

Sent July 29 2024

Picked up at USPS July 31 2024

No response Received response 10-04-24

Erika Moses

Responded 9-30-24 after 2nd letter I sent 9-10-24

Major Thomas Robertson
Investigative Services
South Carolina Law Enforcement Division
4400 Broad River Road
Columbia, South Carolina 29210

Dear Major Robertson,

I am writing this letter regarding the death of my son Kaden Thomas-Lee Moses, DOB: [REDACTED] and date of death December 30, 2023. His death was investigated by your agency and I have been told that your case number is 55230299. Also, I was recently advised by a local female agent that the investigation is in the process of being closed because there was nothing else that could be done on the case. This is very puzzling to me considering what I know about the case. I would like to explain some of the reasons why I feel this way.

On the night my son died he was in his bedroom with another teenage boy named [REDACTED]. I was awakened and told that my son shot himself. I went into the bedroom and my son was sitting in a chair and a rifle was lying by the left side his chair. I moved the rifle to the corner of the room. Additionally, my teenage daughter and her boyfriend and my younger children were in the house with me that night. Earlier in the evening before the shooting [REDACTED] was outside my house by a truck talking to his girlfriend. He returned to the room with Kaden before the gunshot. Kaden was playing a game on his phone with his girlfriend during which he was also talking to her at her home through FaceTime audio. While on the phone his girlfriend heard Kaden say "What are ..." and she heard a gunshot while on the phone. The comment she heard indicates that he was speaking to [REDACTED] who could have had the rifle. The authorities were notified and emergency personnel responded. Kaden did not survive.

I was later told on February 20th around 11am by the SLED agent that she was told by [REDACTED] that he and Kaden were out shooting the rifle earlier that day out back of the house. She searched the premises and found no evidence. My neighbor did not hear anyone shooting or see them out the day my son died. Ammunition for the rifle was in the truck and we now have the ammunition in a sealed plastic bag. It was never obtained by the authorities.

I have received reports from the medical examiner, coroner and toxicology laboratory. Page one of the autopsy report lists a head wound to the left front of the head, intermediate range. Manner of death is listed as homicide. Homicide is defined as causing the death of one by another. In the Evidence of Injury section on page 3 sparse stippling is listed on the left side of the face and neck, on the left arm and on the back side of the left hand. As I understand it

stippling can only occur after the gunpowder particles leave the muzzle of the firearm barrel. How could this have happened from his hand to his face? Also, my son was right-handed.

Additionally, [REDACTED] made several questionable statements that night some of which are listed below:

- "I unloaded the gun" and "I unloaded the gun so there wasn't anything in it".
- "What do I do, my fingerprints are all over the bullet."
- When asked what happened [REDACTED] responded, "I don't know, Kaden just put the gun to his head and pulled the trigger." (This is inconsistent with the information in the Medical Examiner's Autopsy Report wherein the shot was determined to be at an intermediate range and the powder stippling on the back of the left hand, left arm, neck and face.)

[REDACTED]'s mother works as a police officer for a local department and it is my understanding that the family has obtained a lawyer for him and he is not talking to authorities at this time.

This is basically all the information I have.

I do not understand why this case is being closed and have a few additional questions:

Was the firearm and cartridge case submitted to the crime laboratory for examination by the Firearms Section to determine if functioning properly and for comparison?

Was the firearm and fired cartridge case sent to the laboratory Fingerprint Section for examination?

Was the firearm and fired cartridge case sent to laboratory for "touch" DNA processing?

Would you be interested in having the box of ammunition from the truck for laboratory processing?

Were any of the responding emergency personnel interviewed concerning statements/admissions made by [REDACTED]?

Was [REDACTED] cell phone obtained and, if so, was information acquired from it reviewed for relevance?

Was the case presented to the Solicitor's Office for evaluation and guidance?

Why were key parties associated with the case not talked to promptly?

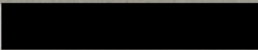
I understand that some of these actions may have been accomplished but I do not know if that is so.

