

“He never done any wrong to us. I mean he was always nice. He just tried to be our friend and stuff.” - Elijah Page.

I am not a mother but I do have children in my life that I would do anything for, ones that I would die for if it came down to it. Any parent wants the best for their child. They don't want them to have to feel an ounce of pain, although life happens. A broken heart is one thing. An argument between friends is one thing. Knowing that your child has been tortured by others that had befriended said child is something that is gut-wrenching and heartbreaking. In the case I'm covering this time is the case of 19-year-old Chester Allan Piage and the three men that took his life; 20-year-old Darrell Hoadley, 20-year-old Briley Piper and 18-year-old Elijah Page.

Chester Allan Poage was born July 4th, 1980 and just a short 19 years later his life would be stripped of him at the hands of three brutal men that had only planned on robbing him. South Dakota, March 2000 Poage's mother, Dottie, would file a missing person's report when her son, Chester wasn't at home nor was her car. Among that she also reported that there were missing items from the house. A month would by before the young man's body would be found in the Black Hills in the Higgins Gulch area; the victim only wearing his shoes and socks. It had been determined that Chester had been beaten, stabbed and crush with a blunt object with a possibility of drowning. These injuries took place over hours of torture but in time the young victim's body couldn't take it any longer and his life finally ended.

Chester had befriended the three other men; Hoadley, Briley and Page and they were to meet at his home to play video games but unfortunately for Chester, at sometime during the night that was supposed to be nothing but carefree fun, they decided to true the fun deadly. They held him at gunpoint where he was forced to the floor where repeatedly kicked him, leaving him unconscious only to wake being bound to a chair by a cord. The three men forced him to drink a dangerous combination of beer, pills, and acid. While doing this, Chester could only do one thing. He begged them for his life. No one wants to die, especially not in such a gruesome way with people you thought you could trust. While he begged they only taunted him and beat him more. From there they left the house and they drove him to the gulch in the Black Hills where his body was to be found, made him strip down to his socks and shoe and stand in 12 inches of freezing snow. They beat him repeatedly for hours, laughing at his misfortune and misguided trust. They attempted to drown him a few times as well. At one point, Chester was said to try and escape but he didn't get far. Later Page would be asked by an investigator How did Allen react when he was told by the other three that he was going to die. He answered, quote 'He was scared. He asked us not to do it, just to let him go.'

Freezing and wanting warmth on top of not wanting to die in the cold and he knew that was where he was headed, the young man begged for the heat from the car, asking to sit inside and warm up but rather than helping him they finally attempted to end his suffering and their fun by dropping large rocks onto his head then leaving him in the icy cold river where his last breath would be taken. It was there that he was to remain until his body was found. After the murder, they returned to Chester's home where they stole from him before fleeing. Luckily the authorities caught up with them quickly. Hoadley,

Briley, and Page were all arrested on April 28th. It was unclear on whose idea it was to actually take the young man's life but in the end, they took it.

The three that were responsible for this horribly brutal act either was found guilty or plead guilty and they were each given a sentence to face the consciences of what they had done. They had taken a child away from his family. They had taken a man away from his dreams and they had taken a life from this world. Elijah Page pleaded guilty and was given a sentence of death and on July 11, 2007, the then 25-year-old Page was put to death by lethal injection. Because of this senseless act of cruelty, now two young lives were gone. Say what you will, Page got what he deserves of whatever else comes to mind and yes he did need to be reprimanded for his actions against Chester but because he chose to do such a thing not only did he take a life but his life was taken as well; neither shouldn't have happened. Again, I'm not sure whose idea it was to commit murder or even commit theft but I would think that the last thing a person would think about before they were killed, whether it's being murdered or being injected by the state due to your crimes, was that one choice you made to do something, to hang out with someone or to say yes to something that you knew was wrong, turned out to be the worst choice you had ever made. This is one of those times. Everyone involved. Although the others have yet to lose their lives in a physical form, their lives are still gone.

Briley Piper was also sentenced to death after he too pled guilty. He is still on death row but he has tried to fight his sentence since.

Darrell Hoadley was found guilty, also the only one who seemed to show remorse for his actions that night although no one can be sure on whether he was being sincere or not. He was sentenced to life in prison; blaming his actions and that fact that he helped take Chester's life due to his own bad childhood. Hoadley had also said that Piper threatened to kill the others if they did not participate in the killing, although that too is unknown whether to be true or not.

