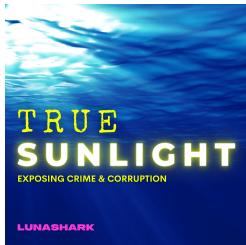


## EPISODE 09: What Happened to Grant and Gracie Solomon – Part One

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[00:00:02] **Mandy Matney:** I don't know what it will take for Gracie and Grant Solomon to get justice, but we're going to take you through the many rabbit holes as we find out exactly what happened to Grant and his sister Gracie. I believe that the entire system—from the media to the church to the government—failed these kids, and it is far past time to shed sunlight on this case. My name is Mandy Matney. This is *True Sunlight*, a podcast exposing crime and corruption, previously known as the Murdaugh Murders podcast. *True Sunlight* is a LUNASHARK production and is written with journalist, Liz Farrell.

[00:01:04] **Mandy Matney:** Well, we have big news. We are officially entering a new era in the *True Sunlight* podcast, the Grant and Gracie Solomon case. This has been a long time coming, but after finally feeling rested and ready to take on another beast of a case, we are opening up that box that I have set in the corner for a long time. It's here, it's now and it is time to unpack it. The case, in the most simplest ways I can summarize, goes like this. In 2020, 18-year-old Grant Solomon was killed mysteriously in an incident the police labeled an accident, where his father Aaron was the only witness present. In the years leading up to his death, it is well documented that Grant, his mother Angie and his sister Gracie tried to report their father Aaron's alleged abusive behavior to authorities, including church, school and court officials. No one listened. Even after Grant's death, they didn't listen. So finally, in May 2021, Gracie made her voice heard. After filing a restraining order against her father, then 14-year-old Gracie Solomon published a heartbreakingly emotional video on YouTube detailing horrific allegations of her father sexually abusing her. In the video, she explained why she was terrified of him, and she questioned the details of her brother's death. That video was seen by over 100,000 people, and it was sent to me over 100 times. But even with more than 100,000 people hearing her story, authorities still didn't seem to care to listen to her, which is why we are talking about it today. We talked about this case a little bit in a previous episode of *Cup of Justice*, but for starters, I want to tell you exactly why we took this case on. It is a story where crime meets corruption, a story that deserves to be in headlines around the world, that isn't being covered much at all by mainstream media. It is a story that has so many attached rabbit holes that desperately need sunlight, sunlight that could help an entire region of people, not just the victims. It is a story about a woman and her two children who repeatedly warned the system about a man they believed was dangerous, and now one of those children is dead and the other two live in fear for their lives. It is a story about a woman going to the ends of the earth to protect her children, no matter how many times they called her crazy, told her no and refused to believe her. It is a story about a

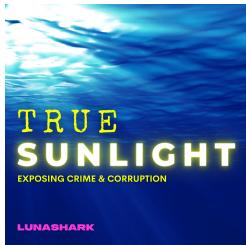


## EPISODE 09: What Happened to Grant and Gracie Solomon – Part One

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system protecting, enabling and believing a man over and over again, despite all of the horrific allegations against him. As I've said before, y'all have sent us hundreds of cases in the last few years, but this one quickly rose to the top. As you told me all of the time in my DMs, South Carolina is not the only state rife with good ol' boy corruption. Now, we are looking at you Tennessee.

Specifically Franklin, Tennessee, a wealthy suburb just south of Nashville. Franklin is in Williamson County, one of the wealthiest counties in the United States. I have to mention wealth here, because while the Solomon case shares a lot of similarities with the Murdaugh case, especially when it comes to good ol' boy power, per capita wealth is where these two locations differ the most. For example, the median household income in Williamson County was \$111,000 in 2022. Compare that to Hampton County, South Carolina's median household income of just \$38,000. But don't get me wrong, money and the pressure to keep up is a big factor in this story, just like the Murdaugh story. In a lot of ways, the first week of investigating the Solomon case has reminded us of those first few weeks we were investigating the Murdaugh family back in 2019. With both cases, there was an overwhelming amount of information online in an endless amount of social media chatter and rumors. But despite all of that chatter, our reporter Beth Braden immediately picked up on the hush-hush nature among locals while making calls to authorities about this case. Those long breathy pauses on the other end of the line after saying the word Solomon. Like the Murdaugh case in 2019, there are a few mainstream reports piecing all of the horrific details of the Solomon case together. In fact, I could only find a couple stories from the Williamson Herald and the Williamson homepage that begin to cover the sprawling details of this tragedy. No ABC, CBS or NBC news stories. No Nancy Grace, No court TV. I want to say for the record that a few podcasts and YouTubers have covered this case in great detail, and I want to give them credit, specifically the *Lauren Interviews* podcast, which was very extensive, *Kendall Rae* and *Southern Girl Crime Stories*. We aren't the first to the scene here by any means, but we believe this story is so important and needs every bit of sunlight and support from our army of pesky people. We do not believe that it is a coincidence that mainstream media, a system very much dominated by the rules of the patriarchy, has seemed to overlook this incredibly important story. In fact, the main person at the center of these allegations in this story is a former media man himself. Aaron Solomon was a TV news anchor for over a decade at WSMV Channel Four in Nashville. That station published a memorial piece after 18-year-old Grant Solomon's death in 2020, but that piece was mysteriously taken down sometime between 2021, when Gracie published her video alleging her father's sexual abuse, and January



