



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**Date:** May 18, 2018  
**Re:** Steven Hlinsky Death: Two Suspects in Custody  
**From:** Chad Larson, Douglas County Attorney

For Immediate Release:

The Douglas County Attorney's Office has charged Troy Traut and Jacob Larson with one count of First Degree Manslaughter and two counts of Fifth Degree Assault in connection with the death of Steven William Hlinsky as outlined in the attached criminal complaint. Both criminal complaints contain identical charges and the same factual allegations.

Both suspects are now in custody. Traut and Larson will appear in court on Monday morning for bail hearings.

This investigation remains active and my office is unable to further comment on the case at this time.

State of Minnesota  
County of Douglas

District Court  
7th Judicial District

Prosecutor File No. 18-1296  
Court File No. 21-CR-18-853

State of Minnesota,  
Plaintiff,

**COMPLAINT**  
Warrant

vs.

**TROY NATHAN TRAUT DOB: 02/24/1985**

7646 County Road 23 SE  
Alexandria, MN 56308

Defendant.

The Complainant submits this complaint to the Court and states that there is probable cause to believe Defendant committed the following offense(s):

**COUNT I**

**Charge: Manslaughter in the First Degree**

Minnesota Statute: 609.20(2), with reference to: 609.20

Maximum Sentence: Fifteen Years Imprisonment and/or a \$30,000.00 Fine

Offense Level: Felony

Offense Date (on or about): 05/05/2018

Control #(ICR#): 18005068

Charge Description: On or about May 5, 2018, within Douglas County, Minnesota, the above-named defendant, Troy Nathan Traut, date of birth: 2/24/1985 (33), did violate section 609.224 (Assault in the Fifth Degree) and caused the death of another, a felony crime.

**COUNT II**

**Charge: Misdemeanor 5th Degree Assault - Intent To Cause Fear of Bodily Harm**

Minnesota Statute: 609.224.1(1), with reference to: 609.224.1

Maximum Sentence: Ninety Days in Jail and/or a \$1,000.00 Fine

Offense Level: Misdemeanor

Offense Date (on or about): 05/05/2018

Control #(ICR#): 18005068

Charge Description: On or about May 5, 2018, within Douglas County, Minnesota, the above-named defendant, Troy Nathan Traut, date of birth: 2/24/1985 (33), did commit an act with intent to cause fear in another of immediate bodily harm, a misdemeanor crime.

**COUNT III**

**Charge: Misdemeanor 5th Degree Assault - Inflict Bodily Harm**

Minnesota Statute: 609.224.1(2), with reference to: 609.224.1(2)

Maximum Sentence: Ninety Days in Jail and/or a \$1,000.00 Fine  
Offense Level: Misdemeanor

Offense Date (on or about): 05/05/2018

Control #(ICR#): 18005068

Charge Description: On or about May 5, 2018, within Douglas County, Minnesota, the above-named defendant, Troy Nathan Traut, date of birth: 2/24/1985 (33), did intentionally inflict or attempt to inflict bodily harm upon another, a misdemeanor crime.

## STATEMENT OF PROBABLE CAUSE

Your complainant, a duly licensed peace officer for the state of Minnesota, asserts the following to establish probable cause to believe that on 5/5/2018, within Douglas County, Minnesota, Troy Nathan Traut, DOB: 2/24/1985 (33), Defendant herein, violated the law as set forth herein.

At approximately 12:56 AM on May 5, 2018, the Douglas County Sheriff's Office received a 911-call from the Muddy Boot bar in Forada, MN, Douglas County. The caller reported that a male had been assaulted and was found on the sidewalk in front of the bar, bleeding from his nose and ear. The victim was subsequently identified as Steven Hlinsky. Hlinsky was transported by ambulance to the Douglas County Hospital. Initial information from the Douglas County Hospital medical staff indicated that Hlinsky was bleeding in and around his brain, had a fractured eye socket, a torn retina, and possible internal injuries. Hlinsky was air-lifted to the St. Cloud Hospital for further medical treatment.

The bartender at the Muddy Boot during the incident, Carrie Goulet, was able to provide some video surveillance that captured a portion of the assault to the initial responding deputies. The camera was positioned inside the bar facing the main door. The video depicts Hlinsky attempting to escort a taller male wearing a striped long sleeve shirt and blue jeans to the door after that individual lit a marijuana pipe inside the bar. Once at the door, the video shows Hlinsky being grabbed by his right arm by another person and pulled out of the bar as the male in the striped shirt wrapped his arm around Hlinsky's neck in a headlock-type position. The door of the bar then closes obscuring the camera's view. The males in the video were subsequently identified as Jacob Larson and Troy Traut.

