



PURSUANT to URCrP, Rule 16(e)  
and UCS §77-38-6, the victim(s)  
and witnesses' identifying  
information has been redacted  
from the enclosed documents.

## **FORCE INVESTIGATION TEAM**

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## Force Investigation Team Report

### Officer-Involved Fatal auto-pedestrian Accident

Incident: Officer-Involved Fatal Auto-pedestrian accident

Agency(s) Involved: Weber State Police Department

Relevant case numbers: OPD 21G68474, 21CS1689

Date of Incident: September 30, 2021

Time of Incident: 22:41 hrs.

Location of Incident: Intersection of 27<sup>th</sup> and Washington

FIT Lead Investigator: Investigator Steve Zaccardi

Involved Officer(s): Paul Tavake

## **Introduction**

On September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021 there was a fatal auto-pedestrian accident that occurred at the intersection of 27<sup>th</sup> and Washington Blvd. This accident involved a patrol officer from Weber State University, who was on duty at the time. This type of incident falls under the Weber County OIS protocol.

The officer-involved fatal incidents are the investigative responsibility of the Weber County Attorney Force Investigation Team (FIT) as outlined in the protocol. The information contained in this document is a summary of the complete investigation conducted by the WCAO FIT with assistance from investigators with the Weber County Homicide Task Force. The following investigators worked on the case with a summary of their assignments.

Lead Investigator: Steve Zaccardi, WCAO FIT

Crime Scene/Witness statement: Steve Haney, WCAO FIT

Surveillance Video Canvas: Cameron Hartman, WCAO FIT

Auto Accident Analysis/Expert: Officer Mark Johnson, OPD Traffic Unit

## **Summary**

On September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021, at or around 22:40 hrs, Weber State Police Officer Paul Tavake was on duty and driving northbound on Washington Blvd, on his way to doing a premise check at the Weber State Downtown location at 2314 Washington Blvd. At the same time, William Casselman was walking east on 27<sup>th</sup> Street, on the south side of the street. Casselman attempted to cross Washington Blvd, in the south crosswalk. At 22:41 hrs, Officer Tavake went through the intersection at 27<sup>th</sup> Street. Officer Tavake's patrol vehicle struck Casselman as he attempted to cross. Casselman was pronounced dead at the scene.

## **William Casselman**



William Casselman was born on July 16, 1952. At the time of the incident, Casselman was living at . Casselman was walking with the assistance of a cane.

## **Officer Paul Tavake**



Officer Paul Tavake has been a full-time police officer with Weber State University since April of 2020. He is currently assigned to the patrol division and works evenings.

**Accident location  
2700 Washington Blvd. Ogden Utah**



**Camera footage**

**Surveillance footage**

Investigators with FIT conducted a canvas of the neighborhood looking for surveillance footage of the incident. They located a security camera at Ivan's Ice Cream located at . The camera was pointed in a southern



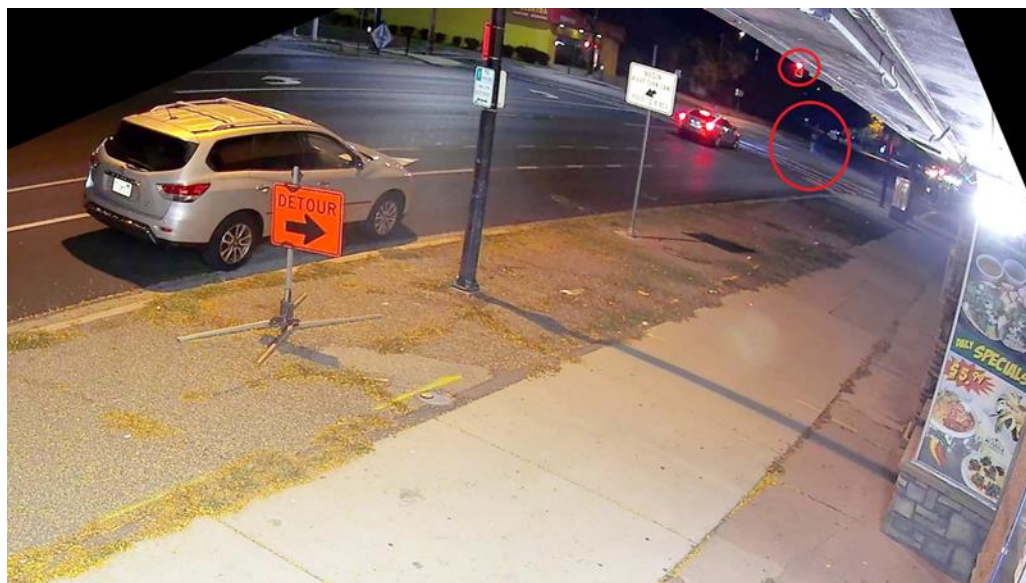
direction and captured the accident from a distance. [Note: The below photo was a still photo taken from the surveillance video as it appeared that night. The series of still photos shown after that were taken from an enhanced version of the surveillance video. In the enhanced version the image was lightened to further assist the reader in seeing the objects. end of note]