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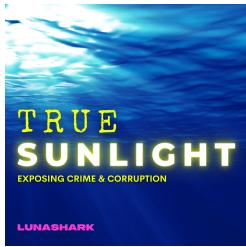
2023, when the case started gaining momentum online. Writer Shannon Ashley first pointed that out in her story published to *Medium*, a site where independent writers and creators published their work. Shannon Ashley is one of many independent writers, bloggers and content creators who have covered this story in great detail, making up for where legacy news seem to have dropped the ball. And that is where the tables are turning. Here at the crux of this story is a woman and her two children and the question of whether or not to believe them or believe their father and the powerful systems that support him. You don't have to read many details in this case for the entire thing to seem unbelievable. How could the justice system repeatedly belittle, discredit and reduce a woman like Angie Solomon—who is a licensed pharmacist by the way—a woman who was armed with evidence, documents and testimony accusing her ex husband of abuse? How could the system possibly choose him over her that many times? That's the scariest part of all of this. The more I dig, the more I think that if it could happen to Angie Solomon, it could happen to anyone. You know, we heard the word unbelievable a lot when exposing the many layers of the Murdaugh story. Unbelievable. How could one man get away with so much? Maybe before the age of social media and independent content creators, these unbelievable stories of systemic corruption and abuse were swept under the rug, because maybe there were too many members of the good ol' boy club and legacy media playing gatekeeper. Whatever you believe, those days are over. We're going to cover every inch of this case and you can decide what you believe for yourself. Just like we did with the Murdaugh case, in the Solomon story we will be putting victims first. And by the way, we have contacted the victims and they fully support our investigation. We will also be calling out corruption and questioning absolutely everything. This will be the first of many *True Sunlight* episodes covering the Solomon case. We are reporting this in real time, and we expect there to be lots of twists and turns just like the Murdaugh story.

Let's start with Grant's death. Grant Solomon was killed on the morning of July 20th, 2020, just one month after his 18th birthday. From the start, police considered his death an accident. Why? Because that is what Grant's father told them.

[00:10:39] **911 Operator:** (Inaudible).

[00:10:39] **Aaron Solomon:** I'm trying. It's 1357 South Water Street. It's off 109. Please hurry.

[00:11:09] **911 Operator:** You said 57?



## EPISODE 09: What Happened to Grant and Gracie Solomon – Part One

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[00:11:11] **Aaron Solomon:** Please hurry.

[00:11:12] **911 Operator:** Okay, what's going on?.

[00:11:12] **Aaron Solomon:** 1357. My son's truck backed over him and he's, it's rolled over him and drug him into the ditch and it's on top of him. He's trapped under the truck, and I-I, yeah he—somehow it drug him underneath it. Yes—my son is under it. I'm trying to—no—I'm trying to call 911!

[00:11:39] **911 Operator:** Okay, what's your name?

[00:11:42] **Aaron Solomon:** My name is Aaron Solomon.

[00:11:45] **911 Operator:** And you said 1337 Southwater Avenue, right?

[00:11:51] **Aaron Solomon:** Yes. Yes.

[00:11:51] **911 Operator:** How is the male?

[00:11:54] **Aaron Solomon:** He's 18. He just turned 18 a couple of weeks—about a month ago. It's my son. Oh my god. Oh my god. This is not good.

[00:12:02] **911 Operator:** Is he awake?

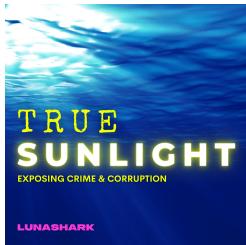
[00:12:05] **Aaron Solomon:** I don't know. I don't think so. He's not—he's not alert, right? No, he's out. And he's trapped. I got three guys here, and he's trapped under the truck.

[00:12:16] **911 Operator:** Okay.

[00:12:17] **Aaron Solomon:** Oh my god.

[00:12:18] **911 Operator:** I understand, sir. Stay on the phone. Meanwhile, we'll get somebody out there. What's your name?

[00:12:23] **Aaron Solomon:** Aaron Solomon.



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[00:12:27] **911 Operator:** Alright Aaron.

[00:12:28] **Aaron Solomon:** Huh?

[00:12:29] **911 Operator:** What kind of vehicle is it?

[00:12:31] **Aaron Solomon:** It's a Toyota Tacoma–Tacoma, and it's the vehicle has—he's underneath the vehicle.

[00:12:37] **911 Operator:** Okay, I've got that. Okay, I've got that. What color is it?

[00:12:45] **Aaron Solomon:** It's a white truck. That's my son. It's somehow backed up—yeah, yeah I'm on one, I'm on with 911 right now—Oh my god. Oh my god. Oh my god.

[00:13:06] **911 Operator:** Was your son working on it?

[00:13:09] **Aaron Solomon:** No, no. He was just getting out of it. It's the hill—we're on an incline and I guess he didn't have it in park or something or it wasn't engaged or—oh my god. Oh my god. I can't believe this.

[00:13:24] **911 Operator:** Is your son still not responding?

[00:13:27] **Aaron Solomon:** No, no, no.

[00:13:29] **911 Operator:** And he's still under the truck? No one can get under?

