Friends and family describe Phoenix as a polite, friendly, intelligent person who was well-liked by everyone. She loved God and was deeply religious herself. Her parents, being deeply religious, homeschooled Phoenix to protect her. But having been homeschooled beginning in the sixth grade, the 23-year-old was naive and didn’t really go out much. This lack of street smarts most likely played a big role in the events that occurred on December 18, 2011.

That day started as a typical Sunday but would turn out to be anything but typical. That afternoon after church, Phoenix’s mother, Goldia Coldon, watched her daughter go outside and get in her car. Phoenix regularly sat in her car to make phone calls, which Goldia thought was odd. She seemed to want more privacy than even her bedroom could provide. But despite finding it odd, she wasn’t particularly alarmed by the behavior.