



Written by [Mary McHugh](#) on December 16, 2010

## Massachusetts Officials: Dead North Carolina Teen Fell From Plane

Authorities in Massachusetts have been investigating the death of a Charlotte, North Carolina teenager, whose shirtless, shoeless, traumatized body was found last November 15 on a street in Milton, Massachusetts, a suburb south of Boston. Delvonte Tisdale, 16, was discovered about 9:30 p.m. on Brierbrook Street. Neighbors claimed to have heard a crashing noise around 9:00 p.m.



Some 20 hours earlier, according to a WSOC TV [timeline](#), Tisdale was last seen by a sibling around 1:30 a.m. at their home in Charlotte about 900 miles away. He was not accounted for when the family began to rise at 5:00-6:00 a.m. and was thought to have already left for school. When in the early evening Tisdale had not been seen by anyone, they reported him as missing to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department.

The criminal investigation into his death concluded that the teen had somehow made his way to Charlotte Douglas International Airport. According to the [Fox](#) affiliate in Boston, there was no evidence showing that he went through security or bought a boarding pass. It was felt he most likely breached security by climbing a portion of the chain-link fence topped by strands of barbed wire that surrounds the tarmac. Tisdale then climbed into the wheel well of a Boeing 737 commercial jet that was scheduled to depart for Boston around 7:00 p.m. His body was found in Milton directly under the flight path that two Charlotte-to-Boston planes were flying that day and located where such flights lower landing gear when approaching Logan International Airport. It is felt he may already have perished while in the wheel well if only due to the below-freezing temperatures in the thin air existing at 20,000 feet. The slightly built teen was injured beyond recognition. His name was determined through the plastic lunch pass found in his jeans.

At first the discovery on the Milton street was a mystery. It was thought by local police that Tinsdale had been the victim of a brutal murder and efforts were made to discover if he was a missing Massachusetts boy. It was only days later when word about the strange and tragic occurrence made national news, that a relative notified officials of the teen's disappearance from North Carolina and he was entirely identified. Fingerprints and dental records were also used to confirm his identity. Massachusetts State Police searched the two aircraft that had flown from Charlotte to Boston that day and found scuff marks, hand prints, and fingerprints in one of the greasy wheel compartments. He had been on U.S. Air flight 1776. On December 9 a police search of the wooded area near where the teen's body was found revealed a red shirt or jacket smudged with grease along with two sneakers. These



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were consistent with what the boy is thought to have been wearing.

After the discovery of the clothing, Norfolk County District Attorney William Keating called a press conference and announced the closing of the investigation and stated it was most likely the teen had been a tragic stowaway. Keating and his office initially became involved when it was thought Tisdale's death was a homicide. According to the [Boston Globe's](#) account:

"There is great concern that with all of our efforts for security, and the almost invasive type of efforts that are occurring right now, that something like this could happen," said Keating, who will be sworn in as the new congressman from the 10th Congressional District next month.

He added, "it's a terrible tragedy what happened to this young man, but if that was someone with a different motive... if that was a terrorist that could have been a bomb that was planted, undetected. This is very serious."

Questions are many and divided as to what caused the 16-year-old to attempt such a feat. A WCNC article indicates that his parents were separated and describe a boy who was unhappy about living with his father in North Carolina and desirous of living with his mother in Baltimore.

An [Associated Press](#) story says the airport where Tisdale breached security has asked the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department to head up an investigation as to how it could have taken place. His family wonders why it was not prevented. Friends feel it is doubtful the teen knew the destination of the plane.



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