



Statistics Don't Lie
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Ratt Dokken Kiss "Jim Dayton"

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To Mark and Chris

Statistics Don't Lie

65% of drowning incidents occur in pools owned by the child's family.

I could see the blurry multi-colored figures dancing in slow motion. It was strange how cool the water felt on my eyes, until they started burning. The water rushed over my tongue as I attempted to breathe. The coughing and crying were not nearly as important as the sheer terror in my heart as my father pulled me from the pool. His coarse laugh and his banging on my back added to the horror. Both arms were wrapped tightly around his neck, while water sprayed down his back. Even after the water was out, I continued to cry in fear of being thrown back into the pool.

I guess I look back at my first time “swimming” as a common experience for most children. And like other children, I got back in the pool. My father suspected that with such a traumatic first experience I would probably become an Olympic swimmer. That was hardly a likely scenario. Oh, I took swimming lessons and I was given the opportunity to join the swim team when I reached the required age. It just never interested me. Besides, I was never really that good a swimmer because of my size. I’m positive there would have been an unbearable amount of ridicule focused on me in a Speedo. So, I avoided the situation altogether.

Maybe that first traumatic experience had an adverse effect, maybe it didn’t. Maybe, it was the stories. My neighborhood had its fair share of storytellers. I think the best one I ever heard was when I was eight. I think it was Nick Francis, or maybe Jerry Nichols, that told me about the Stevenson’s.

The Stevenson’s were the old couple that lived at the turn in 84th and Tremont. Most of the kids in the neighborhood stayed away from their house, not because we thought old people were creepy, but because we didn’t really have much in common with a pair of ninety year-olds. They kept to themselves, and we kept to ourselves. That is with the exception of the story.

The Stevenson’s had two children, Eric and Stephanie. When they were eight and five, respectively, Mr. Stevenson had decided to buy a pool. The very next summer, they say, Eric and Stephanie started telling Mrs.

Stevenson that they had a new friend that liked to come over and swim with them every once in awhile. Mrs. Stevenson thought nothing of it, and shoed the kids out the door to play.

After a time, Mrs. Stevenson started to wonder why the kids were so quiet. She ran to the front door to see if they were in the yard playing. They were nowhere to be seen. Immediately her mind started to race. She had dismissed the children's story about their new friend, but what if it was true? What if someone was playing and swimming with the kids while she wasn't looking? Thoughts of kidnapping, molestation, and mutilation filled her mind. She raced through the house crying hysterically snatching the phone from its cradle frantically dialing. She ran to the backdoor. Right next to one another, Eric and Stephanie floated face down in the family pool. After that, Mr. Stevenson filled in the pool and turned it into a garden for Mrs. Stevenson where she spent the vast majority of her afternoons talking to her plants... her children.

77% of the children are seen within five minutes of being discovered in the pool.

It was a heated debate that inevitably took place between Dave and Chris.

"Really, they couldn't hold a candle to Ratt. The melodic riffs and sweeps of Warren De Martini coupled with the screeching vocals of Stephen Percy were the epitome of eighties hair metal."

Chris would always go to the Dokken defense at this point. "You've got to be kidding." Lucky for Chris, "In My Dreams" came pounding out of the radio. "Listen to that. De Martini needed the back-up guitar of Robbin Crosby. George Lynch needed no second guitarist. And, you can't possibly be saying that Stephen Percy should even be allowed to hold Don Dokken's jock. Sure, Ratt had more commercial success. I say it's management and marketing that made all the difference. When it comes to musical talent, it's like comparing Tiffany to Mozart. They're two different ballparks, leagues, and games."

Dave hoped that at this point I would intervene. "Have either of you two even heard of Quiet Riot? Maybe, Def Leppard? And surely, you're

leaving Van Halen out of this discussion,” I said in my most uninterested voice.

Dave squeezed out his most weasely, “Yeah, what about Kiss? Ever heard of them?” We all busted out laughing.

Dave and Chris had spent most of that summer at my house by the pool. We each had crappy, part-time jobs to learn “the value of a dollar,” as my father put it. Of course, that lesson was wasted until I was out of college. Dave and I always had the same days off, and Chris usually managed to be “sick” whenever his boss wouldn’t give him one of the same days. So, there we sat for an entire summer.

Angie, Kristen, and Shannon were my neighbor and her best friends who managed to find their way over to my family’s pool as soon as school let out for the year. I guess they thought that fooling around with us was a small price to pay for a great tan and access to a private pool all summer. I’m sure they got as much out of it as we did. Plus, they got the bragging rights to, “we hung out with Seniors all summer.”

My parents worked, which afforded us a certain amount of freedom that seventeen year-old boys probably shouldn’t have. I think Dave learned to smoke that summer, there was the day we all got drunk and went to the mall, the day we caught Chris and Shannon screwing by the pool, and the day I saved Angie’s life.

The day started out cold and rainy. I’d decided the day was a wash, and planted myself on the couch. Angie was the first to come banging on the back door.

“Hey, what are you gonna do today?”

I knew I looked like shit. “I don’t think the rain’s gonna let up.”

“I don’t care. You wanna hang out?”

I had known for some time that Angie had a crush on me, and I’d led her on. We’d kissed and fooled around. I don’t think I was as interested as she was. I think she knew it too, because she wouldn’t let me fuck her.

