He could see his 13-year-old prey framed in the living-room windows - cozy in her favorite nightclothes and typing speedily at the family computer on this rainy, 39-degree December night.

As usual, Kacie Woody had switched on all the lights as she walked from room to room, and the small house now glowed against a backdrop of towering trees.

He stepped closer. Kacie was there for the taking - typing, distracted, her silhouette melding with that of the computer monitor before her.

She was right there, only a stretch of dark and the front door between them, and she had no idea he had come for her.

Meanwhile, police officer Rick Woody - Kacie's dad - was on patrol in nearby Greenbrier, cruising the swath of U.S. 65 that cuts through this central Arkansas town. The traffic was mostly 18-wheelers, headed either north toward Missouri or south to Interstate 40. Like most nights in Greenbrier, population 3,042, this one had been uneventful. Rick, suffering from a sinus infection, almost had called in sick. The night was cold and rainy, and his chief had told him to take it easy. Rick still felt poorly, but he figured he could make it through his shift, which would end at 2 a.m.

Rick liked policing the sleeping town. He made few arrests, but that was OK. His idea of good law enforcement was to prevent bad things, not to step in after the crime. That's why he watched out for the young women making nightly bank deposits after Greenbrier's stores and restaurants closed. They often neglected to call for an escort, so Rick would just show up when they were due to leave work.

While on duty, Rick kept his cell phone close so he could check frequently on Kacie. He never really worried, though. Kacie had grown up motherless and had assumed much responsibility at home. She laundered her own clothes, cooked dinner for herself and did her homework without being told. If there were an emergency, Rick could get from Greenbrier to the house in 15 minutes.

Kacie didn't mind her dad's late hours. She had always lived in the little gray house on Griggers Lane, on the outskirts of Holland, population 597, a tiny community in the center of rural Faulkner County. The solitude didn't faze her. Nor was she disturbed by the seemingly impenetrable darkness outside.

Most nights, Kacie didn't even lock the front door.

One of her older brothers, Tim, 19, still lived at home and was usually there with Kacie at night. Tim's friend, Eric Betts, also 19, had taken up temporary residence at the Woody house. So he, too, was in and out. If the guys weren't around, there was always her Aunt Teresa, who also lived on Griggers Lane.

But on this bone-chilling evening of Dec. 3, 2002, a Tuesday, Tim had left for the University of Central Arkansas library at 6 p.m. Eric was at his electrician's class. And Aunt Teresa was in Conway, cheering at her daughter's basketball game.

Kacie was home alone.

EARLIER THAT DAY For Kacie and her circle of seventh-grade friends at Greenbrier Middle School, the day had begun with an argument. At the heart of the tiff were Kacie and one of her closest friends, Samantha Mann, also 13. The girls all normally agreed on pretty much everything - which guys were hot, which girls were popular and, of course, the belief that "school sucks." The group convened each morning before walking to class arm in arm. A sense of security pervaded these locker-lined
hallways, where blue-and-white panthers prowled and pounced across cinder-block walls.

Kacie's social path at school was neatly paved. She had attended Greenbrier schools since kindergarten, and her sunny nature attracted new friends each year. She also was the younger sister of two former football stars.

Her days were plagued by little more than the usual teenage worries - weight gain, grades and guys.

Like her friends, Kacie was experimenting with eye shadow as well as boyfriends. But learning to put on makeup proved to be much easier than mastering the intricacies of teenage courtship.

In an e-mail sent to a male Greenbrier friend that autumn, she had confided: My longest relationship was... i think 3 months. I am usually the one that gets dumped... I have really bad luck with guys. Dude I am like sooo totally confused about guys right now!! ARGH! Sometimes guys really bad suck ya know? It's like... idk... weird... lol... well I am gunna jet bc i don't have nothing to say... Samantha, a self-assured, outspoken blonde, could relate to Kacie's frustration. What Sam couldn't understand was her friend's fascination with the boys she met on the Internet. So far, Kacie had found love twice online. Both of these relationships bothered Sam. She worried about how freely Kacie was giving out her phone number to strangers. Several times, she had warned Kacie: "You can't be in love with someone from the Internet."

The girls' long-running disagreement peaked Dec. 3. It stemmed from a comment Sam had made the day before about a photo of Scott, Kacie's mostrecent online boyfriend. The picture, which hung in Kacie's locker, was of a young, dark-haired guy in a football uniform. Sam had said he was "hot." Kacie thought she said "fat." They had exchanged barbs, and by the following morning, the girls' mutual friends had taken sides.

Sam decided it was time to involve an adult.

For moral support, she took a friend with her to Room 214, where school counselor Dianna Kellar spends her days treading delicately through seventh grade's hormonal minefields.

With her maternal demeanor and lavish use of endearments, Mrs. Kellar, a middle-aged woman with salt-and-pepper hair, is a comforting presence in this small world of constant melodrama. She handled Sam and Kacie's fight as deftly as any other.

After hearing Sam out, the counselor summoned Kacie to the office and let the girls muddle through their grievances by themselves. By the time Mrs. Kellar reappeared, Sam and Kacie had patched up their friendship.

But Sam feared the truce would be short-lived. Kacie didn't know it, but Sam had told Mrs. Kellar that Kacie was giving out her phone number online. Mrs. Kellar had promised to talk to Kacie again, and Sam wasn't sure how her friend would react.

As the girls left that morning, Mrs. Kellar asked Kacie about the matter. Kacie assured the counselor she had shared her number only with people approved by her dad. But Sam knew this wasn't true.

During fifth period, Mrs. Kellar called Kacie back into her office and warned her about dangers online, but Kacie clearly had no fear of anyone she had met on the Internet.

In the months to come, Mrs. Kellar would wonder: What else should I have asked?

When Sam and Kacie met after school, Kacie was her usual bubbly self. But she made an unusual suggestion that later would cause her friends to wonder if she had sensed the horror to come.

As the girls prepared to leave, Kacie asked if she could spend the night at Sam's house. Sam, knowing her mom would frown on a school-night sleepover, said no.
Kacie also asked Jessica Tanner, a slender girl with large, earnest brown eyes. Jessica also said no.

Kacie persisted, asking a third friend, but received the same answer.

Kacie didn't explain why she wanted to sleep elsewhere that night. She just didn't want to go home.

The refusals didn't upset her. She laughed - that goofy, honking guffaw for which she was known - and headed to where her bus waited, its engine thrumming. Before boarding, she hugged all of her friends.

"Bye!" she called out. "See ya!" A FINAL CHAT Kacie spent the evening watching the weather, fervently hoping that the predicted sleet and snow might give her a day off from school.

She showered and put on what she always wore to bed - a favorite pair of blue sweat pants sporting the endearment "Baby Girl" and a gray sweatshirt. Then she returned to the computer, which sat in front of one of the two rectangular windows overlooking the Woody's front yard.

Awaiting Kacie was an instant message from Scott, who was writing from his home in an affluent suburb of Atlanta.

Kacie loved instant messages, which, unlike e-mail, pop up on the screen as soon as they are written. Conversations are in real time.

Kacie had met Scott in a chat room in May 2002. He described himself as a 14-year-old boy living in Georgia. He liked football and wrestling.

Kacie and Scott had officially become boyfriend and girlfriend on Oct. 3, 2002. Scott's online moniker was Tazz2999. Kacie's was modelbehavior63. Their rapid-fire conversation made abbreviations a necessity and misspellings inevitable: Tazz2999: Hey Sweetie modelbehavior63: hey Tazz2999: how are you my angel?

modelbehavior63: ok... u Tazz2999: better now that ur on sweetie And they were off, fingers flying across keyboards as they bemoaned troublesome classes like math and Arkansas history, and analyzed Kacie and Sam's reconciliation. They also discussed Kacie's two favorite extracurricular activities: modelbehavior63: GUESS WHAT... GUESS WHAT Tazz2999: WHAT hehe modelbehavior63: 23 kids outta 130 were picked to sing in front of the school board and I AM ONE OF THEM... ooo adn wednesday i have band practice and thursday i have choir practice Tazz2999: Thats excenlant baby I told you You have the most beutiful voice I have ever hears Tazz2999: *heard* modelbehavior63: As she instant-messaged Scott, Kacie was on the phone with another Internet friend named Dave.

Dave was upset. His aunt, in a coma since a car wreck, was about to die. Kacie hurt for him. Her mother, Kristie, had died in an accident when Kacie was only 7. Kacie was certain her beloved mama was now a beautiful angel, looking out for her from above. Still, heaven was so far away.

