



## **HUMAN PERFORMANCE FACTORS**

### **Attachment 11-Witness Interview Transcript**

**Chattanooga, TN**

**HWY15MH009**

(20 pages)

## NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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IN RE: :
:
THE MULTI-VEHICLE ACCIDENT : NTSB Accident No.
THAT OCCURRED NEAR : HWY15MH009
CHATTANOOGA, TENNESSEE ON :
JUNE 25, 2015 :
:
-----:

INTERVIEW OF: CURTIS DAVID CARLTON

Friday,
July 3, 2015

Chattanooga, Tennessee

BEFORE

JOE WARREN, NTSB
TOMMY SODDER (phonetic), NTSB
KENNETH BRAGG, NTSB

This transcript was produced from audio
provided by the National Transportation Safety Board.

P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

1:06 p.m.

MR. WARREN: (audio begins mid-sentence) and myself, Joe Warren, Investigator Tommy Sodder, and NTSB Investigator Kenneth Bragg are here with a witness, Carlton --

MR. CARLTON: Curtis David Carlton.

MR. WARREN: Carlton. I'll get it right. I'm fairly bad with names. But to start with, we need to get your information real quick.

Curtis David Carlton, do you go by David?

MR. CARLTON: Yes.

MR. WARREN: Okay. And for the record, what's a good phone number for you?

MR. CARLTON: [REDACTED].

MR. WARREN: And --

MR. CARLTON: My address?

MR. WARREN: Yes, we need all that good stuff. Your address -- go ahead.

MR. CARLTON: [REDACTED],

MR. WARREN: And David, what's your date of birth, please?

MR. CARLTON: [REDACTED].

MR. WARREN: All right. Like I said, my

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1 name is Joe Warren and this is Tommy Sodder, we're  
2 investigating this crash that we had last week.

3 MR. CARLTON: Yes, sir.

4 MR. WARREN: And I understand that you are a  
5 witness to that crash.

6 MR. CARLTON: Yes, sir.

7 MR. WARREN: First of all, what do you do  
8 for a living, sir?

9 MR. CARLTON: I drive tractor and trailer  
10 myself. Old Dominion Freight line.

11 MR. WARREN: Old Dominion?

12 MR. CARLTON: Yes, sir.

13 MR. WARREN: How long have you been driving  
14 for Old Dominion?

15 MR. CARLTON: I've been there 11 years.

16 MR. WARREN: How long have you been driving  
17 overall?

18 MR. CARLTON: Twenty-eight years.

19 MR. WARREN: Twenty-eight years as a truck  
20 driver?

21 MR. CARLTON: Yes, sir.

22 MR. WARREN: What licenses do you hold?

23 MR. CARLTON: I have a Class A CDL with a  
24 hazmat endorsement.

25 MR. WARREN: You said you carry doubles?

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1 MR. CARLTON: Doubles, triples.

2 MR. WARREN: So you're qualified for doubles  
3 and triples?

4 MR. CARLTON: Yes, sir. Qualified in three  
5 states for triples. We don't pull them here.

6 MR. WARREN: Right.

7 MR. CARLTON: But we pull them in Salt Lake  
8 City, Utah, Denver, and all that out that way.

9 MR. WARREN: All right.

10 MR. CARLTON: Wyoming, Cheyenne.

11 MR. WARREN: Okay. I'm not trying to pry  
12 into your background or anything, but you yourself as a  
13 driver, have you been involved in any major crashes?

14 MR. CARLTON: Well, actually, in 2010 I was  
15 involved, but it wasn't mine. I was setting in -- like  
16 these people here were, setting in a construction zone  
17 parked with my flashers on and this young kid, Jordan  
18 Matthew of Cofield, slammed right into the back of my  
19 rig. Killed him dead. They estimated his speed at 80  
20 miles an hour when he hit the back of my truck.

21 MR. WARREN: Where was that?

22 MR. CARLTON: I was in Bossier City,  
23 Louisiana. His telephone fell out on the asphalt, so  
24 they said it was a (inaudible). It's like I can't  
25 control what's behind me.

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1 MR. WARREN: I've worked a ton of rigs  
2 involving big trucks and 99 percent of them, somebody  
3 has done something stupid on the truck is the brick  
4 wall they hit. Unfortunately, I've seen a lot of  
5 drivers just kind of quit their career, lose their  
6 career, because it's just tough.

7 MR. CARLTON: (inaudible)

8 MR. WARREN: Especially when you identify  
9 yourself as a professional driver and then something  
10 happened like this, no matter how many times somebody  
11 tells you what you're (inaudible) so on and so forth,  
12 it's still tough on a lot of drivers.