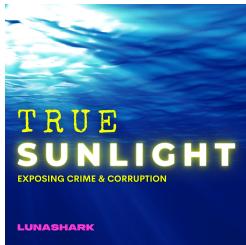
[00:13:30] **Aaron Solomon:** No, yes, no—it's—no.

[00:13:34] **911 Operator:** We've got units en route to you. I'm just asking you questions for (inaudible), okay? Can you check him....

[00:13:43] **Aaron Solomon:** Huh?

[00:13:44] **911 Operator:** —for breathing?

[00:13:46] **Aaron Solomon:** Somebody's telling me that he's coming to. Maybe.



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[00:13:49] **911 Operator:** Okay, he's waking up? Try to keep him still. So he is breathing?

[00:13:55] **Aaron Solomon:** Yeah, he can't move. I don't think he can move. I don't know.

[00:13:59] **911 Operator:** Okay.

[00:13:55] **Aaron Solomon:** He really can't move. He's trapped.

[00:14:01] **911 Operator:** Okay, we got somebody in route. Now, when he wake up he might be scared.

[00:14:04] **Aaron Solomon:** I—I'm telling 'em man.

[00:14:05] **911 Operator:** Can somebody get down there and talk to him?

[00:14:09] **Aaron Solomon:** Yeah, somebody talked to him. Shit. There's blood? Is he facing up or down? He's facing up. They said he may aspirate. We need to hurry. Oh my god.

[00:14:24] **911 Operator:** So does he have blood coming out of his mouth?

[00:14:27] **Aaron Solomon:** Yeah—he's yeah—there's blood coming up. Yeah, somehow it drug him down I think. I don't know whether it wasn't in park or what or it didn't engage the brake or—it drug him underneath somehow. They said he's facing up.

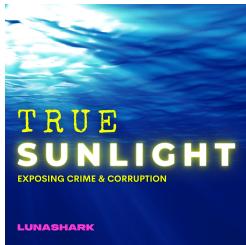
[00:14:45] **911 Operator:** Okay.

[00:14:46] **Aaron Solomon:** But he's bleeding from his mouth. So, Greg turn your face to the side if you can, barely. But be careful.

[00:14:53] **911 Operator:** Don't move him, okay?

[00:14:56] **Aaron Solomon:** We can't move him. We can't—we can't move him.

[00:15:08] **911 Operator:** They're there. I'm gon' let you go, okay?



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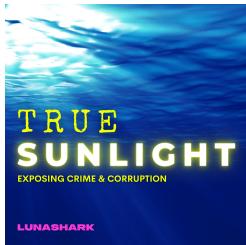
[00:15:10] **Aaron Solomon:** Yeah, okay.

[00:15:12] **911 Operator:** Uh-huh. Buh-bye.

[00:15:14] **Liz Farrell:** Aaron was the only witness to this alleged accident which occurred some time before 8:45 am outside of the Ward Performance Institute in Gallatin, Tennessee. This is where Grant, a rising senior in high school and a promising baseball player, had been scheduled to train at nine when the gym opened. The windowless warehouse-style gym is located between traffic lights on Tennessee Highway 109, which you might recognize from "Goodbye Earl" by the Dixie Chicks, a song about two best friends, Marianne and Wanda, who took matters into their own hands when the law couldn't stop 'ol Earl from abusing his wife. The lyrics go:

*So the girls bought some land at a roadside stand  
Out on highway 109  
They sell Tennessee ham and strawberry jam  
And they don't lose any sleep at night  
'Cause Earl had to die.*

Aaron and Grant drove to the gym separately. It is not clear who arrived first or what time they got there. According to a recording, Aaron says he was parked right next to Grant on the left. At the time of the alleged accident grants two trainers, Tyler Mark and Drew Hall, were in the back of the building preparing for the gym to open. According to statements they later made to a private investigator, they saw nothing until Aaron was on the phone with 911. It is unclear whether either man is who Aaron appeared to reference and even talk to during the call. The alleged accident occurred on a Monday morning in July 2020, which was still at the very beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic when people were working from home, places were still closed and fewer people were out and about. Drone footage shows fenced in storage units to the north of the gym. Across from it is a large and hilly field or yard, and to the gym's south is a vacant lot. As you heard on the call, Aaron reported that Grant's truck had rolled backward onto Grant and dragged him into a ditch, and that was that. Gallatin police filled out a traffic crash report and took some photos. Grant was taken to Sumner Medical Center where he died shortly after at 9:28 am. Then, Vince Gill sang at Grant's funeral. Don't worry, we'll be getting to that. According to doctor's notes, medical personnel were told that Grant had gone to the back of his truck to retrieve his baseball gear and quote, "dad thinks the truck was not in park." The notes

