

Floor Mat May Have Caused High-Speed Crash That Killed CHP Officer & 3 Family Members

 Contributor: San Diego 6 News Team

Email: newstips@sandiego6.com

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SANTEE - A floor mat is at the center of an investigation into the horrific crash that killed a veteran California Highway Patrol officer and three of his family members.

Officer [REDACTED] his wife [REDACTED] their daughter [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] brother [REDACTED] were killed in the crash when their loaner car crashed in Santee late last month.

Now a preliminary investigation into the fiery crash indicates the crash may have been caused by a floor mat that was pressing down on the accelerator, according to a report by the San Diego Union-Tribune.

Witnesses told San Diego 6 News they saw fire coming from the wheels of the 2009 Lexus ES 350 before it crashed. That indicated "long, constant, heavy braking," said San Diego Sheriff's lead investigator Scott Hill in an interview with the U-T.

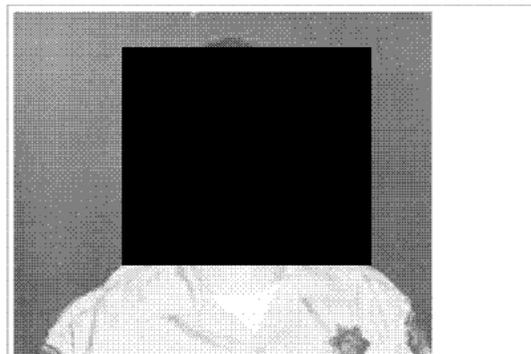
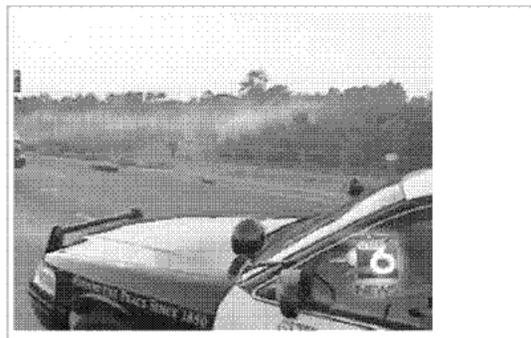
The loaner from Bob Baker Lexus in El Cajon, where [REDACTED] personal car was being serviced, was equipped with all-weather floor mats designed for Lexus vehicles. Similar mats installed in 2007 and 2008 models were recalled by Toyota due to complaints the mats could slide forward and force the accelerator into an open position if not properly installed, according to the paper's report.

Lead investigator Hill says if the floor mat is not in the correct position and the accelerator is pushed down the gas pedal can get caught between the ribs of the rubber mat and will not release.

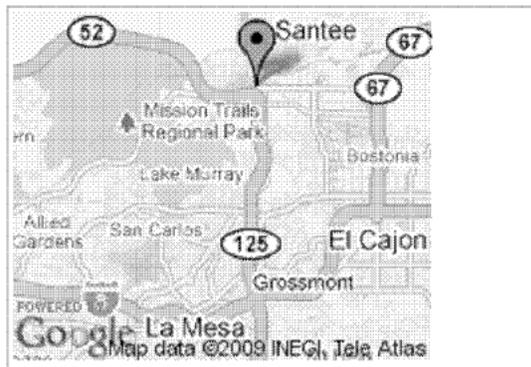
Officer [REDACTED] loaner car was northbound at an estimated 120 mph on state Route 125, when it sped through a T-intersection with Mission Gorge Road, slammed into the rear corner of a Ford Explorer, crashed through a fence, went airborne and rolled several times.

Hill thinks [REDACTED] had trouble with the car's accelerator about five miles before reaching Mission Gorge Road. Several people called 911 to report the car was speeding and weaving in and out of traffic with its emergency flashers on. A caller, believed to be [REDACTED] wife, also called 911 to report their car was speeding out of control.

Hill told the Union-Tribune there was prolonged "heavy, heavy, hard braking."



CHP Officer Mark Saylor



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- [Services for CHP Officer & Family Killed in Crash](#)
- [Memorial for CHP Officer & 3 Family Members Killed in Runaway Car](#)
- [Four killed in apparent runaway Santee car crash](#)
- [SD6 Exclusive: Runaway](#)

"He did everything he could to stop that car," he said.

Cars

██████████ a 19-year CHP veteran, must have worked extremely hard to maneuver the Lexus to avoid other cars on the heavily traveled roadway, only hitting the one vehicle, Hill told the paper.

"We were very lucky that there were not more deaths," Hill said.

Investigators say they don't know if officer ██████████ tried to shift the car into neutral or if he tried to shut off the engine.

The National Highway Transportation Safety Administration recall report from 2007 found some Lexus drivers with stuck accelerators tried to turn off the car with the engine control button but didn't know the button must be held for three seconds.