

Deputies call crash deliberate

DEC 2

Six injured on Hwy. 68

By **ALEX FRIEDRICH**

Herald Staff Writer

An unemployed Monterey caddy was despondent over the loss of his job and girlfriend when he deliberately plowed his sport utility vehicle into two oncoming vehicles Thursday afternoon on Holman Highway, according to accounts from his roommate and sheriff's officials.

Paul James Grant Jr., 46, sent a Pacific Grove family of four and a Monterey man to the hospital when he rammed his silver Toyota 4Runner into the family's black Mercedes SUV and then careened into a burgundy Honda Accord LX on the highway at Skyline Forest Drive.

The impact sent the Mercedes tumbling down an embankment. The Mercedes driver, Mark Giangiorgi, 35, was hospitalized overnight, along with his wife, Jean, and two young children. The Honda driver, 64-year-old Donald Grab of Monterey, was treated for minor injuries.

Grant suffered multiple injuries and remained in the intensive care unit Friday at Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula.

Sheriff's officials investigating the 2 p.m. collision said they were withholding Grant's name until he could be interviewed but confirmed his identity after it was provided by others. In a news release, they said he had "knowingly and willfully caused the head-on collision."

Though deputies would not elaborate on Grant, authorities told Mark Giangiorgi and Grab said that Grant had said after the accident that he had been trying to kill himself when he swerved into Giangiorgi's vehicle.

According to Grab, Grant reportedly told deputies that if he had been driving his van rather than his SUV, he "would have gotten the job done right."

"You can draw your own conclusions on that," Grab said.

Grant's 41-year-old roommate, Pat Hallett, said Friday that his friend's attitude had been deteriorating in recent weeks.

"I was hoping it wasn't going to come to this," said Hallett, a Cypress Point golf caddy who has known Grant for about a decade.

Standing in front of their Boronda Lane apartment in Monterey, Hallett said Grant's personality problems over the past year had distanced him from friends and

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colleagues and eventually plunged his life into a downward spiral.

Hallett and another caddy who had worked with Grant at the Spanish Bay course in Pebble Beach said Grant had been terminated this fall for erratic behavior. Hallett described Grant as a loner, prone to mood swings and constant worrying. He said Grant had turned a temporary living arrangement into a year-long stay. And though Grant paid his bills on time, Hallett was pressuring him to move out of their apartment.

Hallett said that when Grant's girlfriend broke off their relationship earlier this month, he became depressed and started acting irrationally.

"We'd be having a good time, and then he'd get angry over some stupid thing," Hallett said.

Hallett said that when he recently invited a friend over to plan a trip, Grant paced in and out of the room "with a crazy look."

Grant was known for making crude jokes and inappropriate comments, which reportedly earned him the wrath of his golf course supervisors. He once received a 30-day suspension for joking crudely to another caddy in front of golfers, and Spanish Bay ended up firing him about two months ago, according to Hallett and the other caddy, who asked not to be identified.

That man said, "You never knew which Jim Grant would show up."

Hallett said the romance had broken up two weeks ago and the past week had been "really bad."

At one point, Grant parked his SUV on the patio in front of the apartment and told his landlord he was "making a stand," Hallett said.

"I said his mind is going really fast," Hallett said. "I said he should go to a psychiatrist."

The Giangiorgi family had just picked up its 4-year-old champion English bulldog, Iceberg, from a Carmel veterinarian and was returning home to Pacific Grove. Mark Giangiorgi is a trader for the firm of Cantor Fitzgerald.

As is the Giangiorgi family custom, the dog was lying sideways in the front seat, his head resting on the console. He was snug in his seat



The driver of the silver Toyota 4-Runner, above, caused the three-car collision on Highway 68 Thursday afternoon near Skyline Forest Drive.

AARON SUOZZI/The Herald

belt — “It’s like strapping in a watermelon” Giangiorgi said — while Jean Giangiorgi, 37, sat in the back seat to tend to the children. Three-year-old Marco and 14-month-old Antonio sat next to her in their child-safety seats.

Grab’s Honda was right behind the Mercedes. He was headed home to Monterey from his part-time job as an accountant for Universal Staffing in Carmel.

Mark Giangiorgi said he spied Grant’s Toyota coming toward him in the opposite lane at about 50-55 mph. Suddenly, the Toyota swerved toward him, Giangiorgi said.

Grab saw it, too.

“Here comes this other vehicle like a bullet,” Grab said. “It was like a blur. I couldn’t believe my eyes when he pointed this car right at the Mercedes.”

Giangiorgi said, “He wasn’t applying the brakes. It was like this guy . . . wanted to kill himself.”

It was over in a second or two.

Grant’s Toyota smashed into the Mercedes’ left front corner, shoving it into Grab’s Honda and off the roadway. The Mercedes went over the embankment and rolled several times.

“The kids were screaming, you’re thinking about death, survival,” Giangiorgi said in his home Friday. “It was chaos.”

The vehicle finally came to rest on its top.

Silence.

Everyone in the Giangiorgi vehicle was conscious, but hanging

upside down. Mark and Jean asked each other if they were OK.

“I’m messed up, but I can move,” Mark recalled telling her. He pulled himself out and checked the family.

Little Antonio was bleeding from the head, and his father pulled him out. But Marco was stuck in his safety seat, and his mother’s leg was pinned between the seat and the door. Mark Giangiorgi had wrenched his neck and broken a couple of ribs, so he couldn’t help them.

He grabbed the cell phone, called 911 and family friends. Meanwhile, people who saw the accident gathered to help.

A Davis police officer, vacationing with his fiancée, scrambled down the embankment to pry Jean and Marco Giangiorgi out of the Mercedes. He had to cut off a section of the woman’s pants to get her loose.

The family was taken to Community Hospital just down the road.

Grab, meanwhile, sat dazed in his Honda, having temporarily blacked out.

“My engine kept running. There was gasoline leaking. I tried to turn the key off, but was unsuccessful. Others tried. Someone said, ‘You’d better get him out of there before it blows up.’ I thought: ‘This is all I need right now.’”

He realized that the car was still in drive, so he put it in park and turned off the engine.

He was later taken to the hospital

as well, but had only suffered some aches, pains and bruises and was released the same day.

Mark Giangiorgi said the accident had injured his vertebrae, so he wore a neck brace Friday. Marco has a broken collarbone. Antonio had glass shards in his head and needed 15 stitches. Jean Giangiorgi had no visible injuries but complained of pain.

Amazingly, Iceberg the bulldog survived without a scratch — saved by the seat belt and cushioned by an airbag.

Giangiorgi and Grab both wondered Friday what had prompted Grant to try to take others out with him.

“We all have ups and downs in life and hopefully deal with them in an intelligent manner,” Grab said.

Giangiorgi was blunter: “We moved up here (from Southern California) to get way from this . . . There are a lot of ways to take yourself out, but they don’t have to include a family of four.”

He said he wants to make sure Grant never gets on the road again.

“There are places for people like that, and they’re not in the mainstream,” he said.

Grant’s frustrated roommate, Hallett, said he hopes his friend gets help.

“He’s a worrier,” he said, shaking his head. “Now he’s got a lot to worry about.”

Staff writer Kevin Howe contributed to this report.