

Camden, Sept 10 (AP) - A man is suspected of killing his five children in South Carolina and then driving for hours before dumping their bodies, wrapped in individual garbage bags, on a dirt road in rural Alabama, authorities said.

Timothy Ray Jones Jr., 32, led investigators to the site where the bodies of the children were found, off a two-lane highway near Camden, Alabama, said Alabama Department of Public Safety spokesman Sgt. Steve Jarrett on Tuesday.

Jones has been charged with child neglect and police expect to lodge additional charges against him in connection with the children's deaths, authorities in South Carolina and Mississippi said.

The children ranged from 1 to 8 years old and were reported missing by their mother on Sept. 3, authorities said.

Wilcox County, Alabama, District Attorney Michael Jackson told The Associated Press that Jones is suspected of killing the children in South Carolina before bringing their bodies to Alabama.

"This is a very tragic situation," Jackson said. "These kids' lives were snuffed out before they had a chance to enjoy life. Justice will be served."

Police have not released details on how the children died. Lexington County Coroner Earl Wells was arranging for the children's bodies to be taken back to South Carolina for autopsies and identification Tuesday night, sheriff's officials said.

Jones was being held in Smith County, Mississippi, awaiting extradition to South Carolina, the Mississippi Bureau of Investigation said in a news release.

Jones was detained in Smith County on Saturday after being stopped at a motor vehicle checkpoint near Raleigh, Mississippi, and charged with drunken driving, Smith County Sheriff Charlie Crumpton said in a news release.

Crumpton said Jones became agitated when a deputy questioned him about an odor of chemicals coming from the Cadillac Escalade he was driving. The deputy found what were believed to be chemicals used to manufacture methamphetamine and a substance believed to be the street drug Spice, a form of synthetic marijuana, Crumpton said. A sheriff's office investigator was called and found what appeared to be bleach, muriatic acid, blood and possible body fluids, he said.

During a background check, police discovered that Jones was wanted in South Carolina "regarding a welfare concern of his children," who were on a national missing persons list, the Mississippi Bureau of Investigation said in a statement.

Investigators from several departments and the FBI started looking for the missing children on Monday, Crumpton said. He said the children's decomposed bodies were found in individual plastic garbage bags.

Jones had joint custody of the children and is divorced from their mother, police said. They said he told neighbors that he and the children were moving to another state.

Marlene Hyder and her husband, Johnny Hyder, said Jones and his wife moved into a house next to them about seven years ago in Batesburg-Leesville, South Carolina, 25 miles (40 kilometers) west of Columbia. They said Jones told them he worked in computers. Two years ago, the wife moved in with a male neighbor and Tim Jones moved away with the children, the Hyderys said.

Johnny Hyder said the children were often dressed in dirty clothes and were seen home at all

hours of the day because Tim Jones had said he didn't believe in the public schools. Hyder said Jones was constantly looking for a reason to argue and often threatened to call the police. Marlene Hyder said Jones threatened to kill one of their dogs when it briefly went onto his property.

"He was a nut," she said.

A "no trespassing" sign was posted near the driveway of a house where the Hyderys said Tim Jones' ex-wife still lived with the other neighbor. Several people were seen walking around the yard, but none responded to questions from a reporter.