

“Okay. I mean—”

“Was that what you’re saying? She did all that?”

“Well, I don’t know. I don’t recall if there were plates out there or not. I do remember the crackers and the candles and—obviously the presents and the tree and all the—”

“You just said she had the table set for three or four days.”

“Yeah, it was like it was ready. She had those red berry things out there. All that. We were just ready to have people over Christmas Day. That’s what she was excited about. Christmas Eve. Getting prepared.”

“Like I said I just—it’s odd that you didn’t notice anything when you walked in the house. I mean, the dog had his leash on. The house is dark. She hadn’t cooked. And you went ahead and took a shower and didn’t bother to call until afterwards. I would’ve thought you would’ve called right away. There was no note for you or anything.”

“No.”

“Okay. Well, that’s what I wanted to know for now. Unless I can think of something else.”

“Okay.”

“Okay. Thanks.”

“Bye.”

“Bye.”

I’d caught Scott off guard. Angry, I thought of additional questions. I decided to call again—just not right away. I knew he wasn’t going to admit he murdered Laci, but I needed to know as much as possible for my own peace of mind. And maybe, just maybe, he’d slip up and tell me something that would lead us to where he put Laci. I *needed* to have her home. She *deserved* to be home.

Around four, I called him again, and miraculously he answered. As soon as he heard it was me, his guard went up.

“I did have a couple more questions,” I said, and before he was able to utter a single word, I continued. “What was Laci doing when you left that morning?”

“She was mopping the kitchen floor,” he said in a snippy tone.

“She was mopping the kitchen floor?” I asked.

“Yeah.”

“Why was she mopping the floor if the maid had been there the day before?”

“With the dog and the cats, you know her. She mopped all the time.”

“Oh.”

“I’d like to talk to you but—I mean you’re—you know, still accusing me of doing the most disgusting thing.”

“Well, Scott, you know what you told me?”

“Calling me and asking me—and I want to talk to you about finding her.”

“Do you know what you told me that she was doing when I asked you this before? Do you remember telling me that—”

“She was mopping the floor.”

“No. You told me she was sitting on her little bench in front of the mirror and she looked so cute because she was styling her hair like Amy had styled it for her the night before. Do you remember telling me that?”

“No, I don’t remember telling you that.”

“Hmmm. That’s too bad you don’t remember that because I talked—”

“Why are you asking me these questions?” Now he was angry.

“Because I want to know what happened to my daughter.”

“If you’re gonna call me up and accuse me of doing something to my wife—to my child—to your daughter—to your grandchild—it’s the most disgusting thing that you could do. And you know me better than that.”

“Well, then let me ask you this. When did you tell her about the affair? Exactly when did you tell her about the affair?”

“It was early in December. I don’t remember the date.”

“You don’t know a date?”

“No. I don’t know the date.”

“And how did she react? What did she say to you?”

“If you want to talk about finding Laci, I want to do that with you.”

“But you don’t want to give me any details, do you?”

“You’re accusing me of doing this and it’s so disgusting. And it’s

unbelievable that you could ever possibly think [I had] something to do with her disappearance.”

“Yeah, you’re right. It’s unbelievable, Scott, and I’m really disappointed. I truly am. But there are so many things that you’ve just—you know, like I said, you told me that she was sitting in front of the mirror combing her hair when she left. That she looked so cute sitting on her little bench.”

“It is disgusting that you think I could ever have done something to my wife—my child.”

“Then what happened to her?”

“You know I love her.”

“What happened to her?”

“You know me. We spent, I mean, how long? Well, I’ve known you for eight years.”

“What was Laci’s reaction after you told her you had an affair? How did she react?”

“I’m gonna go. You’re not gonna—”

“Scott, these are things that are important.”

“Why don’t we look for Laci? Why can’t we be a family for that? Try to bring her home?”

“Because I don’t think you’ve been doing that.”

“Oh, I have been. You don’t know what I’ve been doing.”

“I need to know some other details here, Scott. Why won’t you tell me what her reaction was when you told her about the affair?”

“Well, I mean, was she happy? No, of course not.”

“What did she say? What did she do? How did she react?”

“I’m sorry. You know that’s between her and I. We had a tough, you know, terrible talk and, and she didn’t understand why and I don’t know why I had an affair. But we made our peace with it and . . . we will always love each other.”

“If you loved her so much, why did you have an affair?”

“I don’t know why I had an affair.”

“You even said on TV the other day that you were still seeing her after you told Laci.”

“I did see her once after—”

“But you don’t remember exactly when you told Laci?”

"No."

"But you do remember that you—"

"I can get a calendar and try to figure it out for you if you want, but I don't know the date."

"And she wasn't mad or upset or hurt or anything?"

"Of course she was upset. Hurt. Yeah. Of course. But you know we are—we're strong enough. We love each other enough to get through it."

"See, I have a really hard time believing all that because—"

"You saw us after I told her and how you know—I mean—you know her—we're the same."

"Well, of course she was the same because I really don't believe you told her. I know my daughter. She would have said something to somebody."

"I-I-I . . ."

"She would have been—"

"Would hope you would help us."

". . . crushed. She would've been crushed to know this, Scott. And you know that as well as I do. It would've broken her heart. She loved you so much."

"We love each other. There's no question. That's why we can get through it. Why we got through it."

"Or was it just a matter of a few days you got through it?"

"Well, I'm along the road to never thinking about it again. Absolutely."

"What was that? I didn't hear what you said."

"We're on the road to never thinking about it, you know, the affair, again. But it was still, obviously, fresh and—"

"It couldn't have been more than a week or two since you told her."

"What?"

"If she disappeared on December 24, and you told her in early December—"

"Right."

"It couldn't have been more than a week or two since you told her, and she's already over it?"

"Right. No, I'm not saying . . . you know, we still talked about it."

But I mean we were okay. You know. You saw us. We were happy. We are happy. And we will be . . . you spent time with us during December. You know how we loved each other.”

“That’s why all this is just so hard to believe.”

“You should be—”

“Why did you tell me she was sitting on a bench in front of her mirror?”

“I don’t know if I told you that or not.”

“I remember it specifically because it was one of the very few times we ever spent any time alone at all.”

“Okay.”

“Because I told you . . . I wanted to know exactly what Laci was doing when you left that morning.”

“Why did you call and ask me again if you have the—”

“Because I want to know exactly what was going on when you left that morning.”

“So you’re accusing me of doing something to my wife and son?”

“I’m just trying to find out what’s going on here, Scott.”

“That’s what you’re doing. You’re saying I did something to my wife and son.”

“Well? Did you?”

“That’s disgusting. I did not. And I don’t want to talk to you again today. I want to talk to you when you’re ready to look for Laci and for your own daughter.”

“Oh, like I haven’t been?”

“I’m gonna go. I can’t take this from you. You haven’t been looking. I’m gonna go.”

I heard a **CLICK**, then a dial tone, then nothing.