That is one reason why I am writing you and let you know that communication with the local agent has been minimal at best. I am very concerned that this case may not have been thoroughly investigated.

It appears that your agency is prematurely giving up because this case is difficult. Perhaps a clearer picture could be achieved by 'digging in' and thoroughly answering all existing questions. I also would appreciate a more thorough detailed presentation and justification as to why the case is in the process of being closed, what has been accomplished to date and what if anything is to be done regarding this incident. I suspect that you would desire a full thorough complete investigation if it was your child. I ask for no less.

I anxiously await your response and can be reached at the number listed below. Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Respectfully,

Erika Moses


CC: Chief Mark Keel
South Carolina Law Enforcement Division



**South Carolina
Law Enforcement Division**

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September 30, 2024

Erika Moses
261 Edgewood Dr.
Clinton, S.C. 29325

Dear Ms. Moses,

I write to you today in response to your letter we received on August 1, 2024, regarding the death of your son, Kaden Thomas-Lee Moses, which occurred on December 30, 2023, in Laurens County.

First, please let me offer my condolences on the loss of your son. I cannot imagine how difficult it must be to deal with such a loss and my heart goes out to you.

I have reviewed the case management history on this case and have met with the SLED Investigators assigned to this investigation to discuss the case in detail. The Case Agent is SLED Senior Special Agent April Merrill, and her immediate supervisor is Lieutenant April Sykes. Both are assigned to SLED's Child Fatality Department. Both are experienced investigators.

SS/A Merrill responded to the scene on December 30, 2023, at the request of the Laurens County Sheriff's Office. A team of SLED Crime Scene Agents also responded from SLED headquarters in Columbia.

SLED assumed the lead on this investigation at the request of the Laurens County Sheriff's Office. Evidence was collected and submitted to our lab for processing, witnesses were interviewed, and records were obtained and examined. The investigation continued for several months. S/A Merrill, Lieutenant Sykes and a SLED victims advocate remained in contact with you throughout this investigation.

State law prevents the release of any records regarding child fatality investigations.

S.C. Code Ann. § 63-11-1990(A) states that all information and records acquired by SLED's Department of Child Fatalities, "are confidential, exempt from disclosure under Chapter 4, Title 30, the Freedom of Information Act, and only may be disclosed as necessary to carry out the committee's and department's duties and purposes." S.C. Code Ann. § 63-11-1990(A). This law further states that the "[i]nformation, documents, and records" of SLED's Department of Child Fatalities "are not subject to subpoena, discovery, or the Freedom of Information Act..." See S.C. Code Ann. § 63-11-1990(F). Further, please know a violation of this provision is a misdemeanor punishable by a five hundred dollar fine or



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imprisonment of not more than six months, or both. See S.C. Code Ann. § 63-11-1990(G). As such, any such materials are not public records as defined by S.C. Code Ann. § 30-4-20(c) and are also specifically exempt from disclosure pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 30-4-40(a)(4).

On May 3, 2024, you attended a meeting with our investigators, our victims advocate, the Laurens County Coroner, and Deputy Solicitor Josh Thomas. During this meeting you were briefed on the facts of this case.

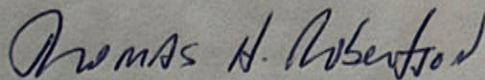
On June 14, 2024, Deputy Solicitor Thomas issued a letter to S/A Merrill declining prosecution in this matter. Simply put, there is just not sufficient evidence to charge anyone with a crime based on the information that we now have.

Ms. Moses, this investigation is thorough and complete based on the facts and information that we have at this time. Please understand that this case, like many others, leaves unanswered questions. Questions that the answers may never be known.

If additional **credible** evidence is discovered, this case will be reopened, and the investigation will continue. Until such time, SLED considers this matter closed.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of further assistance.

With best regards,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Thomas H. Robertson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Thomas" being the most prominent part.

Thomas H. Robertson, Major
Investigative Services
South Carolina Law Enforcement Division

