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# Equal Justice Project

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Representative Joe Neguse  
2503 Walnut St Ste 300, Loveland, CO 80302

Wednesday, July 19, 2023

Dear Representative Neguse:

I am an investigator with the Equal Justice Project. We are a nonprofit licensed private investigative agency that assists citizens with reporting complaints.

I am writing you on behalf of two of your constituents, Karl and Daniela King. The Equal Justice Project is assisting the King family with a complaint of police misconduct.

In 2015, while traveling with her minor daughter in the car, another driver ran Ms. King off the road. Her vehicle sustained extensive damage after being forced into a rocky ravine by the other driver.

The estimated damage to Ms. King's vehicle exceeded the state requirement for a police report to be written. But the Loveland Police Department did not follow its policies regarding a report. The investigating officer, Justin Lorenzen, did not properly investigate the accident. He did not write a full report immediately after the accident, consistent with policy, and he did not try to determine if the other driver was intoxicated.

The other driver, Sharon Scheller, who had left the scene despite Colorado's law to the contrary, was sitting inside a restaurant within 100 yards of Officer Lorenzen. Nevertheless, Officer Lorenzen never made contact with Scheller. More importantly, he made no effort to administer a field sobriety test, which would be standard given the circumstances, to determine if a reckless driver was intoxicated. Lorenzen did not question Ms. Scheller to learn her motive for leaving the scene of an accident. In a subsequent report, Officer Lorenzen said he called Ms. Scheller

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and left a message scolding her for leaving the location. This investigative approach is not standard in instances of suspects fleeing the scene of an accident after allegations of reckless driving.

The Loveland Police Department delayed and later misled Mr. and Ms. King regarding the availability of traffic video from the accident scene. The footage was critical to Mr. and Mrs. King's civil lawsuit against the other driver.

The King family lost their civil suit partly because of a lack of evidence. There was no video footage to prove that the other driver veered from her lane. Had officer Lorenzen conducted a thorough investigation, he would have retrieved the video, which would have been part of his report. Moreover, the city of Loveland would not have erased the video if it were part of an open traffic investigation. Mr. and Mrs. King relied on information from the police department and the city of Loveland about the availability of the video, which was incorrect. The footage was destroyed.

The King family has suffered because of the mishandling of their traffic accident investigation and the reluctance of the Police Department to thoroughly investigate a credible complaint that officer Lorenzen did not correctly investigate their accident. Not only were Mr. and Mrs. King responsible for substantial legal bills, but the police behavior in this matter exacerbated the emotional toll on the entire family. Mrs. King has reported that she suffers acute anxiety from the accident and indifference to her complaints by the Loveland Police Department.

According to the other driver's deposition testimony, officer Lorenzen disparaged Mrs. King, implying she was running a scam. When Ms. King complained, the Loveland Police Department used her loss in her civil case with the other driver as a justification not to pursue an investigation. The mistreatment and disrespect experienced by Daniela throughout this ordeal left a lasting impact on her and her family. They suffered severe post-

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traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and major depression due to the accident. Even after obtaining her driver's license, Karla still struggles with driving due to the traumatic experience. Daniela continues to battle panic attacks, which have led to physical injuries, brain damage, and memory loss. This incident has disrupted their lives in unimaginable ways, both physically and emotionally.

Also, Officer Lorenzen failed to interview Karla their daughter, who had witnessed the accident. Moreover, he neglected to collect photographic evidence of the tire tracks on Daniela's vehicle and failed to complete a timely report, which was written 27 days after the accident.

#### Our Opinion

There was a failure to investigate when officer Lorenzen did not interview a possible DUI suspect following a severe accident. And the Police Department should have investigated statements attributed to officer Lorenzen about Ms. King after she expressed concerns about the deficiencies in his investigation.

Mr. and Mrs. King are asking your office to investigate their complaint. They are concerned that other Colorado families might be harmed similarly by deficiencies in the policies by public safety agencies concerning the retention of records.

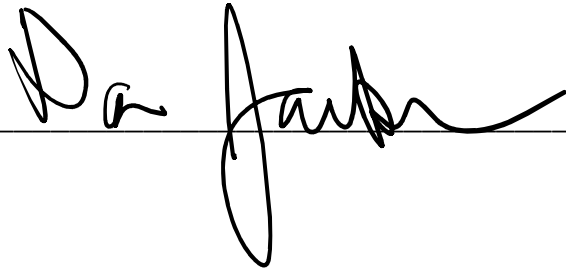
Karl and Daniela King respectfully seek a conference with your staff to discuss their concerns and their interest in legislation protecting citizens from the loss of significant evidence in the care of law enforcement.

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On behalf of Mr. and Mrs. King, I respectfully request that your office respond to schedule a meeting at a time convenient to your staff.

Respectfully submitted,

Don Jackson  
Executive Director, Equal Justice Project



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Don Jackson", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is cursive and stylized, with a large loop under the "J".