Kacie had met Dave sometime during the summer of 2002 in a Yahoo Christian chat room for teens. From the start, their friendship was full of romantic overtones, and even after Scott became her new "official" boyfriend, Kacie had continued her online friendship with Dave.

Scott knew all about Dave. Kacie had introduced them online. The two had even talked on the phone a few times, mostly about cars.

In his Yahoo profile, Dave described himself as an 18-year-old living in San Diego. His picture showed a young man with wavy, sandy hair that fell below his shoulder blades. With his tousled mane, square jaw and pouting mouth, Dave looked like a cross between a surfer and the lead singer of a 1980s hair band.

As Kacie consoled Dave on the phone, she kept Scott abreast of the grim situation: modelbehavior63: tonight... Dave's aunt is going to meet my mommy Tazz2999: Im so so sorry baby... atleast we know that she will be happy there with your mommy... I am sure she will look out for her... modelbehavior63: yeah... i
think they will be best friend... hehe Tazz2999: ... I hope Dave is alright
modelbehavior63: he is... i am on the phone... he has been laughing at me... bc he
know it is the best... Tazz2999: at least he is laughing Kacie told Scott about her
visit to the counselor's office: modelbehavior63: so guess what i got... a lecture
Tazz2999: awww im sorry baby modelbehavior63: ... on how u could be a 80 year
old rapest... lol Tazz2999: lol modelbehavior63: hehe... and that the picture was ur
grandson Tazz2999: how many times have u gotten that 1 hehe modelbehavior63:
um... i lost count... well... then... she is like... "do ur parents know u talk to ppl u
dont know" i was like "yeah" and she was like... well be careful... and dont agree to
meet them less ur mom or dad is with you" i was like...okay... and she is like... well
remember this lil talk... i was like... ok... Tazz2999: uh oh. prolly means she is going
to talk to u again... modelbehavior63: i kno The young couple moved on to more
pleasant topics, like the fact that this day marked their two-month anniversary:
Tazz2999: I will always be your teddy graham and you will always be my angel and
we will be together forever and always and longer modelbehavior63: awww
Tazz2999: hehe what r u doing sweetie modelbehavior63: eating and talking to dave
and singing... Dave and i were crying together for a sec... i told him i loved him...
and momma told me she did too... and that mommy talks to me... and that she said
she would take care of his aunt 'R U OK?' Kacie sent Scott a link to a weather Web
site.
modelbehavior63: look at what it feels like outside!! Tazz2999: awwww *holds
her tight and rubs her arms to keep her warm* Meanwhile, outside in the chilly
darkness, someone crept across the Woodys' front yard - someone who had come
for Kacie.
He had driven to the Holland community in a rented silver minivan, slowing down
when he reached Griggers Lane, a narrow dirt and gravel road that deadends at the
Woody home.
The house, illuminated by interior lamps and a single porch light, stood out in
sharp relief against the blackness. Inside, Kacie still sat at the computer, reading
Scott's fumbling attempts to wax poetic: Tazz2999: hehe ill always be with u my
angel becouse ur all I want to be with Tazz2999: hehe i put my screen saver as the
picture i have in my locker Tazz2999: ur the most beutiful angel in the world Kacie
Tazz2999: r u ok sweetie?
When Kacie finally responded, her message was uncharacteristically brief:
modelbehavior63: yah It was 9:41 p.m.
Maybe the intruder knocked. Or maybe he just walked in.
Either way, he caught Kacie completely off-guard, covering her face with a
chloroformsoaked rag and knocking her glasses onto her dad's recliner. He dragged
the thrashing girl through the living room and hauled her out into the cold darkness,
across the damp ground and into the waiting minivan.
Throughout the violent struggle, Scott's loving entreaties continued to pop up on
the Woodys' computer screen: Tazz2999: r u busy baby?
Tazz2999: ... hehe guess so... Tazz2999: u there baby?
Tazz2999: sweetie r u ok... Tazz2999: please talk to me baby... Tazz2999:
Tazz2999: when u r ready to talk sweetie ill be here... Tazz2999: r u mad at me
sweetie?
Tazz2999: please talk to me baby... Tazz2999: r u ok sweetie No response. For
the next 35 minutes, Scott filled the Woodys' monitor with increasingly frantic pleas:
Tazz2999: please GOD let her be ok Tazz2999: Kacie please tlak to me Tazz2999:
please... please... Still, no answer. Scott kept trying.
Tazz2999: Kacie Im so so scared I dont know what to do.
Tazz2999: ... please... Say something At 10:15 p.m., Scott called the Woody
house.
Tazz2999: why isn't anyone answering the PHONE!
Tazz2999: UGH Tazz2999: Please Tazz2999: PLEASE PICK UP KACIE Tazz2999: PLEASE Tazz2999: GOD PLEASE LET HER PICK UP Tazz2999: please be ok Kacie...GOD let her be ok Scott e-mailed Kacie's friend Jessica: Jessica please let this be u something is wrong with kacie her s/n is still on and she all the sudden left during our convo but didn't log off and i tried to call her and no one answered and we weren't fighting or anything so i e-mail the cops to make sure she is alright i hop they get it soon...I'm going crazy I don't know what I would do without her please God let her be ok But it was 10:44 p.m. on a school night, and Jessica wouldn't find the e-mail until the next afternoon.

Frustrated, Scott went back to instant-messaging the Woodys' computer:
Tazz2999: ERIC TIM DADDY DANNY ANYONE PLEASE BE THERE TO HELP HER PLEASE I KNOW SOMETHING ISN'T RIGHT PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE AT THE WOODY HOME When family friend Eric Betts returned home from his electrician's class at 10:17 p.m., he assumed Kacie was already in bed. For more than an hour, he watched television, getting up periodically to do his laundry.
At 11:30 p.m., during one of his trips to the utility room, Eric noticed that Kacie wasn't in her room. He assumed she was out with friends or family.
Minutes later, Kacie's brother Tim arrived home.
"Where's Kacie?" Eric asked.
"I thought she was here," Tim replied. Concerned, he called his dad. The time was 11:40 p.m.
"Where's Kacie?" Tim asked.
"At home," Rick replied.
"No, she isn't," Tim said.
Rick had last talked to Kacie at 7 p.m. She had been practicing her saxophone.
Rick told Tim to call Kacie's friends. He also told him to check with Aunt Teresa next door. Meanwhile, Rick drove to the Greenbrier Police Department. When he arrived, he called Tim again.
"Nobody knows anything," Tim told him.
Rick notified the Faulkner County sheriff's office. Then he headed home. His little girl wasn't where she was supposed to be, and he was certain someone had taken her.

When Rick arrived, he noticed that both of Kacie's coats - a brand-new yellow one and her band jacket - were draped over a chair in the kitchen. Her tennis shoes and boots lay by the computer, where she always kicked them off.
At the time Kacie disappeared, the temperature had been 39 degrees and dropping. Heavy rains were moving through the area.
At 12:24 a.m., Deputy Dalton Elliott arrived at the Woody home. After looking around, he asked sheriff's investigator Jim Wooley to join him at the scene. Elliott also notified area law enforcement agencies that a girl was missing.
Meanwhile, phones rang all over Greenbrier as Rick, Tim and Eric quizzed Kacie's friends.
"Is Kacie at your house?" Rick asked Sam when a family member brought the phone to her at 1:11 a.m.
"No," a still-groggy Sam said. "Why?" By the time Sam hung up, she was fully awake. "Pray for Kacie," she told her mom. "She's missing." Sam sat up the rest of the night, telephone in hand, repeatedly calling Kacie's house.
By now, Rick and the boys had noticed a phone call from Georgia on their Caller ID. The call had been placed at 10:15 p.m.
They made another discovery as well - a long dialogue on the computer between modelbehavior63 and Tazz2999. AT SCOTT'S HOUSE Scott checked his computer frequently. Every so often, he fell into a troubled slumber. Finally, five hours after
the last message from Kacie, Scott's computer monitor flickered to life:
modelbehavior63: hey scott ru there this is eric modelbehavior63: as soon as u get
this ANSWER back PLEASE i have GOT TO TALK TO YA Tazz2999: im on...
modelbehavior63: what happened with u and kacie tonight... did she just quit
talkin... Tazz2999: yeah... just went silent modelbehavior63: did any thing seem like
something was wrong?
Tazz2999: nope not at all modelbehavior63: what was the last time that u talked
to her... i need as close as a time as possible Tazz2999: 9:41 was her last
message... modelbehavior63: ok... did she say anything out of the ordinary
Tazz2999: no just quiet I can send you our whole convo if u like modelbehavior63:
no i already got it i just need to know if she has seemed like something has been
bothering her or if she needed to talk to someone Eric confirmed Scott’s phone
number. He also asked him for his full name, age and address.
modelbehavior63: what was she saying bout the school consoletor and this guy
dave? anything wrong with her Tazz2999: well umm her ans Sam have been having
a fight and they talked abot it with the consoletor then Sam told the consoletor that she
was dating me and she got lectured... dont worry about Dave he is just a good friend
I would have said something if i didnt htink he was a good guy but he is cool
modelbehavior63: so has it just been tonight that she seemed quiet? ... and did she
talk about goin some where or with someone ?
Tazz2999: Eric... can u tell me the [truth] now... where is Kacie modelbehavior63:
just tell me... i got to know it is VERY important Tazz2999: ummm... i dont think
so... not tonight... but she was on the phone... modelbehavior63: do u know with
who?
Tazz2999: Dave Scott told Eric he didn't know when Dave and Kacie had ended
their phone conversation. Nor did he know Dave's last name, only that he lived in
San Diego. Scott promised to ask Dave for a phone number if he encountered him
online.
modelbehavior63: i am going to get off of here but i will leave it connected just in
case... thanks so much for the help Tazz2999: anytime but can answer sumthing 4
me modelbehavior63: whats that?
Tazz2999: what happen to Kacie...

