



SURVIVAL FACTORS ATTACHMENT

Interviews

Fort Lauderdale, FL

HWY18FH013

(47 pages)

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

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TESLA ELECTRIC PASSENGER VEHICLE *

COLLISION AND POST-CRASH FIRE * Accident No.: HWY18FH013

FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA *

MAY 8, 2018 *

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Interview of: ALEXANDER BERRY

Broward Health Medical Center
Fort Lauderdale, Florida

Wednesday,
May 9, 2018

APPEARANCES:

THOMAS BARTH, Ph.D., Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

SHERYL HARLEY, Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

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I N T E R V I E W

1
2 DR. BARTH: Okay, this is Tom Barth. I am starting an
3 interview on May 9th at Broward Health Medical Center. Also here
4 is Investigator Harley. And we are interviewing Alexander.

5 I have to get your last name.

6 MR. BERRY: Berry.

7 DR. BARTH: Alexander Berry. He was a passenger in a 2014
8 Tesla Model S that crashed on May 8th.

INTERVIEW OF ALEXANDER BERRY

9
10 BY DR. BARTH:

11 Q. Berry, can you give me your age, date of birth, and height
12 and weight, if possible?

13 A. I'm 18. I was born on [REDACTED]. I'm 6'2", 155
14 pounds.

15 Q. Okay. And if you would, just go ahead and describe -- oh,
16 where were you seated in the vehicle?

17 A. The right rear seat.

18 Q. Right rear seat. Okay. And there were two passengers in the
19 front, so three total, right?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Okay. Can you describe -- when did you first realize that
22 something had gone wrong?

23 A. Well, we were going pretty fast down a road, and tried to
24 steer into the turn, but the wheels squealed a little, and that's
25 when the wall was coming up pretty fast on the right side. That

1 was around, yeah.

2 Q. Okay. Do you know if the car was using the autopilot
3 feature --

4 A. No.

5 Q. -- at the time? Okay. Meaning it wasn't, or you don't know?

6 A. It wasn't.

7 Q. Okay. Okay. What do you remember next?

8 A. Just the impact with the wall on the right side of the car.

9 And then I remember just waking up in a stretcher and getting into
10 an ambulance.

11 Q. Okay. Do you recall anything about the vehicle, whether or
12 not it was on fire at the time, or whether -- anything about the
13 vehicle itself, right after the crash, or do you not recall?

14 A. I don't recall, but I heard it was on fire.

15 Q. Okay. Do you remember being treated on scene? Like did
16 the --

17 A. By the paramedics?

18 Q. -- paramedics do anything in particular on scene?

19 A. In the ambulance, yes.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. Once.

22 Q. So they loaded you -- you wake up -- you woke upon a
23 stretcher, they loaded you right into the ambulance, and then what
24 happened next?

25 A. I was driven to Broward General Hospital.

1 Q. Okay. Can you give me a little summary of your injuries?

2 A. I have, on the left side, two cracked ribs. My right pelvis
3 was fractured. My right clavicle has two fractures, and my left
4 shoulder has a tear in it.

5 Q. Okay. Let's see. So you don't recall anything about getting
6 out of the vehicle or any of that aspect, that aspect of it?

7 A. Eye witnesses said I was thrown out of the vehicle, or
8 ejected from it during the crash, but I don't remember that at
9 all.

10 Q. Okay. Okay. So this was at -- this occurred around 7 p.m.?

11 A. About.

12 Q. And you guys were -- where were you going from, or to? What
13 was the purpose of the trip?

14 A. From the mall to his house.

15 Q. Okay. Was there drinking or drugs involved?

16 A. No.

17 Q. Okay. Okay.

18 DR. BARTH: Sheryl, do you have any questions?

19 MS. HARLEY: Yeah.

20 BY MS. HARLEY:

21 Q. Alex, if you don't mind, so what time did you meet up with
22 Barrett and Edgar?

23 A. At about 4 p.m., I think.

24 Q. About 4 p.m.? Did you meet up with them at the mall?

25 A. At their house.

1 Q. At their house? So whose house were you at? You were at?

2 A. Barrett's.

3 Q. You were at Barrett's house? And then you guys went out to
4 the mall?

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. Okay. Did you meet up with anybody else at the mall?

