



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on February 5, 2013

Alabama Boy Rescued, “Anti-government” Captor Dead

The five-year-old Midland City, Alabama boy held hostage in an underground bunker since last Tuesday has been [rescued](#) and his abductor is dead, authorities [confirmed](#) on Monday.

Police say 65-year-old Vietnam veteran Jimmy Lee Dykes stormed a bus full of students last Tuesday afternoon and killed bus driver Charles Albert Poland, Jr. He abducted the little boy, identified only as Ethan, and took him into a bunker on his property that was described as being approximately the size of a large closet.



The boy’s mother had reportedly been “hanging on by a thread” since the kidnapping. She told Midland City State Representative Steve Clouse that her son has Asperger’s Syndrome as well as ADHD.

For days, the kidnapper kept an open line of communication with authorities, who attempted to negotiate with him for the release of the boy.

Fox News [reports](#):

Throughout the ordeal, authorities had been speaking with Dykes through a plastic pipe that went into the shelter. They also sent food, medicine and other items into the bunker, which apparently had running water, heat and cable television but no toilet. It was about 4 feet underground, with about 50 square feet of floor space. The little boy requested Cheez-Its and a red Hot Wheels car, both of which were delivered to the bunker.

By Monday, however, it became evident that the negotiations were going nowhere as Dykes became increasingly agitated. When authorities spotted him carrying a gun, they believed the boy’s life was in imminent danger and stormed the bunker.

Dale County Sheriff Wally Olson has confirmed that Dykes was armed when agents entered the bunker.

While authorities are declining to say just how Dykes died, an official in Midland City, speaking on condition of anonymity, stated that police shot him.

Kentucky.com reported that an acquaintance of Dykes, Roger Arnold, stated, “He [Dykes] always said he’d never be taken alive. I knew he’d never come out of there.”

“We have a big crime scene behind us to process,” said Special Agent Steve Richardson of the FBI’s office in Mobile. “I can’t talk about sources, techniques or methods that we used. But I can tell you the success story is [the boy] is safe.”

One official indicated that Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta had approved a provision of certain equipment to be used to assist in the hostage situation; however, it is uncertain whether that equipment was used.

Five-year-old Ethan appeared to be unharmed, but was taken to a hospital nearby.



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Fox News reports that FBI technicians are scanning the property for explosive devices and will be looking more closely at the scene of the crime once they believe it is safe.

"The most important thing is we have a safe recovery of a child," said Col. Hugh McCall, director of the Alabama Department of Public Safety.

Alabama's Governor Robert Bentley applauded the efforts of law enforcement officials on Monday following the boy's rescue. "I am so happy this little boy can now be reunited with his family and friends," he said in a statement. "We will all continue to pray for the little boy and his family as they recover from the trauma of the last several days."

A White House statement noted that President Obama had called FBI Director Robert Mueller to "compliment him for the role federal law enforcement officers played in resolving the hostage situation." The statement continues:

The President praised the exceptional coordination between state, local, and federal partners, and thanked all the law enforcement officials involved during the nearly week long ordeal for their roles in the successful rescue of the child.

Midland City clerk Melissa Nighton says the rescue was God's answer to prayer. She asserts that a woman had been praying in the town center on Monday afternoon, and shortly after she left, the mayor called with news that the boy was safe.

"She must have had a direct line to God because shortly after she left, they heard the news," Nighton said.

A press conference was held Monday night following the rescue. FBI Special Agent Steve Richardson explained that Ethan was undergoing medical treatment after his tumultuous week.

"The boy is laughing, joking, playing, he's eating; he's very brave, he's very lucky, and the success story is that he is out safe and doing good," he said.

According to neighbors, Dykes was a man to be feared. The Blaze [reports](#), "Neighbors described Dykes as a menacing, unpredictable man who once beat a dog to death with a lead pipe." Some said he threatened to shoot children for stepping on his property and was known for his nightly patrols of his property with a flashlight and a firearm.

Ronda Wilbur, the neighbor whose dog Dykes allegedly beat to death, said she was relieved when she heard that the man was no longer a threat.

"The nightmare is over," she said. "It's been a long couple of years of having constant stress."

Some are speculating on the motive of Dykes in kidnapping the boy. Neighbors believe he did it to air his grievances on a larger platform. Dale County Sheriff Olson acknowledges that to be a very real possibility.

"Based on our discussions, he [felt] like he [had] a story that is important to him, although it's very complex," said the sheriff.

According to the [New York Daily News](#), Dykes was a Vietnam veteran who was described by neighbors as "[very paranoid](#)," anti-government, and possibly a "Doomsday prepper" who loved guns and marijuana.

Meanwhile, more than 500 people paid tribute to Charles Poland, Jr., the bus driver who was killed, calling him a hero for protecting the other children on the bus. School buses from several counties lined



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Poland's funeral procession route with black ribbons tied to their side mirrors.

"As we rejoice tonight for [the boy] and his family, we still have a great emptiness in our community because a great man was lost in this whole ordeal," said Pastor Michael Senn of a local church near where reporters had camped out since the standoff began.

Three students wrote letters about the heroic bus driver. One child penned, "You didn't deserve to die but you died knowing you kept everyone safe."

Governor Bentley said of Poland, "We also want to remember the family and friends of the bus driver.... This man was a true hero who was willing to give up his life so others might live. We are all inspired by his courage and bravery."

Photo of members of Patriot Guard honoring slain bus driver Charles Poland Feb. 3 in Ozark, Ala.: AP Images



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