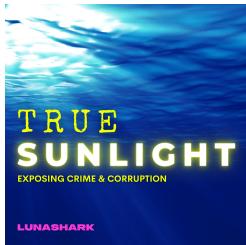


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also indicate that Grant had tried to stop the truck from rolling and had somehow gotten dragged under. Later, as questions began to emerge about the feasibility of that scenario, and as it was learned that Grant never stored his equipment in the bed of his truck, but rather in the backseat of the driver side, this story appeared to change. Doctors noted that Grant had major head trauma to the back of the skull, including a severe laceration and suspected skull fracture. He had blood coming from his mouth, nose and ears, bruising on his left cheek and right hip, but no other injury to his body or skin was noted. No scratches or tears or marks. No debris stuck to his body. The doctor noted Grant had no abnormalities to his legs, no bruising to his abdomen and his neck was not injured. Grant died of cardiac arrest and blunt force trauma. And Aaron declined an autopsy. According to a recording of Aaron in the days after Grant's death, the last Aaron had seen of Grant was when Grant had just gotten out of the truck, closed his door and was making moves to open his back door on the driver side. Quote, "I'm thinking—oh, he's just going to get his gear and I'm going to check this email to make sure it's not important—and then I'm going to get out and we're going to go in," Aaron said on the recording; meaning, according to Aaron, he was looking down at his cell phone when this happened, and he didn't see the how of it. He didn't see how his son ended up face up with his head near the driver side wheel and his body pointed toward the back end of the truck. He didn't see how his son was dragged by a truck that had two foot clearance off the ground, according to a private forensics report that was done nine months later. And as he later sat in Grant's Tacoma and tried to demonstrate his theories about how the truck might have slipped out of gear, he was unable to explain why the truck didn't move. He called it a quote, "God thing." Grant's mother and Grant's sister believe something else altogether. They believe Aaron killed grant. They believe Aaron did this because of what they say Grant knew at the time of his death and what Grant had been planning to do now that he was 18 years old, and they believe Grant's death has continued to be overlooked by law enforcement because of who Aaron Solomon is, and maybe even because of who Aaron Solomon knows.

When it comes to unhealthy relationships, almost everyone has a version of themselves that they can't really explain outside of that diseased dynamic, because they don't really understand it themselves. It is a version of yourself that's usually scared, deeply wounded, highly insecure, in pain and stuck in a rut. It's a version that comes out when you're living off of emotional breadcrumbs, where the reward of being in an otherwise broken relationship, meaning the moments when it's good and you don't feel so pitiful or alone in life, are enough to sustain you for the time being. It's the version that stays with a person even though you know you should be

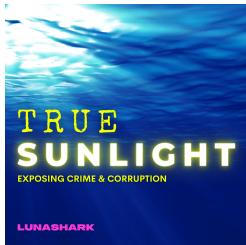


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running from them or that situation. And despite having your feet firmly planted in reality, this version of yourself can also say and do things that when viewed by someone outside of the dynamic, including a future healthier version of yourself, are mortifying to consider. And though your words and actions do have reasons behind them, they don't always present as the most logical. I'm not talking about anything amoral or criminal, just, you know, maybe a little ragey, tragic or dramatic, or maybe a little flip-floppy and inconsistent. If you don't know what I'm talking about, count yourself lucky and be proud of yourself for having solid boundaries and strong criteria for who you allow into your life romantically. For the rest of us, I'm going to ask that you think about the times you might have been called crazy by someone you love, and though you know you're not—you know you're not crazy, whatever that word means anyway—you also know that the version we just talked about might look that way to others, especially when you're asked to answer the question, why? Now, throw in abuse, be it narcissistic abuse, emotional abuse, or even physical violence. Now throw in the normal stressors in life like money and bills and mounting debt. Now throw in children. Okay, answer the question, why? Well, where to start, but also how to start. How do I explain that, yes, I said something that sounds bananas, but that I am not, in fact, bananas. How do I explain that this other person is my tormentor, but also my safe space. That I stayed even though, even though, even though. How do I explain it when another narrative is already set in motion? It's the stuff of Russian literature, quite honestly, and it can get dystopian and dark. If you're a woman, the thought of it can set your teeth on edge, even just reading about it happening to another person. The idea that you can exist one way in public, one way in your unhealthy relationship, and a third way in the eyes of the other isn't the terrifying part. The terrifying part is when the other is not a person, but a system, and God help you if that system includes family court. Because how do you explain to someone that doesn't have a brain, something that exists in absolutes and is influenced by the narrowest and more certain of worldviews, that two opposing things can be true at once? It's a heavy thought, I know, but I want you to keep all of this in mind as we start at the very beginning. When Aaron Lauren Solomon met Angelia Hofheinz for the second time. Here's David reading from the November 13th, 2001 issue of the Tennessean newspaper in Nashville, from a column by Brad Schmidt called, and I am not kidding, *Brad About You*.

[00:23:25] **David Moses:** Headline reads: "The Internet Claims Yet Another Innocent Man. Channel 4 Sports pretty boy Aaron Solomon was quite the ladies man. You could catch him hanging out with the Nashville Cats cheerleaders after the game. Aaron also loved to work Second Avenue on the weekends. No matter where he



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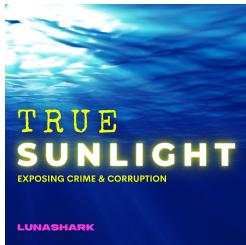
went, he was surrounded by young lovelies. I say ‘was’, because that boy up-and-got married last week. Seems Aaron, 32, got an email three months ago from a young lady he knew back in high school. That young lady. Angie Hofheinz, went to a rival high school and Aaron just loved the way she played basketball for Jackson County High School. The two went out once, kissed and never went out again. Seems young Angie blew him off. Fast forward 14 years. Angie started seeing Aaron on TV and she started feeling guilty about doing Aaron wrong more than a decade earlier. So she emailed him, he emailed back. Whirlwind romance. Next thing you know the two are at a wedding chapel in Las Vegas, the kind of place where the official photographer takes pictures and hands you the roll of film on the way out the door. Aaron leaves for his honeymoon in Cancun this morning. Mazel Tov!"

