

“ PPP ”

## People for Proper Policing in North Wales

### Road traffic Collision Investigations...what really happened?

The picturesque counties of Devon and Cornwall attract millions of visitors every year but, like many places in the UK, **serious danger can lurk on the roads**. When there's a fatal or near-fatal crash in the counties, Devon and Cornwall's **Collision Investigation Unit** are called upon to work out exactly what happened.

ITV's series 'Crash Scene Investigators' follows the expert officers as they use science and detective work to establish the events that led up to serious road traffic collisions.

On call 24 hours a day, seven days a week, it's their job to piece together the events before each incident. Every dent, skid mark and human witness plays a vital role in assisting the team to reconstruct the scene of the collision, helping them identify **the cause, any guilty parties** and reach closure for all those involved.

There are nearly **300,000 casualties on the UK's roads every year**. More than one third of all collisions are caused by drivers losing control of their vehicle. This can be for any number of reasons but it often happens when least expected. The final episode of Crash Scene Investigators explores every driver's worst nightmare – a head on collision. This ITV program covered the investigation of three serious collisions.....

1. A car veered across the road into oncoming traffic. As it hit a campervan, the female driver of the car was killed immediately. The man driving the campervan lost his leg in the impact, leaving him in critical condition while his wife suffered back injuries. The Crash Scene Investigators must find out what caused the collision. Was it a problem with the Ford or did something happen to the driver to cause her to lose control?

**The investigators concluded** that deceased lady driver had driven in to the path of the campervan for no apparent reason but witnesses said she was prone to this. **The PPP concluded**, the van driver had time to move out of the way but didn't and the Ford Ka provided poor protection in such a high energy crash,. The human brain is complex, have you ever thought about the consequences of suddenly losing your sense of balance when riding a bike ...something similar happened to this lady's coordination. The old campervan with it's rear engine and lack of crumple zones or airbags etc did not protect the driver (or the Ka!) and he lost a leg, the van's extra height probably saved his life.

2. An elderly woman was walking her dog along a country lane when a young male driver lost control of his car and hit her. She was trapped under the vehicle for an hour before being airlifted to hospital suffering from a severe leg injury. What caused the young driver to lose control of his car? **The Police concluded** that the lady was walking her dog on the road with a narrow verge. The young driver in the older car panicked and locked his brakes rather than swerving. **The PPP concluded** that without ABS the locked brakes prevented him steering. There was mention of another vehicle approaching on this narrow road which prompted him to move to the left. A narrow road with 2 way traffic is not a safe place to walk a dog. The police did not state this out of sympathy for the injured elderly lady

3. A taxi driver lost control of his car and it careered off an A-road, smashing into a petrol station and ending up on its roof. The driver and passenger survived the ordeal but there appears more to the crash than meets the eye. What happened inside the taxi before the collision? **The crash investigation** confirmed the driver was free of alcohol & drugs but not insured, the passenger was a dangerous drug user who was in possession of drugs at the time. The driver claimed the passenger had attacked him causing him to lose control. **The PPP concluded** that in such cases both driver and passenger (we think he had just taken the drug) should be tested for drink and drugs. It shows how the stored kinetic energy in a vehicle even at normal speeds is sufficient to destroy it and objects it hits when out of control. The taxi was written off and £30k damage done to the petrol station.

**We need to see such detailed reports and conclusions on the fatal collisions in North Wales.**