Mechanical failure blamed in fatal car crash

FAMILY SAYS MAN ACCUSED IN WRECK UNABLE TO STOP

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The family of the man accused of causing a fiery crash on Interstate 280 last month says mechanical problems with the car caused him to drive at speeds over 100 mph, eventually causing a crash that killed a San Jose man.

California Highway Patrol investigators will examine the car next week, officer Todd Thibodeau said. Officials intend to ask the Santa Clara County District Attorney's office to charge 68-year-old [redacted] with vehicle manslaughter with gross negligence, Thibodeau said.

[redacted] the CHP charges, drove at speeds of more than 100 mph in rush-hour traffic on the morning of July 26. His Camry rear-ended one car, sending it into the median and injuring its driver, before it smashed into a Honda Accord driven by a 39-year-old father of five.

The Honda spun around near where the interstate crosses Race Street in San Jose. It burst into flames, killing [redacted]

Witnesses reported seeing [redacted] speeding southbound on the highway and using both shoulders to pass other cars for at least eight miles, Thibodeau said.

[redacted] brother, [redacted], said the behavior described in media reports of the crash sound nothing like his brother.

"He's never been a bad person. He's never been a bad driver," [redacted] said.

His brother, who goes by [redacted] is at home recovering from a broken arm he suffered in the crash. "He said he got on the freeway and that thing just started accelerating," [redacted] as he recalled a conversation with his brother. "He tried to brake. He threw it into neutral. He said if he didn't dodge and weave those other cars he would have crashed much earlier on. He told me he looked at the speedometer and it was going over 130 miles an hour."

Some witnesses to the crash reported that they thought they had seen smoking coming from the car, the brake lights flashing and the emergency lights on. Others said they didn't remember seeing those distress signs from the car as it whizzed along the highway.

[redacted] family is still reeling from the crash. Because of the fire, his body could not be identified without DNA. The process has delayed his body's release, the mother of three of his daughters, [redacted] said.

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