CAUGHT IN THE WEB SECOND OF FOUR PARTS:
Entryway to danger
Kacie Woody's home becomes a crime scene and her online life a clue for detectives
investigating her disappearance.

BY CATHY FRYE ©2003,
ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE, INC. PHOTOS BY KAREN E. SEGRAVE

Something bad had happened in this living room.
State police investigator Karl Byrd knew it as soon as he saw 13-year-old Kacie
Woody's mangled eyeglasses, which lay beneath a pile of towels in a tan recliner.
The frames were bent and one lens had popped out.
Kacie had been missing for six hours now.
It was 3:35 a.m. Dec. 4, 2002, a half-hour since the persistent ring of Byrd's
telephone had jarred him from a deep slumber. The caller had been Jim Wooley, a
Faulkner County sheriff's investigator.
"Karl, I've got a girl out here missing," Wooley had said in worried tones. "I'm not
sure what to make of it, but I don't like the way it looks."
Byrd had hastily donned his clothes and driven to the rural Holland community, snowflakes melting on his windshield. Byrd couldn't imagine a kid taking off on this cold, wet night.

The misshapen eyeglasses confirmed his suspicions: Kacie hadn't left this house willingly.

Kacie's dad, Greenbrier police officer Rick Woody, told investigators that nothing was missing except his daughter's nightclothes. Both of her coats were in the kitchen. Her shoes lay in a pile near the family's computer in the living room. Kacie's beloved Yorkshire terrier, George, was limping.

The last person to have seen Kacie was her brother Tim, who had left the house at 6 p.m. for the University of Central Arkansas library in Conway, 12 miles southwest of their home. At the time, Kacie had been on the Internet. She was wearing her glasses, as she always did when she was on the computer.

Dialogue still on the monitor revealed to the investigators that Kacie had been exchanging instant messages with someone named Scott, who appeared to be a 14-year-old living in a suburb of Atlanta. According to the dialogue, Kacie also had been talking on the phone with someone named Dave.

Kacie's messages ended abruptly at 9:41 p.m., in midconversation with Scott, further convincing Byrd and Wooley that she had been kidnapped.

As other lawmen throughout the county were roused from their beds, Byrd and Wooley went door to door on Griggers Lane, awakening neighbors and asking questions; volunteers searched the dark woods surrounding the Woodys' property.

At 5:14 a.m., investigators issued a Level II Morgan Nick Alert, which allows state police to notify the media of a missing child.

For Samantha Mann, 13, the bus ride to school was unbearable. Her friend Kacie was missing, yet everyone was acting so... normal.

But most Greenbrier Middle School students hadn't yet heard that one of their schoolmates had vanished from her home the night before. So they chatted and bantered as usual, secure in their belief that bad things don't happen to 13-year-old girls living in the middle of nowheresville.

Sam, who knew better, sat numbly in her seat, unsure whether to say anything. Jessica Tanner, 12, also part of Kacie's circle, heard the news when she walked into her first period-class, where two girls were discussing her friend.

"Kacie Woody's been kidnapped," one of the girls said.
"Y'all are lying," Jessica declared, and burst into tears.

Jessica's teacher sent her to the counselor's office. As soon as she walked in, Jessica encountered two other distraught friends, who clung to her and sobbed.

Moments later, Sam rounded the corner.

She made a beeline for Jessica, and the two girls locked in an embrace of grief and disbelief.

At 9:20 a.m., Sam sat in school counselor Dianna Kellar's office, trying to answer the questions of investigators Byrd and Wooley.

She had been here just the day before to tell Mrs. Kellar she was worried about how freely Kacie gave her phone number to people she met on the Internet.

Now Sam was here to talk about Kacie again, this time to policemen.

LOVE ONLINE The Woodys live so far out in the country that phone calls to Greenbrier, 12 miles to the northwest, are long-distance. So Rick laid down strict rules about using the phone.

Kacie turned to the computer, discovering quickly that instant-messaging was almost as good as talking on the phone. Unlike e-mail, instant messages pop up immediately on the screen, allowing conversations to be held in real time.

Kacie's screen name was modelbehavior63, inspired by Model Behavior, one of her favorite Disney movies. The 63 came from older brother Austin's football jersey.
For a while, Kacie was content with her network of local friends. But like many teens, she couldn't resist the lure of chat rooms and ventured into these online social hubs. By autumn 2002, modelbehavior63 had become a regular presence in Yahoo's teen and Christian chat rooms.

Kacie's Yahoo profile, which included a photo of her, was there for anyone who wanted to learn more about her.

She last updated her profile in November 2002: Real name: Kacie Location: Arkansas Age: blank Marital Status: Long-term relationship Gender: Female Occupation: Messenger of God More About Me: (Hobbies): I write love poems, play alto sax, am in the school choir and recently tried out for soccer. I'm 13 now.

Latest News: October 3rd I started going out with Scott. The sweetest, cutest, smartest, funniest, sexiest guy ever. I love him with all my heart.

Favorite quote: "They wear so many faces, show up in the strangest places. To guide us with their mercy, in our time of need. Oh I believe there are angels among us, sent down to us from somewhere up above. They come - "

Kacie first bumped into Dave in a Yahoo chat room for Christian teens during the summer of 2002. They struck up a friendship and began instant-messaging each other regularly. Kacie brought Dave into her group of online friends. She introduced him to her "real life" friends as well, setting up three-way phone calls and sending him photos of her schoolmates.

Kacie and Dave's shared love of music likely helped draw them together. Dave played guitar. Kacie loved to sing and play her sax. Both were Elvis fans.

Dave's profile was sparse: Real name: Dave Location: San Diego, Ca Age: 18 Marital Status: Long-term relationship Gender: Male The accompanying photo showed a blondish, long-haired guy, sort of a younger version of the model Fabio.

Kacie thought Dave was cute, but her friends didn't like his long hair.

Kacie briefly considered Dave her boyfriend but became interested in a local boy in early autumn. She later broke up with this boy for Scott, whom she had met online in May 2002. Kacie and Scott became an official item on Oct. 3, 2002. In Scott, Kacie found someone proficient in all the intrigue and drama of adolescent puppy love. Scott's profile identified him as a Georgia teen who loved football and wrestling. His photo, which Kacie hung in her locker, showed a dark-haired boy in a football uniform, No. 79. Unlike most young players posing for their team photos, Scott didn't wear the standard menacing scowl. Instead, a wide grin creased his face.

Sam disapproved. She had never liked Dave. And Scott didn't strike her as much of an improvement. His mushy prose struck her as excessive.

Sam warned Kacie several times about "dating" people she had never met in person. How, she asked, could Kacie be sure of someone's true identity?

Kacie was so trusting that it worried Sam.

Another Greenbrier friend expressed similar doubts after Kacie e-mailed him an excerpt of an instant message from Scott.