There are also marked crosswalks on all 4 sides of the intersection that are also controlled by pedestrian walking signals.

In the footage, Casselman approached the intersection of 27th and Washington Blvd. on the Southwest corner of the intersection. The light for North and South and traffic was red at the time. The light for West and East traffic was green.

As Casselman reached the corner, and immediately begin to cross the street from West to East on the Southside of the intersection. The walk signal never illuminated giving Casselman the signal or right of way to cross.



As Casselman was walking across the street against a do not walk signal the light for North and South turned green. At this point, Casselman was still crossing East and had barely reached the #1 travel lane for Southbound traffic.



As Casselman continued crossing just as he reached the center turn lane, just as he did so a vehicle went through the intersection in the #1 Southbound travel lane and did not appear to slow or brake, indicating that the driver probably didn't see Casselman crossing.



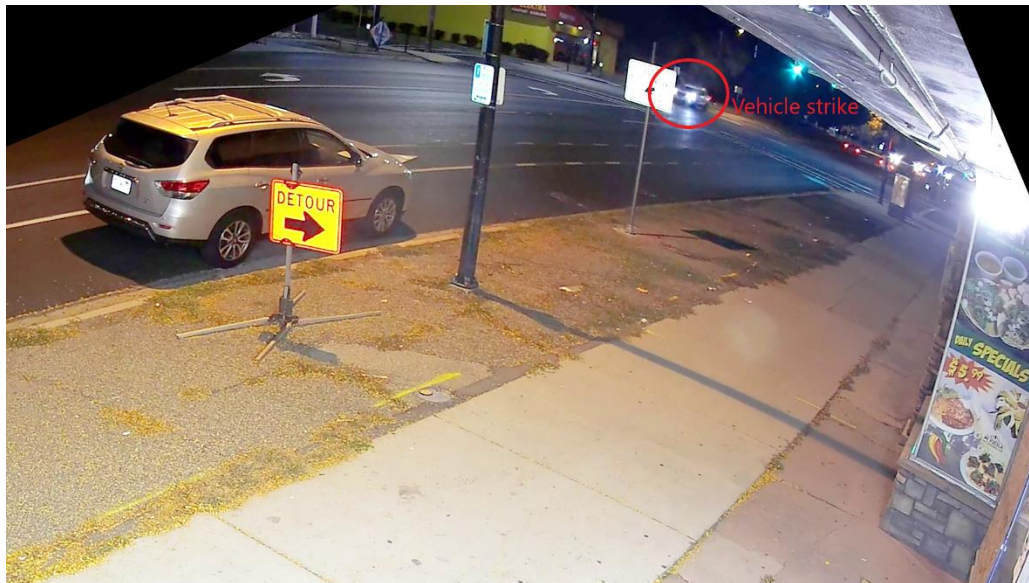




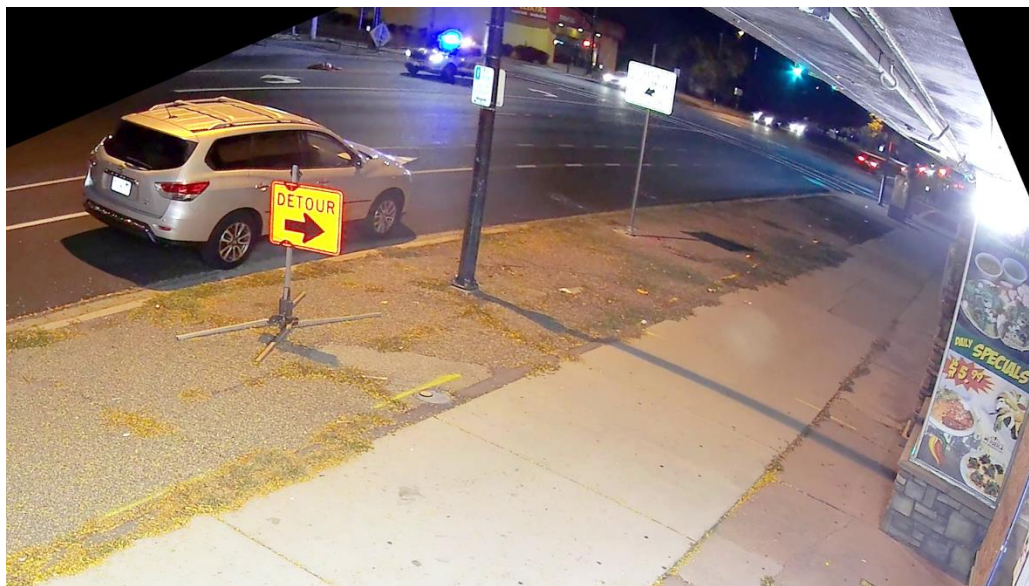
Casselman continued to move East and into the #1 travel lane at this moment Officer Tavake was traveling Northbound in the same lane, the Officer did not stop or slow, indicating that he probably did not see Casselman.

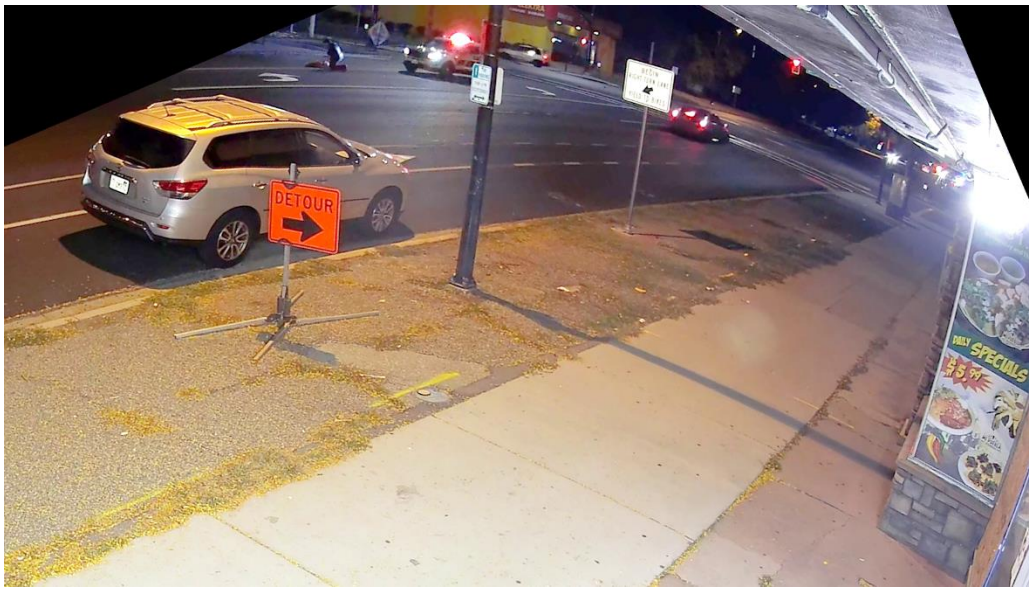


Officer Tavake then struck Casselman throwing him into the air, before he fell to the ground and slid several feet before coming to a stop.

