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**FEDERAL OFFICIALS CLOSE THE INVESTIGATION INTO THE DEATH OF
LENNON LACY**

RALEIGH - The United States Attorney's Office announced today that following its investigation into the death of Lennon Lacy there is no evidence to pursue federal criminal civil rights charges.

Officials from the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of North Carolina and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) met today with Lacy's family to inform them of the decision. Lacy, a 17-year old African-American male, was discovered hanging from a swing set in Bladenboro, North Carolina, on August 29, 2014.

Justice Department investigators conducted a comprehensive investigation into the circumstances surrounding Lacy's death to determine whether his death was a homicide within the scope of the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009, which prohibits inflicting bodily injury because of the victim's actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, gender, gender identity or disability. The

investigation included a review of the materials and evidence generated and provided by the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation, including law enforcement reports, statements made by Lacy's family members and friends, witness statements, social media postings, surveillance camera footage, and forensic evidence reports. Federal officials also conducted independent interviews with persons identified by Lacy's family members as potentially having information about or involvement in Lacy's death.

After a careful and thorough review by a team of experienced federal prosecutors and FBI agents, the Justice Department found no evidence to suggest that Lacy's death was a homicide. Accordingly, the investigation into this incident has been closed.

The Justice Department is committed to investigations of allegations of hate crimes and will continue to devote the resources required to ensure that all allegations of serious civil rights violations are fully and completely investigated.

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