

Michael T. Collins/Melissa Collins Kramer Release

According to Knox County Prosecutor John Thatcher, the Grand Jury returned an indictment yesterday against **Michael T. Collins**, 54, Frazeyburg, for the murder of Lilly Dawn Claggett, 35, St. Louisville. Collins was also indicted for the attempted murder of his 30 year old son, Jesse Collins.

Thatcher said at 10:27 p.m. on July 1, two 911 callers reported a single vehicle crash near 1596 Martinsburg Road (State Route 586), in southern Knox County. A 1998 blue Ford Contour had crashed off the left side of the road and lodged against a pine tree. The driver Lilly Dawn Claggett was shot and mortally wounded. The passenger Jesse Collins was shot and seriously wounded. Officers responding to the scene found several .45 caliber spent casings on both sides of the road immediately south of the crash. A loaded .45 caliber "High Point" semi-automatic pistol was recovered from Claggett's vehicle. The State Highway Patrol assumed the lead in the investigation with the assistance of the Knox County and Licking County Sheriffs' Offices.

At 6:00 a.m. on July 2, a SWAT team executed a search warrant at Michael Collins' residence at 10780 Pleasant Valley Road (State Route 586), in Licking County. Collins and his 28 year old daughter Melissa Collins Kramer were taken into investigative custody. Later that morning officers recovered a .45 caliber "Springfield" semi-automatic pistol behind a utility pole on Swick Holton Road, in Licking County. The .45 caliber "Springfield" was allegedly in Michael Collins' possession the night of July 1.

At 6:00 p.m. on July 2, a State Patrol aviation unit flew over Melissa Collins Kramer's mobile home at 1520 Martinsburg Road. Thatcher said the driveway to Kramer's mobile home is approximately 700 feet from where Claggett's vehicle crashed. Aerial photographs show apparent tire marks and vehicle debris in Kramer's yard, including the front bumper fascia of Michael Collins' white 1997 GMC Jimmy.

Later in the investigation, the State Patrol Crime Lab found damage and suspected white paint transfer on Claggett's Ford Contour that is allegedly unrelated to the crash into the pine tree on State Route 586. A bullet hole was found in the Ford's right rear tail light assembly, and the bullet was recovered from the spare tire in the trunk. Another bullet was recovered from the interior side of a door in the Ford's driver's compartment. No bullet holes were found on Collins' GMC Jimmy.

The Grand Jury also returned firearms specifications against Collins accusing him of using the .45 caliber "Springfield" to commit the offenses contained in the indictment. A tampering with evidence charge is included in the indictment alleging that Collins hid the gun after Claggett and his son were shot.

Melissa Collins Kramer was also indicted on a tampering with evidence charge for allegedly helping her father hide the gun. She faces obstructing justice charges as well for allegedly lying to investigators to hinder the investigation, according to Thatcher.

Michael Collins and Melissa Collins Kramer will be arraigned in the Knox County Court of Common Pleas on August 19.