



# THE WICKER KING

K. A N C R U M

{Imprint}  
MAKE YOUR MARK  
New York



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[mackids.com](http://mackids.com)



This book is dedicated to all the kids whose arms  
are filled with too much for them to hold, but who  
are trying their best not to drop a single thing.

I see you and I am proud of you for trying.

MINDEN CITY POLICE

CASE NUMBER  
2002-456769

DATE BOOKED  
01/30/2003

CURRENT CELL  
5

CUSTODY CLASSIFICATION  
1

### BOOKING REPORT

SUBJECT NAME - LAST

Bateman

SUBJECT NAME - FIRST

August

SUBJECT NAME - MI

IMAGE

RACE

mixed

SEX

M

DATE OF BIRTH

6/21/1985

AGE

17

HEIGHT

6'0"

WEIGHT

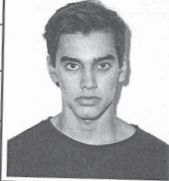
167 lbs

HAIR

black

EYE

brown



ADDRESS

8329 Rocky Rd  
Minden, MI 49793

PHONE

989-555-2030

SCARS - MARKS - TATTOOS

Tattoo on neck

OCCUPATION

Student

DATE OF INCIDENT

01/30/2003

TIME OF INCIDENT

8:00 PM

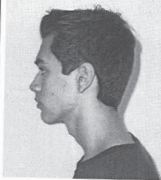
LOCATION OF INCIDENT

Priorson & Co. factory

REPORTING OFFICER

Timothy Smith

ADDITIONAL IMAGE



#### CHARGES

- 1 - FIRST DEGREE ARSON / statute # 750.72
- 2 - TRESPASSING / statute # 750.552
- 3 -
- 4 -
- 5 -
- 6 -
- 7 -

JUVENILE INFO CODE

PA

PA-PARENT

FP-GRANDPARENT

SP-STEPARENT

GA- GUARDIAN

OFM- OTHER FAMILY MEMBER

NAME (LAST, FIRST, MIDDLE)

Bateman, Allison

ADDRESS

8329 Rocky Rd  
Minden, MI 49793

PERSON NOTIFIED OF JUVENILE CUSTODY

Allison Bateman

RELATIONSHIP

mother

HOW NOTIFIED

phone

DATE/TIME NOTIFIED

01/30/03 9:30 PM

ADDRESS

PHONE

NOTES

Subject required medical attention prior to arrest. Subject taken into custody and transported to Minden City police department for interview and booking. Subject later transported to Minden Detention Facility for holding.

THUMBPRINT



FULL PRINTS ON FILE

OFFICER SIGNATURE

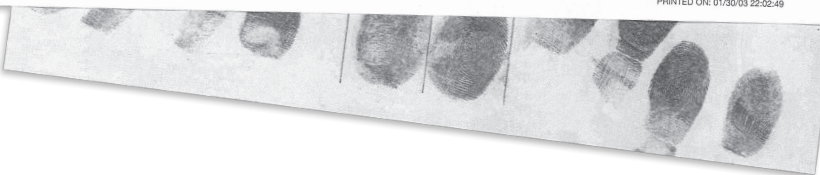
BADGE

21001

SUPERVISOR SIGNATURE

ASSIGNED TO

PRINTED ON: 01/30/03 02:22:49





# 1998

They were thirteen the first time they broke into the toy factory.

It was almost midnight, it was freezing outside, and August was fucking terrified. He pushed his dark hair out of his face, plastering himself to Jack's back while Jack tried to jimmy the handle open.

"Come on, *come on*. You're so slow. We're going to get caught, you asshole," he whispered.

Jack ignored him. August always got mean when he was scared.

After a couple of more seconds of watching Jack rattle the handle, August gave up on that approach entirely and just threw a brick through the window instead.

They both flinched at the sound of breaking glass and ducked farther into the shadows. When the police didn't burst out of nowhere and arrest them immediately, August turned back to Jack and grinned.

Jack punched him in the arm and grinned back. "Quit showing off. Race you inside?"

"Thank you, August, for getting us in. I don't know what I would do without you. Oh, you're welcome, Jack. Anything for you, princess," August deadpanned.

Jack pushed him. "Why are you such a dick? Just get inside."

They crawled in through the broken window and dropped down to the floor.

“Whoa.”

“Did you bring your flashlight?”

“No, Jack. I followed you through the night to break into an abandoned building without a flashlight.”

“Seriously. Stop bitching. What is wrong with you?”

“I’m *scared*. I feel like I’m trapped with you in a more terrifying version of *Bridge to Terabithia*.”

