

## **Georgia middle-schooler commits suicide after bullying, being called 'snitch'**

The father of a Georgia boy who committed suicide says his son was the victim of cruel bullying at school. WLTZ's Sara Belsole reports.

By Elizabeth Chuck, Staff Writer, NBC News

A 13-year-old Georgia boy who hanged himself after reportedly being bullied at school was remembered by family and friends as a hero at his funeral this week.

Devin Brown moved to Columbus, Ga., six months ago to live with his father, who says the bullying began shortly after Devin started at his new middle school, according to NBC.

"He got jumped, or somebody beat him up," Ray Brown, Devin's father, told WLTZ. "He came home one time and had some peanut butter pies he had made for school. When he walked through the door he had some pie left, and he had it all over him. Someone had jumped on him and smeared it all over him."

Brown voiced his concerns to Rothschild Middle School, but officials told him they hadn't heard of any issues, he said.

"They just kind of let it go," Brown said.

It wasn't until last Thursday night that Devin's family realized how far the bullying had gone.

"I hear [my stepmother yelling,] 'Oh my God, Ray, Ray, help me! I can't get him down, he hung himself,'" Cara Downs, Devin's older sister, told WLTZ. "I could see the black and blue around his neck and I tried to find a pulse, but couldn't find it."

Brown believes being called a "snitch" at school pushed Devin over the edge. He told WLTZ that the day Devin took his life, he saw another student carrying a knife and threatening a teacher. Brown said Devin told his teacher about the knife; the other student was given disciplinary action.

"He said, 'Everyone is calling me a snitch,'" Brown said. "He said, 'There's about 15-20 people who want to jump on me.'"

Muscogee County School District's director of communications told NBC News she could not confirm there was threat to a teacher, but she said a knife was found.

"It was discovered upon search in the student's locker. And of course any student discipline, while I can't talk about particular student discipline, was handled according to policy," Valerie Fuller said.

At his funeral on Wednesday, a large wooden box with the word "hero" carved on it was set up. Devin's friends dropped notes into it, thanking him for speaking up about the threat he saw at school, reported WLTZ.

"I made this for him because he is my hero. He did the right thing and he knew he did the right thing," Brown told the affiliate.

On Devin's gravestone, the inscription read: "You left too soon, but forever wouldn't have been long enough. Our hero - Devin Brown."