

GWC STATEMENT ON THE DEATH OF JOHNNY BALDWIN

GWC Injury Lawyers and attorney Lance Northcutt have been asked to investigate the facts and circumstances surrounding the drowning death of Johnny Baldwin on June 4, 2020.

While the investigation is still in its early stages, the police body camera video shared on social media depicting Johnny's death is nothing short of revolting in its display of utter indifference on the part of these officers to the plight of a drowning man.

The video clearly shows Mr. Baldwin begging for help as he struggles for breath while one officer mocks him and calls him names. When another officer prepares to go to the water's edge to attempt a rescue, he is ordered to stop by the first officer. After Mr. Baldwin's head goes underneath the water, that same officer calls him a "fucking stupid-ass idiot." Later, officers can be heard laughing as they walk toward Mr. Baldwin's fully submerged body.

"The incredibly difficult job of the vast majority of good police officers is made all the more difficult when a bad few flagrantly breach the public's trust," said attorney Lance Northcutt. "Here, a man was helpless and literally begging for his life while police officers calmly ridiculed him as he died."

Northcutt similarly rejected the notion that these officers did nothing out of fear for their own safety, as was suggested in media comments attributed to Winchester Police Chief Ritchie Lewis.

According to Northcutt, "What you hear on the video isn't the voice of fear from a frightened police officer. You hear childish taunting and ridicule. You don't stand idly by and mock a dying man because you are afraid, you do it because you are so unmoored from that person's basic humanity that you don't care enough to act. Here, any one of these officers could have done something as simple as picking up a branch and extending it toward this drowning man from the safety of riverbank, but instead, they made a calculated decision to let him die."

Northcutt also notes the irony that at least one of the officers had the initial presence of mind to render assistance, only to be dissuaded from doing so by another officer: "It illustrates how even well-intentioned officers can be the catalyst for tragedy when they fail to act. Here, one officer clearly understood how desperate Johnny was in his dying moments and you can see how this officer was prepared to act to save him until he was told to stand down."

Whether any legal action will ultimately be pursued has not yet been determined and will be addressed only after the record facts are established. At present, the Baldwin family is seeking answers we hope will be forthcoming very soon.