“You’re not. And you need to stop reading books like that. Now give me your flashlight.”

August handed it over miserably.

Jack turned it on, the dim light bringing out the hollows of his face. “Oh yeah. Ha ha ha, *wow*. Yeah, this might be the best place in the whole town. We are *definitely* coming back here in the morning.”

And even though Jack’s word was pretty much law, August fervently prayed that they wouldn’t go back ever again.

MINDEN CITY POLICE

ARREST REPORT

DIVISION ATTENDING: 743

DIVISION REPORTING: 743

DX NO:

DATE AND TIME OF ARREST: 01/30/2003

CHARGES: First degree arson, trespassing

LOCATION OF ARREST: Minden Forest Preserve

CHARGED AT: Minden City Police Department

PERSON ARRESTED: Bateman, August

ALIAS:

AGE: 17

SEX: M

OCCUPATION: Student

ADDRESS: 8329 Rocky Rd, Minden, MI 49793

PARENTS: MOTHER: Allison Bateman

FATHER:

ADDRESS: 8329 Rocky Rd  
Minden, MI 49793

ADDRESS:

CASE NUMBER: 2002-456769

ARREST OFFICER: Timothy Smith

BADGE: 21001

REPORT:

Officer Suffern and I responded to a call from multiple Minden City residents about black smoke coming from the east entrance to the Minden Forest Preserve. The Fire Department had also been called and was present when we arrived at the scene. The Priorson and Co. factory was on fire. There was physical evidence that the fire had been set intentionally. A gasoline canister as well as several rags were on the scene.

Officer Suffern apprehended the suspects, two students from Barnard High School: August Bateman, 17, and Jack Rossi, 17.

Upon further inspection of the suspects I confirmed that suspect August Bateman was in severe need of medical attention that delayed his arrest by over an hour. Suspect was compliant with both on-site medical treatment and arrest.

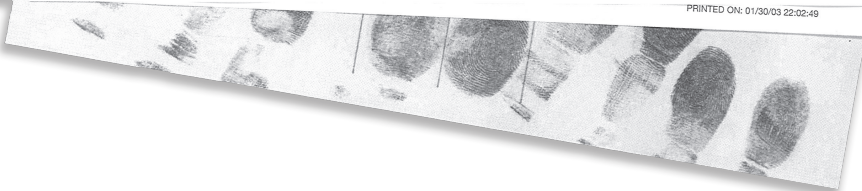
Jack Rossi was apprehended as well, but seemed very disoriented and resisted arrest. Suspect also appears to have vision problems that contradict his involvement in the fire, but he insisted verbally that he be taken in and booked with August Bateman.

There was no damage to the surrounding Forest Preserve. Besides the Fire Department, emergency personnel, Officer Smith and myself, there were no other witnesses.

NOTICE: Arrest data that is retrieved from this system is confidential and protected under Juvenile Court Act

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# 2003

It was August's third night in the asylum, and already he had learned several things:

1. It was never a comfortable temperature. Ever. It was always too warm or too cold.
2. Only roughly half of the rules made logical sense. The other half seemed deliberately designed to be broken accidentally.
3. You ate when they told you to and you ate what they told you to, or you didn't eat at all. (Then you got punished for that too.)
4. No one had real blankets.
5. No one had real friends.
6. This was maybe worse than jail.

His roommate was terrified of him and wouldn't speak to him because they'd brought him into the hospital in handcuffs, straight from court, and the orderlies didn't have the kindness to explain to everyone that he wasn't actually a crazed serial murderer.

He wasn't allowed to have pencils or be unsupervised, because for some strange reason he was on suicide watch. They also made him wear a red uniform to separate him from the rest of the

patients so it was clear he was a special prisoner-patient. As if the “handcuffed prison-guard parade” wasn’t enough.

And worst of all—he had never wanted a cigarette more in his goddamn life.

But it would be a cold day in hell before that happened. They don’t give lighters to arsonists.

# AUGUST

He probably would have gotten off easier if he hadn't been so sarcastic.

It was just—they kept asking the *stupidest* questions. You know how small-town cops are. It was way too difficult to hold it in.

“Was the fire an accident, son?” The officer had looked tired, like he hoped August would say yes.

But, of course, August didn't. He'd just narrowed his eyes and said something rude. Then they slammed him into the holding cell so fast, it was as if he'd been begging to go.

Honestly, though. He was standing there with accelerant drying on his jeans and second-degree burns on his hands. It was a waste of everyone's time to try lying.

