

THE SECOND IMPACT

A fictional story inspired by an Aurora, Illinois traffic crash report

Sherman Doss

FICTION NOTICE: This story uses details visible in the attached 1995 police report as a factual framework. The source report does not state that Sherman Doss's family was killed. The deaths, family members, dialogue, thoughts, and surrounding events below are invented for dramatic purposes. The accident-photo sheets reproduced at the end are from the source report.

Prologue - The File

For years the file had been reduced to a number, a date, and a stack of black-and-white pages: Aurora, Illinois. March 17, 1995. Eola Road at Montgomery Road. A traffic crash that, on paper, occupied only a few boxes, a hand-drawn diagram, a follow-up report, and photographs whose grain made the twisted metal look almost unreal.

Sherman Doss kept returning to those pages because the paper seemed too calm. Forms are good at being calm. They turn motion into arrows, terror into check marks, and the sound of metal folding into a sentence written in an officer's hand. A report can describe impacts and damage. It cannot record the moment a life divides into before and after.

In this fictional telling, Sherman was not alone in the car that morning. His family was with him. They had left home talking about ordinary things - whether they were late, whether the radio was too loud, whether they should stop for breakfast. Those small disagreements would become sacred in memory because they were the last pieces of an ordinary morning.

Chapter One - The Red Light

The light at Montgomery held them longer than Sherman expected. He sat southbound on Eola Road with both hands on the wheel, watching cross traffic move through the intersection. The family talked behind and beside him, their voices overlapping in the familiar rhythm of people who believed they had the rest of the day together.

Then the world arrived from behind.

The first impact was violent enough to erase direction. Sherman felt the car jump forward. His chest tightened against the belt. A scream cut through the cabin. Before his mind could name what had happened, the vehicle spun, turning the intersection into a blur of pavement, glass, sky, and dashboard.

The second impact came from the front. The car was already moving in a direction Sherman had not chosen. The airbag exploded open. The cabin filled with powder and the bitter smell of deployment. For an instant he could hear nothing except a high, thin ringing.

Then came silence - not true silence, but the strange silence after violence, when distant traffic and human voices seem to belong to another world.

Chapter Two - What the Paper Could Not Say

Sherman tried to turn toward his family. His body answered slowly. The windshield had become a fractured field of light. Somewhere outside, someone was shouting for help. He called the names he knew better than his own.

In the fiction of this story, the answers never came.

Emergency crews arrived. Doors opened. Hands reached into the car. Sherman remembered pieces: a face above him, the scrape of equipment, cold air entering through broken space, the repeated instruction not to move. He kept asking about his family until a responder stopped answering the question directly.

At the hospital, time became fluorescent. A clock moved, but Sherman did not. A doctor finally sat down rather than standing. That was the first thing Sherman understood. People stand when they expect to leave quickly. They sit when the words are going to change your life.

The family he had driven into the intersection with that morning was gone.

Grief did not arrive as crying. Not at first. It arrived as disbelief. Sherman kept replaying the red light. He remembered stopping. He remembered waiting. He remembered the impact from behind and the violent spin. His mind searched for a different movement he could have made - one second earlier, one foot farther forward, one glance in another direction - as though memory could be edited until everyone survived.

Chapter Three - The Follow-Up

Later, Sherman went to the Aurora Police Department because the first account of the crash did not match what he remembered. He explained that he had been stopped when another vehicle struck him from behind, causing his car to spin, and that he was struck again. The follow-up report became important to him because it preserved the existence of a second account of how the collision unfolded.

An officer examined the vehicle photographs and noted substantial damage at both the left-front and left-rear areas, along with deployed airbags. To Sherman, the photographs were no longer pictures of a machine. They were the last physical landscape his family had occupied together.

He studied every shadow in them. The crushed panel. The broken contour of the front corner. The rear damage. The ordinary wheel still attached to a car that no longer looked ordinary. He knew photographs could not testify to love, but they could testify that force had passed through that space.

Chapter Four - The Second Impact

Years passed, but Sherman came to understand that the crash had two impacts. The first belonged to the intersection. The second happened afterward and repeated itself whenever a

siren passed too close, whenever tires squealed behind him, whenever a traffic light held him still long enough for his mind to return to Eola and Montgomery.

People told him survival was a gift. He learned that a gift could also be heavy. Survival carried birthdays that no longer had a person attached to them, empty chairs at holidays, and questions with no useful answer. It carried the unbearable mathematics of one person walking away when the people he loved did not.

