



Mail. 5535 Memorial Dr., Ste. F #154, Houston TX 77007

Physical. 717 Texas Ave., Floor 12, Houston TX 77002

Tel. 281-973-2772 • **Fax.** 281-973-2771

Bradford J. Gilde^{§,†} | bjg@gildelawfirm.com

Bradley G. Ertl[®] | bertl@gildelawfirm.com

Chelsea N. Gillespie[&] | cng@gildelawfirm.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Family of Student Killed in Botched College Station Police Raid Sue City

Federal lawsuit: Police had no policies on military-style flash-bang grenade use and used excessive, deadly force in an incompetent SWAT raid of a college apartment resulting in the shooting death of an innocent college student

COLLEGE STATION, Texas, Feb. 7, 2025 – The family of a 22-year-old college student killed in an explosive, military-style raid allege in a new federal-court lawsuit that College Station Police Department (“CSPD”) engaged in a “patently incompetent, grossly excessive, and unreasonably unnecessary military-style raid” that caused the tragedy, according to Gilde Law Firm, PLLC.

The lawsuit was filed by Cynthia and Geoffrey Hopkins and Alyssa Wilson, the parents and girlfriend of Mark Hopkins, who was awoken by an M84 flash-bang grenade and subsequently killed by police early in the morning of Feb. 8, 2023 in the SWAT raid of the off-campus home he rented. The police department, which was previously accused of submitting a false statement to a local municipal court to obtain the raid warrant, later admitted that Hopkins was not a suspect in the raid.

Hopkins, a Blinn Junior College student preparing to transfer to Texas A&M University, died after being struck in a hail of gunfire. Wilson survived the attack, which was initiated with an allegedly unconstitutional home invasion by police and the detonation of a M84 grenade or flash-bang explosive device. Disoriented in the explosion and believing burglars had broken into the home, Hopkins grabbed his personal shotgun to protect himself and Wilson as she hid in a closet, the lawsuit alleges.

The lawsuit accuses the CSPD Police Chief Billy Couch and the department of failing to train officers in the use of proper and appropriate search and seizure procedures, the use of excessive and deadly force, and the proper use of M84 flash-bang grenades. The officer that killed Hopkins, Dakota Norris, also is accused of making false statements in the investigation. During Wilson’s eight-hour detention and interrogation, the lawsuit alleges, the police repeatedly and falsely accused Hopkins of being engaged in criminal conduct, in an effort to justify the killing. The defendants include the City of College Station, the police chief, and 10 police officers involved in the raid.

The family is represented by Bradford J. Gilde of Gilde Law Firm, PLLC, of Houston; Thad D. Spalding and Shelby J. White, of Durham, Pittard & Spalding LLP, of Dallas; and Aaron W. Perry, of Aaron Perry Law Firm, of Bellaire, Texas.

Attorney Bradford J. Gilde, of the Gilde Law Firm, PLLC, said, “Mark Hopkins, who College Station police finally admitted was never a suspect in the unconstitutional home invasion, died because he simply defended himself and Alyssa in their home – a right to defend enshrined in Texas’s Castle Doctrine.”

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[§]Board Certified Civil Trial Law, NBTA

[†]Licensed in TX, PA, & CA



As allowed by Texas law, the Hopkins family previously sued the city in state court for complete access to the incident reports and investigative documents, including the complete and unedited body camera footage of all CSPD officers involved in the warrant, the underlying raid, and the shooting of Hopkins. The family's investigation revealed that the officers involved in the killing of Hopkins received no discipline, no terminations, and no training.

"This terrible tragedy was 100% preventable," the lawsuit asserts. "Mark and his girlfriend were asleep in Mark's room. They had no idea what was happening. They were not engaged in any illegal activity and were not attempting to harm anyone. Nonetheless, because of the reckless and intentional violations of Mark's constitutional rights, Mark is now dead."

The lawsuit asserts, "While Alyssa was not ultimately shot, being the victim of CSPD's flash-bang, being in the line of fire, and witnessing the death of her boyfriend – the man she woke up next to for months – caused her to be traumatized and in shock and suffer direct personal injury in the form of pain, mental anguish, and severe emotional distress."

Cynthia Hopkins, Mark's mother, said, "The police destroyed Mark's life, and the City of College Station still refuses to be accountable. We remain focused on clearing Mark's name. As we have said before, Mark respected authority, and he had no criminal record of any kind."

The case is *Cynthia Hopkins and Geoffrey Hopkins, individually and on behalf of the Estate of Mark Hopkins, Deceased; and Alyssa Michelle Wilson v. City of College Station, Texas, et al.*, Case 4:25-cv-00473 in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Texas, Houston Division.

MEDIA CONTACT: Erin Powers, Powers MediaWorks LLC, for Gilde Law Firm, PLLC, 281.703.6000, info@powersmediaworks.com.