



# BUTTE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY



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## PRESS RELEASE

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### LOCAL TEEN PLEADS NO CONTEST IN UNINTENTIONAL SHOOTING DEATH

A nineteen-year-old Oroville man pled no contest today in Butte County Superior Court on a single felony count of involuntary manslaughter in connection with the shooting death of the youth's 15-year-old friend.

Christopher Riley Noakes, 19, of Oroville, was arrested for the shooting on May 18, 2023, after a 911 call sent Oroville police officers to a Ft. Wayne Street address, where officers found the 15-year-old male victim suffering from a gunshot wound to the head in Noakes' bedroom. Life-saving efforts were started but were ineffective and the youth was pronounced dead at the scene by medical personnel.

Butte County District Attorney Mike Ramsey said a subsequent investigation by Oroville Police detectives revealed the victim was visiting with Noakes and the victim had brought with him a handgun. The semi-automatic pistol was subsequently determined to have been stolen the previous day from a vehicle in Oroville.

Ramsey said the investigation revealed Noakes and the victim were friends and in-laws, and were "hanging out" in Noakes' bedroom while "Facetiming" with a friend of the victim. Noakes allegedly took the gun, which had been in the victim's waistband, and claimed to be "fooling around" when he pointed the gun at the victim, pulled the trigger, and the gun discharged.

Noakes claimed he did not know the weapon was loaded and claimed to have played with the gun the day before with the victim and it was unloaded.

Ramsey said the evidence pointed to an unintentional shooting, but one with tragic and awful consequences with criminal consequences for its gross negligence.

Ramsey said that Noakes faces up to four years in county jail as a result of the plea and that sentencing is currently set for November 9, 2023 at 9:30 a.m. Ramsey said Noakes remains on his own recognizance with conditions that he not possess any weapons and be subject to search by law enforcement.