Hey Sweetie, Scott had written. I miss you so much... I have barely talked to you all day. I Hope Your doing ok sweetie... I Love You so much... ur everything and so much more to me ur my moon and my sun u light up my world your my angel My love for you will never end... Sweeter Dramz... Kacie gushed: Isn't he a sweetie?

Her Greenbrier friend replied bluntly: do u believe all that stuff that dude is saying? How long have u known him?

Kacie responded: i actually do believe him... i have known him for over 6 months... Even after Kacie fell for Scott, she maintained her friendship with Dave, who didn't seem to mind Kacie's new boyfriend. Twice, Dave even talked to Scott on the phone.

The first time, Scott's mom answered.
"Who's calling from California?" she asked. "Is this a salesman?" Scott took the phone from her, explaining, "Oh, it's just a friend of a friend."

The second time Dave called, Scott's dad answered.
"You're not a kid," the irate father declared. He told Dave not to call back.

Rick Woody had a similar reaction when Kacie told him that her online friend Dave was celebrating his 18th birthday.

"Eighteen is too old," Rick said, ordering Kacie to cease her correspondence with Dave. Rick didn't catch a name at the time - he was more concerned about the unknown boy's age.

Kacie obeyed. "My dad said I can't talk to you anymore because you're too old for me," she wrote to Dave.

So Dave switched from the computer to the telephone, calling Kacie frequently and talking about his dying aunt. Kacie also phoned Dave, but would quickly hang up. Then Dave would call back.

The phone calls made Sam even more uncomfortable with Dave. For one thing, Dave didn't sound 18. He used outdated words of a different generation - "groovy" and "righteous" and "wicked."

Kacie once told him: "You people out in California talk a little bit differently."

Sam would later put it this way: "I was like, okaaaaay. He needed to get a teen slang book or something because no one says wicked or groovy. It was like my dad trying to act cool but actually sounding really retarded."

But Kacie always expected the best of people.

On two occasions, Kacie set up three-way phone conversations so that she could talk to Dave and Sam at the same time.

Dave described trips to the beach and how he loved fourwheeling. Mostly, though, he listened to Sam and Kacie talk.

At one point, he interjected.
"How old are you?" he asked Sam.
"Thirteen," Sam said.
"Oh... cool," Dave replied.

Jessica had talked to Dave, too, one weekend night shortly before Kacie's abduction.

Jessica was at the Woody home, feeling ill after a Dr Pepper burping contest. Kacie was on the phone with Dave.

"Here," Kacie said, handing the receiver to Jessica. "Talk to him. He'll make you feel better."

During the conversation, the girls heard noises outside, maybe someone walking around the back of the house, his feet crunching the leaves and sticks. Hastily, they shoved a dresser in front of Kacie's bedroom door. Minutes later, they were certain they heard the kitchen floor squeak.

"I'm scared there's somebody in my house," Kacie told Dave.

"Oh, there's nobody in your house," he replied. "You're just imagining things."

And then the noises stopped.

SHY AND TRUSTING Kacie was born Oct. 17, 1989. She almost died from lung complications.

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Kacie obeyed. "My dad said I can't talk to you anymore because you're too old for me," she wrote to Dave.

So Dave switched from the computer to the telephone, calling Kacie frequently and talking about his dying aunt. Kacie also phoned Dave, but would quickly hang up. Then Dave would call back.

The phone calls made Sam even more uncomfortable with Dave. For one thing, Dave didn't sound 18. He used outdated words of a different generation - "groovy" and "righteous" and "wicked."

Kacie once told him: "You people out in California talk a little bit differently."

Sam would later put it this way: "I was like, okaaaaay. He needed to get a teen slang book or something because no one says wicked or groovy. It was like my dad trying to act cool but actually sounding really retarded."

But Kacie always expected the best of people.

On two occasions, Kacie set up three-way phone conversations so that she could talk to Dave and Sam at the same time.

Dave described trips to the beach and how he loved fourwheeling. Mostly, though, he listened to Sam and Kacie talk.

At one point, he interjected.
"How old are you?" he asked Sam.
"Thirteen," Sam said.
"Oh... cool," Dave replied.

Jessica had talked to Dave, too, one weekend night shortly before Kacie's abduction.

Jessica was at the Woody home, feeling ill after a Dr Pepper burping contest. Kacie was on the phone with Dave.

"Here," Kacie said, handing the receiver to Jessica. "Talk to him. He'll make you feel better."

During the conversation, the girls heard noises outside, maybe someone walking around the back of the house, his feet crunching the leaves and sticks. Hastily, they shoved a dresser in front of Kacie's bedroom door. Minutes later, they were certain they heard the kitchen floor squeak.

"I'm scared there's somebody in my house," Kacie told Dave.

"Oh, there's nobody in your house," he replied. "You're just imagining things."

And then the noises stopped.

SHY AND TRUSTING Kacie was born Oct. 17, 1989. She almost died from lung complications.

Rick and Kristie Woody named their baby after K.C. Koloski, a character on the television series China Beach, and took her home to the house on Griggers Lane. The couple's sons, Austin and Tim, doted on their sister.

Kacie was quiet around people she didn't know. But at home or around friends, she loved to perform. Whenever she visited friends for sleepovers, she took her worn video of the musical Grease and would sing along with every song as she subjected her friends to repeated viewings.
Parents saw Kacie as a "model child," as one mother put it, a good friend for their own children. She possessed an empathy beyond her years, impressing her counselor, Mrs. Kellar, as the only student willing to befriend a lonely schoolmate.

In the years after Kacie's mom died, Kacie fretted over her dad, believing that he was lonely. Many times she climbed into his lap, asking anxiously, "Are you OK?" Kacie was always in search of a mother figure. She latched on to one of Tim's girlfriends, Carlee Hensley, who frequently took Kacie shopping. Carlee once spent a whole day trying to find someone who would pierce Kacie's ears without a guardian present.

The kindness that Carlee and other women showed Kacie made her far more trusting than most kids. People had always been good to her. She couldn't imagine anyone wishing her harm.

The Woodys moved from the North Little Rock area to rural Faulkner County in 1984 for the Greenbrier schools. The sparsely populated area appealed to Kristie and Rick, who had always wanted to live somewhere quiet and safe.

Their new homeplace served another purpose. Kristie and her mother, Illa Smith, loved horses, and this place was perfect for keeping them.

The women each owned several horses, and they spent countless hours grooming, riding and showing their prized animals. One Christmas, Illa made Kristie and Kacie matching Western outfits and took a picture of the pair, with Kacie posed on a toy horse.

In a strange twist, though, horses led to tragedy.

On June 19, 1997, Rick, Kristie, Tim and Kacie were on their way home from Tim's baseball game when two horses ran onto Arkansas 287 in front of the family's Lincoln Town Car.

Rick hit one of the horses, which slammed through the windshield on the passenger's side. After the car shuddered to a stop, Rick looked at his wife.

And he knew.

He couldn't let Kacie see her mother, not like this. But with his ribs broken, and shattered glass littering the car's interior, Rick couldn't reach his daughter. He turned to Tim, who sat in the back seat with his little sister.

"Get Kacie on the floorboard," he instructed his son.

"I can't," Tim answered helplessly. "There's glass."

At that moment, some family friends pulled up behind the Woodys' car. They ushered Tim and Kacie into their own vehicle, where the kids waited until help arrived. Kacie had been sleeping before the accident, so Rick was hopeful she hadn't seen her mother.

But she had. Kacie later told her Aunt Teresa about it, how her mom made an "uh" noise and that when she saw all the blood, she knew that her mother was dead. From that night on, Kacie hated horses.

Even so, she kept her mother's collection of horse figurines. They filled an entire shelf in Kacie's bedroom.

On June 27, 2001, Rick went on part-time patrol for the Greenbrier Police Department. He was elated.

Rick had been working for the department as a dispatcher, a job that evolved from serving as a computer and security contractor for the agency. Rick liked dispatching, but he had longed to be on the streets.

The only drawback was the hours. Rick typically worked the night shifts, which could pose problems for a single dad. Normally, Tim was around. And on weekends, Kacie always went to her grandma's house, where she ate Chinese food and pizza, and chased yellow butterflies across the lawn.

Still, there were some evenings when Kacie was home alone for several hours. Rick believed she was safe though. He had lived on Griggers Lane for 18 years with
no problems. Most of the time, the Woodys left the door unlocked. And as a cop, Rick believed most crimes were random.

