

Health Impact News

**Medical Kidnapping Children in
the United States: South Dakota**

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South Dakota



Parents Find Injury to Baby After Daycare, Doctor Visit Results in CPS Removing all 3 Children



Three children removed from family home when the parents reported a cut on the baby's tongue to doctor after picking up from daycare. Photo courtesy [Bring Bowling's & Becker Babies Back](#) Facebook Community.

by **Terri LaPoint**
Health Impact News

A South Dakota couple still can't figure it out. All they know is their three children, all under 3 years old, have been taken

away for reasons they cannot fully explain because it makes no sense to them. They also have no idea how to get their children back from Child Protective Services (CPS).

They did what any other parent would do, and for that, Molly Bowling and Michael Becker report they had their children taken away from them.

How Seeking Simple Medical Help Led to a Family Nightmare

On Black Friday, November 28, Molly reports that she got off work at 4 pm from WalMart, where she works as a cashier. She went home to help her boyfriend's mother Joyce set the table and fold clothes. Then she and Michael went to the daycare at 5 to pick up the baby, 2 1/2 month old Creedance, and her other two children from a previous relationship – Noah, who is almost 2, and Robin, who will be 3 in March. It was much like any other typical evening.

The baby fell asleep in the car, but woke up crying when they started to unbuckle him from his car seat. Molly assumed he was hungry, since the daycare last fed him at 2:45. She prepared a bottle for him, and Michael tried to feed him. Creedance remained fussy and wouldn't take the bottle, so Michael changed his diaper and Creedance fell asleep again.

The family ate dinner with Michael's parents. When the baby woke up around 8 pm, they tried to feed him again, but he wanted no part of it. While he was crying, Michael says he noticed something odd on the baby's tongue and told Molly and his mother to look. His tongue appeared to be cut, straight across, about an inch back.

Molly said that she started to freak out, wondering what in

the world could have happened at daycare. Michael's mother tried to calm her and recommended that they call his doctor. The doctor instructed Molly and Michael to take Creedance to the emergency room at Sanford Hospital in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Robin and Noah stayed home with their grandparents.



Baby Creedance with Mom

When they got to the hospital, the parents explained they had no idea what had happened, but the baby's tongue was cut and he wouldn't take his bottle. The doctor checked the baby, and told the couple he was calling Children's Voice, a child abuse nonprofit.

They were fine with that, because they couldn't figure out what could have happened to the baby. Molly and Michael both report they assumed something must have happened at the daycare. They were concerned because he wasn't eating. There were no other marks on Creedance except the cut on his tongue.

"It all happened so fast," reports Michael Becker. "Next thing I know, we're being questioned by CPS and detectives."

They were told Creedance needed to stay overnight at the hospital to make sure he was feeding well, which seemed reasonable to them at the time. Molly reports the only treatment they did at the hospital was give him a dose of Tylenol.

According to the children's grandmother, the police and CPS came to the house and looked in on the toddlers as they slept in their rooms. The authorities allegedly told the family that the home appeared safe and the children could stay with the grandparents. Molly and Michael were told they would have to sleep elsewhere, so they went to a nearby hotel, without their babies.

On Monday, they were instructed to take Robin and Noah to be examined by a doctor from Children's Voice. The children are described by their family as happy and healthy, a picture which is supported by numerous photos and videos of the family. The doctor allegedly said they appeared fine, showing

no signs of abuse.

Molly and Michael were again questioned separately by the police, who were described as trying to play them against each other. Michael reports that after they asked him the same question for the fifth time, he asked for a lawyer. According to Molly, “everything came downhill after that.”

Warrant-less Entry to Home and Removal of Children

That is when authorities showed up again at Michael’s parents’ home, demanding to take the children. When Joyce asked if they had a warrant, she reports they told her, “We don’t need one for this,” because it was about the kids.

The reason the authorities gave for taking custody of the children was that it was unsafe for the children to be there. No further reason has been given to date.

When Molly asked about the daycare, she was told the police had spoken with two people at the daycare center; and they said the baby was acting fine. Detectives reportedly viewed some video footage from the daycare; thus the center was ruled out. However, a former employee of the daycare company allegedly told the couple that there are plenty of places in the facility the cameras do not pick up.

To this day, Molly and Michael have only seen their babies once since their seizure by CPS. Michael reports that the baby now has a “horrendous cough” since being in CPS custody, and Molly says that his little face is all scratched up. She never let that happen because she kept his nails clipped. That doesn’t appear to be happening now. Robin is “not herself” and had diarrhea.

The family is devastated and confused. When baby Creedance was just 12 days old, Molly wrote on her Facebook page: “I couldn’t be more happier with my life, yes it’s hard with 3 kids under 3 but they are my everything – it’s amazing how much they change me:)” Now, she tells me that she is very sad because, “everything I do reminds me of my kids.”

Michael says he “thought taking him to the hospital was the right thing to do.” Yet now, “we’re being looked at as though we beat a 2 month old.”



