The Murder of Kacie Woody

In the early 2000s, the internet seemed like a great place to meet friends around the world. Despite the warnings from the grownups, teens rarely questioned the identities of the people they were chatting with. Unfortunately, a 13-year-old girl from Arkansas met an online predator posing as an 18-year-old surfer guy from California. He traveled across the United States to kidnap and murder her.

Background

Kacie Rene Woody was born on October 17th, 1989, in Little Rock, Arkansas. She grew up in Holland, Arkansas, where she lived with her parents, Rick and Kristie, and two older brothers, Austin and Tim. Unfortunately, Kacie lost her mother when she was only seven years old. On June 19th, 1997, the family was driving home from Tim's baseball game when a horse ran into the road. Rick, who was driving the car, hit the animal, and it went through the windshield. Everyone in the vehicle was unharmed except for Kristie, who passed away.

Just like her two brothers before her, Kacie attended Greenbrier Middle School. She was well-liked because her older siblings had been school football stars before going to college. Kacie had a large group of friends, and all the girls were very close. She was a member of the school band and sang in a choir. Kacie learned to take care of herself early, and her father, Rick, knew he could rely on her. She did her homework on time and cooked meals for herself.

In 2002, Kacie lived with her father, Rick, a police officer, her brother Tim, and Tim's college friend, Eric Betts. Austin, the eldest, had already moved out. Kacie's aunt Teresa Paul lived next door to the Woody family. Their house was on Griggers Lane in a rural part of Holland, surrounded by thick woods. Rick often worked nights, but he wasn't worried about Kacie. Tim and Eric were usually at the house by midnight, and Kacie herself kept busy by talking to her friends online.

Meeting Dave and Scott

Kacie's dad allowed his daughter to use the internet to communicate with her friends because the calls from their landline were sometimes billed as long distance. Kacie and her school friends frequented the Yahoo! Messenger chat rooms for Christian teens. Kacie's username was *modelbehavior63* because it was her favorite Disney movie.

In the summer of 2002, Kacie started talking with a 17-year-old boy from San Diego, California, whose username was *jazzman_df*. His profile photo showed a long-haired surfer guy, and Kacie soon learned his name was David Fagen, also known as Dave. The two talked about everything and soon started calling each other on the phone.

Kacie opened up about the death of her mother and how it changed her life completely. Dave told Kacie about his aunt, who also lived in Arkansas, and how she was in a coma after a car accident. It created a strong bond between them, and Kacie decided to introduce Dave to her real-life friends, Sam and Jessica. The girls added Dave to their Yahoo! Friends list but were still unsure about him.

Sam talked to Kacie about her chatting with Dave and told her not to fall in love with someone she had never seen live before. But around the same time, Kacie started communicating with a 14-year-old teen from Alpharetta, Georgia. His name was Scott, and he went by the username *Tazz2999*. Scott enjoyed football and wrestling and soon became a part of Kacie's group of friends.

Kacie talked to Scott over the phone too, and she introduced him to Dave. When Dave called Scott's house one time, Scott's dad picked up and told Dave not to call anymore. Scott's dad informed his son that Dave wasn't a teenage boy but a grown man.

Kacie's friend Sam was also doubtful regarding Dave's age because he used words like groovy and far out, which were outdated in the early 2000s. Naively, Kacie assumed that teens in California talk like that. By the end of the summer of 2002, Kacie told her father, Rick, that her online friend Dave had just turned 18. Rick was shocked and told her Dave was too old to be chatting with 13-year-old girls. He told her to stop talking to him, but Kacie didn't listen.

The relationship with Scott

Kacie continued to communicate with her online friends and had crushed on both Dave and Scott. However, she decided to have an online relationship with Scott. They started dating on October 3rd, 2002 and exchanged photos in the mail. Dave learned about the relationship and said he wanted to remain friends with Kacie.

He allegedly enjoyed talking to her over the phone and needed someone to be there for him because his aunt was getting worse and could pass away soon. One evening in November 2002, Kacie was hanging out with Jessica, and the girls were on the phone with Dave. They heard strange noises outside Kacie's house and ran to the bedroom.

Kacie barricaded the door with a dresser, and the girls listened for footsteps. They heard a floorboard squeak in the kitchen, and Kacie knew someone really was in the house. She whispered this to Dave over the phone, and he calmly replied that she shouldn't be scared because no one was inside. Shortly after, the noises stopped.

On December 3rd, 2002, Sam and Kacie were at school. When Kacie opened her locker, Sam noticed Scott's Yahoo! Profile photo and commented that he looked hot. Kacie misheard her friend and thought that she said Scott looked fat. The two started arguing, and Sam learned that Scott had mailed the photo to Kacie, meaning he had her address.

Sam was worried for her friend, so she went to the school counselor to tell her that Kacie had given her phone number to people she had met online. The counselor called Kacie to her office and warned her about the dangers of talking to strangers on the internet. As a response, Kacie said her father knew all about her online friends and approved of them communicating via phone.

After school, Kacie asked Sam if they could have a sleepover at her house. Since it was a school night, Sam knew her mother would not be okay with it, so she declined. Kacie asked Jessica and another friend if she could spend the night at their houses, but both said no. All three girls were confused by Kacie's suggestion because they usually had sleepovers on weekends.

The disappearance

Kacie returned home after school on December 3rd, 2002, and saw her brother around 6:00 pm before he went to the library to study. His friend Eric was also out of the house, attending an evening class. As usual, Kacie was on her computer, talking to Scott. The two have been dating for two months and chatted about Kacie's day at school. Meanwhile, Kacie was also on the phone with Dave. She told Scott that Dave's aunt was unwell and he was on his way to Arkansas.