Never had this policeman imagined that a kidnapper would pull right up to his doorstep. DEC. 4, MIDMORNING After Jessica's interview with the investigators in the school counselor's office, she and Sam compared notes. Both girls were certain Scott was behind Kacie's disappearance. He was all Kacie talked about lately, and after the previous day's fight, Scott was fresh in their minds.

Sam and Jessica sat in silence for a moment, lost in their thoughts. Something niggled at the edges of Jessica's consciousness, something she should have told the lawmen. She flipped through her memories of Kacie, mulling the events of recent months. Then the nebulous cloud of recollections crystallized.

She turned to her friend in a moment of horrifying clarity.

"Omigod, Sam - what about Dave?" At this same moment, FBI agent Jerry Spurgers was in Kacie's bedroom, wondering the same thing.

**CAUGHT IN THE WEB THIRD OF FOUR PARTS :**

Running out of time

Law enforcement agents work to track down Kacie Woody and learn the identity of her abductor.

**BY CATHY FYRE ©2003, ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE, INC.**

FBI agent Jerry Spurgers knelt on the floor of 13-year-old Kacie Woody's bedroom, holding two crumpled pieces of paper that might reveal the identity of Kacie's kidnapper.

Kacie had been missing for 12 hours now, snatched from her living room as she typed at the computer, and the lawmen investigating her disappearance desperately needed leads.

Surrounded by the stuffed animals lining the teenager's top bunk, the hundreds of Beanie Babies perched on shelves and the angels scattered here and there, Spurgers carefully smoothed the creases from the scraps of paper he had just pulled from Kacie's trash can.

One read: Kacie Rene Woody Loves David Leslie Fagen The other declared: Kacie Rene Woody Loves Scott G - The letters had all been numbered so that Kacie could compute the percentage of "true love" in each relationship.

But for Spurgers, the wadded-up papers held other significance.

When Kacie was abducted on Dec. 3, 2002, she had been exchanging instant messages with her online boyfriend Scott, 14, who lived in Alpharetta, an upscale suburb of Atlanta. At the same time, she had been talking on the phone with another Internet friend named Dave.

At 9:41 p.m., Kacie had abruptly quit responding to Scott's messages, and Scott had quickly become concerned. He had called the Woodys' home in rural Faulkner County and sent frantic instant messages to the family's computer, hoping that Kacie's dad, Rick, or her brother Tim would see them.

Dave, on the other hand, hadn't been heard from. Authorities had no idea who he was, only that he was supposedly an 18-year-old from San Diego.

As Spurgers examined the doodlings of a love-struck girl, he realized that Dave and David Fagen were quite possibly the same person.

The Woodys' computer soon yielded confirmation. Stored on the machine were a Yahoo profile and photo of someone named jazzman_df. FBI agents also found earlier correspondence between jazzman_df and Kacie.
Jazzman_df lived in San Diego. He had registered with Yahoo as Dave Fagen.

GREENBRIER MIDDLE SCHOOL

Meanwhile, Samantha Mann, 13, and Jessica Tanner, 12, sat in school counselor
Dianna Kellar's office waiting to talk to investigators a second time.

Sam and Jessica had initially blamed Scott for Kacie's abduction. Now, however,
they realized they had forgotten to tell the detectives about Dave.

The girls told Mrs. Kellar they needed to talk to the police again.

As they waited, Sam and Jessica hastily composed a note for the cops: Dave has
been tellin Kacie that his aunt is in a coma and he has been driving 4 dayz. Dave is
Kacie's X boyfriend For the past month, Dave had kept Kacie updated on his aunt's
condition. Her coma, he said, was caused by a car wreck. She wasn't expected to live
much longer.

The aunt lived in Arkansas. Dave didn't say where.

Kacie had told her friends about Dave's aunt. She felt really sorry for him. And
then, one night in mid- to late November, when Jessica was sleeping over at Kacie's
house, Dave had called to say he was on his way to Arkansas because his aunt's
condition was worsening. It was the same night the girls had heard strange noises
and barricaded themselves in Kacie's bedroom.

During the hourlong conversation, Dave had told Kacie and Jessica that he
planned to remain in Arkansas until his aunt passed away. Doctors were giving her a
few months at most.

Several times, Jessica and Kacie tried to end the conversation. But Dave told
them he had been driving for 11 hours and needed the company.

Sam also had heard that Dave was heading to Arkansas.

A few weeks before her abduction, Kacie had turned to Sam one day and asked,
"Remember Dave?" "Yeah," Sam had said.

"Well, he said he was going to be in Arkansas seeing his aunt who's in a coma,"
Kacie had told her.

Dave never said anything about wanting to see Kacie during his visit. Even if he
had, Sam and Jessica were certain Kacie never would have agreed to meet him in
person.

But what if he had decided to show up unannounced at Kacie's house?

RACE AGAINST TIME At 1 p.m., a fourth law enforcement agency joined the
Faulkner County sheriff's office, Arkansas State Police and FBI in the search for Kacie
when investigators asked Conway police to canvass their town's motels for
suspicious guests.

Conway, just south of Greenbrier, is the biggest city in Faulkner County.

Investigators were looking for someone registered as David Fagen. Or anyone
with the first name David. Or the initials D.F. Or anyone from California.

Conway police Sgt. Jim Barrett divided the town into two sections. He and one
detective took the east side, and two other investigators headed to the northern part
of the city.

About 30 minutes later, the detectives on the north side called to say there was a
David Fuller from California registered at the Motel 6. Fuller had arrived Dec. 2 and
was scheduled to stay for seven days.

He had requested that the maids skip his room.

Barrett headed to the motel.

The manager there vividly remembered Fuller, who had become angry when he
couldn't connect to the Internet from his room and huffed off to the county library
with his laptop.

The detective walked over to Room 115, where a 1993 Buick Regal with California
plates was parked out front. When no one answered Barrett's repeated knocks, the
manager opened the door with a passkey.
A cursory search revealed a suitcase, still neatly packed, on the luggage rack. A laptop was set up on the table, and two 3/2-inch floppy disks lay on the floor. The bed hadn't been slept in.

Barrett put a surveillance team in the room next door in case Fuller returned.

It was now 1:30 p.m.

Barrett asked another detective to check with car rental businesses. Had Fuller, perhaps, rented a car? Just 10 minutes later, the detective called back: On Dec. 2, Fuller had rented a silver Dodge Caravan for seven days from the Conway Enterprise Rent-A-Car.

At the rental agency, Barrett interviewed an employee named Steve Tate.

Fuller, Tate said, had behaved strangely while filling out his paperwork. The Californian had been fidgety, repeatedly interrupting the process to go outside and smoke.

So Tate had made a note of Fuller's California license plate number and motel room number. Also listed in the paperwork was Fuller's cell phone number.

At 2:45 p.m., state police investigator Karl Byrd and a few other detectives were eating a quick lunch at the Conway International House of Pancakes when Barrett called with David Fuller's phone number.

Byrd then phoned his supervisor, Sgt. Paul Curtis, who had subpoenaed the Woodys' phone records.

"Give me the number she's been calling," Byrd said.

Curtis read it aloud.

The number had been dialed repeatedly from the Woody home. And it matched the one Fuller had given the car rental agent.

Byrd called Barrett: "That's our boy."

A description of Fuller's rented minivan immediately went out to law enforcement agencies and the media.

Wherever it was, Kacie might be there, too.

DAVE VS. DAVID FULLER As investigators delved into Fuller's background, they learned "Dave" wasn't the long-haired, handsome youth pictured on his Yahoo profile. David Leslie Fuller was 47, balding and scrawny. And his life was falling apart.

Fuller was born Jan. 18, 1955, into a devout Mormon family. His parents, Ned and June, were proud of the secure and stable life they had created for their four children. They brought up their brood in an upper-middleclass Salt Lake City neighborhood, in a home they had built in 1956. The three oldest children, two boys and a girl, thrived - enthusiastically involved in school, church and family life. But young Davie was different - aloof, hanging back.

Davie was a lackadaisical student, and by the time he entered his teens, his friends were the rebellious, trouble-making, school-skipping kids. After high school graduation, he played bass guitar in various rock bands.

Davie's lack of interest in the church had long distressed the Fuller family. By the time he was a young adult, Dave had shunned Mormonism altogether.

At 19, he married a girl who was a year or two younger, and they made their home in Moab, southeast of Salt Lake City. The marriage quickly dissolved.