Family separated from young children just before Christmas, with allegedly no charges, no trial, and no explanation.

They had one court hearing on December 2, at which the judge put a 14 day hold on the children. According to the parents, there were no charges given “because they don’t have evidence.” The 14 days were up on Tuesday, December 16, but there is still no word on the next court date.

They have tried to find answers; but they say no one tells them what is going on. They “call and call and call” with no answer, except that CPS says they are going to keep the kids “a little bit longer.” They have no court date, and have no idea what to do next. The hardest thing is that they still won’t let them see their babies.

According to Michael, “this is insane.” They have racked their brains trying to figure out how the baby got a cut on his tongue. The only thing they can come up with is that maybe someone at daycare pulled the bottle out of his mouth too hard, because Creedance has a very strong suction, or perhaps a hair got in his mouth and wrapped around his tongue and cut it. They really are stumped, but they believe it must have been an accident somehow. Michael told me it doesn’t even make sense to him that someone would purposely hold a baby’s tongue and slice it. Everyone in the family reports that they saw no sign of bleeding. No blood was on his car seat, clothing, bassinet, or bottle.

Molly reportedly told the CPS social worker that the cut on his tongue didn’t happen at the house. The worker told her they have ruled everyone else out, so they “know” it happened at the house. In frustration, Molly says that she told her, “Prove it,” because she knew she couldn’t prove something that didn’t happen. The CPS social worker’s alleged response was chilling:

“We don’t have to prove it.”

The parents say the caseworker's name is Breanna Gearhart.

CPS: An Agency with Unlimited Power and No Accountability?

It is frightening to think that Child Protective Services can snatch children away from parents without proof. Babies need their parents. Infants cannot comprehend the separation from their mothers; and research shows that such separation is deeply traumatic for them emotionally, even when justified. One must ask, how is it justified to take children away from parents for nothing more than an isolated accidental injury?

Molly reports that CPS had been called on her once before, a year ago. At that time, a hospital wanted to run a test on Robin's heart that Molly was not convinced was necessary. After CPS showed up, Molly agreed to allow the test. The test showed there was nothing wrong with Robin.

Family Needs Support



The family has a Facebook group set up for supporters – [Bring Bowling's & Becker Babies Back](#). Molly and Michael are heartbroken, confused and asking for help. They admit that the cut on the baby's tongue is strange, but they don't have an answer. They also don't know what they need to do to get their children back, because no one has told them.

According to the South Dakota state government [website](#),

Governor Dennis Daugaard boasts a legislative record before becoming governor that “was particularly focused on protecting children and helping the disabled.” He now actively “promotes South Dakota as a great place to expand existing businesses and to locate new businesses.”

It would seem that these goals are not furthered when parents can have their children seized by the state for simply taking their child to the hospital to check out an injury.

Governor Daugaard’s office phone number is 605.773.3212. You can also [email him here](#).

Medical Kidnap Case in South Dakota Featured in Local Media



Bridget Bennett from ABC KSFY in Sioux Falls reports on the Medical Kidnap case of South Dakota family. [Story here.](#)

Health Impact News

Reporter Bridget Bennett and KSFY in Sioux Falls, South Dakota reported on the Medical Kidnap case of Molly and Michael first reported at Health Impact News' website [MedicalKidnap.com](#). Molly and Michael will be spending Christmas without their three children, simply because they brought their 2-month old son to the emergency room when they discovered an injury to his tongue after picking him up from daycare. The doctor reported them to CPS, and they lost custody of all three of their children, even though there was no evidence of abuse. The police reportedly removed the children from the home without a warrant, allegedly stating

that they “didn’t need one.” ([Story here.](#))

KSFY showed a copy of a letter the family received from CPS stating that although there was no abuse, there were allegedly signs of “neglect.” KSFY then interviewed Virgena Wieseler, the Director of Child Protection Services who defined “neglect”:

“Neglect can be a number of things, when the parents or caretakers don’t meet the needs of their children. That could be not responding to a health issue, could be failure to thrive.”

This is an apparent open-ended subjective standard that could be potentially used by any “medical professional” to justify taking children away from parents. KSFY then interviewed Avera Emergency Physician Dr. Jared Friedman, who stated similar conditions about how they remove children from parents:

“It may not be full-fledged physical or sexual abuse, just not having the child taken care of, not properly feeding the child, certainly is another reason we will contact child protective services.”

As we have reported numerous times at [MedicalKidnap.com](#), this open-ended subjective standard has been used in many cases to remove children from parents simply for choosing a different medical doctor or procedure for their children, disagreeing with the doctor, or even just mentioning that they want to seek a second opinion.

Watch the entire interview at ksfy.com. Let Bridget Bennett know how much you appreciate KSFY bringing this story to the public: bbennett@ksfy.com.

If you don't like Virgena Wieseler's explanation of what constitutes ground for removing children from parents at CPS, she can be reached at:

CPS@state.sd.us – tel: 605-773-3227 ([public source](#).)

