

Trial begins in vehicular homicide case

Surveillance camera catches crash that killed Washougal man

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A Vancouver man charged with vehicular homicide in the 1999 death of Washougal resident Joseph Steven Allyn went on trial Monday in Clark County Superior Court.

Prosecutors charge Steven Eugene Asher, 46, was the driver of a sports car that spun out of control on Washougal's E Street and

struck another vehicle.

Allyn, 29, was a passenger in Asher's car.

The accident happened about 8 a.m. on Jan. 22, 1999.

The driver of the other car, Tanya Taylor of Washougal, suffered injuries that included a broken ankle and facial cuts; Asher also was charged with vehicular assault.

The trial is expected to last until May 2.

The jury will have the unusual opportunity to see a videotape of the crash, said deputy prosecutor Grant Hansen, as the collision was captured by a surveillance camera at East County Communications.

The business has a surveillance camera trained on the street.

According to court papers, the "camera recorded the defendant's vehicle pass by westbound prior to the accident, and also recorded the actual accident/impact point, where the defendant's vehicle and Ms. Taylor's vehicle hit."

Washington State Patrol officers estimated Asher was traveling 80 mph in a 30-mph zone.

Witnesses, according to court papers, estimated Asher's speed from 45 to 80. The affidavit claims Asher was fishtailing and spinning his tires shortly before the crash.

Asher's attorney, Steve Thayer of Vancouver, said evidence will prove that Allyn pulled the hand

break, causing Asher's car to lose control.

"This was an accident, not a crime," Thayer said.

Asher also has been named the defendant in two civil lawsuits.

A lawsuit filed by Taylor was dismissed earlier this month.

A lawsuit filed by Allyn's widow, Jill Allyn, is pending.

Jill Allyn, his wife of six years, was seven months pregnant with the couple's first child when her husband was killed. She gave birth to their son in March 1999.

Her late husband grew up in the Camas-Washougal area, graduated from Camas High School and worked as a diagnostic technician at Hi-Way Fuel.