

# More than a decade later, missing Alabama boy found in Ohio

By Melodi Smith, CNN

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## Teen discovers he's been a missing person for 13 years

Source: [CNN](#)

Teen discovers he's been a missing person for 13 years 03:12

### Story highlights

- Julian Hernandez was 5 when he and his father vanished from Alabama in 2002
- Julian was listed as missing; his father, Bobby Hernandez, has been arrested
- Julian is now 18

(CNN)A child who was reported missing in Alabama 13 years ago has been found safe and unharmed in Cleveland, Ohio, authorities say.

Julian Hernandez was in the legal custody of his mother when he disappeared on August 28, 2002. He was 5 then.

It was suspected that his father, Bobby Hernandez, took him as part of a noncustodial parental abduction, according to the Vestavia Hills Police Department, just south of Birmingham.



Bobby Hernandez (Photo: Cuyahoga County Prosecutor's Office)

A lead in the case came Sunday, when Vestavia Hills police were contacted by the FBI in Cleveland about a missing child.

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The case broke when Julian was trying to apply for college, Brandon Falls, the district attorney for Jefferson County, told [CNN affiliate WVTM](#). He ran into problems when his Social Security number didn't match his name.

A school counselor worked with him to determine why. It was then they found out that he was on the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children database.

The missing child they were able to locate and positively identify is now 18. Julian's mother and family were notified of his recovery.

Bobby Hernandez was arrested Monday in the abduction. The court records from Cuyahoga County in Ohio did not specify exact charges against him. CNN reached out to attorney Ralph DeFranco's office for further comment Wednesday night but did not immediately receive a response.

Bobby Hernandez made his first appearance in the Cuyahoga County Court on Wednesday, and his bond was set at \$250,000. His preliminary hearing is scheduled for November 12.

In addition to the charges in Ohio, Hernandez will face charges in Jefferson County, Alabama, in the 2002 abduction. He may face additional charges.

The Vestavia Hills Police Department worked in collaboration with the FBI's Violent Crime Task Force in Cleveland, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and the Birmingham Division of the FBI.

Source: <http://www.cnn.com/2015/11/04/us/missing-boy-found-alabama-ohio/>

## ID of Alabama Boy Missing for 13 Years Revealed After He Tried to Validate Social Security Number

By EMILY SHAPIRO

Nov 5, 2015, 8:17 PM ET



PlayNational Center for Missing and Exploited Children

WATCH How Missing Alabama Boy Was Found Safe 13 Years Later

The true identity of the Ohio teen who disappeared as a boy 13 years ago in Alabama was revealed after he couldn't validate his Social Security number, according to the Jefferson County, Alabama, District Attorney.

The boy's father, Bobby Hernandez, was taken into custody in Ohio on records tampering charges and Alabama officials issued a warrant to arrest him for felony interference with custody, officials said.

Here is what we know so far about the mysterious case:

['Disturbing' Voicemail Woman Got From Missing Husband's Phone May Hold Clues Into His Disappearance, Police Say](#)

[FBI Names 'Person of Interest' in 1989 Missing Boy Case](#)

### The Abduction

Julian Hernandez, now 18, was reported missing by his mother in August 2002, according to the Vestavia Hills police. He was 5 years old at the time.

Police suspected he was taken in a "non-custodial parental abduction."

### Leads

Authorities followed many leads over the years as to where Julian might be, from Florida to Canada, police said today. Each one was a dead end, police said -- until this week.

### The End

The investigation came together when Julian, who "was doing well in school," "was looking to go to college," said Lt. Johnny Evans of the Vestavia Hills Police Department. "And when he started the process, that's when things kind of started coming together."

When he could not validate his Social Security number, according to Jefferson County District Attorney Brandon Falls, that led to the discovery of his identity.

"My understanding is that he was applying to college, that there was some discrepancies in his Social Security number because both he and his dad were living under false names," Falls told ABC News.

After the information came to light, "he worked with his own school counselor, and it was discovered that he was on the National Database for Missing and Exploited Children," said Falls. "At that point they, either he or his counselor, contacted the authorities in Ohio and that started their investigation."

The Vestavia Hills Police Department was contacted this week by [FBI](#) agents from Cleveland, Ohio, about a missing child from Vestavia Hills.

Authorities located and positively identified the child as Julian, the police said.

"She had not given up, but she hadn't heard anything in awhile," Evans said today. "It was just kind of a shock to her...all of a sudden on a Monday afternoon to be told, 'Hey, he's found.'"

"It was just great for me to be able to tell the mother...he is doing well," said Evans. While police do not know if the mother and son have reunited, they have been in contact.

### **Charges**

Hernandez, was arrested in Cuyahoga County, Ohio and faces charges in connection with the case, police said.

The Jefferson County District Attorney's office in Alabama said an arrest warrant was issued today for Hernandez for the felony offense of Interference with Custody.

"The warrant concerns the taking of Julian Hernandez from the lawful custody of his mother on August 28th, 2002 from Vestavia Hills, Alabama, and the continuing interference with custody until the 18th birthday of Julian," the district attorney's office said.



Bobby Hernandez was arrested and charged in Cuyahoga County Court in Ohio in connection with the abduction of his son, said the Vestavia Hills Police Department.

Hernandez was being held on \$250,000 bond in Ohio, according to court records. He is accused of tampering with records, according to a complaint from the Cuyahoga County Prosecutor's Office. He allegedly "falsified identifying information to obtain fictitious State of Ohio identification card," the criminal complaint said.

Falls suggested that Hernandez may have been using the name of a dead person.

"It's my understanding that the name they were using ... was an actual person--so this was not completely a made up name," Falls told ABC News. "But it was someone who was deceased as of 2002 here in Alabama. "

Hernandez's attorney, Ralph DeFranco, did not immediately comment to ABC News. But he said Hernandez, who was living under an alias, was a soft-spoken man, according to ABC affiliate WEWS. "I think he saw it coming someday, he just didn't know when, or where," DeFranco said. "But really a very nice soft-spoken, gentle man who loves his son and his son is in excellent condition."

### **What's Next For Julian?**

"He is 18," said Evans. "He is an adult, so it's kind of up to him now as to whether he wants to come back. We can't go get him and bring him back because he was a juvenile."

A representative for Julian's mother said in a statement: "Our family was overjoyed this week to locate Julian and learn that he is safe. We want to thank everyone for their prayers and support during Julian's disappearance. Although we appreciate the interest our story has generated, we will have to decline any requests for interviews or additional information at this time. We ask that the media respect our privacy as we focus on Julian's well-being during this difficult time in his life."

Source: <http://abcnews.go.com/US/missing-alabama-boy-found-safe-ohio-13-years/story?id=34992408>