South Dakota Commits Shocking Genocide Against Native Americans by Abducting Their Children

<https://youtu.be/5DgBqYkcxZs>

VIDEO: South Dakota exposed

The Department of Social Services makes up 53% of the entire budget for the state of South Dakota every year, right on the backs of the Native people.

by: [Albert Bender](#)
[People's World](#)

Genocide is not too strong a term for what is now happening in South Dakota. The huge, shocking violation of legal and human rights being carried out by the state is tantamount to genocide against the Native American nations, the Lakota, Dakota and Nakota Sioux, residing within its borders. It is the abduction and kidnapping by state officials, under the cover of law, of American Indian children.

This is a gross violation of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) of 1978. Further, these abominable kidnappings are being upheld by the courts of that state.

The best approach to this crime against humanity is by the following initial checklist:

1. Over 700 American Indian children are removed by South Dakota state officials from their homes every year.
2. These hundreds are sent to white foster homes or group homes.
3. Many are adopted by white families.
4. Indian children account for 13.8 percent of the state's child population, yet they represent 56.3 percent of the foster care population.
5. Of the hundreds of Native children in foster care in 2011, 87 percent were placed in non-Indian homes while Native foster homes went empty.
6. Because of its targeting Native children, South Dakota is currently removing children from their families at a higher rate than the vast majority of other states in the U.S.
7. Once removed, the state's courts routinely keep Indian children from even seeing their families for at least 60 days.
8. The state's Department of Social Services (DSS) workers warn Native children that if they become emotional during a visit with their parents, the visits will be discontinued (this is incredible!).

This is genocide as defined by the United Nations General Assembly's [Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide](#). This Convention (Article 2) defines genocide as follows :

“... any of the following acts commit with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious

group, as such:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.”



Photo: Pine Ridge Indian Reservation child. [Pamela Cook, Flickr, CC BY NC SA 2.0](#)

South Dakota is committing blatant and flagrant genocide against the Sioux people in violation of subsection (e) of Article 2 by transferring Indian children to white homes, and also of subsection (b) amid allegations of sexual abuse and drugging of Native children in DSS foster care. This is a most serious case of ethnic cleansing.

One Indian mother had 62 hearings and was never allowed to present any witness testimony, never even allowed to see the petition filed against her. This is a huge violation of long established U.S. due process. Also, the Indian Child Welfare Act mandates that Native children shall first be placed with tribal relatives, non-related tribal members, or members of other tribes before non-Indian families can be considered.

South Dakota has taken a step back into the late 19th century, when thousands of Indian children were forcibly removed from their homes by U.S. soldiers and sent to boarding schools – allegedly for education, where the motto was “Kill the Indian, Save the Man.” In some of these schools the motto was more akin to simply “Kill the Indian.”

This journalist has heard numerous accounts from families across Indian Country who had lost at least one child to the boarding school system in the 19th century. They were told that their child or children had run away from the school and could not be found. In other cases they were informed that their child had died from illness.

For the Lakota people this has been a continuation of a 100-year history of child abduction. This began in the 1880s under the U.S. government policy of forced assimilation (genocide); children as young as 5 years old were forcibly removed from their homes and taken to boarding schools hundreds of miles away. Now it is happening again, this time under the mask of state-run foster care. Over the past

decade over 5,000 Sioux children have been removed from their homes. According to a [recent report by the Indian Child Welfare Act directors in South Dakota](#), 740 Lakota children are removed to foster care each year and 90 percent are placed in white homes and institutions.

A vigorous campaign is currently being waged by the [Lakota People's Law Project](#) to secure the return of over 2,200 Lakota, Dakota and Nakota children illegally taken from their homes by DSS.

Among the results of the LPLP efforts was the recent [Great Plains Indian Child Welfare Act Summit](#) held May 15-17 in Rapid City, South Dakota. The summit was held in an atmosphere that has been characterized by the Oglala Sioux Tribe as a “child welfare emergency.”

The summit also had as a backdrop a federal class action lawsuit that was filed on March 21 by the Oglala and Rosebud Sioux Tribes and tribal members, challenging the continued removal of Native children in Pennington County, South Dakota, from their homes.

South Dakota DDS has asserted that it had authority to remove children by tribal court order or tribal council agreement. The states have no authority over such youngsters; the tribes have exclusive jurisdiction over Indian children residing on reservations.

However, investigations by LPLP found that South Dakota's assertions are blatantly false.

Typically, DDS would receive a false report of child neglect on a given reservation and without any legal authority would snatch the child in question without any notification to the

child's relatives. In one such instance DSS abducted a young boy when he left his relatives to use the restroom while family members were attending a high school graduation ceremony. It was weeks before his family found where he had been taken.

Aside from the genocidal racism involved there is a *financial motive* on the part of the state. South Dakota receives \$79,000 from the federal government per year per child for every Native youngster it removes, but provides only \$9,000 to a white foster home. The remaining \$70,000 is deposited in state coffers.

