

[Transcript] Sword and Scale Nightmares / All in the Family

On a windy and rainy morning, in April of 2018, 20-year-old Kitty Fusco left her home with plans to visit her grandmother and newborn son, but she was unaware that both her husband and her father were watching her, and they plan to kill her.

Welcome to Sword and Scale Nightmares, True Crime for Bedtime, where Nightmare begins now. In October of 1998, 37-year-old Anthony Fusco was living in a small house in Dutchess County, a large county on the eastern edge of New York about 80 miles north of Manhattan. Anthony shared his home with his longtime sweetheart and wife of 15 years, Kelly Fusco, along with their beloved daughter Nicole. Throughout his life, Anthony had been a man of action and goodwill. After graduating high school, he enlisted in the US Coast Guard, climbed the ranks to Chief Petty Officer and ultimately retired with a great reputation. This was just the start of the goodwill that Anthony wanted to accomplish during his lifetime. After his military discharge, Anthony began working as a correctional officer at a federal correctional institution while also devoting himself to his local community and the people around him. On top of all the things I just listed, Anthony served as a member of his town's zoning board of appeals. He was a member of a non-profit that supports music programs for teenagers, and he was a parishioner and CCD teacher.

At his local church, despite having a full-time job, a wife, and child, and many community responsibilities, Anthony still wanted to do more. At some point in the late 90s, Anthony and his wife Kelly discussed the possibility of adopting a baby. A child is something they both really want at this point, and so they decided to pull the trigger. So on October 1998, Anthony and Kelly formally adopted a 10-month-old baby girl, and they named her Katie. According to relatives and friends of the Fusco family, Katie was raised in an especially supportive, loving environment, and she had a pretty normal upbringing. She attended public school, made close friends, and was a typical teenager. Katie loved animals, and she was a vegetarian. To some, her nickname was Pac-Man, because she was always eating. During her junior years of high school, Katie became known as an aspiring artist that liked to draw comic strips. By the time she reached her late teens, Katie realized that in addition to her passion for drawing, she also loved the internet, and she used the internet to share her artwork. On one of her many online profiles, she wrote the following about herself. I'm naive, young, and extremely odd. I'm quiet, and awkward, and kind of predictable. But that doesn't say a whole lot, because sometimes I'm loud, and outgoing, and pretty sporadic. Some days I love indie, and other days I love dubstep. I hate mainstream, and people, and socializing with strangers. My life is the internet, and my work is in my art. My behavior is that of a five-year-old, and I believe in magic more than I believe in reality. I'm a bit confusing. You just have to see for yourself, I guess. Like many teenagers, Katie struggled to find herself. But for her, the struggle was compounded by the fact that she knew she was an adopted child. Katie wanted to know who she was, or at the very least, where she came from. By the time she turned 17, Katie is really becoming an individual. She gets more into digital art, photography, and graphic design, and even uses her artwork to make statements about women's rights. She makes a website for herself to showcase her impressive portfolio, and share her aspirations and future plans, writing that she hopes to attend Dutchess County Community College before transferring to Sunny Purchase, a school known for its visual arts programs. She also shares that she ultimately hopes to pursue a career in digital advertising. It seems like she's got her future all mapped out. Katie's this kind, smart, capable, well-liked, and extremely talented young girl. She's a woman poised for success, but there's still something eating away

