

# Eyewitnesses say police cars ran over woman

By GARY GREEN  
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The sketchy details surrounding the death of a Bowling Green, S.C., woman may have been sketchy for good reason, the dead woman's nephew said Monday. "It just seems like the police are trying to hide something," Danny Dover of Box 151 Bowling Green said.

Mrs. Laura Rebecca Brown Dover, 39, of Bowling Green reportedly was killed instantly Friday night as she walked across U.S. Highway 321 and was struck by a car involved in a high-speed chase by York County authorities.

"I'll tell you what really happened," said Tommy Gibson also of Bowling Green, who was on the scene of the accident. "After she got hit by the first



car, five police cars ran over her body. They didn't even stop for her. They were too interested in catching him," Gibson told a reporter. The driver of the sub-compact Gremlin which had hit Mrs. Dover had

been identified as Ronald Eugene Sylvester, a Gastonia man serving in the U.S. Navy. Reportedly, after hitting the woman, Sylvester's car had crashed into a tree approximately 300 yards away, where he remained pinned for almost 10 minutes.

Sylvester was taken to Gaston Memorial Hospital and later transferred to Charlotte Memorial where Monday night he had sunk from Saturday's reported "fair condition" to an "unsatisfactory condition."

#### RAN OVER BODY

"I saw the police run over her after he (Sylvester) hit her," Jenette Miller, 11-year-old eyewitness, told The Gazette. "They didn't even stop for her," she said as she covered her face to

hide the big tears rolling down her cheeks.

Miss Miller and Tommy Gibson were the only two witnesses who could say for sure that they thought a police car had hit the woman.

Other witnesses said that it had happened too fast to grasp all of the events.

Johnny Early, also of Bowling Green, had been the closest to the road when the accident occurred. He gives this account of the events:

Mrs. Dover, her daughter, Diane, 20, and her niece Sandy, 16, had been standing on the east side of Highway 321 talking. They started back across to the west side of 321 where their homes were. There were no cars on the highway.

Just as the three women got into the northbound lane of the highway, the 1973 Gremlin charged over the hill. The two younger women jumped forward to the center of the road. Mrs. Dover called out one of their names just as the speeding Gremlin swerved to avoid hitting them. In its swerve, it caught Mrs. Dover.

A York County Police car was within a car length behind. Four more police cars were several seconds behind. Early said that no siren was sounded until after Mrs. Dover had been hit.

Both Diane and Sandy Dover agree with Early's account of the events.

York County Police Officer Joe Smart, who reportedly was the driver of the first police car behind the Gremlin, refused to comment to a reporter, citing a department rule which forbade him to do so.

He did agree, however, to talk to Danny Dover, the nephew of the dead woman.

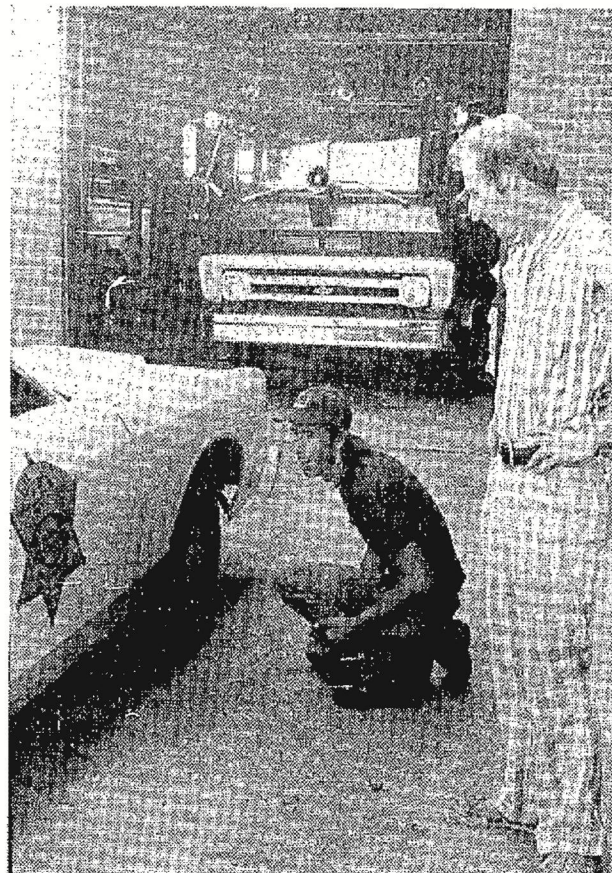
While Smart and Dover conferred inside the Clover, S.C., police station, Johnny Early and a reporter examined Smart's squad car.

#### BLOOD ON CAR?

Early found what he said that he believed to be dried blood, splattered on the right front quarter panel above the front tire of the car.

"I can't definitely say that it is blood, but it sure looks like it to me," he said.

After the conference between Smart and Dover ended, Dover related his account of what the officer had said. According to Dover, Officer Smart said that he didn't see the woman's body until after the Gremlin had hit it. "He said that he thought it was part of the car," said Dover. "He didn't know that it was



**DRIED BLOOD?** — Danny Dover (left) and Johnny Early (standing) examine the York County sheriff department car that two eyewitnesses say ran over the body of Dover's aunt, Laura R. Dover, 39, late Friday night after she had been hit by a 1973 Gremlin involved in a high speed chase with police.

a woman," he said.

According to Dover, when Smart was asked why the chase had begun, he replied, "I'll tell you why: because he was a smart-alec. He was 21-years-old and thought that he had a fast car. He was driving under suspended license, anyway."

Dover, 23, told the reporter that "the worst thing about it is that they (the police) didn't have any respect for the dead."

"I asked them if they could stop traffic until the body was moved and they told me to go home where I'd be out of the way. But later when a fire truck came to wash down the road, they stopped traffic for it. They wouldn't show any respect," he said.

Dover said that his aunt's body was scattered in pieces up and down approximately 300 yds. of highway.

"For her to be torn up like that she had to have been hit more than once," Early added.

"I want to get to the bottom of this not

just for my aunt, but for anybody else that this could happen to," Dover said.

Lt. George Meek, York County Sheriff's Department, who is investigating, said Tuesday morning when asked about the allegations made by Bowling Green residents, "No comment. The case is still under investigation."

## INSIDE TODAY

Bridge	2B
Classified	4-7B
Comics	2-3B
Crossword	2B
Movies	8B
Opinion Page	4A
Sports	7-8A
Women's News	5-6A