13 MR. CARLTON: Stays on your mind.

14 MR. WARREN: I try to talk to drivers all  
15 the time and say look, hey, think of this way, be glad  
16 it was your brick wall versus some family's minivan  
17 with four kids and stuff. You've got to hit something.

18 MR. CARLTON: That's what he told me. He  
19 said I'm glad -- if this is going to happen, I'm glad  
20 he hit you.

21 MR. WARREN: You don't want to be the one  
22 there for it, but if you look at it like that, rather  
23 than the back end of your trailer, than a minivan full  
24 of kids.

25 MR. CARLTON: It wasn't good.

1 MR. WARREN: That's a tough thing to be  
2 involved in.

3 MR. CARLTON: And I tried to help the man.

4 MR. WARREN: I got you. I bet you won't  
5 ever forget that day.

6 MR. CARLTON: No, sir.

7 MR. WARREN: All right. But other than that  
8 one day, no other major incidents you've been involved  
9 in?

10 MR. CARLTON: No, sir.

11 MR. WARREN: As you know, we're  
12 investigating this major crash that we had this last  
13 week up there on 75.

14 Can you tell me what you saw? Let's just  
15 start with that. What you saw when leading up to it.  
16 You were coming back from Atlanta, is that correct?

17 MR. CARLTON: I was coming back from Atlanta  
18 on 75, I started coming north.

19 MR. WARREN: Driving your personal vehicle?

20 MR. CARLTON: Yes, sir. A little red Dodge  
21 (inaudible). I was in the right lane. I looked out my  
22 rear view mirror and I saw this truck hammering down.  
23 He was getting closer and closer and closer. I said  
24 daggone. He went over to the left on me and he come  
25 back over to the middle lane. He kept on hammering

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1 down. He was passing everybody.

2 MR. WARREN: Where did you observe him at?

3 MR. CARLTON: The Volkswagen (inaudible).

4 MR. WARREN: So about Exhibit 8, something  
5 like that?

6 MR. CARLTON: Yes, sir.

7 MR. WARREN: Okay.

8 MR. CARLTON: I was in the right lane. I  
9 stayed in the right lane. He kept going from lane to  
10 lane, lane to lane, lane to lane. When I approached  
11 Exhibit 11, I was getting off -- I was going to get  
12 off. When he went by me, I never seen the brake lights  
13 come on. I could tell the cars were stopped, dead  
14 stopped. They were stopped in the road and that man  
15 never touched his brakes. And then all of a sudden  
16 boom. I saw a big ball of fire coming from under a  
17 car. So I parked beside the road and ran all I could  
18 to do to get up there because I thought maybe I could  
19 get them out before it was too hot. I couldn't get  
20 there. I couldn't touch that car. He was huffing and  
21 carrying on. There was nothing I could do.

22 But then I saw a lady laying beside the  
23 road. I was trying to figure out where she came from.  
24 Well, I never could. I saw she was seriously  
25 (inaudible) and then I walked up there and there was

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1 another guy in a car. The cars were going everywhere.  
2 They were spinning out everywhere. And then one of  
3 them spun out in front of me and he nailed him and  
4 pushed him down the road with him.

5 So I'm going to say his speed was probably  
6 75 or 80 miles an hour when he entered that  
7 construction site.

8 MR. WARREN: When he passed you the first  
9 time by Volkswagen, you estimate his speed about?

10 MR. CARLTON: Seventy-five or 80 at least.

11 MR. WARREN: Okay. And you think he just  
12 kept that same speed?

13 MR. CARLTON: He kept that same speed right  
14 on through -- he was just changing lanes. And he's  
15 supposed to be in the left lane anyway. That's a  
16 violation there. He kept going from lane to lane, lane  
17 to lane, lane to lane. It's like you don't get out of  
18 my way, I'm going to run over you. I mean that's the  
19 attitude he looked like he had to me.

20 MR. WARREN: So when you saw that truck did  
21 you identify what kind of truck it was?

22 MR. CARLTON: It was a Peterbilt.

23 MR. WARREN: A Peterbilt.

24 MR. CARLTON: Yes, sir. I will never forget  
25 it. Peterbilt. What they call a hammer lane, left

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1 lane.

2 MR. WARREN: That's what we call it, the  
3 hammer lane.

4 MR. CARLTON: I glanced at the driver  
5 because I'm not (inaudible). First thing he probably  
6 would have said what are you laughing about? No, I'm  
7 not laughing. I'm sure that's what he would have said,  
8 you know? I didn't even look at him. I saw a lady in  
9 the passenger seat. I just glanced up. I was worried  
10 about getting run over myself, so I was trying to stay  
11 out of the way when I was coming down through there.

12 MR. WARREN: Did you have to move over for  
13 him to get around you or he just passed you?

14 MR. CARLTON: He just passed me, just passed  
15 me, just sounded like a freight train coming down  
16 through there the way he was driving. He was passing  
17 everybody.

