

Chicagoland

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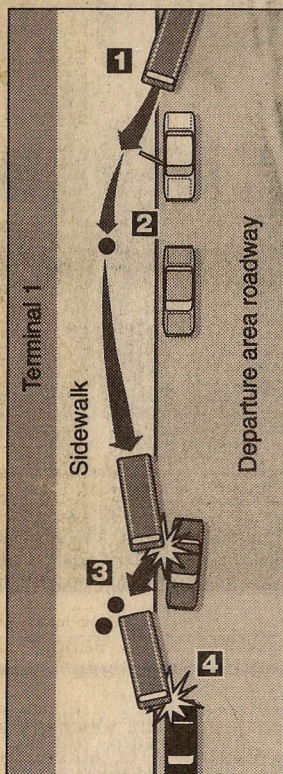
North

Fatal O'Hare accident

A minivan jumped a curb at O'Hare International Airport at about noon Sunday, killing one man and injuring at least four others, including the van's driver.

How it happened

- 1** The van's driver, George Brinkman, 68, of Elgin, stepped on the accelerator, but the van didn't move. He stepped on it again, and the van jumped the curb onto the sidewalk. Apparently, the wheels had been turned toward the curb.
- 2** The van clipped the door of a white car and then hit David Simon, 22, of Deerfield. He was later pronounced dead.
- 3** After sideswiping a Cougar and injuring its driver, the van hit and injured Paul Steinmiller, 66, of Pittsburgh and his granddaughter.
- 4** The van hit a parked limousine, the van's air bag inflated, and it stopped.



Source: News reports



Chicago Tribune

Man killed when van jumps curb at O'Hare

By James Hill and Paul Sloan

What began as a routine trip to O'Hare International Airport on Sunday ended when a mini-van jumped a curb and killed a 22-year-old Deerfield man.

George Brinkman, 68, of Elgin, was charged Sunday with negligent driving and striking a pedestrian on the sidewalk, police said. Both offenses are misdemeanors.

David Simon of Deerfield was killed, and four others, including Brinkman, who is Elgin's city inspector, sustained injuries ranging from bumps and bruises to fractures.

"[Brinkman] was really shaken by what happened," said one officer. "He knows someone was killed, and he felt really bad."

Because of Sunday's accident, traffic experts, officials from the Chicago Department of Aviation and the Chicago Police Department are scheduled to meet

Monday to discuss what can be done to prevent the recurrence of such accidents, the second at O'Hare in less than a year.

According to police, Brinkman's son-in-law, John Burke, drove the van to the airport. Burke and other family members got out, and Brinkman moved to the driver's seat to park the van in the main parking lot.

Brinkman accelerated to merge left into traffic, but the van did not move because the tires were turned into the curb, police said.

"He pushed on the accelerator some more and the van just jumped the curb," said a major traffic investigator who reviewed the accident. "This would explain the revving of the engine that witnesses heard. From there, he just apparently lost control."

The mini-van then clipped the door of the car parked in front of it as Brinkman drove down the sidewalk trying to gain control of the van, police said.

Seconds later, Brinkman struck

Simon, carrying him about 110 feet before side-swiping a parked car and knocking Simon off the hood, police at the airport said.

Brinkman then careened into 66-year-old Paul Steinmiller of Pittsburgh and his granddaughter, both of whom were standing on the sidewalk, before he ran into the back of a parked limousine. His air bag opened and the van stopped, police said.

Simon died in Lutheran General Hospital in Park Ridge of traumatic stress from extensive injuries and severe bleeding, said spokeswoman Alice Brown. Steinmiller was in fair condition Sunday night in Lutheran General with multiple fractures to his legs.

Stephanie Steinmiller, 36, of Hoffman Estates was listed in good condition with a fractured leg in Resurrection Medical Center, a spokeswoman said. Lora Schwarz, 40, of Palatine, who

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