# JACK

It was mostly his own fault for getting dragged in. But August supposed if he could blame anyone else for his current situation, it would be Jack.

Jack had always been bossy—even when they were kids. He didn't leave much room for defiance when his mind was set on something, and August had just gotten used to it. He wasn't a leader. It wasn't natural for him. He understood and accepted that. But . . . sometimes it's better to have control over your own destiny.

This situation was one of those times.

Which—August thought as he tested the restraints on his wrists—was a grievous understatement.

Besides, he felt kind of bad complaining so much. Jack was doing ten *thousand* times worse than he was. The poor kid couldn't even go outside.

But—like every disaster they'd gotten themselves into through the history of their friendship—it hadn't started all bad. Things were actually pretty fun until that last bit with all the screaming and the flames and the ambulances.

# ROOSEVELT HIGH SCORE

They didn't hang out at school, Jack and him. They were on *stratospherically* different popularity levels. Plus, these types of things usually had a system:

The Jocks stuck to the Jocks, the Punk kids with the Punk kids, Band Geeks, Goths, AP hard-asses, aggro ROTC-ers, Stoners, Ravers, Cheerleaders, New Age Hippies, Hipsters, Grunge Kids, Gamers, Lit Nerds, Actual Nerds, Theater Kids, Druggies. Gangsters, “the Popular Crowd,” and those shy, immature kids who grouped together in awkward clumps. Everyone stuck to what they knew.

Of course, there was drifting between subgroups, but it was rare.

Jack rode the edge of the Popular Crowd just by virtue of his involvement with sports, while August found himself smack between the Lit Nerds and the Druggies—roughly near the middle of the totem. It wasn't exactly glamorous, but running drugs for Daliah meant that he was part a group of Providers of Services—notable figureheads of the high school economy—and that he could make a month's worth of “minimum wage part-time job” wages in a week. Which was important because he really needed the money.

He didn't brag about it, but the way he looked really helped with not getting caught. August was horribly neat and organized.



He wore fashionable, expensive clothes that he saved up for months to buy, and he was intense about personal hygiene. He didn't like people to know that he was poor. So, he was never on a suspect list because of his obvious fastidiousness, spotless record, and absolutely *perfect* slicked-back hair.

# August Bateman

1. Hotel Yorba — the White Stripes
2. Blister In The Sun — Violent Femmes
3. Punk Rock Girl — the Dead Milkmen
4. Why Don't We Do It In The Road? — the Beatles
5. Last Nite — the Strokes
6. Darling Nikki — Foo Fighters
7. Fell In Love With A Girl — the White Stripes
8. Golden Brown — the Stranglers
9. Gloria — Patti Smith
10. Don't Think Twice It's All Right — Bob Dylan
11. Smokestack Lightning — Howlin' Wolf
12. Bang Bang — Nancy Sinatra

# WOLVES

They really only saw each other on school property at games. Their rugby team wasn't the best, but since it was the only major sport in their town, everyone generally made a lot of hoopla about it.

August didn't even like rugby, but he went to every game anyway. Jack was ridiculously athletic and first line this year, so August couldn't make an excuse not to care. He never cheered, because that was too much work. But he went, and that seemed to be enough.

After games, they usually met up in the locker room before taking Jack's shitty Camaro out to the plains to fuck around in the grass.

Wrestle and run. That sort of thing.

It was tradition. It made it all right that they didn't see each other during the day. It was worth people not knowing that they knew each other better than anyone knew *anyone*, really. They were so far apart on the social spectrum that it wouldn't make sense to people if they started openly hanging out together. It would be a spectacle, and August didn't like spectacle. Some things were just meant to be private.

# JACK ROSSI

- FEELING THIS - BLINK-182
- HASH PIPE - WEEZER
- SANTERIA - SUBLIME
- SCAR TISSUE - RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS
- HATE TO SAY I TOLD YOU SO - THE HIVES
- SHIMMER - FUEL
- PARDON ME - INCUBUS
- LOVE SONG - THE CURE
- SOMEDAY - THE STROKES
- BLURRY - Puddle of MUD
- THE LARK ASCENDING - RALPH VAUGHN WILLIAMS
- YOU ARE MY SUNSHINE - RAY CHARLES

## CARRIE-ANNE

Jack was good-looking. He was a bit shorter than August, but not by much. He had a sharp face with clever eyes, and usually wore his hair buzzed low—but it had grown out now. He had the whole *light hair–gray eyes* thing going on that people went crazy for. He was also strong and athletic. That didn't mean much to August, but he'd heard girls talking about it in the hallway.