There is a video you can find of Chester's mother talking about her son online and it's heartbreaking; the crack in her voice and the sorrow in her eyes. A parent shouldn't have to outlive their child. That's just not how it's supposed to happen. I don't know if any of the men actually stood up and advised that they shouldn't have been doing what they did but in the end, an innocent life was stolen and in total four lives are ruined because they thought they should rob someone who thought of them as friends. I always try to leave you with some kind of lesson from each case but from this particular case, I'm finding many. Although you have to let your children grown and learn from their own experiences, even if they are a legal adult like Chester was, keep in touch and know things about their lives even if it's just saying I'm having friends over or I'm leaving with this person. Obviously, it couldn't be done in this case as they forced him from the house but still. Also, know who your friends are. It's something that is hard in this world, to know who you can really trust because can you ever really trust someone? I, personally, have a very small group of friends and I keep it that way on purpose. Have I still been burnt? Damn straight but that only caused my walls to become stronger. The last thing is always thinking about the things you choose to do, the choices you make because a lot of the times, they don't just affect you. In this face, they affected everyone involved and beyond.

The families of Chester, Darrell, Briley, and Elijah – personally I'm sorry for what you've had to deal with because of this event. So many people were involved and I hope that, if you haven't already, you find some sense of closer and peace.

Like always I have included pictures. Thank you for reading.

Ali



The victim, 19-year-year Chester Poage lost his life at the hands of three other that he thought was friends. A senseless, ruthless murder that took this man away from the ones who loved him.



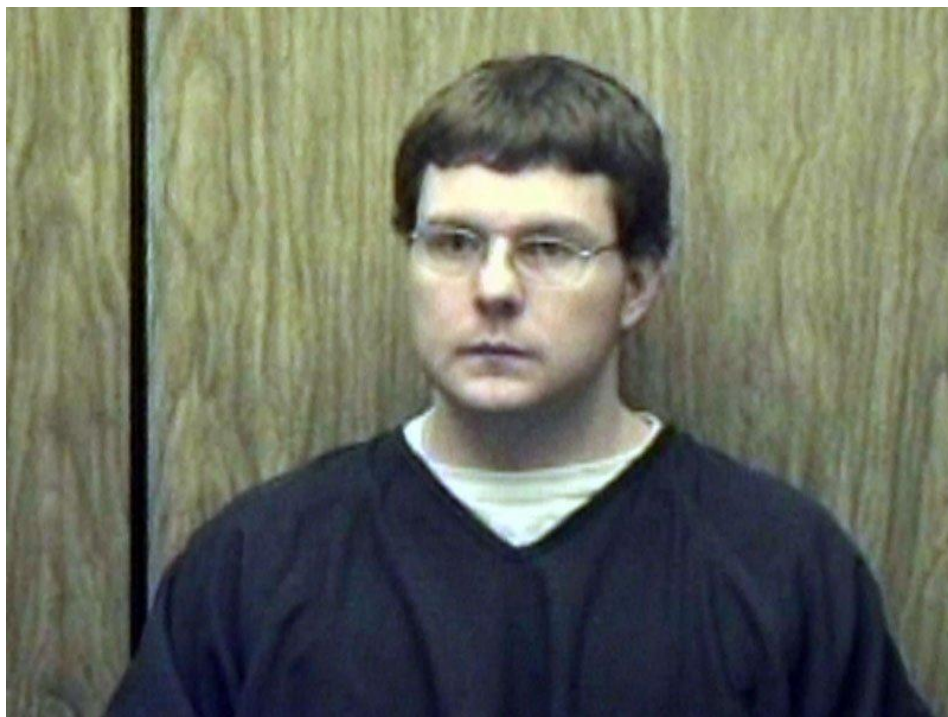
Chester's mother, Dottie, holding pictures up as she talks about her son that she lost far too soon.



A young Elijah Page; he would be sentenced to death.



Elijah Page; he would be the first to be executed by lethal injection for this crime



A young Briley Piper; he would be sentenced to death for this crime.



A more current picture of Piper; he is still fighting the death sentence that has yet to be carried out.



This is the only picture I could find on the last, a young Darrell Hoadley, sentenced to life in prison