

11-Year-Old Boy Kills Himself After Alleged Social Media Prank - and Another Child Is Charged

Chris Harris

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Police say criminal charges have been brought against a juvenile in Michigan after an 11-year-old boy killed himself following what the boy's mother claims was a social media prank.

Authorities in Marquette, Michigan, confirm that charges of malicious use of a telecommunication services and using a computer to commit a crime have been brought against an unidentified juvenile after the boy was found unresponsive from a suicide attempt on March 14.

Marquette police declined to identify either juvenile involved and said only that the boy who died was "engaged in communication with another juvenile via social media prior to the incident."

However, Katrina Goss tells PEOPLE it was her son Tysen Benz who tried to kill himself that March day - though he did not die until this week.

Goss claims that the charges have been brought against a girl that Tysen knew, who faked her own suicide on social media as a prank and thus triggered her own son's successful attempt.

Goss says the accused juvenile was Tysen's girlfriend.

(PEOPLE attempted Thursday to reach the girl that Goss claims has been charged but was not immediately successful.)

Tysen's mom says the accused juvenile allegedly faked her own suicide using various social media sites and also allegedly used social media accounts of her friends to circulate the rumor of her suicide.

An hour into her prank, Tysen hung himself, his mom claims. Goss says she found him on March 14 and that emergency response teams managed to resuscitate him. Machines kept Tysen alive for weeks after his suicide attempt, but he died in a hospital in Ann Arbor, Michigan, on Tuesday.

"We had to let him pass on," Goss says. "He was severely brain-damaged and the doctors told us he would never recuperate, that it wasn't even really him anymore. I was at his bedside for three weeks. We are utterly devastated and we will never get over it.

"He was amazing - an amazing athlete who was super fun and had a great sense of humor. He was extremely social; the whole community is upset."

Goss alleges that her son contacted the girl's friends, expressing his thoughts of suicide - but she allegedly kept up the ruse.

"She did nothing to contact me or the authorities," Goss tells PEOPLE. "I truly don't know what the point of this prank was. I don't even know how that's supposed to be funny, especially if she cared about him at all. I am not sure how that could be a joke. She must have severe psychological issues to go forward with something like that and to keep the joke going even after he told her he was going to kill himself."

Goss says Tysen will be buried next week following services scheduled for Tuesday. She says she is trying to keep things together for her other sons, ages 10 and 14.

Of the girl whom she claims is responsible, Goss says “she’s intelligent enough to know right from wrong.”

Goss says for months, she tried reaching out to the girl’s father and aunt several times, asking that she cease all communication with her son. But “they blew it off,” she claims.

“He was 11 - little kids don’t need to worry about that stuff,” Goss says. “These kids don’t even think what they’re doing online is real. They don’t comprehend the magnitude of their words and how their actions can impact other people. Parents need to monitor their children’s online activities so things like this don’t happen.”

[A GoFundMe campaign](#) for Tysen’s medical expenses has thus far raised over \$30,000.