

[Transcript] True Sunlight / TSP #14 - What Happened to Grant and Gracie Solomon? Part Three

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I don't know why police apparently failed to immediately investigate Grant Solomon's death.

But when we look at what happened just on July 20th, 2020, we see so many red flags that we need to talk about.

The more we find out, the less Aaron Solomon's story makes sense.

My name is Mandy Matney.

This is True Sunlight, a podcast exposing crime and corruption previously known as the Murdoch Murders podcast.

True Sunlight is a Luna Shark production with reporting and writing from journalists Liz Farrell and Beth Braden.

Bom dia from Lisbon, Portugal.

We are on the other side of the pond for the next week, so if this episode sounds a little different, bear with us as we continue to attempt a healthy work-life balance while exploring some of our favorite places.

I debated taking this week off after August ended up being such a Murdoch mess.

But I know so many of you are patiently waiting for more information in the Solomon case, so that is what we will be doing today.

Also, today, you will be hearing a lot more from reporter Beth Braden, our Boots on the Ground journalist in Tennessee.

Beth has been doing a fantastic job on this case and we want to thank the Luna Shark members for supporting this very important work.

I can't wait to see where our team goes with this case.

Next week, we will actually be taking a real break from the show as we have a wedding to go to and an absolutely crazy, crazy travel schedule ahead.

And follow me on Instagram at Mandy underscore matinee for those fun, non-true crime updates.

But we have something special in store from one of your favorite Luna Shark contributors who's invested countless hours on a wild case that you probably haven't heard about.

So stay tuned on that.

The Solomon story is multi-layered and extremely complex.

Like the Murdoch story, the lawsuits, the claims on YouTube, and the court documents can have you bouncing around between theories with no immediate answers.

But if you strip all of that away and just look at July 20th, 2020 at what happened to Grant Solomon and what we know about the police investigation, if you look at one event on its own, without the context of custody battles, molestation allegations, pressures over sporting achievements or connections to powerful people, what happened to Grant Solomon on this day

[Transcript] True Sunlight / TSP #14 - What Happened to Grant and Gracie Solomon? Part Three

is a mystery on its own.

Even outside of knowing the history and dynamics of the Solomon family, even without knowing that potential motives might exist, the incident that happened in that parking lot simply makes no sense.

How could a healthy, athletic, and alert teenager get run over by his own truck in a parking lot?

How could this happen?

Mere feet from his father and how could his father not have seen it?

How could this teenager have been run over by a truck and dragged down an incline and into a ditch with seemingly little injury to his body?

And how could a pickup truck with no known mechanical issues just come out of park?

Aaron Solomon has an answer for these questions, of course.

Any video we will talk about later on, he calls it a quote, God thing.

In other words, he maintains that Grant's death is just one of those uncontrollable and unpredictable things that happen in life, like an act of nature.

But Grant's death was not an act of nature.

And in our experience, there's always an answer.

There's always one true event that happens before someone's untimely death.

Even if there's no who, there's always a how and a why.

But in this case, that how and why are elusive.

And when the how and why aren't easy to identify, that's when everyone needs to start asking questions.

So today, we're going to focus on everything we know about the day Grant Solomon died.

We're going to tell you about the town that it took place in, the officers who arrived, about what we've found in the investigation so far, and about the statements Aaron Solomon has made since Grant's death.

We're going to tell you exactly why this event is particularly troublesome.

The first thing to understand about this case is where it happened.

The Solomon family lived in Franklin, Tennessee, which is a well-to-do city in one of the nation's most well-to-do counties, about 40 minutes outside of Nashville.

Grant Solomon, who had just turned 18 a month before his death, lived with his mother Angie and his 14-year-old sister Gracie in a condo.

His father Aaron, a financial advisor and former well-known Nashville sportscaster, lived about 15 minutes away.

Grant was a talented baseball player and about to be a senior at Grace Christian Academy, a school he'd been attending since the third grade.

In the summer of 2020, Angie and Aaron signed Grant up for a private pitching clinic at a place called Ward Performance Institute in Gallatin, Tennessee, which is just over an hour from Franklin on the north side of Nashville.

Real quick, let's talk about Gallatin.

The town, now with a population of about 46,000 people, was one of the last to integrate in the South.

Today, it is one of the fastest growing areas in Tennessee and it's known for its diversity,

[Transcript] True Sunlight / TSP #14 - What Happened to Grant and Gracie Solomon? Part Three

its resident spirit of volunteerism, and their devotion to their faith, according to the Readers Digest.

In fact, three years before Grant was killed, Readers Digest designated Gallatin as the nicest place in America.

That assessment seems largely based on how the town reacted after a 2016 police shooting and how the police handled the situation.

In that case, a 40-year-old woman named Loranda Sweatt was shot to death by a Gallatin police officer.

According to reports at the time, Loranda was being evicted by the Housing Authority and at some point during the eviction became combative with a sheriff's deputy and injured him with an axe.

The deputy called for backup and a veteran officer with the Gallatin police department arrived.

Loranda, with axe in hand, advanced on the officer and he shot her.

Immediately, and in an effort to keep the peace, the police chief released the bodycam video so the public wouldn't lose trust in the department.

