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Letter threat against Graham leads to prison term for Easley, SC man

Suspects sought in shooting that left innocent bystander dead

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Neighbors hangout across the parking lot from where Howard J. Nemley, 25, died from complications of gunshot wounds, Wednesday evening at Deer Park Apartments in Columbia.

KIM KIM FOSTER-TOBIN — kkfoster@thestate.com [Buy Photo](#)

By R. DARREN PRICE and BRYAN BETTS — dprice@thestate.com bbetts@thestate.com

RICHLAND COUNTY, SC — Howard J. Nemley loved to take his 3-year-old daughter to the small park where they lived at Deer Park Apartments.

But the simple father-daughter outing turned tragic Wednesday night when Nemley, an innocent bystander, was killed in a shootout between two groups during an apparent fight in the apartment's parking lot.

The 25-year-old father was shot while holding his child in his arms as they were walking home from the park. He died at the scene, despite efforts of EMS and some people at the complex who rushed to his aid

after the shooting.

Miraculously, his daughter was not hurt.

Thursday, deputies followed up on leads and interviewed witnesses. But no arrests had been made.

Deputies were called shortly after 9 p.m. Wednesday to Deer Park Apartments, at 7225 Firelane Road off Two Notch Road, Richland County Sheriff's Department spokesman Curtis Wilson said.

The reason for the apparent fight between the groups is being investigated. But as soon as the bullets started flying, Wilson said, group members fled the scene.

Apartment resident Ebony Davis said she didn't know Nemley but often would see him with his daughter while she played at the playground and rode her bicycle.

Davis said she had just seen the victim earlier in the evening and told him he had "such a beautiful little girl."

Davis' 14-year-old son was at home Wednesday night and looked out the window, where he saw Nemley in the parking lot after the shooting, bleeding.

"It's unexplainable," she said. "This is one of those things you never wish to see happen. I just hate that my son had to see it."

Desireé Moody and her husband have lived at Deer Park for the past five years and heard the gunshots from their first-floor apartment. When they looked out the front door a few minutes later, EMS was already on the scene.

When they first moved to the apartment complex, Moody said the couple thought they had found a hidden gem.

Now, she doesn't let her children play at the apartment playground. She said she is concerned about safety, since rowdy groups from elsewhere hang out there.

Wednesday's shooting was the last straw, though, and the family is talking about moving.

"It hit me hard because my daughter, she's 3, too," Moody said. "A child could have lost her life."

Anyone with information is asked to call CrimeStoppers, (888) CRIME-SC.

Rachael Myers Lowe and Cassie Cope contributed to this story.

[Back to Top](#)
[< Previous Story](#)



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[Next Story >](#)



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