

Bickering Parents Leave Baby in Parking Lot

Contributed by Kelcie McCrae, Dexter R. Mullins & news reports -- Black College Wire
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N.C. A&T grad student, ex-girlfriend arrested after campus incident

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In a Dec. 4 press conference, North Carolina A&T Police Chief Glenn Newell discussed the charges filed against the parents of the infant found the previous night in the Webb Hall parking lot at approximately 9:15 p.m. Newell stated that the child was left unattended after mother Tekia Ritter, 23, and father Lashawn Murray, 25, had a disagreement over who would be responsible for the custody of the child that night.

Murray is a native of Greensboro and is a graduate masters student in the School of Education at A&T.

Both parents have been charged with misdemeanor child abuse, according to Newell.

"Both parents acted in negligence and both were charged," Newell said. "This is still an ongoing investigation."

Newell stated that the parents met in the parking lot last night to rotate custody of the child. Ritter placed the child on top of Murray's car, informing him that he would take the child. Murray said he would not, and Ritter left. Murray also left, but then called the University Police Department, stating that Ritter left the child unattended.

Mariah Brown, an A&T freshman political science major, was shocked.

"I just feel like it was really irresponsible on both parents," Brown said. "If they didn't want the child, there are other alternatives like adoption. Both parents should lose custody of the child."

In North Carolina, the Safe Haven Law allows for people to surrender infants for adoption legally and safely by dropping them off at a nearby hospital or police station. The law allows parents to legally give up an unwanted infant anonymously and safely. Its purpose is to encourage parents to deliver the infant to a safe place instead of abandoning it in a way that may jeopardize the health of the infant.

"If you're man enough to [get a girl pregnant], you need to be man enough to take care of your child," sophomore business management major Joel Williamson said. "This man is 25 years old, and he needs to take care of his child. When you have a child, your life becomes your child's life. You always put your child first."

According to a local newspaper report, the child has been abandoned before. On Oct. 30, court records state that Ritter left the child unattended on Murray's doorstep and drove away. She sent Murray a text message on that occasion telling him the child was there.

The District Attorney's office is currently reviewing the situation.

{moshaloscan}Kelcie McCrae & Dexter R. Mullins write for The Register, The North Carolina A&T student newspaper, which originally published a version of this article.