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at her. Like many adopted children, she always wanted to know where she came from. She wanted to know her real parents, and through the magic of social media, she tracks them down. But there's an old saying that I'm sure you've heard before. Be careful what you wish for. Not every rock should be turned. You might just find something nasty underneath. In 2016, not long before she's set to graduate high school, Katie learns the names of her biological parents. They are 42-year-old Steven Plato and his wife, 37-year-old Alyssa Plato, a longtime couple that was living in Henrico, a suburb of Richmond, Virginia. Steven and Alyssa met online in 1995, and right away, their relationship was a potential train wreck, because Steven was 20 years old, and Alyssa was only 15. Nonetheless, they pursued each other, fell in love, and were soon expecting an unplanned newborn baby. It's unclear whether any of the parents were in this situation, but Alyssa and Steven ended up getting married, and in 1998, 17-year-old Alyssa gave birth to a baby girl. Alyssa's original plan was to keep and raise the child, but after a few months, it became clear that her situation was untenable, with no money and a not-so-supportive husband that allegedly had abusive tendencies. Alyssa made a difficult choice. She decided to put her daughter up for adoption. That daughter would eventually become Katie Fusco after a married couple in New York, Anthony and Kelly Fusco adopted her. As for Alyssa and Steven, Katie's biological parents, they remained married, and over the next several years, they had two more daughters. With a little more life experience behind them, they were able to keep and raise their two younger children. But now, it was June of 2016, and the daughter they had put up for adoption 18 years ago was blowing up their inboxes on social media. After a few months of messaging back and forth with these people, Katie graduates from high school and decides to postpone her college plans, opting instead to live with Steven, Alyssa, and her two sisters in Virginia. For Katie, this was a chance to get to know her estranged family, that she was fully embracing it. As for her adoptive parents, Anthony and Kelly Fusco weren't thrilled that Katie had decided to delay going to college, but they eventually came around and gave Katie their blessing as she made the move to Virginia. Also, because she was now 18, there really wasn't much they could do to stop her, anyway. As Katie moved in with the Playdolls, the transition from one family into another was seamless. It was a meaningful and happy family reunion. The Playdoll family embraced Katie as one of their own because, well, she was. Katie was given her own bedroom, she received and continued encouragement to pursue her artistic interests, and she seemingly had the love of two new parents along with two new younger sisters. Unfortunately, the good times did not last very long. Katie eventually realized that Steven's and Alyssa's marriage was barely holding on by a thread. The couple didn't sleep in the same bed together, and Katie could sense the tension in the air. Whatever passion they may have had for each other was obviously long gone. About three months after Katie moved in with them, Katie's father began sleeping on the floor in Katie's bedroom. And then, on one fateful night, in September of 2016, Steven climbed into bed with his own daughter. In 2016, 18-year-old Katie Fusca was living in Dutchess County, New York, with her adoptive parents. That year, Katie had plans to begin attending her local community college. But, as her high school graduation date grew closer, Katie's curiosity about her biological parents led to her contacting them through social media. By June, Katie had earned her high school diploma and decided to forego

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her college plans. Instead, she moved to Henrico, Virginia, to live with her biological parents, Steven and Alyssa Playdle. Steven and Alyssa had been married for nearly 20 years, but there was a marriage that was quickly falling apart. At this point, Katie's father has taken to sleeping on the floor next to her. One night, he climbs up into bed with Katie and begins to molest her. Although she's an adult, she is his biological child after all. So what else can we call it? Katie seems not to mind though, because just three months after moving in, she has an ongoing consensual sexual relationship with her father. Soon after, Steven's wife Alyssa is like, what on earth is going on here? And moves out of the house before filing for divorce. Alyssa later claims she had suspicions about Steven's and Katie's relationship, but was not completely aware of how far it had gone. After Alyssa files for divorce, she and Steven share custody of their two daughters, and by January of the following year, Steven tells those daughters to refer to Katie as their stepmom, even though everyone including they themselves knew Katie was their sister. Now that her mother was out of the house, Katie and her father Steven had an announcement to make. Katie was pregnant. When Katie's mother found out about the pregnancy, she got on the phone with police immediately. In Virginia, incest is a felony and carries a potential 10-year prison sentence. Both Katie and Steven were questioned by Henrico County police officers, but nobody was arrested. So basically, a few months go by and Steven and Katie decide they need to get out of Virginia, where everyone is judging them for their decisions. All those mean comments about incest were really killing their vibe, so they moved to Nightstale, North Carolina with an incestuous baby on the way. They decide after a while they want to get married, but their whole father-daughter relationship was kind of standing in the way of that goal. Eventually, they're able to accomplish their goal by concealing their true biological relationship. The weirdest part about the whole thing, though, is that all of Katie's loved ones seem to be totally cool with Katie marrying her father. Their engagement is out in the open, oddly enough, and their small wedding ceremony is even attended by Steven's parents, aka Katie's grandparents and Katie's adoptive parents, the Fuscus. The wedding photos complete with smiling faces, a serene lakeside backdrop, and Katie's baby bump are some of the most unsettling images you'll come across. When people ask them, hey, why did you guys even attend that ceremony? Katie's adoptive parents said that they felt there was nothing they could do except support their daughter. Now, Katie's adoptive parents were in a bit of a bind because, although they hated everything about what was going on, they felt completely powerless to stop it. I mean, what do you do when you're now legally adult adopted daughter decides to shack up with her own biological father? You can either accept it and go along with the situation or risk never seeing your adopted daughter again. So they did what any loving parents, I guess, would do. And as much as this entire arrangement nauseated them, they grinned through their clenched teeth politely and kept their opinions to themselves. So, on September 1st, 2017, Katie gives birth to her brand new baby and she and her dad named their new son, Bennett. Needless to say, this is not a family that's going to have a happily ever after. And things quickly take a turn for the worse. Only a few months after Bennett's birth, both Stephen and Katie are arrested and charged with incest and adultery. Custody of their son is granted to Stephen's mother, the baby's grandmother, and at the same time, as weird as it is, the baby's great-grandmother. Now, both Stephen and Katie are faced with a

