

CRIME & JUSTICE

Philly families file lawsuit against Pa. State Police for pursuit that ended in a fiery, fatal crash in Delco

The April 24 crash killed four people who were part of a group that had sped away from the Brinton Lake Shopping Center in Concord Township after troopers attempted to pull them over.



Isaiah Miller lost control of a red Ford Taurus he had been driving on April 24 and crashed into a bridge embankment in Brookhaven. Four people, including Miller, died in the crash.

Steven M. Falk / Staff Photographer

by Vinny Vella

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A Philadelphia woman who survived [a police chase through Delaware County](#) this spring that ended in a fiery crash has sued the Pennsylvania State Police troopers involved in the chase, calling their actions unnecessary and unjustified.

Kemone Manning is joined in the lawsuit by the families of two people who died in the crash and a third person who was seriously injured.

Manning, 18, as well as the parents of Ka-Lyn Billups, Tyjana Motley, and a minor who was not identified, filed a wrongful-death lawsuit Tuesday in federal court in Philadelphia. Troopers [were chasing a Ford Taurus in which the four](#), as well as three others, had been riding after it fled a traffic stop in Concord Township in April.

At the time, investigators said they believed one of the car's occupants was connected to a shoplifting incident at a nearby mall. Troopers also said the vehicle's inspection was expired and its temporary license plate was illegally obscured by a tinted holder.

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David Inscho, the lawyer who filed the lawsuit, said Wednesday that the deaths and severe injuries caused by the crash should never have happened.

"This tragic accident occurred because of a stop which was unjustified for a claimed equipment violation, and resulted in a reckless and ultimately deadly chase through Delaware County in the middle of the day, exposing our clients and many other people to an unnecessary danger," he said.

A spokesperson for the state police declined to comment on the pending litigation Wednesday.

Billups, 21, and Motley, 17, were killed April 24 when Isaiah Miller lost control of the Ford Taurus the group was riding in on Route 322 in Boothwyn. Miller, 20, and front-seat passenger Ikeam Rogers, 20, also died in the crash. Motley was pregnant at the time, and her unborn child did not survive an emergency C-section, according to the lawsuit.

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Manning, Bishop Young, 20, and the minor survived the crash and were hospitalized with severe injuries, including burns, bone fractures, and traumatic brain injuries, according to the lawsuit.

At the time of the crash, state police officials said troopers had attempted to pull the group over after seeing them in the Brinton Lake Shopping Center in Concord Township. A state police spokesperson said one member of the group — he did not specify which — matched the description of a suspect from an earlier shoplifting incident at a Lululemon store there.

Trooper Daniel Sgambato, stationed at the shopping center in an unmarked vehicle, tried to pull over the Taurus, according to the lawsuit.

Miller, the driver, sped away from the stop, leading Sgambato and Trooper Jason Eckman on a five-minute, seven-mile chase. During the pursuit, Miller weaved in and around rush-hour gridlock and made illegal turns against the flow of traffic, the suit said.

Inscho, the attorney, said the troopers should have acknowledged that the “low danger” of allowing Miller to flee a stop for issues with his vehicle did not outweigh the “high danger” of the reckless driving he used to avoid them.

The troopers had other options, including using the vehicle’s plate to trace its owner, and steering the vehicle in the direction of another trooper in the area who was poised to deploy spike strips to disable the Taurus, the lawsuit said.

The filing also calls for a review of the state police chase policies, citing a similar chase a few months earlier.

In that incident, four people allegedly stole \$5,000 worth of merchandise from the same Lululemon store. Troopers chased the group, all from Philadelphia, onto [I-95](#), where they struck the car and disabled it. No one was hurt in the collision, and the car’s occupants have pending criminal cases for receiving stolen property and related crimes.

Speaking of the April incident, Inscho said: “We represent two families that have lost children, and two others who are significantly injured and whose lives who are going to be altered by this. We want to hold the state police accountable, and want to make sure this thing doesn’t happen again.”