The president of the Oglala Sioux Tribe and other Natives feel that the ICWA lawsuit is for greater fairness for all families, regardless of race, including whites. But, it must be remembered that white youngsters are not being sent to non-white homes; for whites, genocide is obviously not an issue. The humanity of Indian people, particularly in the face of the racism they have endured is truly poignant and moving. This becomes a movement not just for Indian people, but for all, led by long-suffering, grieving Native families.

Read the Full Story Here:
<http://www.peoplesworld.org/south-dakota-commits-shocking-genocide-against-native-americans/>

About the Author: Albert Bender is a Cherokee Indian. He is a freelance reporter and political columnist for News From Indian Country, and other Native and non-Native publications. He is also a historian and attorney specializing in Native American law. Currently, he is writing a history of the Maya Indian role in the Guatemalan civil war of the late 20th century.

South Dakota's ILLEGAL Seizures of Lakota Children

Watch this video with interviews of parents and children allegedly abused by the social services system in South Dakota:

<https://youtu.be/feOT6-UYTsY>

“A Lakota child is ten times more likely to be removed from his/her family and forced into foster care than a Caucasian child, and nearly 60% of South Dakota's foster care children are Native American.”

Social Service Workers Speak Out: Poverty is not Neglect

<https://youtu.be/OeGiFozkiYo>

In the video above, former social workers in South Dakota speak out about the abuses against Native Americans in South Dakota. One man reports that when he left Social Services and started to speak out, they came and took his own kids away from him.

South Dakota Foster Care Scandal: Lakota Children Sexual Abuse Case Covered up by Attorney General



South Dakota Attorney General Marty Jackley. Photo by [Lee Stranahan YouTube Video](#).

UPDATE 8/7/2015

Tammi Stefano of The National Safe Child Show will interview investigative reporter Lee Stranahan tonight at 10 p.m. EDT (7 p.m. PDT) at [UBN Radio TV, Channel 2](#). Listeners can call in at (323) 843-2826.

https://youtu.be/l4_DuRA5kS8

Health Impact News Editor Comments

We have previously reported about what some in South Dakota are calling a “[Shocking Genocide Against Native Americans by Abducting Their Children.](#)”

Listen to Attorney [Daniel Sheehan](#) of the [Lakota People’s Law Project](#) explain how the Department of Social Services in South Dakota makes up 53% of the entire state budget every year by removing Lakota Native Americans from their families and placing them into the foster care system.

<https://youtu.be/5DgBqYkcxZs>

One of the most horrifying stories to come out of South Dakota regarding alleged abuse of Lakota children in foster care is The Mette Rape Scandal, where 6’9” 310 pound Richard Mette allegedly raped & tortured his adopted Lakota Indian daughters for years at the home he shared with his wife Wendy Mette in the town of Aberdeen, South Dakota.

There has been scant local press coverage of the story in South Dakota, such as this one in the [Dakota Reporter in September 2014:](#)

[Mette Rape Scandal: The Facts & The Unanswered Questions](#)

Investigative reporter [Lee Stranahan](#), who has written for two of the biggest political sites in America: *The Huffington Post* and *Breitbart News*, spent several months in South Dakota in 2014 investigating this story, and has started a new series of audio broadcasts at [BroughtToLight.com](#). The first season is called:

South Dakota Is Scared

He kicked it off with a press conference in Washington D.C. this week, where former South Dakota Division of Criminal Investigation agent Mark Black spoke.

[Breitbart.com covered the Press Conference Announcement here.](#)

Here is a promo for Stranahan's first season on Brought To Light, where former agent Mark Black alleges that [South Dakota Attorney General Marty Jackley](#) was involved in a scheme to falsely accuse innocent people in an attempt to cover-up the crimes committed in the Mette Lakota Children Rape Scandal:

Video no longer available

You can listen to the entire interview with former agent Mark Black at [BroughtToLight.com](#).

The [Lakota Law Project](#) has also documented much of the corruption in South Dakota where Native American families are losing their children to the South Dakota Department of Social Services. Watch this video, called "Hearts on the Ground: Bring Lakota Children Home," where parents and children allegedly abused by the social services system in South Dakota share their horror stories:

<https://youtu.be/feOT6-UYTsY>

Quote from the video:

"A Lakota child is ten times more likely to be removed from

his/her family and forced into foster care than a Caucasian child, and nearly 60% of South Dakota's foster care children are Native American."

Is the Corruption Only in South Dakota?

Sadly, no, it is not. [Health Impact News](#), via its Medical Kidnap website, is receiving reports of these kinds of stories all across the United States *on a daily basis*. Read how a story similar to the Mette story in South Dakota is still unfolding in Arizona, for example:

[Corruption and Medical Malpractice Coverup involving Arizona CPS? How One Family was Destroyed](#)

Healthy 17 Year Old Dies Shortly After South Dakota Takes Custody Away from Mother



Brady Alan Folkens. Source: Dawn Van Ballegooyen

UPDATE 3/12/2016

STAR Academy, the juvenile correctional facility where Brady Folkens met his untimely death, is being shut down. South Dakota Governor Dennis Daugaard says that the boot camp style treatment center will close its doors permanently on April 8.

