicated conviction. Begin with the person harmed, the routines interrupted, and the community that had to live with the absence. The result is a chronology with identifiable custodians rather than a collection of free-floating claims.

This part of the account begins with a modest question: what did the cited source actually establish? Its answer is plain: Young women disappeared and were found dead across the Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti area. The answer does not automatically prove motive, identity, or every charge in the case. Begin with the person harmed, the routines interrupted, and the community that had to live with the absence. The remaining status is stated without embellishment: John Norman Collins was convicted of murdering Karen Sue Beineman and sentenced to life. He was not convicted of the other deaths commonly grouped as the Michigan Murders.

The case file gives different kinds of information different weight. Agencies created a coordinated investigation across jurisdictions. A contemporaneous observation, a laboratory result, a charging allegation, and an appellate finding do not perform the same job. Begin with the person harmed, the routines interrupted, and the community that had to live with the absence. Describing those jobs plainly is especially important when the story concerns Karen Sue Beineman, the other young women whose deaths were investigated, their families, and the university community.

The first account

By the time The Michigan Murders and John Norman Collins reached public memory, sequence had become easy to lose. The jury convicted him of Beineman's murder. Restoring sequence shows what investigators knew, what prosecutors alleged, what the defense contested, and what a court or jury ultimately resolved. Separate what witnesses reported at the time from what investigators later inferred. An older headline cannot replace the current status: John Norman Collins was convicted of murdering Karen Sue Beineman and sentenced to life. He was not convicted of the other deaths commonly grouped as the Michigan Murders.

There is no need to enlarge the evidence to make this file serious. Historical attribution of other deaths is broader than the single

adjudicated conviction. That proposition is consequential on its own. Separate what witnesses reported at the time from what investigators later inferred. The account therefore avoids borrowing certainty from unrelated defendants, other jurisdictions, or later cases that happen to resemble events in Washtenaw County.

The public record speaks most reliably when attribution travels with the claim. Here is the supported proposition: Young women disappeared and were found dead across the Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti area. The source may recount an allegation, summarize trial proof, or state a judgment, and the language must match that function. Separate what witnesses reported at the time from what investigators later inferred. That practice protects the accuracy of the case and the dignity of Karen Sue Beineman, the other young women whose deaths were investigated, their families, and the university community at the same time.

At this stage of the file, absence is also information. The available materials establish this much: Agencies created a coordinated investigation across jurisdictions. They do not establish every rumor that accumulated during 1967-1970. Separate what witnesses reported at the time from what investigators later inferred. Refusing to bridge those gaps with speculation keeps the unresolved portions visible instead of disguising them as narrative momentum.

Consider the detail in its proper scale: Evidence in the Beineman case led to Collins's trial. It is neither disposable nor self-executing. Its force depends on where it sits among the other records from Washtenaw County. Separate what witnesses reported at the time from what investigators later inferred. A measured account can explain that relationship without turning legal caution into a repetitive disclaimer.

The language of this chapter changes when the legal posture changes. The jury convicted him of Beineman's murder. If the proposition came from an accusation, it remains attributed; if it survived adjudication, the judgment is named; if review altered the result, the alteration is carried

forward. Separate what witnesses reported at the time from what investigators later inferred. The controlling endpoint is recorded separately: John Norman Collins was convicted of murdering Karen Sue Beineman and sentenced to life. He was not convicted of the other deaths commonly grouped as the Michigan Murders.

What happened to Karen Sue Beineman, the other young women whose deaths were investigated, their families, and the university community generated records made for different audiences: investigators, lawyers, judges, jurors, officials, and the public. Historical attribution of other deaths is broader than the single adjudicated conviction. Those records overlap, but they are not interchangeable. Separate what witnesses reported at the time from what investigators later inferred. Reading across them carefully prevents a later summary from erasing an earlier uncertainty or a later reversal.

Building a chronology

The most useful context is the context that changes interpretation. Agencies created a coordinated investigation across jurisdictions. In the Washtenaw County record, that detail helps explain why a particular investigative or legal step followed. Dates and sequence matter because later knowledge can make early decisions seem more certain than they were. General crime lore would add volume but not understanding, so it is left outside the account.

