

**Press Release**  
**A Small-Town Story, Big Faith, and a Drug-Dealing Toddler**

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*This four-episode narrative podcast follows the early illicit life of Rev. J. Dana Trent, one of only 2,500 ordained female Baptist ministers in the world.*

**September 14, 2021; Raleigh, NC** -- Duke Divinity School graduate and ordained Southern Baptist minister Rev. J. Dana Trent was not always a do-gooder. Trent, the featured voice of a new podcast called [\*\*Breaking Good\*\*](#), **outlines the true story of her childhood as a drug-trafficking lookout raised by miracle-chasing Christian parents.**

This four-episode podcast, funded by the [Louisville Institute](#), is framed through mental illness, poverty, and substance use in rural America. Set in Dana, Indiana, the hometown of WWII-era Pulitzer-prize winning journalist Ernie Pyle, *Breaking Good* follows Trent, who is named for the town, in her harrowing childhood as “Budgie,” a street-named drug-dealing toddler. Trent’s fervent Christian parents--diagnosed with schizo-affective disorder and borderline personality disorder--were college-educated health care professionals who met in a locked inpatient psychiatric hospital in 1977. The couple uprooted their midwestern lives in 1980 and moved to Los Angeles after watching Dr. Robert Schuller’s “Hour of Power.” Schuller, a positive-thinking televangelist, spurred Trent’s parents into believing they could conceive a baby in L.A. as older adults. After 18 months in California, the couple went broke and moved back to Indiana, but with their new infant, Dana, in tow. The family began trafficking drugs under the auspices of a kiddie-ride amusement business to survive.

***Breaking Good* podcast episodes include:**

- Historical snippets from Pulitzer Prize winning journalist, Ernie Pyle
- 1940s World War II culture
- 1980s and 1990s nostalgia
- Dr. Robert Schuller’s “Hour of Power”
- Rural, midwestern American culture and the Baptist Church
- Indiana WTTV T.V. Star, Sammy Terry
- Details of the family drug trafficking kiddie ride ring
- Psychiatric professionals and psychiatric patients
- Through line: faith

Rev. J. Dana Trent, on *Breaking Good*, “I used to be ashamed of growing up in an Indiana trailer with parents whose devastating mental illnesses resulted in drug trafficking. My parent’s miracle-chasing fervor for Dr. Robert Schuller used to spur regret and shame, now it’s a source of resilience. This podcast shows that movement.”

Bio: [Rev. J. Dana Trent](#) is a recipient of the Louisville Institute’s Pastoral Study Grant. She is the author of five books and teaches World Religions and Critical Thinking at Wake Technical Community College in Raleigh, NC. Trent’s Pastoral Study Project with the Louisville Institute is [\*Breaking Good: The Church’s Faithful Response to Systemic Poverty, Mental Illness, and Drug Addiction in Flyover Country.\*](#)

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