Eventually he stopped asking the file to explain grief. That was never its job. The report could preserve positions, statements, damage, and official observations. The rest belonged to memory.

He placed the photographs back into the folder. This time he did not close it immediately. He looked at the wrecked car and allowed himself to remember the morning before the impact: voices in the cabin, an unfinished conversation, the impatience of a red light, the certainty that there would be another breakfast.

That was what the accident had taken from him - not only people, but the assumption of later.

And that was what Sherman chose to reclaim. Not the accident. Not the final seconds. The life before them.

Documentary Source Note

The attached source is a seven-page Aurora Police Department FOIA/crash-report packet. The accident photographs reproduced on the following pages are the photo sheets appearing on pages 5-7 of that packet. They are documentary source images; the fatal-family storyline in this manuscript is fictional.



AURORA POLICE DEPARTMENT

1200 E. Indian Trail Aurora, Illinois 60505-1896

Phone (630) 256-5000

Facsimile (630) 256-5729

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION RESPONSE

Thank you for contacting The City of Aurora with your request for information pursuant to the Illinois Freedom of Information Act, 5ILCS 140/1 et seq. Your request for documents and/or information has been granted in part and/or denied in part, as authorized per exemptions outlined in this FOIA statute. Exemptions applied to the requested documents, in the form of redacted or withheld information are identified below.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT - 5 ILCS 140/Sec. 7

7-1(b) Private information, unless disclosure is required by another provision of this Act, a State or federal law, or a court order

7-1(c) Personal information contained within public records, the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy, unless the disclosure is consented to, in writing, by the individual subjects of the information. "Unwarranted invasion of personal privacy" means the disclosure of information that is highly personal or objectionable to a reasonable person and in which the subject's right to privacy outweighs any legitimate public interest in obtaining the information. The disclosure of information that bears on the public duties of public employees and officials shall not be considered an invasion of personal privacy.

You have the right to have a denial of your request reviewed by the Public Access Counselor (PAC) at the Office of the Illinois Attorney General. 5 ILCS 140/9.5(a). You can file your Request for Review with the PAC by writing to:

Public Access Counselor, Office of the Attorney General
500 South 2nd Street, Springfield, Illinois 62706
Fax: 217-782-1396 and E-mail: publicaccess@atg.state.il.us

You also have the right to seek judicial review of your denial by filing a lawsuit in the State circuit court. If you choose to file a Request for Review with the PAC, you must do so within 60 calendar days of the date of this denial letter. Please note that you must include a copy of your original FOIA request and this denial letter when filing a Request for Review with the PAC.

Sincerely,

Aurora Police Department

JoAnn Osberg
FOIA Officer & Records Manager
osbergj@apd.aurora.il.us
(630) 256-5720

Enc/s

FOLLOW-UP REPORT
Aurora Police Dept.
Aurora, Ill.

Ofc. David Tinsley #172 350 N. River St. Aurora, Ill.

PI Accident

1300 Hrs.

17 Mar 95

95-3563

At approx. 0900 Hrs.; 17 Mar 95; Mr. Sherman Doss, came to Traffic Division A.P.D.; reference the above listed accident. The complainant stated that on the original report; his supposed statement was not what he told the officer.

The complainant stated that he was South bound on Eola Rd.; stopped at Montgomery Rd.; when vehicle #1 struck his vehicle from the front causing it to spin around and strike his vehicle a second time in the rear.

Below officer examined photos of the complainants vehicle (the vehicle is in the body shop) and noted large amounts of damage to the left front and left rear drivers side; also that the drivers airbag had deployed.

As a accident reconstructionist; I feel that the damage on this vehicle was not caused by another vehicle striking it at a ninty degree angle on the right side; but more from a vehicle striking the left front of the vehicle. It may also be noted that an airbag seldom deploys from a side impact.

Copies of photos of vehicle #2 attached to report.

