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TOP STORY

## Prosecutors drop charges from fatal St. Mary's crash

By JOHN WHARTON [jwharton@somdnews.com](mailto:jwharton@somdnews.com) Oct 11, 2017



The John Hanson Briscoe Circuit Courthouse for St. Mary's County is located in Leonardtown.

STAFF PHOTO BY JOHN WHARTON

St. Mary's prosecutors dismissed on Friday charges including vehicular manslaughter that had been filed against a Mechanicsville woman from a May 2016 collision that killed her front-seat passenger.

Kellie Lynn Murphy, now 21, faced trial this week on the charges from the crash resulting in the death of Bryce Aaron Hurry, a 20-year-old Clements resident. He was riding with Murphy as a passenger in her car as it collided with another vehicle on a St. Mary's roadway.

Kevin McDevitt, a lawyer for Murphy, said Tuesday that a sheriff's office collision expert had concluded that "passenger interference" was the primary cause of the crash, and that forensic evidence from the car's "black box" monitoring system was consistent with Murphy's statements from a hospital bed, and the accounts of other witnesses.

"Kellie Murphy was facing a felony charge and a potential maximum sentence of decades in prison," McDevitt said. "She is happy the state's attorney's office has elected to drop the criminal charges."

He added, "Kellie's thoughts and prayers go out to the family and friends of Bryce Hurry."

A state's attorney's office employee said Tuesday at the county courthouse that St. Mary's State's Attorney Richard Fritz (R) was referring questions about the decision to dismiss the case to its prosecutor, Assistant State's Attorney Laura Caspar, who could not be reached for comment at the office or by telephone.

McDevitt, crediting a retired Maryland State Police trooper and a private investigator for their assistance to the defense, filed last month a motion to dismiss the case, partly on grounds that sheriff's Cpl. Brandon Foor's testimony that he no longer had much of the information from his investigation included Murphy's account of "the passenger ... grabbing the steering wheel and jerking the wheel into the other lane."

"This is completely exculpatory and exonerating," McDevitt wrote, "and cannot be replicated."

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