

Kayla Rolland Biography

Kayla Rolland

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Biography

Five-year-old Michigan resident, Kayla Rolland, was killed by a first-grade classmate in February of 2000 in an incident that made international headlines. Rolland, born in 1994, was the third child of a factory worker, Veronica McQueen. The classmate who had brought the gun to school that day was also one of three children, but Tamarla Owens took public transportation to and from her two jobs, which kept her from home for ten hours a day. The boy's father was in the county jail at the time on a charge of fleeing from police. When Owens was evicted from her home in February of 2000, she was forced to ask her younger brother to take her children in for a time. At his uncle's home, the six-year-old found a semiautomatic pistol in a shoebox full of coins. He had had prior trouble at Buell Elementary School, having stabbed a classmate with a pencil and having brought a cigarette lighter to school. When he took the gun to school, he reportedly showed it to friends, and his older brother claimed to have told a teacher about the gun; school officials denied this. As the first-graders were changing classrooms on the morning of February 29, the boy pulled the gun from his pants and said, "I don't like you, Kayla." The bullet pierced Rolland's heart and lungs, and she died later that morning. The boy evaded murder charges because of his age, but Owens was charged with neglect and lost custody of her children.