See: [Governor closes STAR Academy juvenile facility near Custer; 64 jobs lost](#)

Rapid City Journal reports:

Department of Corrections Secretary Denny Kaemingk sees the closure of STAR Academy as proof that diversion programs are working. He said the state's juvenile justice reforms have created a system where troubled youth are receiving treatment within their communities, rather than through the courts or state-run programs.

"To take child out of a home, in and of itself causes issues," said Kaemingk who favors community-based intervention.

Brady's mother, Dawn Van Ballegooyen, had pleaded with authorities not to place her son there, but to allow him to participate in a community-based program. He wasn't a drug addict; he had experimented with marijuana and wore his hat to school backwards. There was no need, she felt, for such a drastic action to be taken. Her pleas fell on deaf ears at the time.

Too late for her son, the state appears to recognize that a

community-based solution would have been better.

by **Health Impact News/MedicalKidnap.com Staff**

A 17 year old boy is dead, and his mother wants answers. The answers that Dawn Van Ballegooyen has been given by the state of South Dakota don't make sense to her, and her mother's intuition tells her that somebody is covering up what really happened to her son, Brady Alan Folkens, while he was in state custody.

Most of the stories that we cover at Medical Kidnap have to do with children who were taken by the state via Child Protective Services, but there are other avenues for the state to acquire custody of minors, especially teenagers. As this heartbreaking story shows, the results can be just as devastating, no matter which government agency decides that it can do a better job of raising a child than the parents.

Just as with CPS cases, Dawn was not given a choice in her son being taken from her.

Brady Folkens – Fairly Typical Teenager

According to Dawn, Brady was a fun-loving, artistic, and a really smart kid, the kind who sometimes corrected his teachers. Sometimes that kind of intelligence results in a student who is bored by school. Brady's grades slipped, and he was required to attend summer school between his 8th and 9th grade year. Dawn stated:

Brady Folkens was a 17 year-old teenager who was full of life. He always looked out for the underdog (he has an autistic brother who he promised to look out for). He loved

his mother, father, brothers, little sister, aunts, uncles and all of his friends with all his heart. He loved to play his guitar and play his Xbox. He was VERY intelligent, he was in the 95% in the Stanford testing nationwide. I believe that's why he wasn't feeling challenged in school. Teachers were even amazed by how intelligent Brady was. One of his last conversations with his mom he talked about that he was torn between looking into going to school to become a lawyer or a doctor. Brady was just a typical teenage boy whose dreams got cut short.



Source: Dawn Van Ballegooyen

His lack of enthusiasm for summer school led him into a situation that both he and his mother were powerless to fight. When his mother had a difficult time getting Brady motivated to attend summer school, school officials

threatened Dawn with truancy charges against her. When the single mom asked for help, the school's answer was to call the police.

The State Steps In and Incarcerates Brady

On the 2nd occurrence, the police told Dawn that they required her to file something called a CHINS petition – Child in Need of Supervision. Dawn said she didn't know that she had a choice not to sign, nor did she have a clue how devastating that paper would prove to her family. She erroneously believed that it was a temporary thing; instead, it kept her son in the system indefinitely, and gave the state rights to her child.

Brady reached his senior year of high school, and decided to experiment with smoking marijuana. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, a government agency, 36.4% of high school seniors report having tried pot at least once in the previous year. [[Source](#)] More than 1 out of 3 teens experiment with marijuana, but most teens are not under the ever watchful eye of the state. Because of the CHINS petition, the state of South Dakota had become a watchdog over Brady. They required random urine drug tests, and Brady failed.

Such a failure in an adult can result in a penalty of job loss or benefits lost. It does not result in incarceration unless there is a crime involved, such as possession or distribution. For 17 year old Brady, unfortunately, Dawn says that an officer and the school took great issue with another serious supposed infraction by Brady:

He wore his hat backwards at school.

According to Dawn, the backwards hat was the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back, and the juvenile court came down hard on him. Apparently, someone in the system associated backwards hats with gang activity, but Dawn says that is absurd, and that they don't have gangs there.

Excessive Punishment at Boot Camp?

Though Brady was never arrested, he was sentenced to go to [STAR Academy](#) Boot Camp – a juvenile corrections facility that was more than 7 hours drive away from his home. Dawn says that she pleaded for another option, telling them that she would pay for a drug rehab program locally if that is what they required.

Dawn says that she has learned that the federal government pays “tons of money” for every child that is sent to the boot camps. The parents are required to pay child support and maintain medical insurance on the kids.

State law reportedly requires for the juvenile facility to be a last resort, after all other options were exhausted, yet no other options were allegedly offered. Federal law apparently also mandates that minors not be sent more than 70 miles from home. Both laws were allegedly ignored, and Brady was shipped off to [STAR Academy](#) on October 25, 2013.