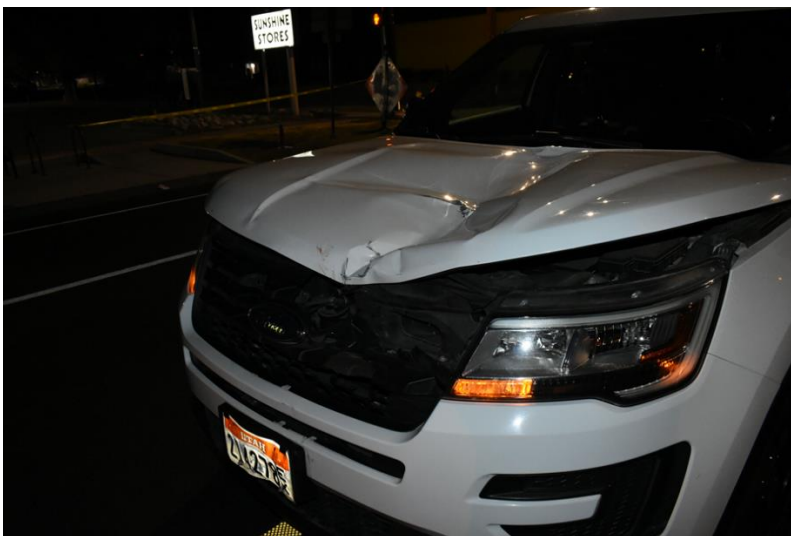








## Crime Scene







## **Advanced Traffic Accident Investigation**

Officer Mark Johnson from Ogden Police Department conducted an advanced traffic accident investigation. See his supplementary report for more details, the following is a summary of his investigation.

Based on Officer Johnson's calculations Casselman was struck and launched 39.7 feet in the air. He then slid on the pavement and additional 111 feet on the ground, for a total of 151 feet from impact to a final resting place.

Based on the mathematical calculations Officer Johnson estimated that Officer Tavake was traveling at an estimated 54 mph on average; with a 9 mph deviation. Low speed 44.9 mph. High speed 63.1 mph. The speed limit in the area is 35 mph, which drops from 40 mph at 30<sup>th</sup> and Washington Blvd.

OPD Traffic officer Mark Johnson examined the traffic light data. The following was taken from his report. *"I was able to go into UDOT's public website and pull the timing and actuation charts for 27th and Washington at the time of the crash. Looking at the charts I was wanting to determine if Casselman did indeed press the request to cross and if so, why it didn't change.*

*Using the time stamp on the video to narrow time the time needed for the stoplight I determined that the accident occurred at 22:40:29. I then looked at the chart and went to the Phase 4 light which is for all Eastbound traffic Ped and Vehicle. At 22:39:50 hours there is a tick mark in the Pedestrian Actuation area, indicating the Casselman pressed the button at that time. However, the light for Eastbound traffic had already turned green 2 seconds prior. Then looking at the very first cycle, post-accident, at 22:40:48 for Eastbound traffic the walk signal is given for Eastbound pedestrians. Looking at this data I determined that even though Casselman pushed the button the system did not give him the walk signal because the light had already turned green and was set*



*to turn red before the system could give him the full allotted time to cross the roadway. Therefore, it continued to show the "Do Not Walk" symbol requesting that Casselman wait until the next cycle when the system could give him a full allotted time to cross the road safely."*

### **Weber Area Dispatch CAD/AVL**

The Weber Consolidated dispatch/police information system, Spillman, can track officers' location in the field. The individual officers are logged into the system via a computer that sends signals to dispatch. When an officer is dispatched to a call for service, the call is sent to the individual officer's laptop computer. The call gives them the necessary information needed to investigate that particular call. The way the system works, the "call notes" will appear on the officer's computer screen before the dispatcher announces the information over the radio. Because of this officers will routinely look at the call notes if they are being dispatched to a call for service. In addition to this, the system will also show the call signs of all the other units who are on duty, including their location and the type of calls they are on. This is called the CAD or computer-aided dispatch.

Officer Tavake had a laptop computer in his vehicle.





He was not dispatched to a particular car but was doing “premise checks” or security checks on Weber State-owned buildings. At the time of the accident, Officer Tavake had commented to a responding Ogden Police Officer that “I down at the CAD and looked up and the guy was right there.”

Investigators pulled the AVL log for Officer Tavake for the night in question. This log updates on average every five (5) seconds. It shows the date, time, call sign, GPS location, speed (if moving), and status. (Status: On a call or out at jail, etc.)