At approximately 6:37 AM on May 5, 2018, deputies located and interviewed Troy Traut. Traut stated that he and Jason Kraft had arrived at the Muddy Boot between 9 and 10 PM the previous evening. He stated that Jacob Larson and Frank Kalina met them at the bar. Traut admitted that he had engaged in a verbal argument with Hlinsky regarding a romantic relationship in which he believed Hlinsky was involved. Traut said that, before the end of the evening, he then exited the bar to have a cigarette with Frank Kalina outside. He stated that when he tried to re-enter the bar, he encountered Larson and Hlinsky fighting with each other as they were exiting the main door. Traut stated that they ran into him and he does not know what happened. He next observed Hlinsky unconscious on the ground, bleeding. He stated that this occurred one or two steps outside of the doorway, and Larson was on top of Hlinsky. Traut stated that he ran back into the bar and asked the bartender if she was calling 911. He stated that the bartender emphatically told him to leave the bar. He further stated that he did not see any confrontation between Hlinsky, Larson, Kraft, or Kalina earlier that evening and personally denied hitting or even touching Hlinsky.

On May 9, 2018, Douglas County Sgt. Mike Tvrdek conducted a follow-up interview with Troy Traut. During this interview, Traut stated that upon trying to re-enter the bar, he encountered Hlinsky and Larson exiting. He described them as having their hands on each other, but stated that they were not fighting or engaged in a physical altercation. He stated that he, Hlinsky, and Larson all tripped and fell to the ground with five feet of the door. Traut stated that he then observed Hlinsky laying on the ground with a tiny amount of blood on his nose, but did not recall anyone near Hlinsky. He stated that he did not see anyone assault Hlinsky and denied assaulting him. He then told Sgt. Tvrdek that he does not like anything about Hlinsky and again stated that he had a verbal argument with Hlinsky earlier in the evening about a relationship that he believed that Hlinsky was engaged in. Traut claimed that Hlinsky was trying to "start sh\*t"

with others in the bar that evening.

On May 5, 2018, Sgt. Tvrdek located and interviewed Jason Kraft at Traut Wells, Inc. Kraft stated that he was from Wisconsin and was in the area to work on some equipment for Traut Wells. Kraft stated that he went to the Muddy Boot with Troy Traut on Friday, May 4, 2018, arriving at approximately 9:30 or 10PM. He stated that they were joined by Frank Kalina. According to Kraft, Jacob Elmo Larson, who he referred to as "Mo" or "Elmo," joined them about an hour or two later. Kraft stated that there were no confrontations at the bar that evening and everyone was friendly. He stated that at approximately midnight, he went outside to have a cigarette near Troy Traut's truck approximately 200 feet from the bar door. He stated that he observed Larson and Hlinsky engaged in a physical altercation, pushing and hitting each other, as they came out of the bar door. Kraft stated that, at that time, he, Troy Traut, and a girl named either Laurie or Tiffany were outside of the bar near smoking near Troy Traut's truck. Video obtained from a surveillance camera located across the street and in a position to view both Troy Traut's truck and Larson's vehicle at that time; however, does not depict anyone in a location near those vehicles.

On May 9, 2018, Sgt. Tvrdek conducted a follow-up interview with Jason Kraft. Kraft again stated that he and Trout were outside of the bar, roughly eight car lengths to the west of the door, when Larson and Hlinsky emerged from the door. He stated that Hlinsky was forcing Larson out of the door and each had their hands on each other's necks and they were punching each other. Kraft stated that he and Trout started walking toward the door (closer to the altercation) and when they were approximately two "trucks away" from the door, people from inside the bar emerged. Video surveillance recordings depict two individuals, Scott Roers and bartender Carrie Goulet, exiting the bar door at that time. As the door opens, Kraft is seen backing away from a very close location from where Hlinsky was laying on the sidewalk. Nonetheless, Kraft stated that the only person near Hlinsky prior to Roers and Goulet exiting the bar was Larson. When Kraft was advised that his version was inconsistent with surveillance video, he stated, "*Bologna*," and left the interview.

On May 5, 2018, Sgt. Tvrdek interviewed Frank Kalina. Kalina stated that Traut, Larson, and Kraft had been at his residence prior to going to the Muddy Boot. He stated that Traut and Kraft drove together to that location while he and Larson took Larson's vehicle. He stated that shortly before he left, Larson was smoking marijuana inside the bar. Kalina stated that he went outside to have a cigarette near Larson's vehicle which he estimated was approximately 40 feet west of the bar door. He stated that he believed that Kraft and Traut were with him at that time. Kalina stated that, "*It was just a blur*," and that he did not see anyone hit anyone, and that he had nothing to do with it. He stated that Larson then told him, "*We have to get the f\*ck out of here*." Kalina stated that Traut and Hlinsky had been engaged in a verbal argument in the bar approximately an hour earlier.

