



# BUTTE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY



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## PRESS RELEASE

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### LOCAL TEEN CHARGED IN SHOOTING DEATH OF FRIEND/RELATIVE

A nineteen-year-old Oroville man was charged and arraigned today in Butte County Superior Court on a single count of involuntary manslaughter in connection with the shooting death of the youth's 15-year-old friend and relative.

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 that 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 be 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. The DA noted that if convicted Noakes faces up to four years in county jail on the single count of involuntary manslaughter.

At today's hearing, because of the apparent unintentional nature of the shooting, Noakes' age, and lack of any criminal history, the judge released Noakes from custody on his own recognizance with conditions that he not possess any weapons and be subject to search by law enforcement.

Ramsey said the arraignment in the case was continued for further arraignment and entry of plea on June 15, 2023, at 8:30 AM.