He called for prayer and made himself visible and accessible in the aftermath, and the community, in large part, responded in kind.

In a report by USA Today, however, Loranda's 22-year-old daughter criticized the release of the video as being only, quote, half, end quote, of the story.

She told the paper, quote,

Before they start judging, people should see the entire unedited video so they can make their own conclusions.

This is not doing my mother any justice.

She was not a person who was out there to attack police officers.

She was provoked, end quote.

Just over a week after the incident, the district attorney announced that no charges would be filed against the officer and that an investigation by the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation had shown that the shooting was justified.

Gallatin is the police department that responded to Aaron's 911 call on July 20, 2020.

Before we get into that day, though, let's talk a little bit more about this department.

In 2018, Gallatin police chief Donald Bandy was named police chief of the year by the Tennessee Association of Chiefs of Police.

Bandy started with the police department in 2001 and was named interim chief and then appointed chief in 2011 after John Tisdale, the chief at the time, retired amid allegations that he had misused a law enforcement database for personal reasons and had used racially inappropriate language in front of other officers.

According to a wrongful termination complaint filed in 2012 by Tisdale's second in command, then as Thrasher, Tisdale was accused of misusing the system to run background checks so he could allegedly use them in his side gig as an expert witness for hire.

When Thrasher asked Tisdale about the purpose of the background check, he said Tisdale lied to him.

After Thrasher reported the incident and Tisdale stepped down, Thrasher was fired by chief Bandy,

[Transcript] True Sunlight / TSP #14 - What Happened to Grant and Gracie Solomon? Part Three

officially for misusing his police vehicle, submitting false time sheets and secretly recording his coworkers, which, the latter one, he actually did.

Thrasher maintains he was fired for being a whistleblower, that his termination was in retaliation for those secret recordings.

According to the complaint, chief Bandy was also accused of making, quote, several racially suggestive comments about a pair of African American colonels serving with the Tennessee Highway Patrol, end quote, in one of Thrasher's secretly recorded conversations.

The district attorney at the time declined to file charges against Tisdale and in 2014, Thrasher's lawsuit was dismissed by a federal judge.

Okay, now the Gallatin Police Department is not a large agency, but it's also far from small.

I called Gallatin PD this week to find out how many officers are on the force, but the woman who answered the phone declined to answer that question until she could, quote, check with her supervisor, end quote.

As of Wednesday, we had not heard back from her.

However, according to a recent news piece by the WKRN television station in Nashville about how difficult it is to hire police officers these days, Gallatin is budgeted for 93 positions.

It's not clear whether those positions include administrative roles, though.

And it's not clear how many positions for law enforcement officers are vacant.

An online job description notes that the department has three divisions, patrol, the officers who handle traffic enforcement and day-to-day calls.

This would be the division of officers who responded to the scene of Grant's death in 2020, as well as criminal investigations division and a professional standards division.

Gallatin Police Department reports handling about 56,000 calls for service a year.

Calls for service is a metric that generally shows how busy any given police department is.

Calls for service can include everything from patrolling businesses at night to responding to a shooting.

And when we say patrolling businesses, we have seen agencies pad their numbers by counting every exterior check of a building as a call for service.

Just to give you something to compare it to, the town of Bluffton in South Carolina has about 14,000 fewer residents than Gallatin and a much smaller police force, but sees almost as many calls for service as Gallatin PD does.

Gallatin PD was most recently in the news this past July because of another officer-involved shooting that is currently being investigated by the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation.

In that incident, a 20-year-old armed man was approached by two officers while seated in his vehicle.

He was told to exit the car.

When he did, he apparently got into a struggle with one of the officers and shot him.

The other officer then shot and killed the man.

The officer who was struck by a bullet was taken to a hospital and treated for non-life-threatening injuries, according to news reports.

According to annual Tennessee incident-based reporting data, Gallatin officers mostly encounter

[Transcript] True Sunlight / TSP #14 - What Happened to Grant and Gracie Solomon? Part Three

crimes such as simple assault, illegal drugs, shoplifting, and vandalism.

In 2020, Gallatin PD handled one murder case.

Grant's case, obviously, was not considered a murder by law enforcement and still isn't.

So that's a snapshot of the Gallatin Police Department.

It gives us a general sense of who they are as a department.

We are not saying they're good ol' boys quite yet, but let's just say that duck is starting to quack.

And we'll be right back.

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Working out is tough, and finding a workout program that sticks is even tougher.

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When the morning Grant was killed, Gallatin police officers began to arrive around 8.48 a.m., about four minutes after the call came in.

Ultimately, seven officers responded to the scene, the last responding two minutes after 9 a.m.

[Transcript] True Sunlight / TSP #14 - What Happened to Grant and Gracie Solomon? Part Three

According to the CAD, which is a detailed report of how first responders were dispatched that morning, the first officer on the scene was Michael Shore.

He was followed by Michael Carmen, Ty Wilson, and his partner Laura Esguera.

Then came Shane Woodard, Christian Booth, and Curtis McKelvie.

It appears that Ty Wilson was assigned the case as he is the one who filled out the incident report and the Tennessee Electronic Crash Report.