[00:24:49] **Liz Farrell:** Aaron Solomon is an Emmy-winning, but now former, news anchor and TV and radio sports commentator in the Nashville market. His was a face that everyone knew and a voice that was easily recognized. He was the emcee at all sorts of charity events. He judged beauty contests, he was a longtime volunteer at a center for child sex abuse victims, and he was treated like a local celebrity by the press. Here's little Brad again on December 17th, 2001, but in David's voice.

[00:25:22] **David Moses:** Headline reads: "Aaron Learns New Skills as a New Husband. Channel 4 Sportscaster, Aaron Solomon reports that he is enjoying married life, with one exception. You might recall Aaron reunited less than a year ago with a high school sweetie, and now he and Angie went and got married on us. Aaron, formerly a committed bachelor, says married life agrees with him. He has no problem putting the toilet seat back down. But, he said, she does make me make the bed. Oh, come on. Surely you've made your bed before? 'Hell no!' he said, 'I've never done that in my life.' Are you serious? 'My parents didn't make me make my bed. That's been the biggest adjustment.' Oy."

[00:26:11] **Liz Farrell:** That was the headlining news bit in *Brad About You* that week. Under it, like way under it, was a tiny headline about Sheryl Crow receiving an honorary doctorate degree at Southeast Missouri State University. That is how beloved it seems Aaron was in those parts. Aaron, a grown man, learns to do a house chore, beat out a story about a talented woman achieving something extraordinary in her chosen field.

[00:26:37] **Mandy Matney:** Now, Angie, Aaron's new wife, was also a Doctor in Pharmacology, and she was doing great. She owned a home, she owned a car and



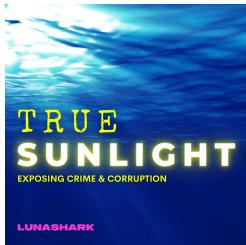
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now, she was going to be a mother. Just seven months after she married Aaron, Angie gave birth to Grant, and four years later, along came a daughter, Gracie. In 2011, Aaron left his job with the television station, it appears, abruptly. Here's a tweet from his coworker Holly Thompson from April 20th, 2011:

*"Dear friends, you may have noticed my longtime friend Aaron Solomon hasn't been by my side at the news desk. I wanted to let you know Aaron has decided to resign. Some changes were coming and although he was asked to stay with Channel 4, Aaron decided to leave and concentrate on he and his wife's business. I will miss my friend, as I'm sure you will too. I appreciate your concern and loyalty to Channel 4. Blessings, Holly."*

Now, it is not clear what business Holly was referring to here. In October 2010, it appears that Aaron filed papers with the state of Tennessee for Aaron Solomon Enterprises LLC. Nevertheless, Aaron went on to work for a sports radio station and then did a six month stint at Morgan Stanley before getting let go for unknown reasons, according to court transcripts. In 2012, Aaron's great aunt died, and as the sole beneficiary of her estate he inherited hundreds of thousands of dollars, according to court transcripts. Angie says that this money seemed to change their marriage, and their marriage was far from perfect, but we'll let Angie tell you about that in a future episode. Even with a new inheritance, the couple was still in a lot of debt. Angie suspected Aaron of multiple infidelities, which again we will get into later, but from the outside the Solomons looked like an all-American dream family—*Keeping Up with the Joneses* in one of America's richest suburbs—where their church sat at the center of their universe. The influential Grace Chapel in Franklin, Tennessee is a megachurch, previously run by a controversial figure named Pastor Steve Berger. According to multiple reports, members of Grace Chapel include the Tennessee governor himself, Bill Lee. Also, State Senator Jack Johnson—and oh—the state senator's wife Deanna Johnson, who was also a judge and plays a significant role in this story later on. When we talk about power structures in Tennessee and systems protecting their own, churches seem to be at the heart. Make no mistake, Grace Chapel's power circle is strong and it's hard to ignore when telling this story. Not only were the Solomon's members of that church, but Grant and Gracie went to

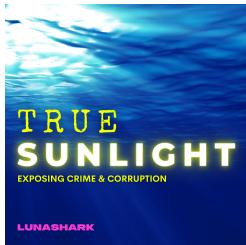


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Grace Chapel Academy, the church-affiliated private school that we will also talk about more in a future episode. So from the outside, I am sure the Solomon family looked perfect. But how many *Dateline* episodes do we have to watch to know that appearances—like dads coaching little league games, families attending church together, big homes, nice cars, etc—that none of that really matters. Which brings us to May 2013, when everything changed for the couple and they could no longer appear like the perfect family. The moment when Angie's worst nightmare as a mother was laid out for her.