“Sure, c’mon in,” I said reluctantly.

The phone rang. It was Dave.

“Hey, I don’t think this rain’s gonna fucking let up. What are you gonna do today?” I could hear Chris in the background.

“I don’t know. Angie’s over.”

Dave yelled to Chris in the background, “He’s not doin’ anything except Angie.” Chris let out a long, sarcastic set of moans. “So, you think she’s gonna let you fuck her? Or, should we come on over?” Chris continued to moan in the background.

“I don’t care. Just a second.” I pulled the phone away from my ear. “Are Kristen and Shannon coming?”

“I doubt it.”

I could tell she didn’t want Dave and Chris to be coming over either.

“Dave, why don’t you guys wait to see if the rain clears.”

Dave laughed. “You fuckin’ dog.”

Angie smiled as I hung up the phone.

“I’m gonna grab a shower.”

She put on her best porno face. “Want some company, stud?”

“You mean...”

“I’ll come up and talk dirty to you, and I might wash your back if you’re good.”

I acted disappointed. She laughed and followed me up the stairs.

I guess it all seemed harmless. We flirted, we screwed around, and we stayed friends. Maybe, all that bullshit that they feed girls about sex

ruining a friendship is true. And, so what if it was. At that moment, I was more than happy to lose a friend to lose my virginity. I wasn't uncomfortable being naked in front of Angie. It wasn't as if she hadn't seen my dick. The water was cold when I first got in. Angie sat on the toilet threatening to flush if I got out of line. This was almost an invitation for the conversation to turn to why she wouldn't fuck me.

"Ang, when are you going to have your way with me?"

"Why do we always have to discuss why I won't fuck you?"

I loved it when she said the word "fuck." I started to heat up. "Well, now that you mention it."

"You can't be serious. You know why."

"Angie, there's something I've always wanted to say to you. I love you." A slight smile gave me away.

"Fuck you. Just because I like you almost as much as you like yourself, doesn't mean you can shit all over me." She stood up from the toilet.

"C'mon, Ang, I love you." The smile got bigger.

She flushed, flipped me off, and with another "fuck you" left the bathroom.

"Fuck."

When I pulled my semi-scorched body out of the shower and walked downstairs, I noticed the rain had stopped and the clouds were breaking up. I screamed Angie's name as I walked through the house soaking all the carpets with my refusal to dry off. I went downstairs to the living room only to find it empty. As I walked past the kitchen window, I saw something red in the pool out of the corner of my eye.

"Fuck."

I was in the pool dragging Angie out before I remembered I was naked. I didn't care. I started CPR as if it were second nature. The swimming

and lifeguard lessons my dad insisted on were actually paying off. Three breaths, chest compressions, and up came the water. I felt bad as I watched her convulse and vomit. I ran inside to call an ambulance and grab a towel for Angie, and myself. She was still spitting out water and coughing by the time I got back.

It didn't take long before the ambulance arrived, and I became the hero of the summer. Angie spent the rest of the summer sneaking over early in the morning or late at night to fuck. So, I guess in the end, I got what I wanted in the first place.

46% are last seen in the house, 23% in the yard, making 69% that were last seen somewhere other than the pool area.

Now, I sell peace of mind. It amazes me that people will childproof everything they can think of, but a big hole in the backyard with water in it is the last thing they see as dangerous. But, I can't complain. It makes my job easier, that's for sure. I started working for this pool fence company straight out of college. Really they're just normal fences with some modifications to make them childproof. For instance, the latch on the gate has a dual-release system. And instead of using chain-link, we designed a more modern wrought iron fence. The individual bars are spaced just far enough apart to look nice, but not let little bodies through. It really is a life saver.

It kept me busy most summers. I drove around the new subdivisions, looking for a house with a pool and kids, I showed the mom a few stats, and made another sale. It was almost embarrassing how easy it was. Don't get me wrong, we had tough times. All it took was one kid falling into a pool, a story on the morning news, and business immediately picked back up.

This summer's been less than lackluster. Yesterday, I drove for two hours to find a new subdivision to cruise. It was quiet. Most of the houses were still being built, but I found an area where a couple of families had already moved in. Only one had a pool, though.

I parked at the top of the street and walked down four houses to the

house with the pool. As I walked by, I checked to see if the other neighbor was home. A quick look in their garage window confirmed they were out. As I walked up the driveway, I could hear kids in the backyard playing. I quickly changed direction and headed for the backyard. I looked through the fence. A boy stood with his finger-guns blasting away at his sister as she ran around singing and dancing. I stood by the fence until the little boy noticed me. His sister immediately stopped having fun when she saw me.

“Is your mommy home?”

“She’s inside.”

The children were rightly apprehensive about opening the gate for me.

“Could you get her for me?”

The little girl nodded, and headed for the backdoor.

As soon as the door latched, I pounced on the boy dropping him into the pool and forcing his head under the water. He kicked, and squirmed, and nearly got away. I looked back and forth from him to the backdoor praying that his mother wouldn’t come running out. I dug my fingers into his head and forced it deeper into the pool. Water splashed everywhere as he struggled. I knew his mother would be coming out the door any second. He started to weaken. Finally, he went limp. I ran. As I jumped in my car and fired up the engine, I heard the blood-curdling wail of the mother.

It won’t be long until business picks up, I can feel it.

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