A quick note about the primary documents we're using in this episode.

Our FOIA for Grant's case file, which we put in over a month ago, is not expected to be fulfilled for another two months, which is troublesome.

A second FOIA we put in for video footage and photographs is going to take until December.

We're obviously not familiar with the number of FOIA requests this agency gets, but the timeline was surprising to us because Grant's case is considered closed.

It's also an interesting timeline because of how liquidity-split the police chief was in getting that body camera footage out to the public in 2016, when seemingly clear conclusions could be made that benefited him and his department.

For now, we are using documents that were provided to us by Grant's mother Angie, who received these through open records requests that were either made by her or on her behalf.

Note to police departments, though.

If you didn't do anything wrong in an investigation, it shouldn't take you months to provide the public with documents showing taxpayers what you did to arrive at your conclusions.

You are public employees, you work for the public, and the public's business should be conducted in public.

So Ward Performance Institute is on Southwater Avenue, or Highway 109, just over two miles south of the Town Square and Gallatin's historic downtown district.

As we said in our first episode about the Solomon case, Grant was killed about three months into the COVID shutdowns.

According to traffic data from the Tennessee Department of Transportation, like all roads, this section of highway saw a dip in traffic, a 17% dip, to be exact.

The peak time for traffic at this section of road was between 11 and noon, according to data that was collected in May 2020.

Between 8am and 9am, that section of road potentially saw around 300 cars pass by, according to the data.

The road looks busy from videos we've seen, but according to the data, it is possible that no one happened to look over at the WPI parking lot in the moments when something happened to Grant that killed him.

Now, Aaron and Grant drove to WPI separately.

Again, it's about an hour from Franklin to Gallatin, more or less depending on traffic, but again, this is also COVID time when there was significantly less traffic.

There are different accounts of what time Aaron and Grant arrived there or who arrived first.

We have data from a Life360 app that Angie used to track Grant, but unfortunately it appears that data is an entirely reliable for determining a person's exact location at an exact point in time.

[Transcript] True Sunlight / TSP #14 - What Happened to Grant and Gracie Solomon? Part Three

What we don't have is a full digital forensic report showing cell phone location, orientation, and usage for both Grant and Aaron Solomon.

Remember the timeline sledge showed us in the Murdoch trial showing when Maggie's phone was in use, when it was moved, etc.

And remember seeing that data on a timeline with Alex's vehicle data?

What is the kind of data we need in this case to fully determine the basic facts, like the time each of them arrived, who arrived first if they were there long enough to interact, and if Aaron was, like he claims, checking emails on his phone, moments before he called 911?

At the very least, Aaron's phone might be able to confirm if he was telling the truth in his statement to police.

We hope that Gallatin police and the district attorney's office did this in their quote thorough investigations of this case.

We hope they did more than respond to the scene of a purported accident and call it a day.

Now, like we've said before, the details given by Aaron in various reports and the story he's given about what happened to Grant have slight variations.

We don't put too much weight on that because victims of traumatic incidents do have the tendency to mix up details, but we did take a closer look at the 911 call.

The two statements provided to separate Gallatin police officers in the immediate aftermath of the incident on July 20th, 2020.

As well as Aaron Solomon's written statement to see what we could learn.

Let's start with Aaron's call to 911 that was answered at 8.43 a.m. and 57 seconds.

Here is the story Aaron tells 911 from the get-go.

My son's truck backed over him and he just rolled over him and drug him into the ditch and it's on top of him.

Okay, so right away he said Grant's truck backed up over him and dragged him into the ditch and now Grant is trapped.

Three things to take note of that we will get back to.

In several points of the 911 call Aaron seems to be talking to someone else.

Remember that.

Two, he can't really answer whether or not Grant is awake and it's hard to tell if he is actually by Grant's side.

And number three, he uses the word trapped.

Now there is another part where Aaron said what happened, specifically he says in the 911 call that there were three people trying to help Grant and he doesn't know if Grant is conscious or not.

Oh my God, this is not good.

Is he awake?

Oh please hurry.

I don't know.

I don't think so.

He's not alert, right?

[Transcript] True Sunlight / TSP #14 - What Happened to Grant and Gracie Solomon? Part Three

No, he's out.

And he's trapped.

I've got three guys here and he's trapped under the truck.

Okay.

Oh my God.

Here's another point where Aaron seems to be talking to someone else.

Aaron then says that the truck somehow backed up over Grant after he was just getting out of it.

It's a white truck.

That's my son.

It's somehow backed up.

Yeah.

Yeah, I'm on 911 right now.

Oh my God.

Oh my God.

Was your son working on it?

No.

No.

He was just getting out of it.

We're on an incline and I guess he didn't have it in park or something or it wasn't engaged or.

Oh my God.

Now again in another part of the 911 call.

Aaron doesn't fully answer the operator's questions and it's hard to tell if he's actually next to Grant.

It sounds like he is talking to people trying to help him and again he says the Grant is trapped.

Listen to this part closely.

No.

No.

And he still wants to truck.

No one can get in front of under it.

No.

It's all units and rounds to you.

I'm just asking you questions before we get to the datum, okay?