[00:30:39] **Mandy Matney:** We are now in he-said-she-said territory, a land that generally speaking, favors the he. We don't usually offer trigger warnings, but after reading hundreds of pages of the Solomon's divorce documents, including transcripts from multiple hearings, we feel obligated to tell you to take cover for all of the reasons one might want to emotionally duck. There's accusations of self harm. There's a stubborn old father who thinks it is his sperm right to threaten the life of his adult daughter. There are attorneys with stacks of old text messages used as weapons. There's vague testimony interpreted as credible fact by a judge who loves his Tennessee sports teams and knows a man in love when he sees one. At the center of it all is a charming, calm, God-fearing, an aw-shucks of a former husband, who doesn't want to have to do it, judge, but he's left with no choice. Because as you can see, sir, she's crazy. On May 9th, 2013, something happened in the master bathroom of the Solomon's five-bedroom home, which they had not made a mortgage payment on in years. Aaron was out of work and so was Angie. On this night, the two were arguing. What happens next is in dispute. Aaron's account is that Angie said to him, quote, "I'm going to end it. I've been thinking about this. I know how to do it. I know what I'm going to do." He says she then went to their master bathroom with the kids asleep in the master bed, locked the doors, took her hairdryer and wrapped the cord around her neck quote, three or four times, attached it to the showerhead in their tub and attempted to hang herself. He said it took him a couple minutes to unlock the doors and when he finally found her she was unconscious and slumped at the bottom of the tub still attached to the showerhead by the cord. He said he undid this, what seems like an impossibly long cord, and then attempted to wake her by putting cold water on her face, and that he did all of this quietly so as to not disturb the children. Protecting the children, he told the judge, was always at the forefront of his mind. He said Angie awakened and became violent, kicking at him, telling him to leave her be. He said she told him that she would spend the next two and a half hours beating the hell out of him, so he fled at three-something in the morning to the parking lot of a nearby Kroger and called

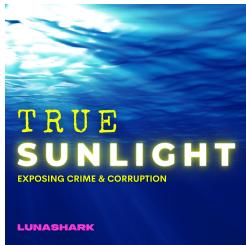


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Angie's father to tell him that she had tried to kill herself. Angie's version is much different. Angie says that Aaron wrapped the cord around her neck trying to strangle her, and she says that she was not trying to kill herself. Now, according to court records, Angie was being treated for depression at the time this occurred. Was Aaron's call to her family out of concern because of ongoing health concerns or was he planting the seed in her father's mind because he knew a line had been crossed that night? That morning, according to testimony from Angie's father, Angie's parents prayed on it and went to church services. Later that week, they helped Aaron convince Angie to go to a psychiatric hospital. In the meantime, Aaron had taken Grant and Gracie to stay elsewhere, and Angie was distraught at this and the story being spun. Angie told the court that she didn't want to go to the hospital, nor did she trust Aaron or her parents at the time to actually take her to one, but she did not want to be apart from her kids. And this was the one thing that she had to do, so she insisted that a third party drive her there and Aaron arranged for an ambulance. Angie was admitted to the hospital but discharged in less than 24 hours. According to a filing from Angie's attorney at the time, the psychiatrist who examined Angie that day had determined that there was no evidence that she tried to harm herself, nor did he believe that she was in an quote, "acute mood state that would lead to suicide." This would be a theme, by the way. According to psychiatric reports included in the divorce filings, Angie's doctors, including the one the judge insisted she used, reported that she was not a danger to herself or others. And yet, here we are.

[00:35:47] **Liz Farrell:** So, after Angie got home from the hospital the next day, Aaron brought the kids home and the family ate dinner that night. The next morning, Aaron told the kids he was taking them to a donut shop, but he didn't return with them, and the very next day he filed for divorce and sole custody of the kids. Angie would spend the next few years not just trying to get her kids back but fighting to spend any second she could with them. Along the way, she would have to subject herself to whatever terms were thrown at her to prove that she was not who her ex-husband said she was. Her children would repeatedly make their preference to live with her known. Third parties who supervised her visits with the kids swore to her capable nature as a parent and her children's desire for more time with her, but still, the court would try to silence her from raising concerns about Aaron's parenting, including barring her from reporting anything to the Department of Children's Services. According to our read on the transcripts, Angie Solomon generally seemed like a mother willing to say yes to anything the court wanted from her, anything Aaron wanted, just for an extra hour with Grant and Gracie. But there was one little

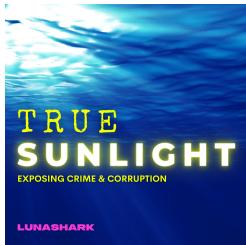


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problem, and that problem's name was Judge Philip E. Smith. Now, poor Judge Smith has since passed away. He died last September at age 62, just three days after being re-elected to the bench. He was heralded as a fair and knowledgeable Family Court Judge. In fact, in 2015, two years after his rulings in the Solomon case began, the Women's Political Collaborative of Tennessee honored him with a Good Guys Award for his work in domestic violence. So there's that. This isn't to take away from his achievements, but if we were just going off the transcripts in the Solomon case, well, that's a hard disagree about the Good Guy Award. To us, it seemed like Judge Smith, who remember, was a huge Tennessee sports fan, wanted to believe the story he was being told by former sportscaster Aaron Solomon and his legal team, and that he really struggled to understand not only where Angie was coming from, but what she was saying. Let's just put it this way. He did not seem like the type of guy who would understand that idea about the different versions of ourselves when we're in unhealthy relationships. The core problem for him was that in the days after the bathroom incident, Angie seemed to text Aaron to take responsibility for staging the incident. I say seem to, because the texts were re-typed by Aaron's team and as such, Angie said she would not testify to them being texts she had sent. According to court records, Aaron had texted Angie to tell her that he had taken a photo of her in the tub with the cord around her neck. She purportedly responded, "Oh, Aaron. You took a picture before you tried to help me? That shows me where this has gone. Just go find another. I staged that anyway. But who cares? Use it against me. Now I'm a complete wreck." But she also reportedly texted him, "Sending out my picture you made before helping me? You tried to hang me." Later, she allegedly emailed Aaron, "I am not suicidal. I made a bad choice for attention, but accept responsibility for that choice and learned why I did it and won't repeat it." Now, it's understandable why Judge Smith would be confused about this, right? He needed the facts of this argument to be in black and white, and this was a hell of a messy gray area. His job in that moment was to protect the kids, and what he was seeing in front of him was hard to make sense of. Aaron's attorney showed Angie the email and asked her, what are you talking about in this email? Angie said, in order for Aaron to stay at home with me, I had to take ownership of what has happened. Now, I'm going to read Angie's lines from the transcript while David reads Judge Smith's words, because it's important to see exactly what's going on here.