At approximately 150 feet before the intersection, the AVL log shows Officer Tavake was traveling at 47 mph. This speed falls within the speed perimeters given by Officer Mark Johnson of between 44 mph and 63 mph.

Investigators attempted to download the “black box” from the patrol vehicle. In some cases, this will show the speed of travel at impact, when the driver hits brakes, etc. This was unsuccessful due to the box malfunctioning and not powering up. Reference Sgt. Conner’s supplementary report for more details on this attempted download.

### **Examination of Laptop and cellphone**

A search warrant was authorized for the examination of the in-car laptop and Tavake’s cellphone.

Investigators found no evidence on either device to show that Officer Tavake was sending any messages, watching videos, or had apps open. He was not chatting with anyone on the computer.

When the laptop was unlocked the CAD screen became visible, which matches Officer Tavake’s excited utterance that he had looked at his CAD before the

accident. Reference FIT Investigator Cameron Hartman's report for details on these two examinations.

### **Blood draw**

A search warrant was authorized for a blood draw to be taken from Officer Tavake. That blood sample was taken from him by the Ogden Fire Department and sent to the Utah State lab for examination. The results showed no substances or alcohol in Officer Tavake's system.

### **Interviews**

Investigators requested to speak with Officer Tavake but he declined to provide a statement.

### **Medical Examiner Report**

On October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 an autopsy was performed on William Casselman. The results were that he had multiple blunt force injuries throughout his body. He had abrasions, lacerations, and contusions of the head, torso, and extremities, extracranial and intracranial hemorrhage, as well as laceration and contusions of the internal organs and fractures of multiple bones.

Manner of Death: Accident

Immediate Cause of Death: Multiple blunt force injuries

Toxicology Results: No Ethanol (Alcohol)

No illegal drugs

Benzodiazepines: 195 nanograms of Dizepam

77 nanograms of Nordiazepam

Potential short-term side effects of benzodiazepines may include:

- Drowsiness
- Mental confusion
- Short-term memory loss
- Lack of motor control
- Blurred vision
- Slurred speech
- Slow breathing
- Muscle weakness



## Conclusion

At night, on a clear day, Officer Paul Tavake was on routine patrol, driving north on Washington Blvd, approaching 27<sup>th</sup> St, traveling at an estimated 45 mph and 50 mph. William Casselman was attempting to cross Washington Blvd at 27<sup>th</sup> street; walking east in the crosswalk. Casselman started crossing on the red light, but not more than halfway across the intersection the light turned green for vehicular traffic.

As Officer Tavake approached the intersection he failed to see Casselman in the crosswalk, striking him with his car. Evidence suggesting that Casselman was difficult to see while he was in the intersection, can be observed on the surveillance footage. As Casselman was in the middle of the road, there was a vehicle that came through the intersection traveling southbound. This vehicle did not slow down or hit the brakes.

The laptop that was in Officer Tavake's vehicle would fall under the state statutory definition of a *"Prohibition of using a handheld wireless communication device"* 41-6a-1716. To the point that Officer Tavake made the excited utterance "I looked down at my CAD for a second and he was right there." There is however a law enforcement exception subsection 2. *"Does not prohibit a person from using a handheld wireless communication device while operating a moving motor vehicle: when used by a law enforcement officer acting within the course and scope of the law enforcement officers' personnel employment."*

There is no evidence to suggest that Officer Tavake was under the influence of drugs or alcohol at the time of the accident. There was no evidence to suggest that Officer Tavake was using his cell phone, or messaging anyone on his department laptop. He did say he looked at the computer for a brief moment but that would have been in the course of his normal duties.

There was no evidence to suggest that William Casselman was under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drugs. He did have Benzodiazepines in his system which is an antidepressant. Some side effects are mental confusion and lack of motor skills. It is unknown if any of these side effects were affecting him at the time of the accident. Mr. Casselman was in the crosswalk, however, he was crossing the street against the pedestrian signal.

All of these factors should be considered when reviewing the case for criminal liability.

*Steve Zaccardi*

*Criminal Investigator*

*Force Investigations/Homicide Task Force*