

CHARLESTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
Sheriff Carl Ritchie
3691 Leeds Avenue
North Charleston, SC 29405




NON-EMERGENCY
843-202-1700


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Charleston County Sheriff Carl Ritchie sends message to community

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, October 8, 2026

Charleston County Sheriff Carl Ritchie has released the following statement:

As part of my commitment to transparency and accountability, I, as Sheriff, believe the people of Charleston County deserve clear and factual information regarding this heartbreaking incident. Every member of our team at CCSO remains obligated and committed to providing accurate information supported by documented records and a full investigation. In a matter this serious, I believe the community is best served when verified facts, not incomplete information or assumptions, guide the public conversation.

I am willing and committed to participating in future media interviews. Before doing so, I am reviewing the relevant documentation and agency contacts to ensure questions are answered fully and responsibly while preserving investigative integrity. Our priority must remain clear: justice for these two children. We owe it to them, their families, and our community to seek the truth and ensure accountability.

Between August 25 and September 20, 2026, CCSO deputies had contact involving Justine May and/or her children during ten separate visits to the residence. Based on the available records, deputies did not observe conditions indicating that the children were in immediate danger or that emergency law enforcement intervention was required.

CCSO also accompanied the South Carolina Department of Social Services to the residence on August 30 and Mobile Crisis personnel on September 12. Those contacts likewise did not result in findings requiring immediate law enforcement intervention.

On September 22, the decision was made by the on-duty supervisor to discontinue additional welfare checks based on the totality of the information available at that time, including the

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previous contacts, the involvement of DSS and Mobile Crisis, and the absence of new actionable information indicating an immediate threat to Ms. May or her children.

CCSO policies and procedures governing deputy responsibilities and responses are publicly available through the link provided [here](#).

The most relevant policies are found in Chapter 9: Operations, specifically:

- 9-02 Patrol Operations
- 9-17 Responding to Emotionally Disturbed Persons and the Mentally Ill

This tragedy has deeply affected our community. I understand that people have important questions, and they deserve answers grounded in facts. Our agency will continue to provide the community with accurate and relevant information as we are able to do so. At the same time, we will take every measure possible to prevent an incident like this from ever happening again.

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