At 9:41 pm, Kacie suddenly stopped responding to Scott's messages. Worried, he called Kacie's home, but nobody picked up. He even emailed Kacie's friend Jessica, but she didn't check her inbox that night. Eric came home at 10:15 pm and saw that Kacie wasn't in the living room. He assumed the teen had gone to bed. Tim arrived at 11:40 pm and checked Kacie's bedroom. He was shocked to see she wasn't there.

Not knowing what was happening, Tim called his dad Rick who was on patrol that night. Rick rushed home and saw that something bad had happened. Kacie's glasses were on the couch, and one of the lenses was missing. Her shoes and two jackets were still in the house, but the weather outside was freezing.

Rick alerted the police right away, and other officers came to the Woody house after midnight. While investigators were searching the house, Eric saw the chat window on Kacie's computer. He messaged Scott, who instantly replied even though it was close to 3:00 am. The teen kept his computer on because he sensed something was wrong with Kacie. Scott told Eric the two were chatting, and Kacie was talking to their friend Dave on the phone. Nothing seemed off about their conversation.

By the morning, the police knew Kacie had been kidnapped. Local law enforcement called the Arkansas State Police and the FBI to help them find the missing teen. Kacie's computer was searched, and the investigators talked to Sam and Jessica at school, hoping the girls would give them a lead. When asked who could've kidnapped their friend, Sam and Jessica blamed Scott.

The FBI traced Scott's IP address, and the agents were sent to his home in Alpharetta, Georgia. They confirmed that Scott was 14 years old and lived with his parents, who didn't even know he had an online girlfriend. He was home on the night of Kacie's disappearance and wasn't their suspect. But the police were still searching for Dave.

The investigators learned from Scott that Dave was allegedly driving to Arkansas, so they checked the local motels for a guest called Dave Fagan or anyone with those initials. Patrols were also on the lookout for vehicles with California plates, and they found one in front of Motel 6 in Conway. The clerk told them the car belonged to a guest named David Fuller.

The man arrived on December 2nd and requested no maid service. He also argued with the clerk because he couldn't connect to the internet from his room and needed to go to the library. Suspecting this was the kidnapper, the officers entered his room and discovered camouflage clothing and rubber gloves. The bed was neat, and the suitcase was unpacked.

Since his vehicle was still in front of the motel, the police checked the local Rent-A-Car and learned that David Fuller had rented a silver Dodge minivan. The paperwork listed his phone number and credit card. The number confirmed that Dave Fagan and David Fuller were, in fact, the same person. He also used the credit card to rent a unit at a storage facility in Conway.

Finding Kacie

On December 4th, 2002, at around 6:00 pm, a police sergeant and two FBI agents arrived at the storage unit rented by Fuller. The door wasn't locked, so they looked inside and saw the rented Dodge minivan. Suddenly, they heard a shot, and the three retreated and called for backup. The police were trying to get Fuller to surrender but didn't get any response from the inside.

The SWAT team was called, and they entered the unit at 8:30 pm. Fuller's body was beside the minivan. He committed suicide by shooting himself in the head. Kacie was found tied up to the minivan floor. Fuller had removed the back seats to make more room inside the vehicle. The girl was shot in the head.

The medical examiner determined Kacie was sexually assaulted before death. They concluded Fuller used chloroform to kidnap her from the house. He likely kept her alive for hours but heard on the radio that the police were looking for him. That's when he decided to kill Kacie.

Who was David Fuller?

David Fuller was born on January 18th, 1955, in Salt Lake City, Utah. He grew up in a Mormon family and was married twice. Fuller had a son and a daughter with his second wife, Sally Krens. The family moved around frequently because Fuller was in the Navy. In 1997, they decided to stay in La Mesa, California and bought a house.

Soon after, Fuller started spending all his time online in different chatrooms. His wife sensed something was wrong, and by 2002, Krens was ready to divorce her husband. In June of that year, she got the paperwork, and Fuller was furious when he found out. In August 2002, Child Protective Services questioned Fuller because he allegedly had inappropriate showers with his 7-year-old daughter. He moved out of the family house afterward.

He was arrested for spousal abuse and indecent exposure to two young girls. During that time, Fuller worked as a car salesman but was fired because he used the work computer to watch pornography. His life was falling apart, but Fuller remained focused on Kacie.

The FBI searched Fuller's apartment in La Mesa and discovered shocking things. Beside his desktop computer were photos of Kacie and her friends. He had their street addresses and phone numbers written on paper. The investigators found chat logs that confirmed he had tried to groom three other girls while using the name Dave Fagan. He had been visiting teen chat rooms for two years.

The investigators carefully tracked his movements in the months leading to the murder of Kacie Woody and found out Fuller was in Arkansas twice before December 2002. The first time he arrived on October 11th and checked into the same motel. Fuller was likely there to confirm Kacie's address and see the house. The second visit to Arkansas was in November, and he rented the storage unit. Investigators believe he planned to kidnap the teen then, but something prevented him.

Kacie's friend Jessica remembered the evening when the girls heard strange noises outside and inside Kacie's home. The police suspected Fuller was in the Woody household but didn't expect to find two teens there.

According to Fuller's credit card records, he purchased chloroform, zip ties, duct tape, and chains in late November. Therefore, he was fully prepared to abduct the teen on December 3rd. Because of all the planning, the police believed that Kacie wasn't his first victim. But his DNA didn't match any unsolved cases in the databases.

The aftermath

Kacie Woody was laid to rest in South Crossroads Church Cemetery in Rose Bud, Arkansas. Her grave is next to her mother's. Kacie's family and friends started a non-profit organization called the Kacie Woody

Foundation to teach kids and their parents about online safety. Rick Woody allowed the FBI to use Kacie's story in their training programs.

Sources

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