



THE CHILD CATCHER

Andrew Bridge

Reviewed by Judge Leonard Edwards, Santa Clara County Superior Court (Ret.)

Some of you may remember *Hope's Child* by Andrew Bridge. It told the story of a young boy growing up in foster care who longed for his mother. Sadly, she was mentally ill and placed in a mental health facility. *The Child Catcher* continues Andrew's story. He secured a fellowship to attend Wesleyan University in Connecticut, graduated from Harvard Law School, was involved with several child-serving agencies in Los Angeles, and ended up as an attorney in the Justice Department.

He was assigned to work on *Wyatt v Stickney*, a long-standing lawsuit against Bryce hospital in Alabama. The case had once been heard by Judge Frank Johnson, the famous federal judge who made several important decisions about the hospital. The story tells of Andrew's efforts to build a case that the placement was not providing adequate care for the hundreds of children living there, but rather a placement that was abusive to its children. Andrew's office was in Washington, D.C., and he had to travel to Alabama to visit the placement now known as Eufaula where only children were placed.

Andrew met with the staff at Eufaula and learned quickly that they were resistant to his participation in the lawsuit and uncooperative in assisting with his efforts. The Alabama strategy had been and continued to be delay the proceedings so that no changes would be made. Discovery was not provided, his attempts to talk with staff were obstructed, and his efforts to talk with some of the children were frustrated. The book follows Andrew making some contact with children and, finally, trying the case before a federal judge. In the trial, Andrew examines a young child who was willing to describe his life in Eufaula.

This is a dramatic book with a powerful ending. I highly recommend it. 🍷