On May 5, 2018, Sgt. Tvrdek interviewed Jacob Larson. Larson stated that he was "burning one" in the bar and someone was walking him out the door. He stated that when he exited the bar, he was shoved in the back and ended up approximately 10 feet into the street. Larson stated that he then observed Hlinsky lying on his back, bloody. He stated that he asked Hlinsky if he was okay, but Hlinsky did not respond. Larson stated that he then left the area in his vehicle with Kalina because he was worried about getting in trouble for smoking marijuana in the bar. Larson stated that he did not recall putting his right arm around the back of Hlinsky's neck or putting him in a headlock position as the video surveillance depicts. When advised of the existence of such video, Larson stated that he did not believe that it existed and ended the interview.



Video footage obtained from the Muddy Boot Bar depicts Traut, Kraft, Larson, and Kalina sitting together at a table when they arrive at the bar. Traut is seen several times approaching Hlinsky in what appears to be an aggressive or agitated manner. At one-point, Traut grabs a beer bottle sitting in front of Hlinsky and tosses it against the wall. On another occasion, Traut flips over a cup that is sitting in front of Hlinsky. On both occasions, Hlinsky remains calm, stays seated, and does not react. Shortly thereafter, Larson walks over to where Hlinsky and Roers are seated at the bar and lights what appears to be a marijuana pipe. He then exhales and blows the smoke between Hlinsky and Roers. At that time, Hlinsky stands up and appears to direct Larson towards the bar door, stopping and appearing to be talking with the bartender, Carrie Goulet. Hlinsky is then seen escorting Larson to the door. Once the door is open, it does not appear that Hlinsky intends to walk outside. Hlinsky is not fighting with anyone or swinging his arms. Video depicts Traut grabbing Hlinsky by his right arm and pulling him outside the door. At that time, Larson is observed putting Hlinsky into a headlock and assisting with forcing Hlinsky outside the bar door. The bar door then closes, and in approximately 8-seconds, Roers and Goulet open the bar door and Kraft is seen backing up through the doorway from left to right, which would have put him right in the area of Hlinsky's body on the sidewalk in front of the bar. Video footage from inside the bar also shows Traut coming back into the doorway of the bar as Goulet is on the phone with 911. Traut then leaves. Cameras from the building located across the street from the bar does not provide any video of the incident itself; the camera angle only displays west of the bar door, then down the street where Traut's truck and Larson's vehicles were parked. Kalina and Larson are seen after the incident walking down the sidewalk to Larson's vehicle where they get inside and drive west out of town. Traut is seen walking half the distance to his truck, he then begins to run around the back side of his truck, gets inside, and leaves quickly, driving west out of Forada.

On May 7, 2018, Investigator Art Vinson interviewed Muddy Boot bartender, Carrie Goulet. Goulet told Investigator Vinson that on the night of the incident, she believes Steve Hlinsky came into the bar around 9:00 PM about the same time as Troy Traut, Frank Kalina, a guy she knows as Elmo (identified as Jacob Larson), and a male named Jason from Wisconsin (identified as Jason Kraft). Goulet stated that Traut and Hlinsky had a verbal confrontation. Goulet said around 12:30 AM, Larson brought his dog into the bar and around that time there was a second incident between Traut and Hlinsky. Goulet described that Traut was in Hlinsky's face and Traut grabbed Hlinsky's beer bottle and threw it against the wall and it broke. Goulet said she had her back turned and was at the till, so she didn't see Traut grab the beer bottle but heard the crashing glass. Goulet said Traut also knocked over a glass on the bar. Goulet said she told both Traut and Hlinsky to *"Knock it off,"* and *"Get over it."* Goulet said Traut then left the bar. Goulet told Investigator Vinson she was aware of at least two separate occasions where Traut made the comment to Hlinsky, *"Come on Beaver, let's go outside and handle this,"* or *"Let's handle this outside."* Hlinsky's nickname is Beaver. Goulet said at the time of the incident Hlinsky was escorting Larson to the door after Larson made up a "onnie" and blew marijuana smoke at Hlinsky and Roers. Goulet said when they got to the door she observed Traut's arm grab Hlinsky and heard Traut say, *"Oh, it's Beaver,"* then the door slammed. Goulet said she was thinking that, *"Oh, this is not happening,"* meaning there was going to be a fight. Goulet said she went outside immediately and found Hlinsky laying on the sidewalk with blood on his face. Goulet said she remembers Traut standing directly in front of Scott Roers' truck and Larson was standing just to the left where Hlinsky was laying. Goulet recalls Jason Kraft and Frank Kalina being outside of the bar as well.