Can you check and breathe in?

Somebody's telling me that he's coming too.

Okay.

Maybe.

He's waking up.

Maybe.

Kind of keeping still.

So he is.

[Transcript] True Sunlight / TSP #14 - What Happened to Grant and Gracie Solomon? Part Three

Yeah, he can't move.

I don't think he can move.

I don't know.

Okay.

No, he can't move.

He's trapped.

He's got somebody in round.

Now would he wake up?

He might be there.

I'm telling him there.

I'm telling him.

Can somebody keep him there and talk to him?

Yeah, somebody talked to him there.

Shit.

There's blood.

Is he facing up or down?

He's facing up.

They said he may ask for it.

We need to hurry.

Oh my God.

At the end of the call, it says Aaron is close to Grant and he is speaking as though Grant is now awake.

Notice, he still says we, referring to other people who were apparently on the scene.

So does he have blood coming out of his mouth?

Yeah, yeah, there's blood coming out.

Yeah, somehow it's dragging him down, I think.

I don't know whether it was in his heart or what, or if it didn't engage the brain or it drug him underneath somehow.

Okay.

They said he's facing up.

Okay.

But he's leading from his mouth.

So, Grant, turn your face to the side if you can, barely, but be careful.

Don't move him, okay?

No, we can't move him.

We can't move him.

At that moment in the call, it's clear first responders were now on scene and this is when the 911 call ended.

We'll be right back.

Which brings us to the reports from first responders on the scene.

Not one of them mentioned a witness other than Aaron.

Officer McKelvie specifically noted he was not able to locate other witnesses.

In fact, Luna Shark reporters Beth Braden and Sam Berlin spoke to a first responder who was first

[Transcript] True Sunlight / TSP #14 - What Happened to Grant and Gracie Solomon? Part Three

on the scene.

He said there was no one near the truck when they arrived.

Not Aaron and not, quote, three men as Aaron had claimed.

This first responder arrived at 848, which is four minutes and 14 seconds after the 911 call was placed.

Meaning, this first responder was likely in the vehicle that is blaring the sirens you can hear on the 911 call at the end.

And something else this first responder said to our reporters that was a red flag, he said when they arrived on the scene, Grant did not need to be extricated from the vehicle.

A written report from the EMTs noted that the weight of the truck was not on Grant and that Grant was under the front of the truck between the two front tires.

First responders secured the wheels of the truck because they were told it was a rolling event, meaning they were reacting to the information they were given by 911 dispatchers and not necessarily what they were observing in front of them.

They also jacked up the front of the vehicle for easier access, but Grant could have been moved without the jacks in place according to this first responder.

And yet Aaron told the dispatcher that the three men couldn't get Grant out.

The first responder we spoke with said that when he and the other responders arrived, Aaron was standing at the top of the hill, not near the truck at the bottom.

In fact, this first responder remembers that when they arrived at 848 a.m., no one was with Grant.

Aaron and a few other people, presumably the two coaches who were inside of WPI when this happened,

were all standing up in the parking lot and not near the truck at all.

Also, and this is perhaps the most heartbreaking moment in all of this,

no one tried to ride to the hospital with Grant according to this first responder.

All told, EMTs were only on the scene briefly.

They got Grant out from under the truck and they left with him about 10 minutes later.

The first responder told us there were still signs of life when they left.

A life flight was called, but then canceled.

So if Aaron wasn't near the truck when first responders arrived,

is that why he couldn't answer questions as to if Grant was conscious or breathing?

Why did Aaron say Grant was trapped if Grant wasn't trapped?

And why did he say there were witnesses there if there weren't?

McKelvie's report specifically states that he had spoken with the two employees who were inside the gym at the time.

Yet there is no other evidence of either employee being fully interviewed about what they heard.

Neither appears to have been asked to submit a statement.

One thing we want to note, by the way, is this.

Sometimes responding officers will listen to the 911 call on their way to the scene, or after getting to the scene so they know what the caller said

and what the caller's demeanor was in the recording versus what they're seeing in front of them.

Additionally, officers will usually listen to the 911 call before writing their incident report.

Again, to ascertain that the things they learned at the scene from the caller

[Transcript] True Sunlight / TSP #14 - What Happened to Grant and Gracie Solomon? Part Three

jive with what they initially told the dispatcher.

So it's confusing to us why the responding officers didn't seem to notice that Aaron had told the dispatcher

that there were people on the scene when they couldn't locate any witnesses after they got there. And it's confusing to us why other first responders didn't see anyone else near the truck when they arrived right as the 911 call was ending.

That brings us to Aaron's two statements to police and his written statement, which he wrote while he was still on the scene and Grant was being attended to by paramedics.

To officer sure, Aaron said he was, quote,

doing some work in his car when he heard a loud noise, looked up and saw the truck wasn't there.

Aaron got out of his vehicle and noticed the truck had rolled into a ditch.

Aaron stated he saw his son under the truck and called 911, end quote.

To officer McKelvie, Aaron said he, quote,

saw Grant get out of the truck and walk toward the back door area.

He then noticed the truck was no longer beside him and he started to get out and look and he heard a large crash and observed Grant under the vehicle.