The end of a proceeding is not always the end of a case's public life. Evidence in the Beineman case led to Collins's trial. Families, institutions, and communities continued to live with the result after 1967-1970. Dates and sequence matter because later knowledge can make early decisions seem more certain than they were. The legal status is reported in its own terms: John Norman Collins was convicted of murdering Karen Sue Beineman and sentenced to life. He was not convicted of the other deaths commonly grouped as the Michigan Murders. It does not imply that every question or consequence disappeared.

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Physical evidence

This part of the account begins with a modest question: what did the cited source actually establish? Its answer is plain: Historical attribution of other deaths is broader than the single adjudicated conviction. The answer does not automatically prove motive, identity, or every charge in the case. Describe what an item could establish and what it could not establish without additional proof. The remaining status is stated without embellishment: John Norman Collins was convicted of murdering Karen Sue Beineman and sentenced to life. He was not convicted of the other deaths commonly grouped as the Michigan Murders.

The case file gives different kinds of information different weight. Young women disappeared and were found dead across the Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti area. A contemporaneous observation, a laboratory result, a charging allegation, and an appellate finding do not perform the same job. Describe what an item could establish and what it could not establish without additional proof. Describing those jobs plainly is especially important when the story concerns Karen Sue Beineman, the other young women whose deaths were investigated, their families, and

the university community.

By the time The Michigan Murders and John Norman Collins reached public memory, sequence had become easy to lose. Agencies created a coordinated investigation across jurisdictions. Restoring sequence shows what investigators knew, what prosecutors alleged, what the defense contested, and what a court or jury ultimately resolved.

Describe what an item could establish and what it could not establish without additional proof. An older headline cannot replace the current status: John Norman Collins was convicted of murdering Karen Sue Beineman and sentenced to life. He was not convicted of the other deaths commonly grouped as the Michigan Murders.

There is no need to enlarge the evidence to make this file serious. Evidence in the Beineman case led to Collins's trial. That proposition is consequential on its own. Describe what an item could establish and what it could not establish without additional proof. The account therefore avoids borrowing certainty from unrelated defendants, other jurisdictions, or later cases that happen to resemble events in Washtenaw County.

The public record speaks most reliably when attribution travels with the claim. Here is the supported proposition: The jury convicted him of Beineman's murder. The source may recount an allegation, summarize trial proof, or state a judgment, and the language must match that function. Describe what an item could establish and what it could not establish without additional proof. That practice protects the accuracy of the case and the dignity of Karen Sue Beineman, the other young women whose deaths were investigated, their families, and the university community at the same time.

At this stage of the file, absence is also information. The available materials establish this much: Historical attribution of other deaths is broader than the single adjudicated conviction. They do not establish every rumor that accumulated during 1967-1970. Describe what an item could establish and what it could not establish without additional proof.

Refusing to bridge those gaps with speculation keeps the unresolved portions visible instead of disguising them as narrative momentum.

Witness evidence

Consider the detail in its proper scale: Evidence in the Beineman case led to Collins's trial. It is neither disposable nor self-executing. Its force depends on where it sits among the other records from Washtenaw County. Credibility is tested through opportunity to observe, consistency, corroboration, motive, and cross-examination. A measured account can explain that relationship without turning legal caution into a repetitive disclaimer.

The language of this chapter changes when the legal posture changes. The jury convicted him of Beineman's murder. If the proposition came from an accusation, it remains attributed; if it survived adjudication, the judgment is named; if review altered the result, the alteration is carried forward. Credibility is tested through opportunity to observe, consistency, corroboration, motive, and cross-examination. The controlling endpoint is recorded separately: John Norman Collins was convicted of murdering Karen Sue Beineman and sentenced to life. He was not convicted of the other deaths commonly grouped as the Michigan Murders.

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The most useful context is the context that changes interpretation. Young women disappeared and were found dead across the Ann Arbor

and Ypsilanti area. In the Washtenaw County record, that detail helps explain why a particular investigative or legal step followed. Credibility is tested through opportunity to observe, consistency, corroboration, motive, and cross-examination. General crime lore would add volume but not understanding, so it is left outside the account.

The end of a proceeding is not always the end of a case's public life. Agencies created a coordinated investigation across jurisdictions. Families, institutions, and communities continued to live with the result after 1967-1970. Credibility is tested through opportunity to observe, consistency, corroboration, motive, and cross-examination. The legal status is reported in its own terms: John Norman Collins was convicted of murdering Karen Sue Beineman and sentenced to life. He was not convicted of the other deaths commonly grouped as the Michigan Murders. It does not imply that every question or consequence disappeared.

