Around 2:20 that afternoon, Phoenix’s father, Lawrence, saw Phoenix back out of the driveway in her car and assumed she was going to a convenience store or a friend’s house. It was the last time her family ever saw her.

Hours later, Phoenix’s 1998 black Chevy Blazer was found abandoned, but still running, 25 minutes from her home, on St. Clair Avenue, in a dangerous section of East St. Louis.   The vehicle was entered into the police database as abandoned, and allegedly the license plates of the car were not investigated, and the vehicle was not searched. The family was reportedly not notified of the car being discovered until a family friend searching independently discovered it in a tow lot. Upon an independent search by her family afterwards, the vehicle was discovered to still contain her glasses, purse, shoes and ID.