



# **Haine Announces Murder Conviction For Driver Who Struck Officer On McKinley Bridge**

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EDWARDSVILLE — Madison County State's Attorney Tom Haine announced Thursday that a driver who fatally struck Police Officer Brian Pierce Jr. on the McKinley Bridge while trying to flee from police has been convicted of first-degree murder.



Following a bench trial that began Monday, prosecutors won a conviction for first-degree murder against Caleb L. Campbell, 24, of Florissant, Mo., in connection with the death of Brooklyn Police Officer Pierce.

“Officer Brian Pierce should be alive today,” Haine said. “We continue to pray for his family, who have suffered so much. We are glad the judge agreed that this was murder,

plain and simple. I do hope the message continues to be heard: fleeing from the police is always wrong and dangerous, and if an officer dies, those responsible for killing the officer will face murder charges.”

Testimony and evidence presented by Assistant State’s Attorney Lauren Maricle and Assistant State’s Attorney Ryan Kemper showed that Campbell was driving a red Dodge Charger at speeds up to 98 mph and attempting to elude police in the early morning hours of Aug. 4, 2021. His car struck Officer Pierce, who was standing on the bridge after deploying a spike strip across the roadway.



Campbell had a handgun in the vehicle and an active Missouri warrant for his arrest when he fled from a different Brooklyn officer who was attempting to stop the driver for traffic violations. Maricle, in her closing remarks, argued that Campbell “knew if he was stopped ... he was going to jail.” Dash-camera video from the pursuit showed Campbell speeding through intersections, ignoring traffic-control devices and barreling past other motorists who were stopped on the bridge.

The other motorists had stopped in the westbound lane of the bridge, behind the parked patrol vehicles of Officer Pierce and a Venice Police officer. Maricle argued that Campbell had an “utter lack of regard” for the safety of other motorists and even his own passenger – his girlfriend. “He sure as hell didn’t have any regard for Officer Pierce, either,” Maricle argued. Campbell, when taken into custody days after his arrest, claimed his vehicle had been taken by carjackers in the parking lot of a Brooklyn nightclub.

At trial, he tried to shift blame onto Officer Pierce, arguing the officer’s actions were a contributing factor.

“Even to this day, this defendant refuses to take responsibility for his actions and has zero remorse,” Haine said. “The suffering and outrage he has caused for Officer Pierce’s family and the law enforcement community are unconscionable.”

Associate Judge Neil Schroeder, in announcing the verdict, said prosecutors proved that Campbell’s actions created a situation where “anything or anyone” in his path “was going to be obliterated,” but Campbell “simply did not care.”

Campbell’s car received heavy damage and became disabled on the bridge after striking Officer Pierce. Surveillance video from a Missouri business, taken minutes later, showed a man and woman walking hurriedly from the bridge, then disappearing into a St. Louis neighborhood.

Haine said the case illustrates the critical need for the Cross-River Crime Task Force. Haine announced the formation of the task force in early 2021 as a measure to stem the flow of crime across the river into Madison County.

The Cross River Crime Task Force is comprised of law enforcement personnel from local, state and federal agencies, and utilizes real-time crime-fighting technology, such as Automated License Plate Readers which are placed in strategic locations.

In sworn testimony at trial, a Brooklyn officer said roughly one in three attempted traffic stops in his jurisdiction results in the motorist attempting to flee across the McKinley Bridge.

“We will not stand by and watch as our bridges become escape routes for wrongdoers who want to commit crimes against our residents and then try to flee across the river,” Haine said. The judge scheduled a sentencing hearing for 2 p.m. on Jan. 23.

Illinois law allows a sentence of life in prison for first-degree murder if the defendant is 18 or older and the victim was a police officer killed while performing official duties.

Haine's office already has filed formal notice that prosecutors will ask for the life sentence to be imposed. Haine commended Maricle and Kemper for their diligent work on the case, along with Venice Police, Illinois State Police, Brooklyn Police, and other agencies that assisted in the investigation and the apprehension of Campbell. He also commended the victim advocates in his office and organizations that have assisted Pierce's family.