In the early 1980s, Dave was still living in Moab and playing bass guitar at a local bar. His band covered popular sing-along tunes, relying on crowd-pleasers such as Jimmy Buffett's "Margaritaville."

One night, a bandmate's girlfriend showed up at the bar with her sister, Sally.

Sally and the bass player really hit it off.

Dave and Sally's courtship ran smoothly. Dave didn't say much about himself, but he was a good listener.
Like Dave, Sally also had married and divorced young. Now she was in her mid-20s and wanted to settle down and have kids.

The couple wed on May 21, 1983, and moved to Salt Lake City. Sally worked as a commercial artist for an advertising agency. Dave drove a tow truck and then worked for a car dealership.

In 1989, Dave joined the Navy Seabees, and the couple moved to Gulfport, Miss. Over the next several years, they moved to Maryland and then San Diego. Son Dillon was born in Mississippi and daughter Stacie in Maryland.

Motherhood suited Sally, but she was increasingly unhappy with her marriage. By their 18th anniversary in May 2001, Sally wanted out.

In the early days, Dave and Sally had done a lot of social drinking. Alcohol mellowed Dave out, made him more talkative and pleasant. But once Dave eased up on the drinking, Sally learned it was best to tiptoe around her husband. It was the only way to deal with his unpredictable temper.

Sally sensed a hatred - toward an unknown someone - simmering beneath Dave's moodiness. He would brood for days and then explode into an inexplicable rage. Sally was afraid to probe too deeply. Dave's past was off-limits.

"I don't want to go there," he would tell her. "Everything was fine. I had a good childhood."

Nor would he discuss the problems in the couple's relationship. Dave liked to deal in facts - bills or car repairs, day-to-day issues he could resolve and file neatly away.

There were troubling incidents, too, like the time Dave was arrested for exposing himself to two young girls. Sally was skeptical of Dave's explanation: that he had simply stopped to ask the girls a question, but they had run off screaming.

Dave never tried to defend himself. He skipped his court appearance and quietly paid a fine for indecent exposure, a misdemeanor.

By the summer of 2002, Dave and Sally's marriage was in its final months.

For the previous five years, the family had lived at 7216 Pearson St. in La Mesa, Calif., just outside of San Diego. By then, Dave had left the Navy and was working for a Saturn dealership.

Dave was more secretive than ever, spending long hours on the computer and walking alone through the neighborhood at night as he chatted on his cell phone.

Sally had stopped asking questions.

The turbulence in the Fullers' disintegrating marriage was affecting the couple's children, Dillon, now 11, and Stacie, 7. Concerned, Sally took Dillon for counseling.

In June 2002, Dave took the kids to visit his parents. Before he left, the couple argued, and Dave angrily threw out the word "divorce."

Great, Sally thought. He's ready.

While Dave and the kids were gone, she attended a nuts-and-bolts divorce workshop, and by the time they returned, Sally had done everything but file the papers. She thought Dave would be pleased. Instead, he was furious.

This time, however, his tantrums had no effect. Dave's formerly timid wife was resolute: The marriage was over.

During the next four months, Dave's once-orderly life crumbled.

In August, California's Child Protective Services division investigated a report that Dave was taking showers with 7-year-old Stacie.

The agency got involved after Sally started asking questions. Dave was livid. "I am not molesting my daughter!" he bellowed in front of the children. Investigators ultimately concluded nothing had happened. But Sally remained uneasy.

By September, Dave had moved into an apartment. One night, he showed up at his old home and demanded that Sally let him in. When she refused, he pushed her aside and barged into the kitchen.
After a screaming match, Sally locked herself in the bedroom with the kids. Dave used a screwdriver to open the door. Sally called 911, and the kids watched out the front window as police handcuffed their father and led him away. Authorities charged Dave with spousal abuse.

That same month, Dave lost his job at the Saturn dealership. The firing happened in front of his son, who had gone with Dave on his day off to pick up his paycheck. His bosses cited a lack of productivity but suspected Dave was visiting child pornography sites on company computers.

The couple's house sold Sept. 26. By this time, Sally had found a new home in Hemet, a town in Southern California's San Jacinto Valley. The move was a leap of faith, but Sally felt strong. She home-schooled the kids, practiced yoga and wrote in her journal of her new hopes.

She hoped to finalize the divorce by the end of 2002. On Dec. 3, the day of Kacie's abduction, Dave called his mother. He seemed fine. Sally was in Utah visiting her family, and Dave asked if she had brought the kids over to see their grandparents.

"No," June Fuller told him.

"That figures," Dave replied, his irritation obvious. He didn't mention that he was calling from Arkansas.

Dave became uncharacteristically emotional. "I love you, Mom," he said, a phrase he never uttered first.

And then he hung up.

DEC. 4, MIDAFTERNOON Authorities now had a suspect in Kacie's kidnapping. But no one knew where he was or if he still had the girl.

After linking Fuller's phone number to Kacie's house, Barrett called the detectives who were staking out Fuller's motel room: "If Fuller shows up, arrest him."

Meanwhile, investigators subpoenaed the suspect's car rental paperwork, complete with Fuller's credit card number, the same one he had used to pay for his motel room.

His recent credit history revealed that earlier that day, Fuller's card had been charged by Guardsmart Storage in Conway. Fuller had traveled to Conway a month earlier to rent the unit.

Maybe, Barrett thought, Fuller was holding Kacie captive there.

He headed to Guardsmart.

En route, Barrett heard from state police that a caller who had heard news reports about the suspect's rented minivan claimed to be following it down University Avenue in Little Rock. Barrett was elated.

We've scared the crap out of this guy, and he's leaving, Barrett thought, assuming that Fuller was reacting to the publicity surrounding Kacie's kidnapping.

He's split. He left her tied up, and there'll be a happy ending.

Barrett and two FBI agents arrived at Guardsmart Storage a little after 5 p.m. The managers, a married couple, led the lawmen to unit No. 313. The door wasn't padlocked. The latch was unfastened. Barrett was sure the suspect had fled in haste.

Unholstering his gun, the detective lifted the door and peered inside.

He saw a silver minivan. Its engine was running.


Dispatcher: Where at?
Barrett: Guardsmart Storage, shots fired. Got me and two FBI agents out here.
Send backup now.
Dispatcher: At Smart Storage?
The kidnapper still clutched his 9 mm Luger in a lifeless hand. A few feet from his body, in the rear of his rented silver minivan, his victim lay on her back, her wrists and ankles chained tightly to the four corners of the van's floor.

He had been hiding in storage unit No. 313 since the night before. Throughout the day, he had cranked the engine and run the heater to warm himself. As he had listened to the radio news reports about 13-year-old Kacie Woody's abduction of the night before, he learned that police knew his name and were looking for the minivan.

The engine was still running, the radio playing, when Conway police Sgt. Jim Barrett had approached the unit and raised the door. That's when David Fuller shot himself in the head.

When Barrett and other investigators entered the unit more than three hours later, they found Fuller at the back of the unit, a few feet from the rear of the minivan, dozens of cigarette butts, a lighter and a bottle of Mountain Valley Spring water littering the concrete floor near his feet.

Fuller, 47, had backed the silver Dodge Caravan into the unit at Guardsmart Storage after snatching Kacie from her home in rural Holland. At some point, Fuller had removed the vehicle's two back seats to make room for his victim.

The seats now rested on the floor. One was folded. The other, on which Fuller had been sitting when he pulled the trigger, remained upright. Fuller had been looking directly into the back of the minivan, where Kacie lay. He had raped her. And he had shot her in the head.

The final hours of the drama had begun a little after 5 p.m., Dec. 4, 2002, 19 hours after the abduction, when Barrett had heard the gunshot and summoned the SWAT team.

The lawmen had spent more than three hours in the sleet and snow waiting, unsure whether Kacie and her kidnapper were dead or alive. Just before 8:30 p.m., the SWAT team entered the unit with Barrett close behind. The detective identified Fuller, using the dead man's California driver's license. Then he looked in the minivan, and the image of Kacie there would haunt him for months each night when he put his own daughter to bed.

As investigators searched the unit, they found a half-empty bottle of chloroform and a purple rag next to Kacie's head. Later, after police had studied the medical examiner's report, they would conclude that Kacie likely had been unconscious from the time she was kidnapped until she was killed, a small comfort amid the ruin.

According to a security box at the storage facility, Fuller had punched in his access code at 10:15 p.m., Dec. 3, which meant he had driven straight there from the Woody's home in rural Faulkner County after abducting Kacie from her living room.