Solomon stated that he called 911 at that time and attempted to help his son, end quote.

Not that much different there, but in Aaron's written report,

which he wrote before he went to the hospital, he said, quote,

my son Grant and I pulled into WPI separately, parked side by side.

I was still in my car, but noticed my son got out to get his baseball gear out of the back of his truck.

I looked down to check a work email and the next thing I know,

I hear and see the truck rolling backwards into the ditch.

I get out of my car to try and find my son and saw that he was trapped underneath the truck and immediately called 911, end quote.

In his written statement, he didn't say that he had heard a loud noise that caught his attention.

He also said he looked up and saw Grant's truck rolling backward into the ditch.

However, in his statements to officers, he said that when he looked up, the pickup truck had already rolled into the ditch.

This was a big one for us.

And again, I realize that it's normal for victims to get details mixed up in the aftermath, but that's kind of a big detail.

If he heard the crash, wouldn't the gym employees inside have heard it too?

Both employees later told a private investigator hired by Angie that they hadn't heard anything.

If Aaron had seen the truck rolling, wouldn't he have heard Grant screaming for help or making any noise at all?

And if so, wouldn't he have mentioned that?

Why does Aaron keep saying Grant was trapped underneath when EMS said he wasn't trapped?

In their report, the lead paramedic wrote that Grant was quote, underneath the front of the truck between the two front tires.

However, the weight of the vehicle was supported by the wheels and was not being exerted upon the patient.

End quote.

[Transcript] True Sunlight / TSP #14 - What Happened to Grant and Gracie Solomon? Part Three

And why don't any of these reports mention the mysterious other people that Aaron mentioned in the 911 call?

Aaron is consistent in his story that he was in his car and on his phone answering messages when this occurred.

In other words, he's consistently made it clear that he and Grant did not interact when they both pulled into the parking lot, which is interesting because up until the last minute, Angie had told Aaron that Grant didn't want him there.

It wasn't clear until right before Grant left that morning that Aaron would be coming to the clinic, something that Grant said he was okay with because he was worried he would have an asthma episode.

Now, while police apparently didn't collect an official statement from gym employees on the scene, a P.I. hired by Angie Solomon did.

Again, neither Tyler Mark nor the other coach Drew Hall saw or heard anything.

They were inside the windowless building preparing for the appointment.

They came out less than a minute into Aaron's 911 call.

According to a report from a private investigator hired by Angie, Drew and Tyler saw the truck in the ditch and Aaron was on the phone with 911.

Is Tyler who Aaron was talking to in the 911 call?

It's hard to tell.

Tyler spoke to Angie's private investigator.

Here's what his report on that conversation said.

Aaron did not go down into the ditch but stood up at the top of the ditch waiting for the ambulance. He stated that Aaron was very upset and crying.

Mr. Mark advised that shortly after he came outside, a man pulled up in a gray pickup truck and parked the truck awkwardly in the lot.

The man asked if he could do anything to render assistance, but he was told that 911 had been called and that EMTs were on the way.

According to the report, both coaches said that something was wrong with the way Aaron described what happened.

Like it didn't make any sense to them when they considered the scene in front of them.

Now considering these slight inconsistencies that police gathered initially from Aaron, it's really frustrating as to why there weren't more interviews or follow-ups.

This is becoming a common theme with a lot of the cases we look into involving suspicion of cover-up and corruption.

The little police work we're able to see that went into these investigations is sometimes so brief it's hard to tell if this is incompetence, corruption, or just plain laziness.

For example, the Tennessee electronic traffic crash report has a whopping two-sentence narrative. That's it.

It says, quote, the owner of vehicle one exited the truck and was subsequently struck by truck as it rolled down the parking lot.

Vehicle one drug the owner into the drainage ditch where it came to rest.

The owner was trapped underneath.

[Transcript] True Sunlight / TSP #14 - What Happened to Grant and Gracie Solomon? Part Three

Aaron was the only one on scene saying that Grant was dragged and then trapped by his own truck. So why does the crash report taken by Gallatin officer Ty Wilson state this as fact?

It bothers me when police reports state something as fact without saying how they got that fact.

It means something completely different when they know something from camera footage, for instance,

which in this case they didn't, or they know something because someone told them it.

They apparently just took Aaron's word for it, wrote it down, and went along with it without much question as far as we can tell.

The crash report also states, quote, occupants struck by own vehicle as fact.

Another narrative by Gallatin police officer Ty Wilson simply said, quote, on Monday, July 20, 2028, approximately 844,

I officer Wilson responded to a serious incident on S water 109.

Upon arrival, I was able to initiate any further investigation.

Victim Grant Solomon was struck by his own vehicle.

And that was it.

Brief with no explanation as to how he arrived at that stunning conclusion.

Another point of interest for us is the vehicle tow report and diagram, which is signed by both Wilson and the tow truck driver.

The diagram is generic and free of detail.

It simply has circles on areas of the truck where damage was apparent.

But there are no specifics noted about what that damage looked like or what it could mean.

If they were trying to reconstruct points of impact, for instance, if they were trying to explain the why and how of this incident with this drawing,

well, they didn't even come close to getting there.