Evidence in the Beineman case led to Collins's trial. That fact is the fixed point for this portion of The Michigan Murders and John Norman Collins. Credibility is tested through opportunity to observe, consistency, corroboration, motive, and cross-examination. In Washtenaw County, later retellings sometimes collapse the investigation and the judgment into one continuous story. The public record does not. It preserves the order in which information appeared and the forum in which it was tested. The present legal posture is stated separately: John Norman Collins was convicted of murdering Karen Sue Beineman and sentenced to life. He was not convicted of the other deaths commonly grouped as the Michigan Murders.

Digital and documentary trails

For Karen Sue Beineman, the other young women whose deaths were investigated, their families, and the university community, the procedural vocabulary cannot be allowed to eclipse consequence. Young women disappeared and were found dead across the Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti area. The detail belongs here because it changes the chronology, not because it supplies atmosphere. Records can preserve timing and contact, but interpretation still depends on context and authentication. Keeping that boundary visible lets the reader understand both the institutional response and the loss that made the response necessary.

The 1967-1970 record from Washtenaw County contains a point that resists shorthand: Agencies created a coordinated investigation across jurisdictions. The present legal posture is equally specific: John Norman Collins was convicted of murdering Karen Sue Beineman and sentenced to life. He was not convicted of the other deaths commonly grouped as the Michigan Murders. Records can preserve timing and contact, but interpretation still depends on context and authentication. One proposition may be established while a neighboring proposition remains disputed. Treating them separately is not hesitation; it is accurate reporting.

A headline can make this episode appear settled in a sentence. The underlying record is narrower. Evidence in the Beineman case led to Collins's trial. From there, the inquiry moves through source, timing, corroboration, and legal consequence. Records can preserve timing and contact, but interpretation still depends on context and authentication. None of those steps authorizes invented dialogue or a claim about what Karen Sue Beineman, the other young women whose deaths were investigated, their families, and the university community privately thought.

Location matters in this file. Washtenaw County determined which agencies, courts, and communities carried the case, while 1967-1970 marks the span over which the public learned it. The jury convicted him

of Beineman's murder. Records can preserve timing and contact, but interpretation still depends on context and authentication. The result is a chronology with identifiable custodians rather than a collection of free-floating claims.

This part of the account begins with a modest question: what did the cited source actually establish? Its answer is plain: Historical attribution of other deaths is broader than the single adjudicated conviction. The answer does not automatically prove motive, identity, or every charge in the case. Records can preserve timing and contact, but interpretation still depends on context and authentication. The remaining status is stated without embellishment: John Norman Collins was convicted of murdering Karen Sue Beineman and sentenced to life. He was not convicted of the other deaths commonly grouped as the Michigan Murders.

The case file gives different kinds of information different weight. Young women disappeared and were found dead across the Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti area. A contemporaneous observation, a laboratory result, a charging allegation, and an appellate finding do not perform the same job. Records can preserve timing and contact, but interpretation still depends on context and authentication. Describing those jobs plainly is especially important when the story concerns Karen Sue Beineman, the other young women whose deaths were investigated, their families, and the university community.

Charging choices

By the time *The Michigan Murders* and John Norman Collins reached public memory, sequence had become easy to lose. The jury convicted him of Beineman's murder. Restoring sequence shows what investigators knew, what prosecutors alleged, what the defense contested, and what a court or jury ultimately resolved. An indictment states allegations; a plea or verdict resolves only the counts and defendants actually adjudicated. An older headline cannot replace the current status: John Norman Collins was convicted of murdering Karen Sue Beineman and sentenced to life. He was not convicted of the other deaths commonly grouped as the Michigan Murders.

There is no need to enlarge the evidence to make this file serious. Historical attribution of other deaths is broader than the single adjudicated conviction. That proposition is consequential on its own. An indictment states allegations; a plea or verdict resolves only the counts and defendants actually adjudicated. The account therefore avoids borrowing certainty from unrelated defendants, other jurisdictions, or later cases that happen to resemble events in Washtenaw County.