D. Tinsley #172

ILLINOIS TRAFFIC CRASH REPORT

Sheet 1 of 1 Sheets

BAR

DRAC	PED	TRFD	TRFC	MTAT	DRVA	VIS	VEID	LOFT
1	1	X	2	4	1	1	1	1
U1	U2			U1	U2	U1	U2	U1

FOR IDOT USE ONLY

6229843	INVESTIGATED BY AUROEA	POLICE	TYPE OF REPORT ☒ ON-SCENE ☐ I.D.E.C. ☐ SUPPLEMENTARY	☐ A Property Damage Only / Drive Away ☒ B All Other	AGENCY (COUNTY) REPORT NO. 95 3563	IFPV 1
ADDRESS NO. (OPTIONAL)	HIGHWAY or STREET NAME Edia Rd	CITY/TOWNSHIP AUROEA	INTERSECTION RELATED ☒ Yes ☐ No	DATE OF CRASH 02/16/95	TIME 6:27 AM	LARS CODE
☐ FT / MI N E S W ☒ AT INTERSECTION WITH	(CIRCLE) MONTGOMERY RD	COUNTY DUPAGE	PRIVATE PROPERTY ☐ Yes ☒ No	ANY SINGLE VEHICLE/PROPERTY DAMAGED OVER \$500 ☒ Yes ☐ No	NO. MOTOR VEHICLE INVOLVED TWO	LARS CODE
NAME (LAST, FIRST, MI.) SYLKATIS, DEEDRAH JANE	DATE OF BIRTH 02/16/95	MAKE CADILLAC	MODEL CLASS	YEAR 87	CIRCLE NUMBER(S) FOR DAMAGED AREA(S) 00 - NONE	TOWED Y N ☒ Y ☐ N

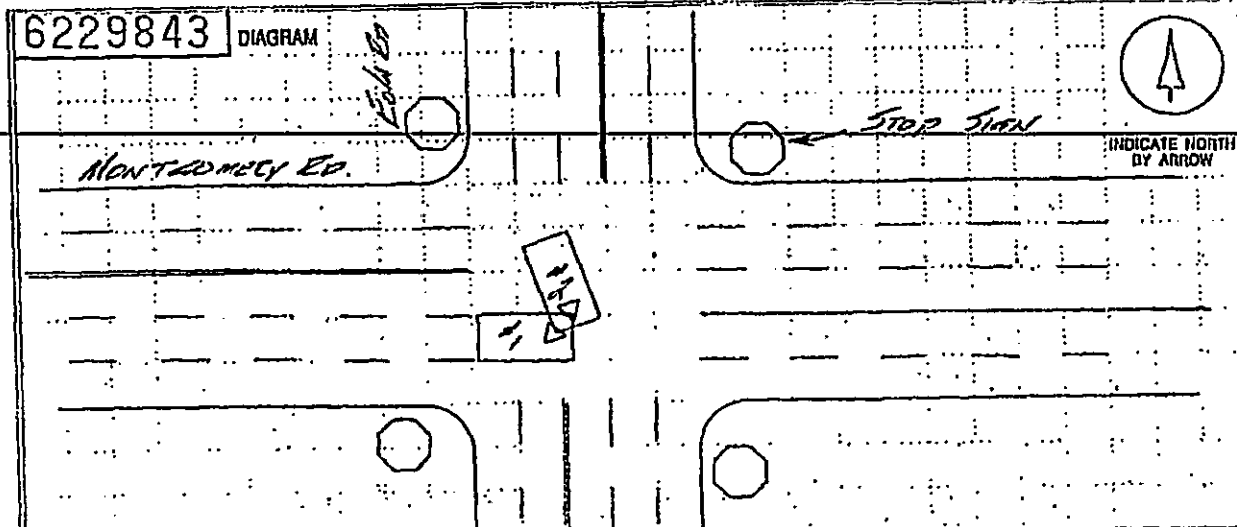
STREET ADDRESS 1766 CHIMBERLAND GREEN DR #204	CITY SAINT CHARLES, IL	STATE IL	ZIP 62204	TELEPHONE 5483-1704	INJURY B	EJECT 1	VIN 2G3AT51R2H9560015	PLATE NO. KEA 6996	STATE ILL	YEAR 7-95	CIRCLE NUMBER(S) FOR DAMAGED AREA(S) 00 - NONE	TOWED Y N ☒ Y ☐ N
DRIVER LICENSE NO. 5483-1704-7956	TAKEN TO MERCY CENTER E.R.	EIAS AGENCY A.F.D.	VEHICLE OWNER SYLKATIS, DEEDRAH J	INSURANCE CO. West American Ins.	TELEPHONE 5483-1704	POLICY NO. FWK-200-249	POINT OF FIRST CONTACT 1	HAZ. MAT. ☒ Y ☐ N	COM VEH. ☒ Y ☐ N	IFPV 2		

