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DO THE AN EAGLE

Report: Kids asked driver to slow down

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A Midland City woman charged with murder in the death of her 4-year-old daughter was asked by other children in the vehicle to slow down moments before the fatal crash.

A crash report recently released by Alabama state troopers revealed 32-year-old Starlea Nicole Knight was under the influence of prescription medication, speeding, and texting at the time of a single-vehicle crash, which left one child dead and seven others injured.



Knight

Alabama state troopers arrested Knight on May 12, shortly after she was released from Flowers Hospital. Court records show troopers charged her with felony murder for engaging in reckless conduct which showed extreme indifference to life causing the death of her 4-year-old daughter, Zyrionh Tucker. According to the crash report, Zyrionh would've celebrated her fifth birthday on Monday, June 1.

Troopers also charged Knight with two felony counts of first-degree assault for serious physical injuries caused to two other children in the crash.

Knight remains held at the Geneva County jail on bail totaling \$250,000.

According to a statement from Trooper Kevin Cook, Zyrionh died when the 2003 Chevrolet Avalanche in which she was a passenger left the roadway and overturned. Zyrionh was ejected from the vehicle. The crash report released this week said more than one passenger was ejected from the vehicle.

Cook said a preliminary investigation showed Zyrionh was not properly restrained in the Avalanche. He said Zyrionh was in a car seat, but was not properly re-

Wreck

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strained in the car seat. He said Knight, however, was wearing a seatbelt.

According to the crash report released this week, investigating troopers spoke to some of the children at the hospital after the crash about what happened.

One of the children said Knight was operating the vehicle recklessly, speeding and texting on her phone at the time of the crash. One of the other children said "we told her to slow down; if we wreck, it's not on us."

Another child in the vehicle said Knight "took more pills than usual that day and seemed all geeked up."

The report also said troopers examined the Avalanche as part of their investigation and learned

Knight was driving 65 mph five seconds before the crash.

The single-vehicle crash happened around 6:55 p.m. May 9, about 3 miles east of Geneva on County Road 89.

Cook said the posted speed limit for all county roads in Alabama is 45 mph unless otherwise posted.

"People just need to be responsible and obey all traffic laws, and if they have young children in the vehicle they need to make sure they're properly restrained," Cook said.

Cook said the two first-degree assault charges filed against Knight were in connection to the serious physical injury suffered by two other children also inside the vehicle.

Of the seven children taken to local hospitals for treatment, the crash report showed, four of them were taken to Southeast Ala-

bama Medical Center and three others were taken to Flowers Hospital.

The report also showed of the nine people inside the vehicle four of them were air lifted by helicopter to local hospitals for treatment, which included Knight.

Two children, ages 3 and 12, were airlifted to SAMC. One other child, age 14, was airlifted to Flowers Hospital.

The children in the vehicle were aged 22 months, 3, 10, 12 and 13, with two 14-year-olds, along with the 4-year-old girl who died.

The crash report showed six of the eight children in the vehicle shared the same address as Knight on Gissendanner Road in Midland City.

Troopers said the circumstances surrounding the crash remain under investigation by the Alabama Highway Patrol.