

Witness replays what he observed during fatal incident in Alton

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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ALTON - A man who witnessed the alleged car attack, which killed 21-year-old Katie Bunt told Riverbender.com what he saw Sunday afternoon near the scene of the fatal incident.

The man was told by police he should not reveal his identity publicly, due to the criminal nature of the incident. He showed a reporter proof he was at the scene in the early hours of Sunday morning when the incident occurred. He called authorities around 3 a.m., when he said the majority of the chaos occurred. He recounted what happened Sunday near the site, which now hosts a makeshift memorial for Bunt. Police said a Bethalto man is in custody for the incident as of Sunday.

The witness said he was unloading groceries near the Hayner Public Library parking lot when he heard commotion occurring near the parking lot behind Danny's Lounge off Belle Street in Alton. He said a small two-door gray or silver car he believed to be a Ford was blocking a lane of traffic before accelerating into a group of what he estimated to be about 12-15 people. He said a concentrated group of seven or eight were in the center, and were the apparent targets of the car. All the people were young, he said.

"By the time the car went through them, I was calling 911," he said. "They were screaming and yelling to call 911, and I was already on the phone."

The man showed a reporter that call, which was placed at 3 a.m. - the time bars close in Alton on the weekends.

An officer from the Alton Police Department arrived almost immediately, the man said. He said Bunt was somewhat alert, but her breathing was labored. Another injured girl was around 20 feet away, sitting on the sidewalk. The man said all the people gathered around Bunt believed she had already passed.

After running into the crowd, the man said the vehicle hopped a curb and continued through the parking lot, before hopping another curb near Danny's Lounge.

The vehicle driven by the man driving into the crowd started leaking fluid from what he believed to be the radiator.

The witness then said the vehicle accelerated again, crossing Piasa Street toward the now-defunct Elijah P's. He said a man left that vehicle and continued on foot.

"It all happened so fast," he said. "It was over as soon as it began. It was a lot of chaos in a short time. The whole thing took five or 10 minutes at most."

Paramedics from the Alton Fire Department arrived moments after the police, and the witness said he left the situation at that time.