From photos taken at the scene, we can see that the rear bumper of the vehicle was bent downward, almost like what you might expect it to look like had it been rear ended.

Though it's difficult to tell the extent of damage to the front of the vehicle from these photos, all in all, the damage does appear to be minor, which is noteworthy.

The tow truck arrived on the scene to get Grant's truck at 9 10 am.

The items inside Grant's truck, including his baseball equipment, his Xbox and some mail, were inventoried and the truck was removed from the scene and taken to a tow yard.

It doesn't appear that police considered the truck to be evidence of any kind.

Now, Grant was taken to Sumner Medical Center where he died shortly after at 9 28 am.

In a hospital report by Dr. Kimberly Plourd, the emergency room doctor that day, she noted a severe laceration to the back of Grant's head with blood coming from both his ears, nose and mouth.

Also noted were, quote, probable skull defects, meaning she could feel the damage to Grant's head.

She also noted there was no trauma to the front of the neck and no bruising on the abdomen.

The doctor said CPR was stopped at 9 28 am and that, quote,

it was apparent that resuscitation was not going to be successful due to prolonged time of cardiac arrest,

in addition to blunt trauma with massive head injury.

For this reason, resuscitation was terminated.

[Transcript] True Sunlight / TSP #14 - What Happened to Grant and Gracie Solomon? Part Three

Let's talk about that cardiac arrest.

Grant's death certificate noted that his cause of death was multiple blunt force trauma and that he had been, quote, run over by a vehicle.

This last part is listed in the spaces for both Grant's cause of death and in another box for, quote, describe how injury occurred.

It's stated as fact, even though no investigation appears to have been done by a medical examiner, no extensive investigation appears to have been done by police.

One thing the death certificate doesn't note is, quote, cardiac arrest as a cause of his death, even though his medical records list this as his principal diagnosis, it also notes that the cause of this cardiac arrest is unspecified.

The death certificate was signed off on by Dr. John R. Pinkston, the medical examiner in Sumner County.

We have reached out to Dr. Pinkston several times by phone and email and have left messages to be passed along to him.

Thus far, he has not returned our attempts to get in touch.

To us, one of the stranger things about this case is a lack of an autopsy.

Keep in mind the larger context here.

Like we said in episode 11, Grant had recently had COVID and had been prescribed an inhaler because he was having trouble breathing.

With COVID being so new to everyone at that time, it would stand to reason that an autopsy would have been warranted

just to see if there had been some other COVID or lung-related medical emergency that happened before the incident with the truck.

In several text messages leading up to this day, Grant had expressed hesitation and concern about doing any physical activity that could strain his lungs.

And it wasn't clear what exactly was going on with him yet, which is another reason it is so baffling to us that Aaron wouldn't have requested an autopsy.

Why wouldn't he want to know if Grant had had an episode that caused him to fall under the truck? Why wouldn't he want to know if there was any other underlying cause to what was an otherwise freak accident?

Beyond that, there's this.

According to Tennessee law, there are 10 different types of deaths that, quote, must be reported to and investigated by the county medical examiner.

Among those types include deaths due to violence or trauma of any type.

Deaths believe to represent a threat to public health and deaths in any suspicious, unusual, unnatural manner.

Based on what we know about Grant's death, there's an argument to be made that his death qualifies for investigation referral to the medical examiner based on anyone or even all of those reasons.

In fact, the Tennessee Department of Health specifically cites deaths due to vehicular crashes as an example of a type of death that needs to be reported to and investigated by the examiner.

In the records we have so far, we don't see any information about a referral to the medical examiner or any other kind of timestamp from the hospital record saying he had been called after Grant died.

So what happened here?

[Transcript] True Sunlight / TSP #14 - What Happened to Grant and Gracie Solomon? Part Three

Even taking Aaron at his word, even without suspecting that there was foul play here, it would seem that an autopsy would have been a logical and legal next step.

Now, let's go back to the scene of the crash.

According to the EMT report, Grant started receiving CPR at 8.53 AM.

Paramedics administered oxygen, fluid, and epinephrine in an attempt to save Grant, and they intubated him to help him breathe.

The ambulance left the scene at 9.03.

In evidence and property control form from the police department lists only a CD with photos and quote, statements.

It's interesting that statements is plural because the only statement we appear to have is Aaron's written statement.

In addition to the toe-in diagram that we talked about earlier, there's another drawing we need to mention.

Well, let's start with this fact first.

The Gallatin Police Department has a seasoned fatal accident reconstructionist on their command staff.

According to the agency's website, Captain Bill Valdick has been part of the department's accident reconstruction team since 2000.

And according to the list of officers who responded to the scene of Grant's fatal accident, Valdick was not called to the scene.

And yet we have what appears to be another poor attempt at accident reconstruction.

A not-to-scale diagram showing an overhead view of the scene and approximately where the truck had been parked before the crash,

as well as an estimated path across the parking lot and its final resting spot in the ditch.

Like so many things in this case, this diagram raises more questions than it answers.

The diagram marks the driver's side door area as the first area of impact.

Then it supposes that the truck approached the ditch.

