

Suspected Impaired Driver Accused of Killing 7-Year-Old Boy

In Washington City, a tragic accident occurred on Friday afternoon when a St. George man ran a stop sign and crashed into another vehicle, resulting in the death of a 7-year-old boy. Tracy Sandoval, 46, is suspected of being impaired and possibly texting while driving at the time of the accident. Following the incident, Sandoval now faces multiple charges.

Sandoval has been charged with automobile homicide, a second-degree felony, as well as automobile homicide involving phone use while driving, three counts of negligently operating a vehicle resulting in serious injury (third-degree felonies), negligently operating a vehicle resulting in injury (a class A misdemeanor), not having insurance (a class C misdemeanor), and infractions for failing to stop for a stop sign and having an illegal window tint. These charges were filed on Monday in 5th District Court.

The police booking affidavit reveals that during the accident, Sandoval failed to stop at the stop sign on 200 South and crashed into another vehicle. The impact caused the white passenger vehicle to spin and collide with a third vehicle. The collision resulted in injuries to a 44-year-old man, a 19-year-old woman, and a 17-year-old girl. Sadly, the 7-year-old victim, Acestyn "Ace" James Butterfus-Ramirez, was unconscious and had a faint pulse upon arrival at the hospital. Tragically, he succumbed to his injuries shortly afterward.

The affidavit also details the injuries sustained by the other individuals involved in the accident. The 19-year-old woman suffered a compound fracture to her back, while the 17-year-old girl experienced injuries to her hip, ribs, and chest. The 44-year-old man sustained a head injury but declined treatment at the hospital.

Following the collision, Sandoval fled the scene in his Ford Expedition. However, law enforcement discovered the license plate of his vehicle at the crash scene. Soon after, they located Sandoval's SUV and pulled him over. Police officers noticed his bloodshot and glossy eyes, as well as the strong smell of alcohol emanating from his breath. A breath test revealed that Sandoval's blood-alcohol level was 0.148%, nearly three times the legal limit in Utah.

Sandoval admitted to drinking alcohol on the day of the incident. He also confessed to grabbing his phone to send a text message to his wife at the time of the accident. According to the affidavit, Sandoval claimed that he had dropped his phone while texting, causing him to bend down to pick it up. He looked up just before colliding with the white passenger vehicle and admitted to being aware that he ran the stop sign and caused the accident. In a nervous state, Sandoval left the scene without stopping to check on the other individuals involved.

Following this tragic event, a GoFundMe campaign has been established to support Ace's family with their medical and funeral expenses, as well as other financial burdens they may face.