The public record speaks most reliably when attribution travels with the claim. Here is the supported proposition: Young women disappeared and were found dead across the Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti area. The source may recount an allegation, summarize trial proof, or state a judgment, and the language must match that function. An indictment states allegations; a plea or verdict resolves only the counts and defendants actually adjudicated. That practice protects the accuracy of the case and the dignity of Karen Sue Beineman, the other young women whose deaths were investigated, their families, and the university community at the same time.

At this stage of the file, absence is also information. The available materials establish this much: Agencies created a coordinated investigation across jurisdictions. They do not establish every rumor that accumulated during 1967-1970. An indictment states allegations; a plea

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Consider the detail in its proper scale: Evidence in the Beineman case led to Collins's trial. It is neither disposable nor self-executing. Its force depends on where it sits among the other records from Washtenaw County. An indictment states allegations; a plea or verdict resolves only the counts and defendants actually adjudicated. A measured account can explain that relationship without turning legal caution into a repetitive disclaimer.

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The courtroom

What happened to Karen Sue Beineman, the other young women whose deaths were investigated, their families, and the university community generated records made for different audiences: investigators, lawyers, judges, jurors, officials, and the public. Agencies created a coordinated investigation across jurisdictions. Those records overlap, but they are not interchangeable. A trial is structured proof under rules, not a complete replay of every event or every rumor surrounding it. Reading across them carefully prevents a later summary from erasing an earlier uncertainty or a later reversal.

The most useful context is the context that changes interpretation. Evidence in the Beineman case led to Collins's trial. In the Washtenaw County record, that detail helps explain why a particular investigative or legal step followed. A trial is structured proof under rules, not a complete replay of every event or every rumor surrounding it. General crime lore would add volume but not understanding, so it is left outside the account.

The end of a proceeding is not always the end of a case's public life. The jury convicted him of Beineman's murder. Families, institutions, and communities continued to live with the result after 1967-1970. A trial is structured proof under rules, not a complete replay of every event or every rumor surrounding it. The legal status is reported in its own terms: John Norman Collins was convicted of murdering Karen Sue Beineman and sentenced to life. He was not convicted of the other deaths commonly grouped as the Michigan Murders. It does not imply that every question or consequence disappeared.

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Appeal and review

A headline can make this episode appear settled in a sentence. The underlying record is narrower. Historical attribution of other deaths is broader than the single adjudicated conviction. From there, the inquiry moves through source, timing, corroboration, and legal consequence. An appellate court tests legal error and the governing record, not whether judges would retell the case the same way. None of those steps authorizes invented dialogue or a claim about what Karen Sue Beineman, the other young women whose deaths were investigated, their families, and the university community privately thought.

Location matters in this file. Washtenaw County determined which agencies, courts, and communities carried the case, while 1967-1970 marks the span over which the public learned it. Young women disappeared and were found dead across the Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti area. An appellate court tests legal error and the governing record, not whether judges would retell the case the same way. The result is a chronology with identifiable custodians rather than a collection of free-floating claims.

This part of the account begins with a modest question: what did the cited source actually establish? Its answer is plain: Agencies created a coordinated investigation across jurisdictions. The answer does not automatically prove motive, identity, or every charge in the case. An appellate court tests legal error and the governing record, not whether judges would retell the case the same way. The remaining status is stated without embellishment: John Norman Collins was convicted of murdering Karen Sue Beineman and sentenced to life. He was not convicted of the other deaths commonly grouped as the Michigan Murders.

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By the time The Michigan Murders and John Norman Collins reached public memory, sequence had become easy to lose. The jury convicted him of Beineman's murder. Restoring sequence shows what investigators knew, what prosecutors alleged, what the defense contested, and what a court or jury ultimately resolved. An appellate court tests legal error and the governing record, not whether judges would retell the case the same way. An older headline cannot replace the current status: John Norman Collins was convicted of murdering Karen Sue Beineman and sentenced to life. He was not convicted of the other deaths commonly grouped as the Michigan Murders.

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Uncertainty

The public record speaks most reliably when attribution travels with the claim. Here is the supported proposition: Evidence in the Beineman case led to Collins's trial. The source may recount an allegation, summarize trial proof, or state a judgment, and the language must match that function. A responsible account marks the edge of the record rather than filling silence with motive, dialogue, or private thought. That practice protects the accuracy of the case and the dignity of Karen Sue Beineman, the other young women whose deaths were investigated, their families, and the university community at the same time.