It ended up being a death sentence for Brady. He was buried 2 months later, on Christmas day.

Went to STAR Healthy – Dead 2 Months Later

Brady Folkens was completely healthy when he left his home for the final time. He was skinny, just 120 lbs, but he had no

health issues. Those allegedly didn't start until he arrived at STAR.

Dawn says contact with his family was very limited. Brady loved his family, and looked forward to his one 10 minute phone call per week when he was allowed to talk with his mom.

In his journal, he called those brief contacts with home “the highlight of the week.” He wrote numerous times of looking forward to the day when the boot camp would allow his mother to visit him on December 21. His journal entry on December 17 shows his deep love and respect for his mother:

I'm really excited to see my Mom this weekend. I can barely believe it's happening. I feel a little bad though. It's a long trip and a lot in gas \$ on top of the money she already pays for me to stay here, but I bet she'll be happy to see me.

Little did they know that it would be the last time they would see each other, and by the time Dawn arrived at STAR on Dec. 21, he was very sick and had been admitted to the hospital. He died that night.



Her little boy is gone. Source: Dawn Van Ballegooyen

The state says that he died from a rare viral infection. The cause of death is listed on the death certificate as “lymphocytic myocarditis associated with parvovirus B19.” But that explanation doesn’t add up, reports Brady’s heartbroken mother.

Dawn is still trying to put the pieces together. She and others

believe that there is a cover-up of what actually happened. She has sought the input of Dr. Lars Aanning, as well as other experts. Dr. Aanning believes that:

glaring errors in the pathologist's work up almost completely rule out this virus as being responsible for Brady's death....I support Dawn's (Brady's mother) contention that the autopsy was grossly negligent, incorrect, and appears calculated to cover up Brady's real cause of death.

Brady's mother is still trying to obtain all of the medical records, but from the records they have, combined with Brady's journal entries, she believes that there may have been numerous instances of wrongdoing and negligence by STAR Academy and the medical staff, and that the autopsy performed on her son involved a conflict of interest.

They believe that the cause of death is most likely the result of a severe reaction to a drug prescribed, without his mother's knowledge or consent, to Brady at STAR. Instead of recognizing that he was having a reaction, staff and doctors allegedly continued to give other medications that should not have been given with his reaction, ultimately resulting in his untimely death after being in state custody.

How a Healthy Teenager Can End up Dead 2 Months Later – Timeline

It seemed to all start on October 28, when Brady received [the flu vaccine](#).

According to medical records and Brady's journal entries, over the next month, he had a sore throat, a sinus infection,

and exhaustion that he chalked up to the higher elevation. He was prescribed amoxicillin and cefuoxime. His acne got worse, and he was prescribed the antibiotic minocycline on December 5, at a dose reportedly higher than the normal dosage for a 126 pound teenager .

Antibiotics like amoxicillin and minocycline can potentially cause liver toxicity.

His mother reports that STAR Academy was not authorized to prescribe drugs without parental permission. They also allegedly neglected to inform Dawn about the drugs.

She reports that no one ever asked her if Brady had any drug allergies or sensitivities. Had they asked, she reports that she would have informed them of a previously documented reaction to tetracycline, in which he began being jaundiced, a sign of liver toxicity. When that happened, the tetracycline was immediately discontinued. Minocycline is in the tetracycline family.

Brady showed signs that his body was again reacting to the minocycline, but those signs were apparently missed by the staff at the boot camp. Over the next 15 days, Brady experienced stomach aches, severe abdominal pain, weakness, vomiting, diarrhea, and extreme tiredness. All of these symptoms are listed on the drug information sheet accompanying the medicine, as well as on sites like [Drugs.com](https://www.drugs.com), which states that “You should check with your doctor immediately if any of these side effects occur when taking minocycline.” These are signs of a possibly life-threatening reaction, which can include autoimmune-mediated hepatitis.

Because of the risk of liver damage with minocycline, the

manufacture recommends that other drugs that tax the liver, like Tylenol or antacids, not be given to a patient taking minocycline.

Yet that is exactly what happened. By December 16, Brady had been experiencing extreme tiredness. Staff at STAR gave him Tylenol.

On Wednesday, December 18, Brady wrote in his journal:

Today I felt really weird this morning. I thought that it was Thursday....I felt really tired in school.

He saw a doctor and was prescribed 3 days of bedrest. The staff reportedly ignored that, and Brady shoveled snow the next day with a 100 degree fever. He also played guitar that evening with other guys at the facility. His journal entry on the 19th reads:

Today I woke up feeling like complete shit. It has only gotten worse so far. I anticipate feeling bad tomorrow as well. But hopefully I'll be better by Saturday when my mom comes to visit.

That was Brady's final journal entry. He began vomiting. Staff gave him more Tylenol, as well as Ibuprofen, and Mylanta, all of which can interact with minocycline. Antacids are contraindicated with minocycline. His condition continued to deteriorate. No one made the connection that he could be reacting to the minocycline. He continued taking it, even on his final day.