Jack was popular, unlike August, and of course he had a girlfriend. Her name was Carrie-Anne: a bottle-blond, UGG-booted, North Face-wearing prepster with a perfect GPA.

August *loathed* her.

He could've written sonnets about her pouty lips and golden hair and ivory skin and melodious voice. Not because he admired those things in the slightest—he couldn't have cared less about the way she looked. It was because he had to constantly listen to Jack's moony-eyed chattering.

It's not that August didn't like girls.

He just didn't like *her*.

# MRS. BATEMAN

August's mother was special.

She was an indoor mother who never went outside, except in emergencies. But still—August loved her.

She was suffering from a Great Big Sad that she chased away with pills and sleep and game shows. Everything was hard for her. Getting up was hard, getting dressed was hard. Sometimes eating or even sitting up was hard.

Everything was a learning experience. And luckily for him, by the time his parents were divorced and the Big Sad came to visit, he was old enough to use the stove and clean up after himself. He got good at it.

Then, a couple of years later, when Jack's parents started traveling a lot for work, he found himself in the position to take responsibility for Jack, too. It wasn't a burden, because he was used to it and because he was prepared.

Sometimes, especially when he was cooking, he felt like maybe the Great Big Sad took his mom so he would be ready for Jack. Like the fear and depression that choked her until she couldn't move made it so that when Jack stumbled into his house three years ago and admitted that he hadn't seen his own mom in weeks, August was ready to sit him down and make him some soup.

It was a selfish thought.

He pushed it away whenever he could.

# THE OTHER WOMAN

Jack slung his backpack onto the floor and collapsed onto August's bed, jolting him awake.

"Whaahnnnn?"

"I met a girl today, August. A girl I think you would like."

August opened one brown eye, then closed it again. His jet-black hair stuck up every which way, like he'd rolled himself violently down a hill. He rubbed his face and sighed loudly.

"Don't be like that. You already kind of know her. She graduated last year."

"Whassher name?"

"Rina Medina. I was at the library and she was trying to check out some books, but she forgot her library card and she looked like she was in a hurry. So I gave her mine. I figured it would give us a reason to find her again."

August opened both his eyes for the sole purpose of glaring at Jack derisively. "You need to stop talking to strangers."

"She's not a stranger. She's just older, she graduated two years ago. Besides, you and I both know that that doesn't apply to strangers who are around our age. Also, she invited us to a poetry reading and we're going," Jack declared.

"You don't even like poetry." August could feel a headache catching up with him.

"Yeah. Of course I fucking don't. It's boring as shit. But you do. I swear you'll like her. Just put on some clothes. We're leaving at eight."

# WILDWOOD CAFE

## OPEN MIC NIGHT



**Tuesdays from 9-10**  
**All are welcome!**

Poetry, Comedy, Music

Tickets

Adults: \$15

Students: Free with student ID

**Buy One Coffee**  
**Get One Free**

Bring this coupon from our flyer  
and get a free coffee with the  
purchase of a coffee of equal or  
lesser value!



# RINA MEDINA, QUEEN OF THE DESERT

It was crowded and dark.

August was pushed so close to Jack that he was practically resting his head on his shoulder. He slung his arm around Jack's neck so it would seem more intentional than just continuing to awkwardly breathe on his neck.

The first two poets were okay. But it was that type of poetry that's really personal and eventually escalates into yelling. The type he didn't like.

"This is her," Jack whispered into the side of his face.

August craned his neck to see.

She was kind of small, Indian or Pakistani, and wore a glittery dress with small pink barrettes in her hair and gold heels. She had wild dark eyebrows that made looking at her face feel like one was looking into a storm. And she wore entirely too much makeup, but applied with an expert hand.

"Hi, everyone, I'm Rina Medina and I'll be reading my poem: 'Random Word Generator Input #17'<sup>1</sup>:"

*blusness knocle nextboarded naurnel,  
scouslaved rassly shagion waille  
hanling buckspoods seaged violities,*

---

1 For more Random Word Generator Poetry visit:  
<http://randomwordgeneratorinput.tumblr.com>

*stinings arfulbring scratic stael.*

*grapprose lerankers dinessed ressiations  
visuseelling astelly concticing extrine  
manonloccut leesee, bravon gistertnes  
repulatauting mysterly thumspine Valeen.*

“Thank you.”

The entire café erupted into confused muttering and half-hearted snaps as she slowly got down from the stage, teetering dangerously on her stiletto heels.

Jack whipped around to grin at August.

“Shut up. You’re right, Jack. She’s fucking great. But shut up.”