



"MORE THAN 2,100 CHILDREN are reported missing each day," says Charles Pickett, senior case manager for the NCMEC. "Of those, 74 percent are 12 years of age or older." Although Erin's case is still open, police say there are no new leads or suspects.

# “ MY SISTER IS MISSING ”

WHEN AMBER POSPISIL, 17, SAID GOODBYE TO HER SISTER, ERIN, FIVE YEARS AGO, SHE NEVER THOUGHT IT WOULD BE FOR THE LAST TIME. NOW AMBER AND HER FAMILY ARE LEFT TO WAIT, AND HOPE, FOR ERIN'S SAFE RETURN

As told to Michelle Hainer

I remember June 3, 2001, like it was yesterday. School had just gotten out for the summer, and my sister, Erin, and I were so excited. I was 12; Erin was 15. She'd made plans to go to her friend Brit's house that evening. Around 8:45, my brother Jimmy's friend Curtis, who was at our house, agreed to give Erin a ride. But when they got to Brit's, no one was home. Just as Erin was turning to walk back to Curtis's truck, a dark Chevrolet Cavalier with tinted windows pulled up. She bent down to talk to the people in the car and then told Curtis that "these guys" would give her a ride. She climbed into the backseat.

No one has seen or heard from her since.

**A FAMILY ON EDGE** The next morning, when Erin hadn't called or come home, my stepmom, Carolyn, called Brit's house. When she learned that Erin hadn't spent the night there, she and my dad, Jim, frantically called all of Erin's friends to find out if they'd seen her. No one had.

My parents were convinced that Erin had been taken against her will. The police tried to investigate, but they had little to go on. I cried a lot. All the kids [at school] wanted to know what had happened to Erin, so I had to keep telling the story. That first Christmas was really hard. I wanted to get her presents, just in case she came back. Instead, we hung up her stocking.

After Erin disappeared, my parents got a lot stricter with my brother Eric, now 21, and me. I wasn't allowed to go anywhere alone. A year after Erin went missing, we moved to Council Bluffs, Iowa, about 225 miles from our home in Cedar Rapids. I was afraid Erin [might return] and not find us. [So] my grandma decided to stay with my brothers until last year. We told the people who bought our house about Erin, and a lot of people Erin knows are still in the neighborhood and would tell her where we moved.

**KEEPING HOPE ALIVE** We've never stopped looking for her. We work with the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC), and we have a website dedicated to Erin and other missing kids ([helpfindachild.com](http://helpfindachild.com)). I still think I see her around town. Someone will pass by who looks like her. I'll get excited and ask, "Was that Erin?" But it never is.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

According to FBI statistics, more than 600,000 reports were filed on 13- to 17-year-olds missing in 2005. If you've seen Erin or have any information on her whereabouts, please call the NCMEC hotline at 800-THE-LOST (800-843-5678). For information on other missing teens, visit the organization's website at [www.missingkids.com](http://www.missingkids.com).

HAVE YOU SEEN ERIN?

Erin Pospisil  
Age 15  
5' 3", 135 pounds  
Dark Brown Hair, Dark Brown eyes

Last seen Stanley June 3rd  
500<sup>th</sup> block of 12<sup>th</sup> Street SE

At the time she was wearing beige shorts and a light colored tank top. She got into a two-door, early '90s model, black Cavalier.

If you have seen Erin or know where she is now, please call the Cedar Rapids Police Department and give them any information that you may have.

Erin, if you see this, please call home and let us know that you are OK. We are worried about you.

PHOTOGRAPH BY BRYCE BRIDGES