Grant was lying underneath it with his head near the rear driver's side and his feet near the rear passenger side.

Then it notes the resting place of the vehicle in the ditch without a clear notation of the position of Grant's body.

The position of the truck does not accurately represent its final resting place that we can see in the photos we have from the scene.

This poor attempt at accident reconstruction does not include exact measurements, nor does it show an accurate placement of where Grant was found.

We don't know whether any of the other responding officers were part of the department's accident reconstruction team,

but we do know that according to the Peace Officer Standards and Training Commission in Tennessee,

none of the seven Gallatin police officers who responded to the scene that day

appear to have any continuing education or specialty certifications in accident reconstruction listed in their files.

Now, another strange thing to note.

[Transcript] True Sunlight / TSP #14 - What Happened to Grant and Gracie Solomon? Part Three

It doesn't appear that law enforcement, i.e. the investigators examined the parking lot or the alleged path of the truck for blood or other tissue to suss out where Grant's initial fall would have been

or to discern where he might have fallen and hit his head before being dragged.

Also, as we said, Grant's truck was towed from the scene and the contents of his truck were inventoried,

but it doesn't appear that law enforcement, i.e. the investigators, searched or examined the ditch, because if they had, they would have noticed some things.

A first responder from the scene told us that Grant's cell phone and glasses were lying near the sidewalk.

A photo from the scene shows Grant's Grace Christian Academy ball cap lying underneath the truck. According to Angie, the hat was retrieved when Grant's cell phone resurfaced.

We know officers looked inside the cab of the truck because there's a photo of it, but did they check to see if the vehicle was in or out of park?

And if they did, why isn't that noted in their report?

These officers seem to have demonstrated zero curiosity as to how Grant got from point A in the parking lot to point B in the ditch.

Angie says Aaron called her at 8.58 to tell her there'd been an accident.

It took her about an hour to get to Sumner Regional Medical Center from her home in Franklin.

By the time she got there, Grant had already been pronounced dead.

One week after Grant died, Angie was full of questions about her son's death and desperate for answers.

Keep in mind that she hadn't seen any of the official reports or talked to any of the officers at that point.

The week after Grant's death was a grief-filled haze as she waded through planning her only son's funeral while caring for her daughter Gracie

and attending to the tasks that come with the death of someone gone too soon.

Aaron, the man she had battled with in the courtroom over the years, was the only apparent witness.

He was the only person who could give her the information she needed.

And we'll be right back.

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[Transcript] True Sunlight / TSP #14 - What Happened to Grant and Gracie Solomon? Part Three

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Call me basic, but I love fall flavors like pumpkin and squash.

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With pre-portioned ingredients and easy step-by-step recipes delivered straight to your door, we save so much time and cut out the hassle.

It's like date night every night we cook dinner together.

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And this is where we get another variation in Erin's story of what happened.

Angie and her best friend Melanie Hicks, who Angie calls Mel,

went to Erin's home in Franklin on July 27th to see the truck,

which Erin had driven home from the tow yard just two days after the incident that killed Grant.

Angie hit record on her cell phone camera and asked Erin if it was okay to record their conversation as she began asking Erin what happened.

Is that under the axle?

Okay, so his feet were down the other way?

Angled back like that, so the wheels, neither of these tires were on him.

But I don't know if the back ones had run over him.

I don't know, you know, I don't, because I didn't actually see everything happen.

Wait, so these tires were in front of him?

Correct.

Okay, so you're saying that he was laying right here.

In the video, Erin proceeds to stick his feet under the front of the truck

to demonstrate the direction Grant's body was lying in.

His head near the inside of the front passenger tire,

and his body angled in such a way that his feet were below the driver's side front tire.

Erin went on to tell Angie that when he first began walking toward Grant's truck in the ditch, that he was looking through the windshield thinking Grant would be sitting in the driver's seat.

Instead, he said as he got closer, he could see Grant's head and his red t-shirt under the truck.

Erin told Angie he called 911 immediately as he stood at the top of the ditch,

while, quote, people told him he needed to sit down.

I was more in the front of it, and I'm calling 911 immediately,

and I'm probably, you know, kind of this,

at the top of the ditch on this side of it, at the edge of the parking lot.

[Transcript] True Sunlight / TSP #14 - What Happened to Grant and Gracie Solomon? Part Three

And literally, because I'm, you know, people are like, man, you need to sit down because you're... What people, though?

Are these the three guys Erin referenced on the 911 call?

If they were there as Erin was calling 911 and telling him to sit down, then they had to have been witnesses to the accident, right?

And if they are witnesses, where did they go before first responders arrived?

And why haven't they ever come forward to tell authorities what they saw?

Also, it's interesting how Erin is sure to tell people that he, quote, called 911 immediately.

That is not generally something someone would doubt in an accident such as this one.

Of course, a father is going to call 911 right away,

so why does Erin feel it's so important to note this repeatedly?

Is it because he didn't want to be accused of wasting time trying to rescue Grant himself, or is it something else?

Whatever the reason, this is a piece of information that Erin seems intent on making clear.

In the video, Erin goes on to tell Angie that, quote, two dudes came

and everybody was afraid to try to move the truck because it was, quote, unstable.