No one called his family to let them know what was going on.

On Saturday morning, December 21, a staff member noted that Brady was looking yellow. He was transported to Custer Regional Hospital E.R. with vomiting, diarrhea, fever, jaundice, and severe abdominal pain, which Brady rated as “the worst possible pain.” Records allegedly do not show that the staff at Custer were told of any of the over-the-counter medications that Brady had been given.



Brady was fighting for his life. Source: Dawn Van Ballegooyen

Tests at Custer included injecting a contrast medium to help in visualizing body parts in scans. Records allegedly show that Brady vomited violently immediately after the contrast medium – Gastrografin – was injected. On the consent form

for the procedure, signed by STAR staff, it says that:

Other serious complications include severe respiratory distress or cardiovascular collapse accompanied by shock. Very rarely do these or a combination of these complications result in death.

Mother Arrives at STAR, Learns Her Son Is Hospitalized and Near Death

Dawn thought that she was coming to visit her son at the STAR facility, and had no idea that he was sick at all. After her 7 hour drive, she was shocked when staff members told her that Brady was at the hospital. There was no indication of how serious his condition was.

When she arrived at the hospital, she found a very sick young man, but he was coherent and able to talk. He walked down the hall to the restroom on his own. She recalls him trying to decide if he wanted to go to school to be a doctor or a lawyer when he got out and graduated. At the time, they believed that both were viable options.



His mom says that Brady always stood up for the underdog. He had such a big heart. Source: Dawn Van Ballegooyen

Meanwhile, several STAR staff members and the E.R. doctor held what appeared to Dawn to be a furtive conversation as they huddled together. She says that they were whispering, and the STAR personnel “looked panicked and very worried.” By this time, Brady had been diagnosed with acute hepatitis and liver failure. There were reports of a possible clot in his liver. She wonders if they were making the connection to the minocycline.

Shortly after, she reports that she received a call on her cell phone from the judge who committed Brady to the STAR Academy. He wanted to know if it was OK with her if they transferred custody of Brady to her. Of course, she agreed, thinking that her son would get better and that he would be back home, never to go back to STAR.

Looking back, that phone call looks to Dawn like there was an ulterior motive or hidden agenda behind it.

Immediately after the phone call, the E.R. doctor, Dr. Heith Waddell, informed Dawn that Brady was going to be flown to another hospital, closer to her home. At that time, doctors said that Brady had acute portal vein thrombosis.

Things Go Downhill Fast

Dawn begged to ride with her son on the airplane, but people at Custer persuaded her to drive and meet him at Avera Hospital in Sioux Falls. She left for the 4 hour trip, but it was another 2 hours before Brady was loaded onto the plane. The air transport records reportedly show that his blood pressure and his heart rate were all over the place.

Throughout the transport the patients cardiac rhythm jumped between a wide complex rhythm, sinus rhythm, and accelerated junctional rhythm.

When they contacted Custer Hospital to ask about Brady's heart rhythm prior to transport, they learned that he had not been on a heart monitor there.

By this point, Dawn says that Brady was clearly in trouble, and it doesn't appear that the air transport team had adequate information on Brady. They allegedly administered a number of medications in the attempt to stabilize him, to no avail. They started an IV with heparin. According to the literature on heparin, combination of heparin with both NSAIDs and minocyclene can be problematic. The heparin was later stopped.

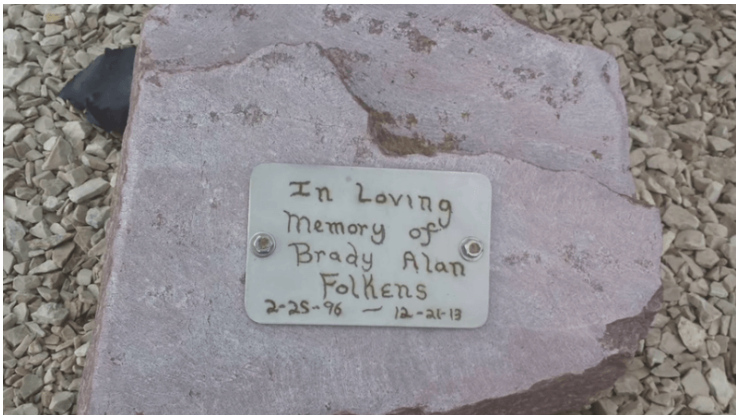
By the time they reached Avera Hospital at 8:30 pm, Brady

was in “profound shock.” He was hypotensive, hypoxic, and had a heart rate of 35. He was still able to respond to questions. Very shortly after, his heart gave out, and doctors at Avera began cardiac life support.

When Dawn arrived, she says that they rushed her to his room where they had him on a ventilator. The doctors called time of death at 11:12 pm. However, one report states that Superintendent Haiar at STAR “reported that he received information that Folkens had died between 9:30 and 10:00 PM on 12-21-13 (MT).” She tearfully reported to Health Impact News that his lips, ears , and fingertips were already blue.