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potential 10-year prison sentence. While waiting for their court proceedings to move forward, they both bond out of jail. As part of the terms of their release, however, Stephen and Katie are ordered to not communicate with each other at all. In legal land, this is known as a no-contact order. Right after he gets out of jail, Stephen takes off to his home in North Carolina, which just so happens to be near his mother and his newborn son. Katie, on the other hand, goes back to New York and moves back in with her adoptive parents. At some point, the reality of Katie's situation must have come into focus for her. She must have realized just how twisted and bizarre her life had become. Because after only a few months of being away from Stephen, Katie decided that she wanted to end the relationship. Despite the no-contact order, Katie called Stephen on the phone and broke up with him. What would happen next would make this already strange story take a much darker turn. On April 11, 2018, 20-year-old Katie Fusco broke off the relationship with her incestuous father, Stephen Plato. The very same day, she also finalized her plans to drive to Stephen's mother's house in North Carolina to visit her newborn son, Bennett. The drive from her home in New York was pretty long, so Katie's adoptive father, Anthony Fusco, offered to go with her. So the next morning, she and her adoptive father leave the house and climb into Anthony's pickup truck to begin the long drive to North Carolina. As Katie pulls out of her driveway, both she and Anthony are completely unaware that Stephen Plato is sitting nearby, watching them from a parked minivan, and sitting in his passenger seat is an AR-15. There's a witness to what's about to happen, and he calls 911 as he witnesses this tragedy. He describes to the operator the car that's pulling up to Anthony's pickup truck. He says he sees the driver of the car pulling out a rifle and just absolutely emptying the magazine into the truck. The caller is frantic as the 911 operator asks, he's dead? The caller quickly says, yes sir, his brains are on the road. And just like that, it was all over. The night before this phone call had been placed, Stephen Plato had driven from his home in North Carolina to the Fusco's residence in Dutchess County, New York, driving over 500 miles. When he arrived there, he parked his van near their driveway and waited for Katie to emerge from the home. He then followed her and Anthony as they traveled south toward the town of New Milford in Connecticut. At a cold and rainy intersection, Katie and her adoptive father sat at a stop sign, waiting for their chance to cross Route 55 when Stephen Plato pulled up alongside them and emptied a rifle magazine into their driver's side window. Stephen then fled the scene. A few minutes later, Stephen pulled over and called his mom, who in turn called 911. In this harrowing phone call, Stephen's distraught mother would describe to 911 that her son had just confessed murdering multiple people, including his own daughter, slash wife, and her adoptive father. When police and emergency services arrived, Anthony and Katie Fusco were found covered in their own blood. They were both dead. Within the following hours, investigators pieced together what happened and who was responsible for this vicious double homicide. Stephen Plato quickly became a hunted man. At the same time, the police also learned that Stephen's horrific acts didn't start with murdering his own daughter and her adoptive father. On the day before Stephen gunned down both of them, and in fact before he had even left the state of North Carolina, Stephen had done something equally, if not more cruel. On the day before this double homicide, Stephen had driven to his mother's house to pick up his infant son. He drove him back to his own house where he murdered the child and left the body in a closet. Police never disclosed the cause of the baby's death,