No one who worked on the case would ever agree on the time of Kacie's death. With the chloroform, she could have remained alive but unconscious for hours. Detectives don't know if she was dead or alive when Fuller left the unit on foot at
7:24 the following morning to buy water and cigarettes at a nearby convenience store.

The security box showed Fuller was gone 21 minutes.

He spent the rest of the day chain-smoking and, police speculated, waiting to flee the unit on foot after dark.

As investigators examined the crime scene, several lawmen gathered for a somber discussion: Who was going to notify Greenbrier police officer Rick Woody of his daughter's death?

Faulkner County sheriff's investigator Jim Wooley and state police investigator Karl Byrd volunteered. They had worked this case from the outset, and they would see it through.

DEC. 4, LATE EVENING Jessica Tanner, 12, and several of Kacie's other closest friends were keeping vigil at 13-year-old Samantha Mann's house. By now, the local TV news broadcasts were reporting that police had cornered a man named David Fuller. Reporters described his rented minivan, and Fuller's face appeared on the screen.

Sam and Jessica looked at each other and spoke in unison: "It's Dave." Dave, whom Kacie had befriended on the Internet, had claimed to be 18. The picture on his Yahoo profile was of a goodlooking young man with long, wavy hair.

Sam stared, disbelieving, at this new version of Dave. He was balding and had a mustache. "He's ugly," Sam said. "And old."

And then there was an update: Authorities had stormed the storage unit. A news conference was scheduled for 10 p.m. The briefing opened with the first report of Kacie's death. Sam and her friends huddled on the staircase and wept.

At 12-year-old Haley Allen's house, the phone rang. The caller was her father, checking on her. Haley and Kacie had been friends since kindergarten.

"Are you doing OK?" he asked.
"Hopefully, they'll find her," Haley replied.
"You don't know?" There was an uncomfortable silence. Then Haley's dad said, "Let me talk to your mom."

Before she took the receiver, Leah Compton sent Haley to bed. Haley obeyed reluctantly. For the next hour, she lay there, staring at the ceiling, wondering.

Finally, Leah and Haley's stepdad entered her bedroom.

Haley asked, "Is she going to be at school tomorrow?" "No," Leah said softly.
"She's gone."

Haley cried and cried. And then, as many other kids in Greenbrier did that night, she crawled into bed with her parents.

Over on Griggers Lane, a handful of people had gathered at the home of Teresa Paul, Kacie's aunt.

Teresa, the older sister of Kacie's late mother, had moved next door to the Woodys in 1990, a few years after her husband, a native Alaskan, had drowned in the Yukon.

Teresa didn't say so, but she knew Kacie was never coming back. When she had returned from Rick's house at 6 a.m., she had seen an owl perched on the deck. In her husband's clan, the owl was the symbol of death.

She was prepared when a family friend arrived at her front door.

Teresa spoke first. "She's gone, isn't she?" Like Rick, Teresa had lost her spouse. And she, too, had lost a daughter. Her oldest girl, Jonna, died in a car accident in 1994. She was only 17. Heartbreak was an old, familiar acquaintance.

Teresa turned to her elderly parents, Chuck and Illa Smith.

"Mother," Teresa said gently, "it's over." "Oh, they got Kacie?" Illa asked, hoping to light her face.
"He killed her," Teresa said flatly.

There was a stunned pause. And then the Smiths sobbed. First their granddaughter Jonna. Then their daughter Kristie.

Now Kacie.

Chuck turned to Teresa: "Why can't we keep our girls?" he asked. "We keep losing our girls."

Down the road from Teresa's house, dozens of people filled Rick Woody's home. Rick slumped in his recliner, watching the TV for updates on the standoff between the SWAT team and the man who had kidnapped his daughter. Rick also listened to the chatter on his police radio.

But as a TV news crew announced that there would be a news conference at 10 p.m., Rick's radio went silent.

And he knew.

ALPHARETTA, GA. In this affluent suburb of Atlanta, 14-year-old Scott was telling his parents that something horrible had happened to a girl he had met on the Internet. It was some time after 9 p.m., EST, and Scott, known online as Tazz2999, had just learned from Internet news reports that Kacie was dead.

His parents, Steve and Pamela, were baffled. Who, they asked, is Kacie? And all of this is going on where? In Arkansas?

So Scott explained everything, starting with how he had met Kacie in a chat room in May 2002 and how she had disappeared the night before while chatting with him on the computer.

"This is not small stuff," Pamela told her son. "This is either a really sick joke, or it's something so terribly sad."

She looked at Scott's pictures of Kacie. There was a school portrait, a formal photo of Kacie in all her finery as Fall Festival Queen and a few candid shots from Kacie's webcam.

It would be several days before Pamela grasped the magnitude of what her son had gotten himself into - a murder case involving a girl from Arkansas, a killer from California and, eventually, a coast-to-coast FBI investigation.

Pamela hadn't even known that Tazz2999 had a girlfriend.

DEC. 5, 2002 School counselor Dianna Kellar's office at Greenbrier Middle School was filled with crying students.

Flowers, stuffed animals and other teen paraphernalia soon covered locker No. 427, where Kacie had once gossiped with friends as she stashed her books.

Throughout the afternoon, teachers comforted sobbing girls and tried to soothe fears. By the end of the day, an oppressive grief had sucked the laughter and chatter from the halls.

THE GIRLS SAY GOODBYE On Dec. 8, the night before Kacie's funeral, her friends arrived at the visitation with yellow roses and a group picture of themselves making goofy faces.

Sam tucked the photo under Kacie's pillow.

Then the girls took their roses, which had handwritten notes attached to each stem, and placed them one by one in the coffin. Except for Haley. She couldn't look at her friend. She gave her rose to Rick.

Kacie was wearing a yellow dress her grandma had made. It was a little tight on her, but it had been her favorite. Her Aunt Teresa had made sure two matching jackets went into the casket. She knew Kacie would want to show them to her mama in heaven.

During visitation, Rick said to Sam and Jessica: "Don't quit coming around. You're my girls too now."
OVER THE NEXT FEW WEEKS In La Mesa, Calif., FBI agents searched Fuller's orderly apartment. They found a framed montage of photos of Kacie near his computer.

Dave had two computers: one in his apartment and the laptop he had taken to Arkansas. Authorities examined both, looking for other victims.

Soon, the FBI arrived at Sam's house with printouts: a picture of Sam, pointing to a photo of singer Justin Timberlake; a webcam picture of another of Kacie's friends; and Dave's Yahoo buddy list, which included the names of lots of Greenbrier kids.

Sam was alarmed. So was Jessica, who remembered clearly the night she and Kacie had sent Dave a picture of themselves posing with Kacie's dog, George.

Dave had wanted to see what Jessica looked like.

The FBI was quickly finding out that Dave Fagen, as Fuller was known online, had been a regular presence in teen chat rooms for at least two years. He also had been targeting three other girls about the same age as Kacie.

The first lived in Michigan. She met Fuller in the winter of 2000 in Yahoo's teen chat room. They had talked for several hours and the girl put Fuller, known then by the screen name daves_in, on her buddy list. He claimed to be a 17-year-old living in San Diego. The girl chatted with him every day. She told the FBI that Fuller was always a gentleman, sticking to innocent topics like school, friends and family.

Fuller had asked for her phone number, saying, "I want to hear your voice," but the girl said no. She also refused his offers to fly her to California. The girl corresponded with Fuller for nearly two years, primarily on a public-library computer. Fuller never learned her real name.

Another of Dave's interests lived in Dallas. This girl met Fuller online in March 2001. She had never given Fuller her address, she told detectives, but in March 2002, flowers from a Dave Fagen had arrived at her home. The girl's father was furious. And that was the end of her correspondence with Dave.

In Pennsylvania, FBI agents discovered a third girl who knew Dave, but after making certain that she was safe, agents didn't press for details.

Investigators ran Fuller's DNA through a national databank, but that produced no matches linking him to other crimes. Authorities were surprised. Fuller's planning had been so meticulous, they thought he must have struck before.

A KILLER'S PLOT REVEALED Fuller, police learned, made his first trip to Arkansas on Oct. 11, 2002, nearly two months before he executed his plan. He flew into Little Rock National Airport, Adams Field, where he rented a car, drove to Conway and checked into a Motel 6. No one is sure what Fuller did during this first trip to Arkansas, although police believe he spied on Kacie and the Woody home.

