

Subject: Harris Family's Statement
To:

Statement from the Family via Jay S. Harris.

"We are very disappointed in the District Attorney's decision not to charge Officer Saunders. The information that has been provided to us and the released report raise more questions than answers into Officer Saunders' conduct and training, and we feel that relevant information was excluded from this report. For example, the information relayed to us prior to this report was that Officer Saunders told two of the first responders (a firefighter and Trooper Powell) that he could not see what was in Daniel's hand, and that Daniel's hand was in a closed fist. It was not until later, in his interview with the SBI, that Officer Saunders discussed "a metal object" in Daniel's hand, which was later identified as a carabiner. Trooper Powell was not listed in the District Attorney's report. We also learned that Officer Saunders had weeks to retrieve his Taser from his supervisor, which he had used in a prior arrest, yet he made no efforts to retrieve it. In fact, it was told to us that he met his supervisor earlier that day, and if it is true that he "routinely" carried it and it was a part of his uniform, why would he not ask for it? The witness identified as Civilian Witness #4 is completely discredited and ignored by the report. However, it appears he may have been the only person, other than Officer Saunders, with an unobstructed view of the shooting. The fatal shooting of Daniel Harris was not necessary in our opinion and we are demanding answers, especially after this released report. We are sure that this awful tragedy could have been prevented if the officer had exercised any number of the non-lethal options at his disposal. In our opinion, the comment that, "There is no evidence that Harris being deaf played any role in this incident" is a red flag for the extreme miscommunication and disconnect between the deaf community and law enforcement. Police must receive appropriate training for interacting with a large part of our population. We are going to continue to fight for justice for Daniel, who was a brother, son, and father of a now 4-year-old boy."

Statement from Attorney F. William DeVore, IV

"Right now, there is still so much that we do not know. The family is obviously still grieving about the loss of Daniel, and they are still seeking answers as to why Officer Saunders would use deadly force in this situation. It remains unclear as to whether Officer Jermaine Saunders had been properly trained or followed the appropriate policy and procedure of the State Highway Patrol when he shot Daniel. The Mecklenburg County District Attorney's office has been cooperative throughout this investigation, but I am extremely disappointed in the release of private medical information pertaining to Daniel. It is an attempt by the District Attorney to justify Officer Saunders' actions, yet it bears no relevance to the civil or criminal case. The standard for liability in a civil case is whether the use of deadly force by N.C. State Trooper Jermaine Saunders was reasonable taking into account all of the circumstances **known and existing to him at** that time. At the time of this incident, Officer Saunders had no knowledge of any alleged medical conditions of Daniel, therefore all of said information is irrelevant in both the civil and criminal context. The District Attorney's Office did not ask for the family's consent to publish any of Daniel's medical information, and it is my belief that this information was included to justify a conclusion, instead of presenting neutral facts that are relevant to the dispute. The only relevant facts should be those that were available to Officer Saunders at the time this incident occurred. While we will never know why Daniel fled from the police over a traffic violation, his actions toward Officer Saunders did not warrant the taking of his life."
Will DeVore