18 MR. WARREN: Do you have a CB in your --

19 MR. CARLTON: No, sir.

20 MR. WARREN: Personal car?

21 MR. CARLTON: Nor the truck.

22 MR. WARREN: You don't have one in the truck  
23 either?

24 MR. CARLTON: Never had one. No, sir.

25 MR. WARREN: Oh, really.

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1 MR. CARLTON: Management policy. They want  
2 your mind on the steering wheel, not what you're  
3 hearing on the radio. But the best of my -- everything  
4 I seen, he should be charged for that.

5 MR. WARREN: Is there any possibility that  
6 the truck that passed you is different than the truck  
7 that got in the crash?

8 MR. CARLTON: No, sir. No, sir. No, sir.

9 MR. WARREN: You're 100 percent sure that's  
10 the truck?

11 MR. CARLTON: One hundred percent. I saw  
12 the word Kentucky on the side of it. Was that on the  
13 door, the side of the truck, Kentucky?

14 MR. WARREN: Might be, yes, sir.

15 MR. CARLTON: It was on the door -- I mean  
16 on the side of the truck.

17 MR. WARREN: Might be his DOT number?

18 MR. CARLTON: Well, yes.

19 MR. WARREN: Or where they normally put the  
20 DOT?

21 MR. CARLTON: I think it was on the -- like  
22 on the side of the cab.

23 MR. WARREN: Okay.

24 MR. CARLTON: The sleeper area. Came by me  
25 so fast. Like I say, he changed lanes constantly,

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1 riding people's bumper. I was looking for a crash to  
2 happen before it happened, you know.

3 MR. WARREN: So basically what you're  
4 telling me is that this truck stood out to you before  
5 the crash occurred?

6 MR. CARLTON: Right, way before.

7 MR. WARREN: It stood out to you because of  
8 his driving --

9 MR. CARLTON: Driving way -- disrespect,  
10 speeding, and the law. Disrespect of other people in  
11 their cars. Following on their bumpers. I mean  
12 everything the man done from the point he passed me to  
13 the point of that crash was all unlawful. It shouldn't  
14 have happened.

15 And then when the crash happened, there was  
16 no -- if I was going to do something like that, I would  
17 have put that truck in a jackknife and went off in the  
18 woods. I ain't going to hurt nobody. But he  
19 disregarded -- it's like I'll just mow them over and  
20 that's what he done. He mowed them over. I mean  
21 that's my version of it. Just ran them over.

22 MR. WARREN: That's what I wanted to hear  
23 from you.

24 MR. CARLTON: He just ran them over.

25 MR. WARREN: Your version of what you saw.

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1 MR. CARLTON: Yes, sir.

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I have a few  
3 questions for you.

4 MR. CARLTON: Yes, sir.

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: When you first saw  
6 the truck, where were you at?

7 MR. CARLTON: Right there at Volkswagen --  
8 what exhibit is that?

9 MR. WARREN: It's Exhibit 8 or 9.

10 MR. CARLTON: Right there is where I first  
11 saw him coming.

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: When you first saw  
13 him, what was he doing?

14 MR. CARLTON: Changing lanes. That's why I  
15 saw him. I looked at him in my mirror. He was going  
16 from one lane to the next.

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: So this is behind  
18 you?

19 MR. CARLTON: Yes, sir.

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

21 MR. CARLTON: Right behind me there.

22 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And when he passed by  
23 you, what lane were you in?

24 MR. CARLTON: I was in the right lane.

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Far right, the slow

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1 lane?

2 MR. CARLTON: Me, yes, I was in the right  
3 lane.

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And what lane was he  
5 in?

6 MR. CARLTON: He was in the next lane over.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: So the middle lane?

8 MR. CARLTON: Middle lane.

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And you said you saw  
10 the female in the truck?

11 MR. CARLTON: In the truck, yes, sir.

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: All right. Did you  
13 ever get a chance to look at the driver? Were you able  
14 to see him?

15 MR. CARLTON: Well, I glanced at him, but I  
16 can't tell you if I could pick him out because I only  
17 glanced at him at the scene, you know. I didn't -- if  
18 I remember right, I think he had a brown shirt on. But  
19 I really didn't look at him. I was more worried about  
20 the people that was injured.

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: How long from the  
22 first time you saw him until the crash occurred?

23 MR. CARLTON: Maybe three, four minutes. I  
24 think the crash happened around 7:10 or something like  
25 that.

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1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And when you were  
2 driving, did you see any warning signs for the  
3 construction site?

4 MR. CARLTON: Yes, sir.

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

6 MR. CARLTON: Telling you there was  
7 construction.

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Tell me about the  
9 construction signs you saw.

