

## Office of the Kane County State's Attorney



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### **SYCAMORE MAN CHARGED WITH AGGRAVATED DUI IN FEBRUARY TRAFFIC DEATH OF 11-YEAR-OLD BOY**

May 7, 2013

A Sycamore man has been charged with being under the influence of a controlled substance in February when the car he was driving plowed into the rear of a second car, killing an 11-year-old boy, severely injuring a second person and causing a chain-reaction crash in west-central Kane County.

Benjamin J. Black, 28 (d.o.b. 8-9-1984), of the 1500 block of Sparkhayes Drive, Sycamore, is charged with three counts of aggravated DUI, one a Class 2 felony and two Class 4 felonies, one count of operating an uninsured motor vehicle and failure to reduce speed to avoid an accident.

According to the charging documents, Black had a controlled substance in his body resulting from the unlawful use of a controlled substance at a time when the vehicle he was driving when he crashed into the car in which 11-year-old Matthew Ranken of Sycamore was a backseat passenger, killing Ranken, and severely injuring a passenger in the front seat of the car, Teale Noble. At the time of the crash, Black was driving without insurance as required by law.

According to the Kane County Sheriff's Office, the crash occurred at about 7:30 p.m. Feb. 27, 2013, on Illinois State Highway 64 in western Kane County. Black was driving a 1999 Ford Expedition westbound on Route 64. Ranken and Noble were passengers in a 1999 Chevrolet Cavalier, which was stopped, along with other vehicles, because of a crash that had occurred farther west on Route 64. Other vehicles were involved and other non-life threatening injuries were reported in the crash that killed Ranken.

The aggravated DUI charges were filed after additional evidence was revealed as part of the investigation, which had proceeded since the crash.

A warrant for Black was issued Monday, May 6, 2013, and Black was taken into custody. Black appeared in Kane County bond court this morning, and Associate Judge William Parkhurst set Black's bail at \$250,000 with 10 percent, or \$25,000 to apply for bond. Black next court appearance was set for 9 a.m. May 9, 2013, in Courtroom 313 in front of Circuit Judge James C. Hallock.

If convicted of the most serious offense, Black faces a sentence of probation or between three and 14 years in the Illinois Department of Corrections and fined up to \$25,000.

During today's hearing in front of Judge Parkhurst it was revealed that a laboratory analysis found that heroin metabolites were present of Black's urine, which was taken immediately after the crash.

At the time of the crash, Black was charged with failure to reduce speed to avoid an accident, a traffic offense, and one count of operating an uninsured motor vehicle, a Class A misdemeanor. On May 2, 2013, a judge granted a petition by the Kane County State's Attorney to drop both charges. Those charges have been reinstated.

The charges against Black are not proof of guilt. A defendant is presumed innocent and is entitled to a fair trial in which it is the state's burden to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.