NAME (LAST, FIRST, MI.) DOSS, SHERMAN LEE	DATE OF BIRTH 02/16/95	MAKE INFINITI	MODEL TD	YEAR 93	CIRCLE NUMBER(S) FOR DAMAGED AREA(S) 00 - NONE	TOWED Y N ☒ Y ☐ N						
STREET ADDRESS 228 N. MARION APT 1L	CITY OAK PARK, IL	STATE IL	ZIP 60302	TELEPHONE 7985-5280	INJURY B	EJECT 1	VIN INR42DIPMD18296	PLATE NO. NYS 732	STATE ILL	YEAR 4-95	CIRCLE NUMBER(S) FOR DAMAGED AREA(S) 00 - NONE	TOWED Y N ☒ Y ☐ N
DRIVER LICENSE NO. 7985-5280	TAKEN TO MERCY CENTER E.R.	EIAS AGENCY A.F.D.	VEHICLE OWNER DOSS, SHERMAN L.	INSURANCE CO. SAFENAY Ins.	TELEPHONE 1659568	POLICY NO. 1659568	POINT OF FIRST CONTACT 1	HAZ. MAT. ☒ Y ☐ N	COM VEH. ☒ Y ☐ N	IFPV 2		

UNIT 1	UNIT 2	UNIT 3	UNIT 4	UNIT 5	UNIT 6	UNIT 7	UNIT 8	UNIT 9	UNIT 10	UNIT 11	UNIT 12	UNIT 13	UNIT 14	UNIT 15	UNIT 16	UNIT 17	UNIT 18	UNIT 19	UNIT 20	UNIT 21	UNIT 22	UNIT 23	UNIT 24	UNIT 25	UNIT 26	UNIT 27	UNIT 28	UNIT 29	UNIT 30	UNIT 31	UNIT 32	UNIT 33	UNIT 34	UNIT 35	UNIT 36	UNIT 37	UNIT 38	UNIT 39	UNIT 40	UNIT 41	UNIT 42	UNIT 43	UNIT 44	UNIT 45	UNIT 46	UNIT 47	UNIT 48	UNIT 49	UNIT 50	UNIT 51	UNIT 52	UNIT 53	UNIT 54	UNIT 55	UNIT 56	UNIT 57	UNIT 58	UNIT 59	UNIT 60	UNIT 61	UNIT 62	UNIT 63	UNIT 64	UNIT 65	UNIT 66	UNIT 67	UNIT 68	UNIT 69	UNIT 70	UNIT 71	UNIT 72	UNIT 73	UNIT 74	UNIT 75	UNIT 76	UNIT 77	UNIT 78	UNIT 79	UNIT 80	UNIT 81	UNIT 82	UNIT 83	UNIT 84	UNIT 85	UNIT 86	UNIT 87	UNIT 88	UNIT 89	UNIT 90	UNIT 91	UNIT 92	UNIT 93	UNIT 94	UNIT 95	UNIT 96	UNIT 97	UNIT 98	UNIT 99	UNIT 100
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UNIT 1	UNIT 2	UNIT 3	UNIT 4	UNIT 5	UNIT 6	UNIT 7	UNIT 8	UNIT 9	UNIT 10	UNIT 11	UNIT 12	UNIT 13	UNIT 14	UNIT 15	UNIT 16	UNIT 17	UNIT 18	UNIT 19	UNIT 20	UNIT 21	UNIT 22	UNIT 23	UNIT 24	UNIT 25	UNIT 26	UNIT 27	UNIT 28	UNIT 29	UNIT 30	UNIT 31	UNIT 32	UNIT 33	UNIT 34	UNIT 35	UNIT 36	UNIT 37	UNIT 38	UNIT 39	UNIT 40	UNIT 41	UNIT 42	UNIT 43	UNIT 44	UNIT 45	UNIT 46	UNIT 47	UNIT 48	UNIT 49	UNIT 50	UNIT 51	UNIT 52	UNIT 53	UNIT 54	UNIT 55	UNIT 56	UNIT 57	UNIT 58	UNIT 59	UNIT 60	UNIT 61	UNIT 62	UNIT 63	UNIT 64	UNIT 65	UNIT 66	UNIT 67	UNIT 68	UNIT 69	UNIT 70	UNIT 71	UNIT 72	UNIT 73	UNIT 74	UNIT 75	UNIT 76	UNIT 77	UNIT 78	UNIT 79	UNIT 80	UNIT 81	UNIT 82	UNIT 83	UNIT 84	UNIT 85	UNIT 86	UNIT 87	UNIT 88	UNIT 89	UNIT 90	UNIT 91	UNIT 92	UNIT 93	UNIT 94	UNIT 95	UNIT 96	UNIT 97	UNIT 98	UNIT 99	UNIT 100
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*IF YES, COMPLETE COMMERCIAL VEHICLE AREA ON BACK OF FORM



NARRATIVE (Refer to vehicle by Unit No.)