10 MR. CARLTON: It says -- I don't remember  
11 what it said.

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Where was it at? Was  
13 it on the road?

14 MR. CARLTON: It was on the side of the  
15 road. Yes, sir. In plain view.

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: When you saw him, how  
17 fast were you driving?

18 MR. CARLTON: I was driving about 60 miles  
19 an hour and he just blew by me like I was --

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And you estimated him  
21 to be going about 75?

22 MR. CARLTON: Seventy-five or 80,  
23 estimation. It's hard to guess what it was actually.

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Did you ever think  
25 about calling 911 when you saw him?

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1 MR. CARLTON: Well, I started to, but I  
2 didn't. I should have, I guess. I've done it before,  
3 but all they tell you is we'll have somebody out there.  
4 You never see anybody, you know? I wished they'd done  
5 something to save those kids.

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: How close to you --  
7 scratch that. How close were you to the truck when it  
8 crashed?

9 MR. CARLTON: I was getting -- I was right  
10 there at the exit. I just parked on the shoulder and  
11 ran over.

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No, no. Before it  
13 happened. You're driving. Did you see the crash?

14 MR. CARLTON: Oh, yes. I saw the crash.

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: How far back were  
16 you?

17 MR. CARLTON: Thirty foot, 30 feet,  
18 something like that. Probably 30 feet. Maybe 40, 50.

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And when the crash  
20 occurred, did you have to slam on your brakes?

21 MR. CARLTON: No, I was exiting off. I  
22 exited off and just parked.

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: So you were actually  
24 on the ramp?

25 MR. CARLTON: Right.

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1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: When it occurred.

2 MR. CARLTON: But I could see the cars  
3 stopped in front and I knew if he wasn't going to hit  
4 his brake lights he wasn't planning on stopping.

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And you said you  
6 didn't see him hit his brake lights?

7 MR. CARLTON: He didn't touch his brakes.  
8 He didn't touch them.

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Now what can you tell  
10 me about the cars that were stopped?

11 MR. CARLTON: They started going every which  
12 way.

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I mean before that.  
14 Did you -- did you get the impression that there was an  
15 accident already present on the roadway?

16 MR. CARLTON: Out there?

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes, before the cars.  
18 I mean did the driver happen upon a set of cars that  
19 already crashed or the traffic looked normal to you?

20 MR. CARLTON: The traffic looked normal to  
21 me as far as to stop traffic in front where it  
22 happened.

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: So the cars were  
24 pretty much virtually stopped?

25 MR. CARLTON: Yes.

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And you said you've  
2 been driving for your company, current company for?

3 MR. CARLTON: Eleven years.

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And 28 years total,  
5 correct?

6 MR. CARLTON: Right.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: So during all your  
8 driving experience, have you had driver training  
9 before?

10 MR. CARLTON: Yes, sir.

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And you had driver  
12 training that was closely associated with safety?

13 MR. CARLTON: Yes, sir.

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And was the way he  
15 was driving, was that consistent with a safe driver?

16 MR. CARLTON: No. It was as raked as you  
17 can get. Is that how you say it?

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes.

19 MR. CARLTON: He was -- seemed like to me he  
20 just wanted to run over them. I mean if you're going  
21 20 miles over the speed limit, if something happens in  
22 front of you, there's no way you can stop, nothing.  
23 You can't stop.

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Where were you coming  
25 from that day?

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1 MR. CARLTON: Atlanta.

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Atlanta?

3 MR. CARLTON: Yes, sir.

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: So you finished your  
5 trip, your commercial truck?

6 MR. CARLTON: Yes. I parked it in Atlanta  
7 and got in my car and came home.

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: So you were on your  
9 way home?

10 MR. CARLTON: Yes, sir.

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay. I don't have  
12 anything else.

13 MR. CARLTON: My personal opinion, I hope  
14 you all hang him, get him off the road.

15 MR. WARREN: I'm going to go ahead and end  
16 the tapes and interview at this time. It looks like  
17 the time is now 1:23 p.m.

18 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went  
19 off the record at 1:23 p.m.)

20

21

22

23

24

25

C E R T I F I C A T E

MATTER: Multi-Vehicle Accident that Occurred  
Near Chattanooga, TN, June 25, 2015  
NTSB Accident No. HWY15MH009  
Interview of Curtis Carlton

DATE: 07-03-15

I hereby certify that the attached transcription of page 1 to 19 inclusive are to the best of my professional ability a true, accurate, and complete record of the above referenced proceedings as contained on the provided audio recording; further that I am neither counsel for, nor related to, nor employed by any of the parties to this action in which this proceeding has taken place; and further that I am not financially nor otherwise interested in the outcome of the action.

*Neal R Gross*  
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