

GROOMING GRACIE 1:15:20

Funding for NetSafe is provided by the Utah State Legislature through a grant on the Utah Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice. In proud partnership with these other organizations...

NARRATOR

At an early age Gracie learned to trust other people. As Gracie and her sister played the simple games of childhood, safety and trust in their world was a given. Something they never thought to question.

Gracie is growing up in the new world of instant communication. Cell phones, texting, online chats and instant messaging have become the preferred way of staying in touch with friends. Gracie also stays in touch with friends through MySpace.

Gracie has a new friend...someone she has met online. Lately, right after school, Gracie's new friend has been online at the same time. Gracie accepted him into her circle of friends, even though she didn't know him. He is older and makes her feel more mature by showing an interest in her and what she's doing. What Gracie doesn't know is that what appears to be a harmless conversation with an older boy is actually an online predator grooming Gracie. This begins a perfect scenario for a predator to find out more about her. He takes an interest in her and lets her know he cares about her.

Gracie's friend is anxious to find out more about her without her knowing. He studies her MySpace profile where he first saw her. From her profile, he already knows she lives in Salt Lake City and is very interested in music. Gracie is feeling very safe with her new friend. After all, they have a lot in common and like the same music. She thinks he must really like her because he burned a CD for her. Trust is a very powerful thing.

Now that he has a pretty good idea where she lives, Gracie's friend tries to find out more about her school life during the day. He also knows that she is online almost everyday after school. What started out as an innocent chat between Gracie and her online friend over homework and music has now escalated into a relationship where Gracie trusts a complete stranger. Gracie's friend now has an even better way to contact her and stay in touch throughout the day. Gracie has no idea what the possible intentions of this stranger could be. Gracie is no longer just an innocent teenager meeting new friends in the virtual world. Gracie is now a victim about to meet face to face with an online predator.

Could this happen to you?

How safe are you when you are online?

For more information go to netsafeutah.org

Funding for NetSafe is provided by the Utah State Legislature through a grant on the Utah Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice. In proud partnership with these other organizations...