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**We Deserve Better than Justice In About An Hour:
County Attorney Amy Beavers Blocks Attorney General from
Investigating Fatal Police Shooting Before Reviewing the Evidence**

Burlington, IA – I am the attorney representing Kai Schoff, a seven-year-old boy whose mother, Autumn Steele, was fatally shot at the hands of Burlington PD Officer Jesse Hill on January 6, 2015.

This morning, I learned from an article in The Hawk Eye that Iowa DCI had released a draft of its investigation into Autumn's shooting to Amy Beavers, the Des Moines County Attorney. This evidence was provided to Ms. Beavers to allow her to decide whether to investigate Ofc. Hill's actions herself or refer the matter to the Iowa Attorney General.

In the article, Ms. Beavers said that some of the evidence from the DCI investigation, including the transcript of its interview with Ofc. Hill, had not yet arrived. She also said that she wanted to discuss the matter with Autumn's family before she made her decision.

I emailed Ms. Beavers this morning to introduce myself and to find out how far along she was in making her decision.

I spoke with Ms. Beavers around 11:00 this morning (Iowa time). She told me that she had just received a draft, but not the final DCI report, and that she had not reviewed it in detail. Neither had she reviewed any other of the evidence which had been submitted to her office; it had been sealed until the DCI report was released so that it could all be evaluated together.

Ms. Beavers said that she was leaning toward dealing with the case herself rather than involving the Attorney General, but had not yet decided what to do. She did not ask my opinion as to whether she should block the Attorney General's investigation, and I did not offer it.

Ms. Beavers had also not yet spoken with Autumn's family, as she promised in this morning's paper to do. As I made clear to Ms. Beavers, I represent Autumn's seven-year-old son Kai, but he was not the only victim Ofc. Hill left behind. Ms. Beavers had said that she planned on speaking with Autumn's husband, Gabe Steele (father to their four-year-old son Gunner) and I gave her the contact information for the attorney representing Autumn's mother, Gina Waters-Colbert.

Since Ms. Beavers had not yet had the chance to review the evidence, there was not much left to discuss; I briefly asked about a few collateral matters (such as the availability of evidence and an upcoming hearing involving the Steele's dog) and ended the conversation.

What a prosecutor is *supposed* to do next is to carefully review all the evidence, speak with the victim's family, and come to a decision about whether she or the Attorney General is better suited to further investigate this case. These are among the hardest decisions a prosecutor faces; she must carefully examine all the evidence, look within herself, and decide whether a fresh perspective might better serve the interests of justice.

In Ms. Beavers' case, this arduous process took about an hour.

By 1:30, Ms. Beavers' office announced to KBUR¹ that it had decided not to refer the case to the Iowa Attorney General and that she would handle the matter herself. Ms. Beavers also said that "she has spoken to a lawyer for the family of Autumn Steele...and Atty. Adam Klein did not express any concerns about Beavers' office further investigating the January 6th fatal shooting of the 34-year old Burlington woman by city patrolman Jesse Hill."

Ms. Beaver serially misrepresented our conversation.

First, I am not "a lawyer for the family of Autumn Steele," nor did I ever claim to be. I represent her son Kai. Autumn's husband and their son and Autumn's mother are represented by other lawyers. She knew that, and she knew who they were and how to reach them. Her statement to the press that she spoke to a "lawyer for the family" is a naked attempt to hide the fact that she broke her promise to discuss the matter with Autumn's family members before coming to a decision.

Second, I in no way intended to convey to Ms. Beavers that I, or Autumn's family, approved of her blocking the Attorney General's investigation and handling this matter herself. When I hung up the phone this morning, I hadn't decided yet. I don't know Ms. Beavers, and I felt that she deserved the chance to review the evidence, make up her own mind, and tell me what she thought before I came to any conclusions about her judgment or her competence and whether the Attorney General would do a better job of investigating this case than she would.

It never once occurred to me that Ms. Beavers would make this decision without even pretending to look at the evidence or reach out to the family.

Now I've decided. And yes, I have concerns.

The unopened boxes on Amy Beavers' desk are the result of an extensive investigation by the Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation. DCI interviewed Ofc. Hill, spoke to witnesses, and visited the scene. They conducted forensics, pored over dispatch logs, and reviewed the autopsy findings. They watched footage from dash cams and body cams and probably a lot of other things. I don't know exactly what they found, because right now, the only person who gets to look at that report, and evaluate the actual

¹ <http://www.kbur.com/2015/02/06/county-attorney-will-decide-burlington-officers-fate-personally/>

evidence, is Amy Beavers. Hers is the first set of hands into which DCI put that report because *she is supposed to use it* to make a well-informed decision about who can best move this case forward. Apparently, she just can't be bothered.

We deserve better than justice in about an hour.

My client is seven-year-old boy who doesn't have a mother anymore. Gabe Steele and his four-year-old son Gunner watched their wife and mother bleed to death before their eyes. This is not an easy case. Autumn Steele, her family, and the people of Iowa deserve a fair and thorough investigation into Ofc. Hill's actions. By making this decision without reviewing any evidence, without consulting the family, in the time it takes to get a pair of discount eyeglasses, Ms. Beavers has made it clear that she will not provide one.

This morning I was willing to reserve judgment as to whether Ms. Beavers had the judgment, competence, and integrity to fairly and thoroughly investigate Ofc. Hill's actions. Now I am certain that she does not.



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Full text available at: <https://db.tt/TCkoyvIU>

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