Via search warrants, the Douglas County Sheriff's Office has obtained text messages and other communications relayed between the suspects in this case. Although the investigation is

far from complete, text message communications between suspects regarding this incident have been obtained. Such communications include discussions regarding surveillance cameras at the scene, the condition of the victim, the status of law enforcement interviews with suspects, and advice relative to law enforcement interviews. For example, following the assault on Hlinsky, Frank Kalina (who is not currently considered a suspect, but rather a witness), sent the text message: *"Apparently they have cameras in the old bar that point over there so they'll see I didn't have anything to do with it. Probably not a good fact for troy or Elmo though."*

Additionally, Jacob Larson sent a text message to Kalina stating, *"No one touched anyone u now nothing."*

Hlinsky was released from the St. Cloud Hospital on May 11, 2018. On May 13, 2018, the Douglas County Sheriff's Office received a 911-call reporting a medical at Hlinsky's residence. Hlinsky was found unresponsive. CPR and other EMS procedures were attempted, but Hlinsky was pronounced dead at the scene. Medical personnel and the Medical Examiner who performed the autopsy on Hlinsky agree that the injuries Hlinsky sustained were not the cause of a single fall. Hlinsky's death was caused by the consequences of traumatic brain injuries inflicted by blunt force head trauma. A postmortem examination was performed that showed bruising over the right side of Hlinsky's face and around his right eye, shoulders, and arms. The top and left side of his head was bruised. He suffered a fracture of the mid-frontal basilar skull and multiple contusions of the brain were observed.

Troy Traut and Jacob Larson are depicted on video pulling Steven Hlinsky out of the bar and placing him into a headlock. Hlinsky was found seconds later, unconscious, and with massive trauma to his head and face. The Medical Examiner believes that Hlinsky's death is the result of the trauma that he sustained during the early hours of May 5, 2018 outside of the Muddy Boot bar in Forada, MN.

## SIGNATURES AND APPROVALS

Complainant requests that Defendant, subject to bail or conditions of release, be:  
(1) arrested or that other lawful steps be taken to obtain Defendant's appearance in court; or  
(2) detained, if already in custody, pending further proceedings; and that said Defendant otherwise be dealt with according to law.

Complainant declares under penalty of perjury that everything stated in this document is true and correct. Minn. Stat. § 358.116; Minn. R. Crim. P. 2.01, subds. 1, 2.

**Complainant**

Brad Lake  
Chief Deputy  
216 7th Ave W  
Alexandria, MN 56308  
Badge: 233

Electronically Signed:  
05/18/2018 10:42 AM  
Douglas County, mn

Being authorized to prosecute the offenses charged, I approve this complaint.

**Prosecuting Attorney**

Chad M. Larson  
Douglas County Attorney  
305 8th Ave W  
Alexandria, MN 56308  
(320) 762-3856

Electronically Signed:  
05/18/2018 10:30 AM



## FINDING OF PROBABLE CAUSE

From the above sworn facts, and any supporting affidavits or supplemental sworn testimony, I, the Issuing Officer, have determined that probable cause exists to support, subject to bail or conditions of release where applicable, Defendant's arrest or other lawful steps be taken to obtain Defendant's appearance in court, or Defendant's detention, if already in custody, pending further proceedings. Defendant is therefore charged with the above-stated offense(s).

### ☐ SUMMONS

THEREFORE YOU, THE DEFENDANT, ARE SUMMONED to appear on \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ AM/PM before the above-named court at 305 8th Ave W, Alexandria, MN 56308 to answer this complaint.

IF YOU FAIL TO APPEAR in response to this SUMMONS, a WARRANT FOR YOUR ARREST shall be issued.

### ☒ WARRANT

To the Sheriff of the above-named county; or other person authorized to execute this warrant: I order, in the name of the State of Minnesota, that the Defendant be apprehended and arrested without delay and brought promptly before the court (if in session), and if not, before a Judge or Judicial Officer of such court without unnecessary delay, and in any event not later than 36 hours after the arrest or as soon as such Judge or Judicial Officer is available to be dealt with according to law.

☐ Execute in MN Only

☒ Execute Nationwide

☐ Execute in Border States

☒ This warrant may be executed at any time of the day or night and on Sundays or legal holidays.

### ☐ ORDER OF DETENTION

Since the Defendant is already in custody, I order, subject to bail or conditions of release, that the Defendant continue to be detained pending further proceedings.

Bail: \$

Conditions of Release:

This complaint, duly subscribed and sworn to or signed under penalty of perjury, is issued by the undersigned Judicial Officer as of the following date: May 18, 2018.

Judicial Officer

Ann L. Carrott  
Judge

Electronically Signed: 05/18/2018 02:44 PM

Sworn testimony has been given before the Judicial Officer by the following witnesses:

COUNTY OF DOUGLAS  
STATE OF MINNESOTA

**State of Minnesota**

Plaintiff

vs.

**Troy Nathan Traut**

Defendant

*LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER RETURN OF SERVICE  
I hereby Certify and Return that I have served a copy of this Warrant  
upon the Defendant herein named.*

Signature of Authorized Service Agent: