

Woman who was Edwardsville Police Department dispatcher is convicted of felony obstruction charges

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A Bethalto woman who worked as a dispatcher for the Edwardsville Police Department was convicted of felony obstruction charges following a one-day bench trial held today in front of Circuit Judge Kyle Napp.

Keri L. Knight, 41, who was indicted by a Madison County Grand Jury in January, faced two counts of Obstructing Justice (Class 4 felony), in connection with her attempts to obstruct the investigation into a former Edwardsville police officer by providing false information to investigators and concealing evidence connected to the investigation. The officer, Brian Barker, 42, was charged in December 2014 and February 2015 with official misconduct, money laundering, arson, possession of stolen firearms and multiple counts of burglary following an investigation into numerous burglaries in the area.

After hearing evidence, Judge Napp retired to deliberate before handing down her guilty verdict. Knight will remain free on bond pending sentencing. If convicted, the penalty range is probation up to 1-3 years in prison.

State's Attorney Tom Gibbons praised police and his prosecutors, First Assistant State's Attorney Jennifer Mudge and Crystal Uhe, Chief of the Criminal Division, for their victory in court. "This verdict is significant as it demonstrates that my office and our courts will not tolerate attempts to obstruct justice," he said. "When someone attempts to hinder the investigation of a case, they will be subject to prosecution for their role in covering up a crime. It's especially disheartening that this was a public employee who violated the law in this manner."

At the request of the Edwardsville Police Department, detectives with the Madison County Sheriff's Department led the investigations into both Barker and Knight. Barker's case remains pending; he is currently out on bond. His charges, as well as statements made herein, are based upon probable cause. The defendant is presumed innocent unless proven guilty.