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but they did reveal that he did not sustain any noticeable injuries or trauma. The prevailing belief is that Stephen smothered his own son to death with a pillow. Stephen then climbed into his minivan and drove nearly 600 miles north to New Milford, Connecticut, where he killed his daughter Katie and her adoptive father Anthony Fusco. Sadly, or perhaps mercifully, when Katie was killed, she was unaware that the newborn son she was on her way to visit was already dead. A few hours after her death and just five miles from where Stephen had killed Katie, police locate Stephen's minivan. Inside, they find Stephen. He's dead also, the result of a self-inflicted gunshot wound. Stephen had shot himself in the head. Throughout his life, Stephen did some unquestionably terrible things. When he was 20, he was having sex with a minor. His victim and eventual wife, Alyssa Plato, has said that Stephen was a lousy and cruel father, which isn't exactly hard to believe. According to Alyssa, when Katie Fusco was still an infant, Stephen would pinch Katie until her body was black and blue. She also claimed that Stephen got easily tired of Katie's infant cries and he would cover her mouth with his hand, even on some occasions stuffing Katie into a cooler to drown out her crying. He even prevented Katie's mother from rescuing her until she was on the verge of suffocating to death. Then, 18 years later, Stephen began having sex and ultimately impregnated the same daughter he had abused when she was an infant.

Despite all of his misdeeds, Stephen's acts of murder still caught several people off guard. According to his lawyer, who had been representing Stephen throughout the incest allegations, Stephen had called him about a week before the murders and asked what he should wear to court. He also claimed that Stephen never gave any indication that he would ever hurt anyone, much less murder three people. Given that Stephen is dead, the best estimation we can make as to why he did what he did is that he simply snapped. Between facing a potential ten-year prison sentence and his wife slash daughter ending their relationship, Stephen decided to take his own life, but not before selfishly ending the lives of three other people. As for Katie, many have asked questions. Why would she allow Stephen into her bed? And why would she pursue a relationship and a marriage with her own father? While we don't know for sure, it is likely that Katie was desperately seeking validation. As an adopted child, perhaps Katie felt unwanted, and when Stephen expressed a desire and love for her, maybe Katie felt like she had found her validation. Something else that may have played a part in Katie's decisions relates to something known as genetic sexual attraction. And I apologize in advance if this takes away from your delicious Quizno sandwich. But this is a term that was first used in the 1980s to describe the attraction that may exist between adoptees and their newly discovered relatives. People tend to be sexually attracted to those who resemble them in both physical appearance and mentality. But sexual attraction between relatives who grow up together is almost completely unheard of. Many experts believe that this is an aspect of human evolution that works on a subconscious level to prevent people from engaging in inbreeding. However, when two relatives reunite many years after being separated, there's a small chance that genetic sexual attraction can occur. Perhaps Katie was genuinely attracted to Stephen because he so closely resembled who she was, and maybe she never saw him as a father at all. As for Stephen, he almost certainly never viewed Katie as his daughter. When Katie reached out to him, all he saw was a young, bright, attractive girl that he could have sex with. Katie longed to understand and embrace her roots, and Stephen Plato, being the selfish, sick-minded, and cruel person that he was,

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simply took advantage of that and manipulated Katie to get what he wanted.
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Sweet dreams, and good night.