[00:39:38] **David Moses:** Mrs. Solomon, the question is a very important question, and it could be key to this case. I want you to explain to me why you would put that language, quote, "I made a bad choice for attention" in this correspondence? And again, this is a watershed moment in this case. Why did you put that in there?



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[00:40:04] **Liz Farrell:** Because in our marriage when anything went awry, or there was any violence, as long as I took ownership of it, Aaron would come home and it would still have a marriage.

[00:40:14] **David Moses:** And this is a man who you said put a cord from a hair dryer around your neck?

[00:40:21] **Liz Farrell:** Yes.

[00:40:23] **David Moses:** Why would you want that man back?

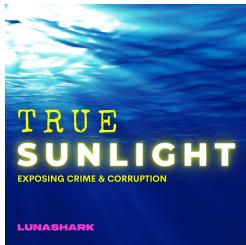
[00:40:25] **Liz Farrell:** That's a watershed moment, Your Honor. I wanted him back because I love him. I loved him then. When he came back on Memorial Day, everything had so-called worked. When he took the kids out on Thursday, and I got up Friday morning and they were gone, at that point I was done.

[00:40:41] **David Moses:** But what you're saying doesn't make sense to me.

[00:40:45] **Liz Farrell:** Which part?

[00:40:46] **David Moses:** Well, the part that you say if you take ownership, he'll come back home.

[00:40:51] **Liz Farrell:** What happened during this June 2013 hearing, which by the way, was just a month after Aaron had taken the kids from her initially, seemed to end up coloring Judge Smith's opinion of Angie moving forward. In this and subsequent hearings, it seems like he refused to see her as anything but unstable and suicidal, rather than a potential victim of abuse, who was temporarily blinded by the drama of her toxic relationship. Could it have been that Aaron put the cord around Angie's neck at one point and then left her and instead of getting up Angie decided to play dead to teach them a lesson, and as a professional woman who wanted her kids back she was embarrassed to put that on the record? Or could it have been that Angie was so trained to play along with Aaron's version of a story just to keep the peace and move past it, but she thought nothing of reading from that script until she realized he was going to use it against her? Who knows. Those questions were never considered, but it probably wouldn't have mattered anyway. Judge Smith was convinced that Aaron was a loving husband who only wanted the



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best for Angie and to protect his children. That's not us supposing this. He literally said that. And though judge Smith rightfully noted that Angie's father's testimony against her was vague, he somehow also found it credible. At no point though did anyone offer evidence of Angie being an actual danger to herself. Aaron seemed to have just this bathtub example, and the only unspecific examples Angie's father could muster for the judge were things he insinuated that Aaron had told him about Angie. He told the court that he was worried about Angie. Any particular thing that worried him about her, the judge asked. Nope. Just things he had heard from Aaron about, quote, "irregularities at their home" that have quote, "not been what a father or grandfather would like to know of." The judge asked for examples. Mr. Hofheinz's answer was that he's a type A personality. The judge responded, "don't take that as a bad thing," and then, Mr. Hofheinz gave his examples of what worried him about Angie. His example read by David:

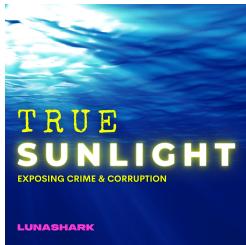
[00:43:00] **David Moses:** I've told her that I've thought that there was changes that need to be made. The way she was raising her children, I thought she was more of a friend than a mother figure.

[00:43:12] **Liz Farrell:** Angie's attorney pressed Mr. Hofheinz on cross examination. What can you direct us that links her behavior to putting the children in fear or harm's way?

[00:43:21] **David Moses:** Well, you know, I can't give you anything definitive along that line.

[00:43:28] **Liz Farrell:** Ultimately, he said they were afraid that she would take the kids away from them. He mentioned that he didn't agree with how Angie kept house or prepared their dishes, and he noted that his daughter had a very jealous heart toward her husband, feeling that he was always involved with other women, and that he simply didn't believe any of that, but worried she'd say something in front of her kids that they didn't need to hear. A few years earlier, Angie had taken out a protective order against her father after he threatened that he would show up when she least expected it to, quote, "address a dispute they were having." I felt that I had a right as a father to say that, he told the judge. At the end of this first hearing, Judge Smith ordered that Angie should get no parental time with the kids.

