

Murder

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the Avalanche. He said Knight, however, was wearing a seat belt.

"What probably hits so hard in this whole situation is this 4-year-old child did not have a choice in the matter (on whether to wear a restraint)," Cook said.

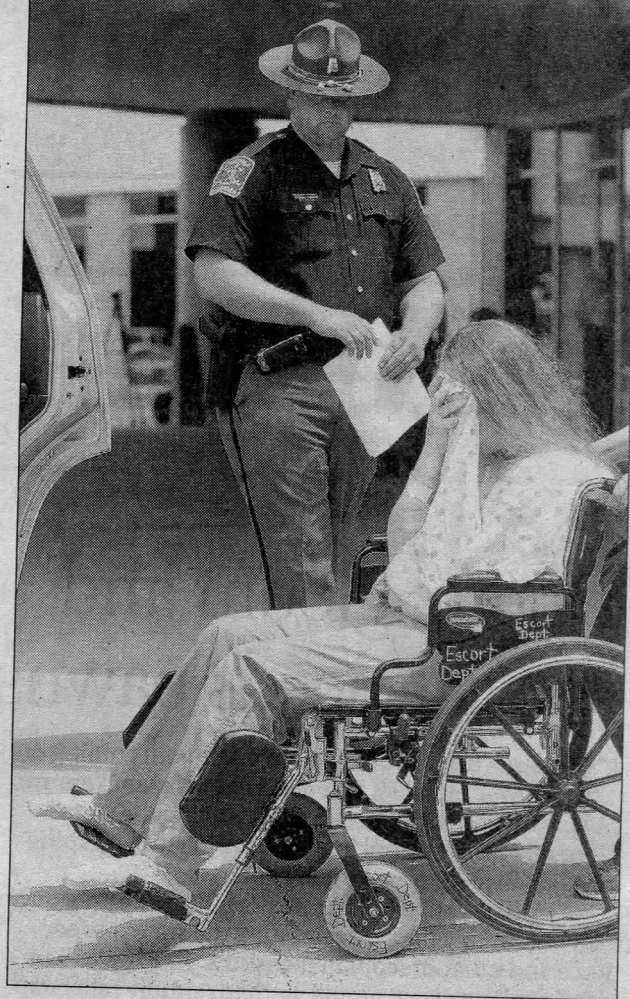
"Driving a motor vehicle is a great responsibility. You've got to moderate your speed, wear seat belts and make sure your passengers are buckled up. Put down your cellphone and be focused on driving. Be responsible."

The exact reason for the murder charge was not explained.

Geneva County District Attorney Kirke Adams said in a message to the *Dothan Eagle* that "the totality of the circumstances and factors involved in the crash lead law-enforcement to obtain a warrant for murder under the extreme indifference to human life statute. I cannot comment on what factors led to this decision at this point. I am thankful for the effort that the state troopers put into this case."

Authorities said Knight was taken to a local hospital after the accident on Saturday. She was still wearing a hospital gown on Tuesday when she staggered into the Geneva County Jail with her face covered. She had no bond as of Tuesday, but is expected to have a first appearance hearing within 72 hours of her arrest.

Cook said the Alabama state trooper traffic homicide unit is continuing its investigation into the cause of the wreck by performing a digital reconstruction and obtaining information from the vehicle's computer. Whether speed or alcohol were factors remains part of the investigation.



JAY HARE/DOTHAN EAGLE

Starlea Nicole Knight is escorted into an Alabama State Trooper vehicle after being released from the hospital and charged with first-degree murder in relation to the traffic death of her daughter over the weekend.

Cook drew attention on Tuesday to the need to especially monitor speed on county roads.

"The speed limit on county roads is 45 (miles per hour) for a reason," he said. "That is the speed that we deem to travel the road safely."