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Institutions

The end of a proceeding is not always the end of a case's public life. Young women disappeared and were found dead across the Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti area. Families, institutions, and communities continued to live with the result after 1967-1970. Police, prosecutors, defense counsel, courts, laboratories, journalists, and families each occupy different roles. The legal status is reported in its own terms: John Norman Collins was convicted of murdering Karen Sue Beineman and sentenced to life. He was not convicted of the other deaths commonly grouped as the Michigan Murders. It does not imply that every question or consequence disappeared.

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For Karen Sue Beineman, the other young women whose deaths were investigated, their families, and the university community, the procedural vocabulary cannot be allowed to eclipse consequence. Evidence in the Beineman case led to Collins's trial. The detail belongs here because it changes the chronology, not because it supplies atmosphere. Police, prosecutors, defense counsel, courts, laboratories, journalists, and families each occupy different roles. Keeping that boundary visible lets the reader understand both the institutional response and the loss that made the response necessary.

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After the judgment

This part of the account begins with a modest question: what did the cited source actually establish? Its answer is plain: The jury convicted him of Beineman's murder. The answer does not automatically prove motive, identity, or every charge in the case. Sentencing, resentencing, parole, dismissal, or an open investigation can change the legal status without changing the human loss. The remaining status is stated without embellishment: John Norman Collins was convicted of murdering Karen Sue Beineman and sentenced to life. He was not convicted of the other deaths commonly grouped as the Michigan Murders.

The case file gives different kinds of information different weight. Historical attribution of other deaths is broader than the single adjudicated conviction. A contemporaneous observation, a laboratory result, a charging allegation, and an appellate finding do not perform the same job. Sentencing, resentencing, parole, dismissal, or an open investigation can change the legal status without changing the human loss. Describing those jobs plainly is especially important when the story concerns Karen Sue Beineman, the other young women whose deaths were investigated, their families, and the university community.

By the time The Michigan Murders and John Norman Collins reached public memory, sequence had become easy to lose. Young women disappeared and were found dead across the Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti area. Restoring sequence shows what investigators knew, what prosecutors alleged, what the defense contested, and what a court or jury ultimately resolved. Sentencing, resentencing, parole, dismissal, or an open investigation can change the legal status without changing the human loss. An older headline cannot replace the current status: John Norman Collins was convicted of murdering Karen Sue Beineman and sentenced to life. He was not convicted of the other deaths commonly grouped as the Michigan Murders.

There is no need to enlarge the evidence to make this file serious. Agencies created a coordinated investigation across jurisdictions. That

proposition is consequential on its own. Sentencing, resentencing, parole, dismissal, or an open investigation can change the legal status without changing the human loss. The account therefore avoids borrowing certainty from unrelated defendants, other jurisdictions, or later cases that happen to resemble events in Washtenaw County.

The public record speaks most reliably when attribution travels with the claim. Here is the supported proposition: Evidence in the Beineman case led to Collins's trial. The source may recount an allegation, summarize trial proof, or state a judgment, and the language must match that function. Sentencing, resentencing, parole, dismissal, or an open investigation can change the legal status without changing the human loss. That practice protects the accuracy of the case and the dignity of Karen Sue Beineman, the other young women whose deaths were investigated, their families, and the university community at the same time.

At this stage of the file, absence is also information. The available materials establish this much: The jury convicted him of Beineman's murder. They do not establish every rumor that accumulated during 1967-1970. Sentencing, resentencing, parole, dismissal, or an open investigation can change the legal status without changing the human loss. Refusing to bridge those gaps with speculation keeps the unresolved portions visible instead of disguising them as narrative momentum.

Status at manuscript lock

The controlling status for this account is: John Norman Collins was convicted of murdering Karen Sue Beineman and sentenced to life. He was not convicted of the other deaths commonly grouped as the Michigan Murders. That sentence is deliberately narrower than a television summary. It does not merge co-defendants, convert accusations into findings, or imply that an appeal erased a human death. Later proceedings may change the legal posture, but they should not be projected backward onto the record described here.

Sources from the edition

The Michigan Murders and John Norman Collins

- Michigan Courts: <https://www.courts.michigan.gov/>

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