The weekend he was in town, Kacie was crowned seventhgrade queen at the annual Fall Festival's Night of Coronation. On Oct. 12, a Saturday night, Kacie wore her first grown-up dress, a long, shimmering black confection, and a self-conscious smile.

She had 52 days to live.

On Oct. 15, 2002, Fuller sent this e-mail to Alltel Communications: I am planning an extended trip to Arkansas and the ISP I am currently using doesn't have a local dial-up number there. Are you an actual ISP and if so, how do I get software and set up an account to use your service?

Two days later, Kacie turned 13. On Nov. 2, when he had his kids for visitation, Fuller bought a gun. He told them he needed it for target practice.

Kacie also had been shopping. She excitedly described her purchases in an e-mail to a school friend: I got a new sweat shirt today... its really cute... and it is YELLOW! Yellow is the best color in da world!

On Nov. 4, Fuller flew back to Little Rock, once again renting a car, driving to Conway and renting a room at the Motel 6. Two days later, he showed up at the
Guardsmart Storage facility in Conway looking for the largest unit available. Fuller told one of the on-site managers that he traveled the country buying cars and needed a place to temporarily store vehicles.

On Nov. 8, he extended his stay at the motel. Authorities later speculated that Fuller had planned to abduct Kacie during this trip, but something thwarted him.

When he returned to California, Fuller went shopping again. He bought chain, duct tape and zip ties from his local Home Depot. He also obtained a bottle of chloroform from a chemical supply company. Soon he would pack his supplies in his Buick Regal for a final trip to Arkansas.

In Kacie, Fuller had found the perfect victim.

She was gullible, freely giving him her real name, address, phone number and pictures of herself. Also stored on Fuller's computer was a poem Kacie had sent him: It was about nine p.m.

When everything got so dim, In the road was a horse, How could things get any worse?

We hit it hard and fast, And in it came through the shattered glass, There was blood everywhere, The moon shone a big glare, I wondered if she was alright, This was one horrid night, We all were rushed in the room, Where my daddy lay full of gloom, I was only seven, I heard the prayer that said she was in heaven, Oh that was such a horrid night, And as I stared at the sky with fright, I wondered why she had to go away, Even though I knew now she'd be happy everyday, I hated horses from that day on, Because now my mommy was gone.

Such outpourings from Kacie were Fuller's inspiration. His fictitious aunt, who he said had been in a car wreck and was dying - like Kacie's mother - was key to gaining Kacie's trust and sympathy.

Byrd, the state police investigator, would later surmise: "On the night Kacie died, she was telling the Georgia kid the story [Dave] told her - how he was going to see his dying aunt and how [the aunt] was going to go meet Kacie's mother. As it played out, he was playing a mind game with her. He was talking about her.

"Kacie was the one who was going to meet her mother."

A YEAR LATER When Fuller's parents learned of their son's crime and death from reporters, they were skeptical.

"My son Dave would not be involved in anything like that," Ned Fuller declared indignantly. "Don't bother me anymore."

But then the police came, and they had to believe. In the months that followed, Ned wanted to call Rick Woody, but the officers discouraged him.

"I just wanted to tell him how sorry I was and that I still - I can't understand - that Dave must have been out of his normal mind-set when this happened because he was never violent," he says now.

"I'm just sorry his was the daughter he got involved with. I'd have probably come charging out here with a shotgun if it had been me."

The Santa Ana winds will sweep across Southern California in the coming days, carrying the stinging smoke of wildfires. It is late October, a week before Halloween, and in the dusty, palm-dotted San Jacinto Valley, Sally Fuller has found serenity.

Sally is tall, lean and lightly tanned, her patrician features emphasized by the short, stylish cut of her salt-and-pepper hair. She lives in San Jacinto, just north of Hemet.

She now recognizes the red flags she missed: the late nights Dave wandered the neighborhood to talk on his cell phone; the tantrum when Sally proposed moving the computer out of his bedroom; his insistence that the couple have separate Internet passwords and e-mail accounts; the framed photos of a smiling young girl in Dave's new apartment.

At the time of Kacie's murder, Sally and Dave's divorce was not yet final.
Sally heard what her husband had done from the reporters who called as the SWAT team surrounded the storage unit. "I was not as surprised as I could have been because of how I saw him deteriorate," she says. "I guess I had this feeling - he is going to crash. He is just going to crash.

"My feeling is that this was the only time," she says, referring to Kacie's murder. "Of course, he was gone for months at a time, so I really don't know."

Sally has been cautious in what she has told her children. Dillon, now 12, knows that his father killed a girl and then himself. Stacie, 8, knows only about the suicide. Dave's ashes are still in Sally's closet. Someday, when the kids are ready, she will take Dillon and Stacie to Mount Olympus to scatter their father's remains.

Rick Woody, now 46, sits in his dimly lit, paneled living room, staring at the row of photos that line his mantel.

There is his wife, Kristie, her striking features framed by a mass of dark, tumbling curls. And there is Kacie, who possessed the same soulful eyes and enigmatic, close-lipped smile.

"I've gone through all kinds of emotions," Rick says, his face unreadable. "I've gone through the bitter stage, the questioning-God stage, where I've asked, 'How can you take my wife and then turn around and take my little girl?'" He recognizes the irony in this tragedy - that the man who became a cop to help others wasn't here when his own daughter needed him most.

Last spring, Rick agreed to allow federal and state authorities to share Kacie's story in a nationwide effort called "Innocent Images" to train law enforcement officers and educate parents - even though he isn't ready to hear the story in its entirety.

"I can't let this be meaningless," he says. "I've got to make it do somebody some good."

In June, the FBI presented Rick with one of 100 commemorative patches bearing Kacie's name. The blue-and-gold patch depicts a teddy bear sitting next to a computer. "Kacie Woody, 1989-2002" is printed on the computer screen. FBI agents and local law enforcement officers who are part of the Innocent Images task force will wear the patches.

Guilt and what-ifs haunt Rick. What if he had called in sick that night, like he had been tempted to do? What if he had kept a closer eye on Kacie's computer activities?

"It can't lead you anywhere but in a circle," he says. "You want to know everything that's going on in your kid's life and you think you've got a good idea...." His voice trails off. "You want to protect them...." Again, a pause before Rick concludes: "She didn't have any fears."

OCT. 28, 2003 White tombstones glitter against the late-afternoon shadows on this gray, overcast day. Crickets chirp, and a breeze rustles trees on the cusp of autumnal glory.

Rick pulls up on his motorcycle, parking directly in front of Kacie's grave. He takes off his helmet, walks to the grave and kneels. Eleven days have passed since what would have been Kacie's 14th birthday. Tenderly, Rick scoops up the cards and notes that Sam, Jessica and other friends have left.

In years past, Rick came here each Sept. 4, his wedding anniversary, to leave red roses for Kristie - one for each year they would have been married. This year, he left 22. But now there is a second grave in need of flowers, yellow ones, Kacie's favorite. Rick comes here three times a week, usually on his motorcycle. Kacie loved to ride with Rick. So it seems fitting to thunder into this peaceful spot on his bike.

Kacie was excited when Rick bought a motorcycle. During their first excursion, she leaned this way and that, glorying in this new sense of freedom. Rick finally pulled over and lectured her about holding on to him. He needed to know she was still back there. But Kacie wasn't afraid of falling off. She was with her daddy.
Rick leans against his Kawasaki Vulcan and gazes at Kacie's gravestone. He is clad entirely in leather. On his jacket, just over his heart, is the FBI patch that bears Kacie's name.

Briefly, a burst of sunlight pierces the clouds, warming the shoulders, but not the stone, on which a white ceramic angel slumbers. For much of her short life, Kacie wanted to be an angel, just like her mother. In second grade, for a school assignment, she listed two goals: to become a gold-medal gymnast, and then, someday, to go to heaven to see her mama.

Kacie now lies next to her mother. The epitaph on her gravestone is a single line, an allusion to the heart-rending fulfillment of a second-grader's goal: I Am an Angel.

The declaration comes from a poem Kacie wrote in sixth grade: I'm an Angel I'm an angel, Sent from above, To spread the world, With lots of Love... "It was like someone put that in her head," Rick says, still leaning against his bike, eyes focused on the past. "So I thought it just belonged there."

Rick glances once more at his daughter's grave. And then he roars off, the seat behind him empty without the joyful girl who once rode there, the one who dreamed of angels.

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