

## ***Police Warn Of Fake Social Media Posts About 5-Year-Old Cannon Hinnant's Murder***

*Sandy Malone*



*Wilson, NC – Police are warning about fake posts on social media that claim police have disputed the parents' account of what happened when 25-year-old Darius Sessoms fatally shot five-year-old Cannon Hinnant in the front yard of his father's home on Aug. 9.*

*The Wilson Police Department posted a picture of one of the fake posts that purported to have been posted by them with the warning label "Fraudulent Release. Not from Wilson Police Department," according to WMBF.*

*"We continue to see social media posts incorrectly including the Wilson Police Department name that were NOT issued by our department," police captioned the picture of the fake post. "An example is shown below. Please do not share these posts and report them to Facebook."*

*The fraudulent post shared by the Wilson police claimed the shooting was brought on by actions of Hinnant's father and said the parents weren't cooperating with police.*

*"Just to be clear we did NOT find any evidence to back the version of events the family has been claiming," the fake post read. "The parents of Cannon claimed their son had been s-t [sic] at random for riding his bike into the neighbor's yard. This is not an accurate [sic]. The version of events the suspect gave police after his arrest was that Cannon's father had invited him over earlier in the day to do drugs." "They got into an altercation after getting high," the fake police post claimed.*

*"Darrius claims that he struck Cannon by accident via a stray bullet while aiming for the child's father, Austin Hinnant. Preliminary evidence has so far lined up with the suspects [sic] version of events."*

*The post went on to fraudulently claim that Austin Hinnant had admitted he invited Sessoms over and that he appeared to be under the influence when police arrived at the shooting scene of his little boy, according to WMBF.*

*Sponsored:*

*It also falsely claimed that both of Cannon's parents were under investigation in their child's murder and that the state had requested the GoFundMe account set up to help the family be shut down.*



*Wilson police have asked for the public's help in identifying and reporting the fake posts purporting to have been posted by them, WMBF reported.*

*The fatal shooting occurred at about 5:30 p.m. on Aug. 9 at the home of the little boy's father in the 5100-block of Archers Road, WRAL reported.*

*Family members said five-year-old Cannon was playing outside with his seven-year-old and eight-year-old sisters when he was shot.*

*Neighbor Doris Lybrand witnessed the shooting and said Sessoms run up to the little boy, put a gun to his head, and fired, WRAL reported.*

*"My first reaction was he's playing with the kids," Lybrand said. "For a second, I thought, 'That couldn't happen.' People don't run across the street and kill kids."*

*The neighbor told WRAL that she realized the gun was real and Cannon had been shot when she saw the little boy's father's reaction to what had happened. She said she went back inside, locked herself in, and then called 911.*

*"You don't expect to see somebody shoot someone," Lybrand said. Cannon was transported to Wilson Medical Center where he later died, WITN reported.*

*Sessoms fled the scene in a 2019 Toyota Corolla but police tracked him down to a residence on Goldsboro Road, according to the Daily Mail.*

*He was taken into custody about 24 hours after he shot Cannon and charged with first-degree murder, WITN reported.*

*Sessoms has been held without bond.*

*Multiple law enforcement agencies including the Goldsboro Police Department, the Wayne County Sheriff's Office, and the U.S. Marshals Service task force worked together to affect Sessoms' arrest, the Daily Mail reported.*

*Sessoms lived next door to Cannon's father, WRAL reported. A neighbor said Cannon's father and Sessoms had dinner together the night before he shot the little boy.*

*They also said the man who would kill Cannon was over at the father's home earlier in the day on Sunday, WRAL reported.*

*Cannon's family said Sessoms grew up on that street and they had known him for many, many years, WNCN reported.*

*"We used to play together and I never thought he'd kill someone,"*

*Rachel Pipkin, a cousin of the little boy's mother, said. "A mother now has to lay her son to rest at 5 years old which she should never have to do. He'll never be forgotten."*

*His family said Cannon was supposed to have had his first day of Kindergarten on Monday, WNCN reported.*

*His mother, Bonnie Waddell, told the Wilson Times that her five year old had just learned to write his name.*

*"He was just a loving kid," Waddell said. "He had the biggest heart."*

*"It's devastating," the grieving mother added. "No one should ever have to bury their child. No mother should have to go through this."*

*Police said they do not have a motive in the case but family members told WRAL that they believed Sessoms shot Cannon because the little boy rode his bike onto the neighbor's lawn.*

*Sessoms made his first court appearance virtually from the Wilson County Jail on Tuesday before Wilson County District Court Judge John Britt, the Daily Mail reported.*

*The defendant said he would be getting his own attorney and the probable cause hearing was scheduled for Aug. 25.*

*Sessoms already had a criminal conviction record before he allegedly murdered his neighbor's five year old, the Wilson Times reported.*

*He was convicted of felony larceny of firearms in March of 2016 in Wilson County.*

*Sessoms was also convicted of misdemeanor maintaining a place for a controlled substance in Wake County a month before that and then he was convicted of felony marijuana possession in November of 2016 in Nash County, the Wilson Times reported.*

*Court records showed the suspect was charged with two counts of felony maintaining a vehicle, dwelling, or place for a controlled substance in Wilson County when he shot the little boy.*