She says that a nurse later told her that the scene was staged to make it look like he was still alive when she got there, but she knew what she saw:

He was already gone.



A life too short. Source: Dawn Van Ballegooyen

Autopsy Anomalies

Dawn was told that her son died from parvovirus B19, but she says:

I felt it that night, that I wasn't being told the truth.

Doctors at Avera asked her if she wanted an autopsy. She was still in shock at the death of her child that she didn't even know was sick until a few hours earlier, but she said that she wanted an autopsy, but she wanted it to be performed at another hospital – Sanford. She hoped, that way, to get objective answers. She never signed any consent forms.

Contrary to her wishes, a pathologist at Avera performed the autopsy. According to records of the investigation, “Haiar [from STAR] said he requested an autopsy after learning of Folkens’ death.”

Another physician, Dr. Lars Aanning, later noted numerous anomalies with the autopsy. According to a letter that Dawn sent to the judge:

We have just recently learned from Lars Aanning M.D. that Brady Folkens’ death was not due to a viral infection with parvovirus B19 as the pathologist, Dr. Raed Sulaiman of Avera McKennon, documented in his final autopsy report on January 15, 2013. Dr. Sulaiman based his diagnosis on three positive tests for this virus obtained post mortem. However, four tests for this virus had originally been ordered. The 4th test (IgM), which was negative for acute infection with parvovirus B19, had been left out of the autopsy report. The other three tests simply confirmed that Brady had previous

exposure to this virus, that his immune system had developed antibodies to the virus, and that traces of this virus could still be detected by very sensitive DNA methods. In fact, over 50% of teenagers like Brady show positive results for these same three tests.

Our conclusion that Brady Folkens did not die from an acute parvovirus B19 infection is supported by the results of Dr. Radio, pathologist at University of Nebraska Medical Center, an authority on parvovirus B19 infections of the heart, and several medical specialists, both national and international, who have recently published studies on parvovirus B19 infections of the heart. Dr. Aanning will be glad to share his evaluation and correspondence on this issue.

Dr. Aanning reports:

I have had email conversations with international authorities on parvovirus B19-associated myocarditis and they also do not agree with Dr. Sulaiman that Brady Folkens died from the effects of this virus.

These experts believe that Brady died from a cascade of events precipitated by an autoimmune hypersensitivity reaction to the minocycline which resulted in ultimate cardiac collapse and death. From the medical evidence, it appears that his liver was overloaded. He reacted to the minocycline, and other liver-toxic medications that he was given compounded the overload on his liver.



Dawn pleads for justice for her son. Source: [YouTube Video](#) screenshot.

Dawn and some of the experts she has consulted believe that the autopsy was “engineered” as a cover-up to hide possible negligence on the part of STAR and medical providers.

A combination of omissions, wrongful interpretations, and incompetence ... caused the death of Brady Folkens – whose minocycline-induced illness should have been promptly suspected and appropriately treated.

Mom Wants Justice and Closure

The death of one’s child may be the most difficult thing any parent may face. Not having answers makes it even harder. Dawn feels like the state of South Dakota is stone-walling

her. She just wants answers. She wants to know for certain what happened to her beloved son. Instead, she is being forced to fight for every bit of information she gets. There are still missing medical records. It took her many months to get Brady's journal.

When Dawn first started corresponding with Health Impact News, and we responded back, she wrote to us:

Thank you for believing my beloved son Brady's life did MATTER!!!

Of course it mattered. Every child matters, and no child deserves to die. How cruel is it that the state decides it knows best how to parent, yet the child is abused, molested, or dies while in the care of the state? Dawn is a mom who wants validation that her son's life meant something.

Brady was a very talented young man with immense potential, whose dreams were cut down before they ever had the chance to be. He made some mistakes, but those mistakes should not have cost him his life. From his writings, it is clear that he regretted his mistakes, and had learned from them. He was determined to work hard for his freedom, and make a difference.

His mother prays that his story can help to save other kids. She asks how many children die in custody that we never hear about.

Friends of Brady have uploaded a recording of a guitar track that he wrote and recorded at age 15:

<https://youtu.be/V9GXj349b4>

How You Can Help

Dawn Van Ballegooyen wants to find an attorney willing to help her to get justice for her son and uncover the cover-up, but hasn't yet been able to find one with the courage to fight this fight. She hopes that a good attorney will step up.

She wants a whole new investigation to be done, because the first one was allegedly filled with conflicts of interest and cover-ups. Supporters believe that it may take an out-of-state investigation to get to the bottom of everything. It would be great, she says, to finally be able to get all of the medical records. At this point, some of them are still missing.

Governor Dennis Daugaard may be reached at 605.773.3212, or contacted [here](#).

Supporters may get involved and leave words of encouragement at the [Justice for Brady Alan Folkens](#) Facebook page. Her mother's heart needs to hear that her son's life DID matter. Those messages are welcome on Brady's page.

