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By Sasha Goldstein



Geist, pictured, lived in the back yard, but was never known to be aggressive, despite a Salt Lake City police officer's claim, Sean Kendall says. (Facebook)

A devastated Salt Lake City man wants the police officer who shot his dog dead fired from the force.

Sean Kendall's 2-year-old Weimaraner, Geist, was killed last week after officers entered the man's backyard during the search for a missing nonverbal 3-year-old boy.

The 110-pound pooch approached the unidentified officer "in an aggressive manner" and "the officer, in turn, shot the dog," police said in a statement after the shooting June 18.

The missing boy was found at his home asleep about 30 minutes later.

"The department regrets the unfortunate outcome of this incident," the statement read.



Geist, seen here as a puppy, grew into a 110-pound Weimaraner and Kendall's near-constant companion. (Facebook)

The officer, a 10-year veteran, has not been placed on leave, but the shooting is under investigation by the Internal Affairs Unit, police said.

"I understand the concern for a missing child. But that doesn't negate my rights as a property owner. And it doesn't replace my dog," the 27-year-old pet owner told KSL-TV. "It doesn't justify what that officer chose to do, and that was use lethal force on my animal."

Kendall was not home at the time of the search, but his hiking-, kayaking- and cuddle-buddy was outside in the backyard, where he has a kennel.

"Other than the fact that the officer was on my property uninvited, (Geist) was doing nothing but what a dog should do. You buy a dog to help protect your property, and that's exactly what he was doing," the heartbroken owner told

the TV station.



Even once he grew up, Geist didn't know his own size — and insisted on cuddling. The dog was killed last Wednesday by a police officer in Salt Lake City. (Facebook)

The case outraged the Utah community as the story of Geist's unfortunate end spread. called "Justice for Geist", which has more than 14,000 likes and photos of people in solidarity with Kendall. And about the same number of people have signed a petition, meant for the Salt Lake PD, demanding the officer who shot the dog "be held accountable for using excessive force."

Kendall himself was invited to the police department Monday to speak with high-ranking officers to discuss the incident, a talk which left him "extremely frustrated and upset."

"The only thing that I would be satisfied with is having this officer terminated," Kendall told the Salt Lake Tribune. "I feel that his judgment was completely inappropriate."

But police defended the search, despite the dog's death. No one would comment on the use of force, which remains under investigation.



Sean Kendall said the dog was his best friend and was shot for no reason.
(KSL.COM)

"There are extenuating circumstances," Sgt. Greg Wilking told the Tribune. "A child is missing, and if you're a parent, you would want us to look everywhere for your child. We wouldn't want to leave any stone unturned."

But Kendall said even aside from the death of his friend, the shooting should be a wake-up call for the police department, which he said needs proper training on how to deal with and identify aggressive dogs.

"I'm devastated, to be honest," he told the newspaper. "Geist was a member of my family. At times he was the only thing, the only person, the only comfort that I had."

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