

Cyclist Killed Was Witness in Mayfield Case

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Catawba County court officials have confirmed that one of the two Catawba County residents killed in a mid-day Sunday crash was a main witness in cases concerning former NASCAR driver Jeremy Mayfield. The two, 35-year old John Franklin, of Claremont —set to testify in the cases—and his 22-year old passenger, Allison Nixon of Conover, were chased on their motorcycle first by Blowing Rock Police, then other agencies through Caldwell County. They died after their motorcycle hit a car near Granite Falls just before noon Sunday. Blowing Rock Police first spotted the cycle speeding and weaving through traffic there, but discontinued their part of the chase once they were inside the city limits of Lenoir. At one point, the two pulled behind Cheeks Store north of Lenoir, and there is video of them briefly hiding behind the store, then fleeing again as lawmen arrived. Near Wal-Mart at Glenridge Drive, a woman was making a left turn onto U.S. 321 north, and as she pulled out, her car was hit by the motorcycle traveling an estimated 120 miles per hour at the time. Just what will happen with the Mayfield cases with the death of Franklin at this point is not clear. Mayfield is suspended from racing with allegations against him for property and other crimes.