



# NEWS

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## News: Arbery Case

GLYNN COUNTY, Ga.- On Sunday, February 23, 2020, two calls were received at the Glynn-Brunswick 911 Center between 1:08pm and 1:15pm involving activity that was reported as suspicious in the Satilla Shores neighborhood located off US-17 in Glynn County. The Glynn County Police Department responded to the calls. Gun shots were heard by the responding officer upon arrival to the Satilla Shores neighborhood. Shortly thereafter, the location of the gun shots was identified, and an ambulance was called. The Glynn County Police Department immediately began investigative activities. Detectives arrived on the scene at approximately 1:45pm.

Travis McMichael and Greg McMichael were brought to Glynn County Police Headquarters for questioning at approximately 3:30pm on February 23<sup>rd</sup>. Glynn County Police Officers sought the legal advice of the Brunswick District Attorney's Office in reference to possible charges. At that point, the DA's office became involved in the investigation. The DA's office advised that there needed to be further follow up and the detectives would be contacted the following day by the DA from the Waycross Judicial Circuit. The McMichaels were deemed not to be flight risks and officers were advised by the DA's office that no arrests were necessary at the time. Detectives met with DA George Barnhill, Sr. of the Waycross Judicial Circuit the following day and reviewed their findings with him. DA Barnhill, Sr. advised detectives before noon on February, 24<sup>th</sup> that the act was justifiable homicide and for detectives to continue their investigation and provide him with lab reports and any additional pertinent information. The autopsy results were received by the Glynn County Police Department on April 1<sup>st</sup> and immediately forwarded to DA Barnhill, Sr.

Given the familial relationship of DA George Barnhill, Sr. and an Assistant District Attorney in the Brunswick District Attorney's Office, the family of Ahmaud Arbery requested that DA Barnhill, Sr. be removed from the case. At this point, DA Barnhill, Sr. recused himself from the case and contacted the

Georgia Attorney General's office to seek assistance in finding another DA to handle the further "evaluation for prosecution," as he stated in his April 3<sup>rd</sup> letter to Glynn County Police Captain Tom Jump. In this letter, DA Barnhill, Sr. notes, "I appreciate there is immediate pressure on your department as to the issue of "arrest."" DA Barnhill, Sr.'s letter makes five points regarding the case and concludes that there was insufficient probable cause to issue arrest warrants at that time. In consultation with the Georgia Attorney General's office, the case was transferred to DA Tom Durden's Office of the Atlantic Judicial Circuit.

When the Glynn County Police Department had jurisdiction over the case, it was ultimately decided not to seek out the Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) to review the case given that none of the officers involved in the case were employed with the Police Department, from 1982 to 1989, when Greg McMichael was employed by the department and the officers involved in the case had little to no contact with Mr. McMichael when he was employed by the Brunswick District Attorney's Office.

From the beginning, the Glynn County Police Department has sought justice in this case. Glynn County followed the direction of DA Barnhill, Sr., and officers were advised not to publicly release information in reference to the case that could impact future prosecution.

In the press conference held by the GBI following the arrest of the McMichaels, it was stated that the Glynn County Police Department had conducted a thorough and good investigation into the case. The Police Department stands ready to further assist the GBI and DA Tom Durden into the investigation and court proceedings that will follow. The Police Department has continued to be advised not to release any information regarding the case other than to law enforcement and judicial agencies as we await the answers that many in the community and the nation are seeking in this case.

Glynn County Commission Chairman Mike Browning stated on Thursday, May 7<sup>th</sup>:

*"Our hearts go out to the family of Ahmaud Arbery for the tragic loss they have experienced. This has impacted them more than we can ever comprehend. This heavy issue has touched so many of us both locally and nationally and caused us to pause and think deeply about this family and our own families. We have to believe that the justice system will do what it is designed to do and provide answers to the many unanswered questions. It is in the hands of the proper authorities and we stand by ready to support Tom Durden, the District Attorney for the Atlantic Judicial Circuit and the Georgia Bureau of Investigation as they conduct investigations into this case.*

*Until we get answers to the many unanswered questions, I am hopeful that we can come together as a community to deal with this situation with peace and brotherhood, rather than hate and violence which can only make a terrible situation worse. Again, we ask prayers for this family and this community as a whole as this case moves its way through the justice system."*

For additional questions regarding the Arbery case, please contact the GBI at (404) 244-2600. If anyone has pertinent information to this case, please contact the GBI Tip Line at 1-800-597-TIPS (8477) or on-line at [www.gbi.ga.gov/submit-tips-online](http://www.gbi.ga.gov/submit-tips-online).