

# Salt Lake City dog shot by police sparks protest

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Hundreds picketed in front of the Salt Lake City Police Department on Saturday after an officer shot a dog in his owner's backyard on June 18. (Photo credit: Fox 13)

"He was kind of all I had," Kendall tells [FOX 13 Salt Lake City](#) of Geist. "To me, he wasn't just some animal. He was my best friend. He was kind of like a child. I went through raising him, training him."

Kendall soon found out that Geist had been shot by a police officer canvassing the area for a missing 3-year-old child. The child was found in his parents' own home shortly after Geist's death. Officer Brett Olsen claims Geist was a threat to his safety, which is why he chose to use lethal force.

Public outcry following Geist's shooting has been fierce; Salt Lake City Police Chief Chris Burbank tells the [Deseret News](#) he's been "extremely disappointed" at the amount of hate mail and even death threats his department has received since the Weimaraner's death. While the department is conducting an internal investigation into the incident, the Chief says he will stand behind Officer Olsen.

"I absolutely demand that every single one of my officers treat the public with the respect and dignity they deserve. My officer, and officers, deserve no less," Chief Burbank says.

"Evidence shows the dog was extremely close," he adds. "We do have documentation.

“After 23 years in law enforcement I haven’t seen this type of public outcry when certain human beings have lost their lives.”

Chief Burbank did go on to call Geist’s death “an unfortunate circumstance.”

Salt Lake residents are demanding a thorough review of the incident that led to Geist’s demise. A Facebook page called “Justice for Geist” has already received nearly 50,000 Likes, and a rally held Saturday outside of the police department headquarters attracted hundreds of Geist supporters, many of them holding signs that read “Man’s best friend should not be gunned down” and “My pets are my family.”

“It’s overwhelming, the support of the community,” Kendall tells The Salt Lake Tribune. “That makes the loss of my best friend a little bit easier to deal with.”

Even the Salt Lake City Council is getting involved; the members wrote a letter to Chief Burbank June 25, calling for the department to review their procedures involving conducting property searches and training officers on how to read dog behavior. The council says they will support an independent review of Geist’s death.

Meanwhile, Kendall is leading the rally against the police officer who killed his canine companion. Kendall is demanding that Officer Olsen be disciplined and fired.