[00:44:12] **Mandy Matney:** Angie soon got a job as a pharmacy supervisor, earning more than twice what Aaron was making. She was ordered to pay Aaron child



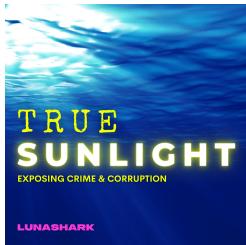
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support, and though psychiatrists deemed her stable, she was granted only limited time with her children. Eventually, she gained more and more time, despite heated setbacks like Judge Smith not liking that one of her psychiatrists had put it in writing that the court, meaning him, had been tricked and manipulated by Aaron. But custody was always at issue. So were the fears for her children's safety, and so were Aaron's attempts to stop her from talking. According to accounts from Grant's sister and friends, Grant wanted to get away from his father, and more importantly wanted to get his sister away from him and his alleged abuse. As he got closer to his 18th birthday, Grant reportedly began standing up to Aaron more and more. State officials looked into claims of abuse and Grant had reported to his school that his sister was being molested, and nothing came of it. According to his girlfriend, soon after Grant turned 18, he planned to seek legal custody of Gracie and help in any criminal case against his father, but then he died. So now, he can't do that. It is the timing of his death, along with the family's history and the circumstances of Grant's alleged accident, that have led Grant's family and friends to suspect that something more happened here. In 2021, those suspicions prompted Grant's sister Gracie to go public with her allegations against her father in a video that would change the course of this story. We will hear more from Gracie in a later episode of this podcast, but here is just a clip of the then 14-year-old showing the world just how serious she is.

[00:46:30] **Gracie Solomon:** My name is Gracie Solomon. I'm 14 years old, and I'm here to tell my story. I just want to say before we get into any of this, that it's coming straight from me. It's all me and no one else is telling me what to do. My brother died protecting me from my father, Aaron Solomon. My father is a monster. It makes me want to vomit. I've been minimalized, but now I found my voice, to be able to tell you that my father raped me, hurt me, and I'm not going to be a victim of this monster. He's a rapist. He's a molester. He's a liar and he's a killer. I hate my dad. I'm absolutely terrified of him for everything he's done to me, my brother and my mom.

[00:47:19] **Mandy Matney:** We will go back to that video and Gracie's story in a later episode, because unfortunately, despite all of the buzz created by the Freedom for Gracie Movement, the investigation appears to be in the same place it was in 2020. Beth Braden called over to the 18th circuit District Attorney's Office in Tennessee on Wednesday to find out what was going on. District Attorney Ray Wiley said, quote, "There has been a very thorough investigation done on this and there's just nothing here." He said that the Gallatin police did the initial investigation, and then his office later asked them to look again, and there was just quote, "nothing criminal at all we could find." In reference to the online movement to get help for Gracie and have



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Grant's case reopened and properly looked at Wiley said, quote, "There are a lot of things stated in there that are not true." Beth asked for the case files to see what kind of investigation was done. As it stands, we have only seen the Gallatin Police Department's traffic report on the crash and a case file from the private detective Angie hired to look into the case. According to those records, not only did the two trainers at the gym that day say what they were told happened didn't make any sense to them from what they saw that day, a forensic report on Grant's truck showed that there are only two times the Tacoma had quote, "rolled over" something in its history. And both times, the report said that someone was behind the wheel with their seatbelt on, possibly indicating that either someone was in the seat when Grant was hit, or it didn't happen at all. So as you can tell, we have a lot of questions that need to be answered in this case. What happened to Grant Solomon? What happened to Gracie Solomon? How many people did she tell about the alleged abuse? Who investigated the alleged abuse, and what did they find? Was anyone who investigated the case connected to the church? What exactly is the DA's office claiming as false? Did they investigate the sexual abuse allegations at all? The big question: is the alleged sexual abuse related to Grant's death in any way? And what about Aaron Solomon, who filed a defamation lawsuit against two teenagers, Angie and others, after Grace's video surfaced because he denies all allegations? Where is he now? What was going on with his finances at the time Grant died? And what is going on now with the custody battle for Gracie? Most importantly, what about Gracie? At the heart of this is a 16-year-old who lost her big brother. Gracie, the teenager who the system failed time and time again. Gracie, who felt like she had no other choice but to publish very horrific details about her life on YouTube. We want justice for Gracie. We want justice for Grant. And we want answers for Angie. To get those answers, Liz, Beth and I plan on interviewing a slew of people related to this case. Not only the Solomon family, but those who knew them. We have a lot of work ahead of us. If you have any relevant information to our investigation, please email us at: [info@lunasharkmedia.com](mailto:info@lunasharkmedia.com). Also, soak up the sun Premium Members. Don't miss Happy Hour, Thursday, July 27th at 6:30 pm, with Mark Tinsley, his amazing wife Stephanie, and hosted by our journalism queen, Liz Farrell. Details will be coming your way in your email inbox. We will be back next week after Russell Lafitte's sentencing. Stay tuned, stay pesky and stay in the sunlight.

[00:51:59] **Mandy Matney:** *True Sunlight* is created by me, Mandy Matney, co-hosted by journalist, Liz Farrell and produced by my husband, David Moses. *True Sunlight* is a LUNASHARK production. Right, Luna?