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**PRESS RELEASE**

**November 6, 2017**

On Sunday night, November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017, Mr. Williams, myself, Riley County Police Department Director Brad Schoen, met in the Riley County Attorney's Office for purposes of discussing an incident reported as a Criminal Threat that was believed to be racially motivated.

On Friday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, Mr. Williams informed persons that he had in fact painted the graffiti on his own car. Mr. Williams made the same statement to myself and Director Schoen during our meeting on November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017. Mr. Williams went on to add that he had intended to wash the graffiti off his car but before he could do so a neighbor had made the report.

Mr. Williams did not make the initial report or call to the Riley County Police Department. A neighbor made the initial call to the police department to report the graffiti that appeared on Mr. William's vehicle. Mr. Williams, was contacted by the police, and being young, and in a situation he did not intend or anticipate, he failed to inform the police department immediately that it was a Halloween prank and that he had in fact painted the graffiti himself on the car.

Over the weekend and prior to meeting, myself and Director Schoen discussed this matter and agreed that criminal charges were not warranted given Mr. Williams willingness to come forward and clear up this unfortunate incident. I, as the Riley County Attorney believe it would be counter-productive for the County Attorney's Office to proceed with any type of criminal charge. Mr. Williams was contrite and apologetic, and embarrassed by the attention this matter has drawn to the community and to himself.

I informed Mr. Williams that I accepted his apology and appreciated the fact he did come forward before the matter went any further.

To quote Mr. Williams:

“I would like to deeply apologize to the community. The whole situation got out of hand when it shouldn't have even started. It was just a Halloween prank that got out of hand. I just want to apologize from the bottom of my heart for the pain and news that I have brought you all.”

This situation, as it turned out, does not mean the citizens of Riley County, Manhattan or Kansas State University should not remain vigilant in ensuring that our community responds to any words or actions that would or could intimidate any particular group of people or any individual. We should remain vigilant against hate and intolerance. We should likewise, accept the apology of a young man, who made a mistake and owned it before it went any further.

Barry Wilkerson  
Riley County Attorney