



Case Study: Jenny and Mark

A 16-year-old female, Jenny, has been talking to a “17-year-old boy”, Mark, online for the past 5 months. They have exchanged photos and in the pictures, Mark looks like a 17-year-old boy. They finally agree to meet in person.

Jenny sneaks out of her bedroom one night to meet him at a convenience store near her house. She is surprised to see that he is older than he looks in the pictures. Mark apologizes for lying about his age, and tells Jenny that he is actually 22 years old, but said he really cares about her and was afraid she wouldn’t talk to him if he was truthful about his age. Mark tells her she is free to leave and never talk to him again but explains he just wants to have dinner with her. She agrees to get into the vehicle and go to dinner.

After eating at a fast-food restaurant, Mark agrees to take Jenny home, but instead, he takes her to an open field in the middle of the country and assaults her physically and sexually. Afterward, he zips ties her hands and feet and takes her to his residence, which is a mobile home trailer in the middle of an acreage.

Mark shackles her inside a large closet. He gives her a pillow and a bucket to serve as a toilet. Jenny is reported missing by her parents and an extensive search is conducted in an attempt to find her. However, despite handing out flyers and searching the area, Jenny is not immediately found.

Over the next 6 months, Mark decides when she eats and gets water and he continues to physically and sexually assault her, over her protests and fights. Finally, Jenny realizes that she is never going to get out of her situation and decides to give in to his demands and stop fighting him. Eventually, Mark stops physically assaulting her and convinces her that she needs him to survive. Mark tells her that he is the only one who buys her clothes, feeds her, and provides a roof over her head. Mark starts allowing Jenny out of the closet more, but she is still shackled every night to prevent her from escaping. Mark talks to Jenny about helping him commit crimes such as thefts, burglaries, and shoplifting so they have money to survive. Jenny complies and helps Mark commit these crimes. Mark even teaches Jenny how to drive a car in case she needs to drive during the commission of a crime.

Three years later, Mark decides to rob a jewelry store because he is tired of the small payoffs. Believing that Mark truly cares for her, Jenny agrees to help him commit the robbery. Mark sets up a deal to purchase 2 handguns “off the streets”. He gives Jenny money and she drives alone to the meeting place and purchases the 2 handguns. A few days later, they both enter the jewelry store in the afternoon wearing all black clothing and black ski masks. Each of them is holding a handgun and making threats to the employees and customers. Mark smashes several of the jewelry cases, grabs the contents, and places the items in pillowcases. Meanwhile, Jenny is pointing her gun and yelling at people to “Get down”. As they exit the store, the police have already arrived outside and taken them into custody without incident. While in police custody, it is discovered that Jenny is the missing teenager from 4 years prior.

Over the past 2 years, there were times when Jenny was allowed to leave Mark’s residence alone, and therefore had opportunities to escape her situation. Since she would always return to Mark’s residence, the District Attorney believes she was a willing participant in the robbery. Due to the



fact that Jenny is statutorily an adult now, and at times, she was allowed to leave Mark's residence alone, the District Attorney decides to charge Jenny as an accessory to the robbery. However, Jenny's parents believe Jenny's actions were a result of being victimized for the past 4 years.