DRIVER #1 STATED SHE WAS EASTBOUND ON MONTGOMERY RD. SHE HAD STOPPED FOR THE STOP SIGN AND WAS TURNING LEFT WHEN VEHICLE #2 STRUCK HER. SHE HAD OBSERVED VEHICLE #2 AND THOUGHT HE WAS GOING TO STOP.

DRIVER #2 STATED HE WAS WESTBOUND ON EOLA RD. HE WAS UNWARE OF WHAT HAPPENED WHEN THE AIR BAGS DEPLOYED.

DRIVER #2 CITED FOR DISOBEYING A STOP SIGN.

LOCAL USE ONLY

U1 Color BLUE U2 Color BLACK

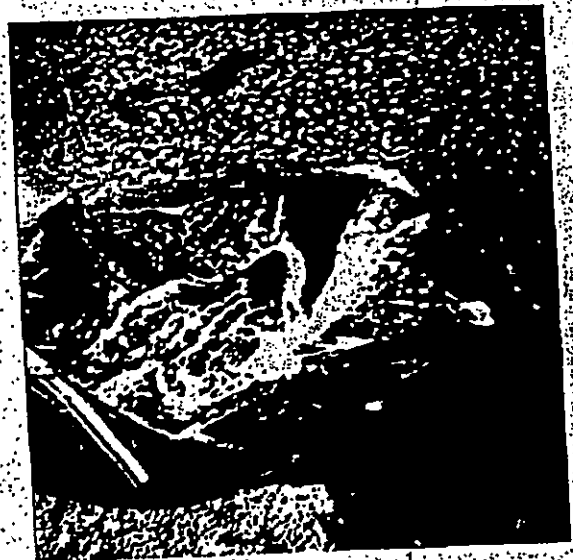
U1 Towed by / to VIA'S TOWING

U2 Towed by / to MENDOZA'S TOWING

COMMERCIAL VEHICLE		UNIT NO. _____
CARRIER NAME _____	SOURCE ☐ Side of truck ☐ Papers ☐ Driver ☐ Log book	
ADDRESS _____		
CITY _____	STATE _____	ZIP _____
ID NUMBER _____	US DOT _____	ICCMC _____
or State No. _____ State name _____ ☐ None		
HAZARDOUS MATERIAL: PLACARDED? ☐ Yes ☐ No		
If Yes: 4-Digit _____ or Name _____		
1-Digit _____		
Hazardous cargo released from truck? ☐ Y ☐ N ☐ Unk		
(do not count fuel from vehicles fuel tank)		
Violation of HAZMAT reg. contribute to crash? ☐ Y ☐ N ☐ Unk		
Violation of MCS reg. contribute to crash? ☐ Y ☐ N ☐ Unk		
Inspection form completed? ☐ Y ☐ N ☐ Unk		
- HAZMAT ☐ Y ☐ N ☐ Unk		
- MCS ☐ Y ☐ N ☐ Unk		
Out of Service? ☐ Y ☐ N ☐ Unk		
Form No. _____		
IDOT PERMIT # _____	VEHICLE LENGTH (TOTAL) - ft _____	
TRAILER WIDTH(S) 0-60" 97-102" Over 102"	TRAILER LENGTH(S) - ft	NO. OF AXLES
Trailer 1 ☐ ☐ ☐	Trailer 1 _____	
Trailer 2 ☐ ☐ ☐	Trailer 2 _____	
☐ IN CITY OF ☐ NEAREST CITY: _____ Miles N E S W of: (Circle)		
VEHICLE CONFIGURATION (Circle Applicable Number)		
1 Bus	4 Truck/trailer	7 Tractor/doubles
2 Single unit truck, 2 axles, 6 feet	5 Tractor/tractor	
3 Single unit truck, 3 or more axles	6 Tractor/semi-trailer	9 Unknown Heavy Truck
CARGO BODY TYPE (Circle Applicable Number)		
1 Bus	4 Flatbed	7 Auto transporter
2 Van/enclosed box	5 Dump	8 Garbage/refuse
3 Cargo tank	6 Concrete mixer	9 Unknown

95-3563

SS



95-3563

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95-3563

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