

Alton Police Department issues statements in regards to Katie Bunt lawsuit

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
October 11 2018 3:50 PM



ALTON - The estate of Katie Bunt, a 21-year-old woman killed on July 22, 2018, is suing the Alton Police Department, alleging the department did not act in a professional or timely manner to prevent the young woman's death.

Bunt was killed when a car alleged to have been driven by Caleb Lenhardt, 21, plowed into her and a group of her friends near the parking lot of Danny's Lounge in Downtown Alton after an altercation between Lenhardt and some of the women with whom Bunt was enjoying the evening. The suit alleges the incident would have never occurred if the police had acted on a violation of an order of protection placed against Lenhardt by Kelsey Barnes, who was with that group of women that night.

To address this suit, Alton Police Chief Jake Simmons issued the following statement:

My heart and prayers go out to Katie Bunt's family and friends; especially to her parents. As a father myself, I cannot imagine what type of emotions they must all be feeling and what desire they must have to hold someone accountable for Katie's death.

The Alton Police Department always authorizes charges for a Violation of Order of Protection if probable cause exists. While I cannot talk about the facts of this case, I have reviewed it thoroughly, and I believe my officer acted in a professional manner within the scope of the law during this incident.

I stand by the investigation into the possible Violation of an Order of Protection and the subsequent Murder investigation that followed this incident. I too want justice for Katie, and I look forward to the day the Madison County State's Attorney can try the Murder case in court. Only then will the person truly responsible for Katie's death be held accountable.



The suit claims an officer named only as "John Doe" was "reckless and indifferent" when Barnes allegedly approached him regarding Lenhardt being in her presence. She had previously filed two orders of protection against Lenhardt when the two were in the same vicinity it Downtown Alton.

It also alleges that officer knew Lenhardt was intoxicated and that there was at least one order of protection against him, but said the officer did not charge Lenhardt.

In that suit, it claims Bunt lay dying in the parking lot of the 400 block of Belle street partially because that unnamed officer "left her vulnerable" as she suffered extreme mental and physical trauma following being ran down by the vehicle.

Officer John Doe, Simmons and the City of Alton are each named in the suit, which is seeking \$50,000 for each count. The case is being represented by the law office of Jack Daugherty and Keith Short in Alton.

Daugherty said he could not comment much outside of what was filed in the complaint, adding it was self-explanatory.

The complaint, which was sent to Riverbender.com by the law office, alleges one count of willful and wanton/conscious disregard and another count of state created danger. There was also a count of inadequate training and failure to supervise leveled at the police department as well as the City of Alton.