Erin said he was close enough to see that Grant wasn't moving his mouth,

but that he stayed on the phone with 911 and didn't get very close to Grant.

If he called 911 immediately, this conversation about whether the truck should be moved would have been recorded by dispatch, no?

The next day on July 28th, Angie and Mel met Erin and his friend Sam Johnson at WPI.

Erin drove Grant's truck back to the scene that day

and appears to have parked it in the same spot where Grant had parked it just eight days prior.

Angie was again recording the conversation.

Erin tells her what happened just before the crash.

Last time I see Grant is literally like this.

And I see him, I don't see the truck rolling yet.

Well, yeah.

I don't even see it rolling until I see it kind of settling back there.

Right at that time, I get like a work email and I'm like,

I just look down for a second to see.

So I didn't see to the point where he gets to this.

Did you catch that?

Erin says, I don't even see it roll until I see it kind of settling back there.

And he gestures toward the ditch.

In his handwritten statement to police, the same one Angie hadn't seen yet on July 28th, 2020.

Erin wrote, quote, I look down to check a work email and the next thing I know,

I hear and see the truck rolling backwards into the ditch.

So did he or didn't he see the truck roll?

Erin again tells the story of walking down the parking lot and realizing Grant wasn't in the cab of the truck,

but he could barely see him underneath, he said.

So he called 911.

[Transcript] True Sunlight / TSP #14 - What Happened to Grant and Gracie Solomon? Part Three

By this point in the video, Erin, Sam, Angie and Mel are all standing on the edge of the parking lot looking down into the ditch.

This time when he tells the story, he says that quote, somebody had just run out and said, man, you need to sit down.

And he appears to gesture toward WPI.

Again, wouldn't this moment have been captured on the 911 call?

According to a report from Angie's private investigator, Drew Hall, who was one of the coaches at WPI there that day, said that he and Tyler Mark were the only two employees at WPI and that neither of them had seen what happened.

So who, quote, ran out in Erin's version of the scene at WPI?

Listen to what he says next.

I knew I needed, I knew looking at this, that humans could not, like the three or four people or five people couldn't help at the moment, that 911 needed to get here immediately.

So on with the dispatch going, please get here fast.

Three or four or five people.

Who else was there?

And where had they all gone by the time first responders arrived?

Remember, the first responder we spoke to said nobody was around the truck when they arrived on the scene and their arrival on the scene is caught on the 911 recording.

Erin then says he was sitting on the edge of the parking lot at the top of the ditch when emergency personnel arrived and says again that somebody insisted he sit down.

Erin told Angie that when police arrived on the scene, they quote, immediately told him that they needed him to come inside the WPI building.

It made him angry to be pulled away from grant, he said.

There's something curious in the video at this point, and we're not sure what to make of it.

Sam, who is Erin's friend, interrupts to ask Erin if he's okay with the fact that Angie is recording him.

Erin agrees that it's fine and keeps talking, saying he was pulled inside WPI but believed that officers were trying to spare him from seeing paramedics pull grant from underneath the truck. Instead, he says he came back outside in time to chase the ambulance to the hospital.

Near the end of the video, Erin is standing in the ditch and points out the rock that he says he believes Grant hid his head on.

It could be notable that Erin tried to provide a clear explanation for Grant's head trauma when everything else about his account was so murky.

Erin doesn't seem to want to commit to quote seeing the truck take down Grant.

He doesn't seem to have any concrete details about what he heard or saw, nor does he seem particularly mystified about how he could have missed it.

Ultimately, what we have here is a problem that used to have solutions.

Had police shown just a little more curiosity in their investigation, we'd know more about what that parking lot looked like.

For instance, was there any physical evidence that showed Grant falling at the top of the incline and

[Transcript] True Sunlight / TSP #14 - What Happened to Grant and Gracie Solomon? Part Three

being dragged into the ditch?

Had Erin elected to have an autopsy, we'd know for certain whether Grant had experienced lung trauma prior to his death, which could possibly explain the strange event.

More than that, if the medical examiner had investigated Grant's death, then we might know what story Grant's body told and what happened to him in the moments before his last breath.

What we have here is an incident that makes no sense mechanically.

A body that doesn't seem to have been dragged.

A father with variations in his account of what happened to his son.

A father whose account doesn't seem to be supported by the facts.

A father with connections who seemed to be immediately believed by the police.

A death certificate that doesn't exactly match the medical records.

In this story, we have unverified information being stated as fact.

We have investigators who seem to have done the bare minimum.

And we have a police chief who is free and open with information when it supports his agency's competence.

But who seemingly drags his feet when journalists are simply seeking evidence to back up law enforcement's assertion that there was a thorough investigation conducted into Grant's death.

Again, absent of all of the context of Erin's relationship with his family, his text with Grant, the divorce, the accusations made on YouTube and the lawsuits.

Absent of all of that and we are still left with all of this.

When we are looking at the how and the why of someone's untimely death, it shouldn't be this difficult.

It should be simple and straightforward and supported by the evidence.

But it's not and that's why we know it is time to dig further.

Stay tuned, stay pesky and stay in the sunlight.

Right, Luna?

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