7 A. Yes, two of our friends.

8 Q. Two of your friends?

9 A. Who both drove separate cars.

10 Q. Oh, okay.

11 A. Following us.

12 Q. Okay.

13 DR. BARTH: Yeah. And that was the Model X that was -- or
14 was it a -- what was the vehicle following?

15 MR. BERRY: A white BMW 5 series.

16 DR. BARTH: Oh, okay. We had heard that there was like
17 another Tesla involved, but okay.

18 MS. HARLEY: Okay.

19 DR. BARTH: So it's a --

20 BY MS. HARLEY:

21 Q. So, and all of you were going back to Barrett's house?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Okay. All right. Have you ever been in that car before, the
24 one that Barrett was driving?

25 A. Uh-huh.

1 Q. Yeah?

2 A. Many times.

3 Q. Hmm?

4 A. Many times.

5 Q. Many time? Does Barrett own it?

6 A. I'm not sure if the title's in his name, but the family owns
7 it, and he drives it every day.

8 Q. He drives it every day? When you were in it, did it feel any
9 different than when you were in it before?

10 A. No.

11 Q. As far as driving, it was handling the same way? There
12 wasn't really any issue?

13 A. I've never experienced it going a hundred miles per hour
14 around a turn before, so I can't really attest to that,
15 specifically. But it seemed fairly normal.

16 Q. How did you know it was going a hundred miles an hour?

17 A. Just a feeling, I assumed, and I looked at the speedometer.

18 Q. You looked at the speedometer? Okay. Do you know if
19 Barrett's ever driven that fast before?

20 A. I can't personally attest to it. He probably has.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. I'm not sure.

23 Q. All right. So you guys left the mall, you were heading back
24 to Barrett's house, and you were driving pretty fast, at about a
25 hundred miles an hour, and then you got to the turn. What's the

1 first thing you remember when you arrived at that turn?

2 A. Still going the same speed. I'm not sure if he tried to
3 brake at all. I'm guessing he did. But he cut it close, and the
4 tires slid and just moved out towards the wall on the right side
5 of the road.

6 Q. Okay. Did he say anything?

7 A. No. I think he was just trying to correct the car.

8 Q. All right. So the car kind of slid into that wall?

9 A. To an extent.

10 Q. Yeah. Okay. Do you remember the car after it hit the wall?
11 Did it do anything? Did it spin around? Did it just kind of --

12 A. I think I blacked out once it hit the wall.

13 Q. Okay. You were in the back seat on the right-hand side?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Do you remember moving anywhere inside the car?

16 A. Not -- I don't remember anything after hitting the wall.

17 Q. Okay. Were you wearing a seatbelt?

18 A. No.

19 Q. Do you know if Barrett and Edgar were wearing seatbelts?

20 A. I'm guessing they were.

21 Q. And you said when you woke up, you were actually already on a
22 stretcher, and they were loading you in the ambulance?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Okay. When you woke up, did you see the other two boys that
25 you guys were with, your other two friends?

1 A. I didn't see them there, but one of the boys pulled me away
2 from the car, pulled me out of the car.

3 Q. One of the other boys that was in the BMW?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Okay. All right.

6 DR. BARTH: Do you remember which boy that was, what his name
7 was?

8 MR. BERRY: Yes. His name was Beckton.

9 BY MS. HARLEY:

10 Q. I'm sorry, Beckton?

11 A. Beckton, yeah.

12 Q. Okay. Is that B-e-c-t-o-n?

13 A. B-e-c-k-t-o-n.

14 Q. K-t-o-n.

15 DR. BARTH: That's his first name?

16 MR. BERRY: Yes.

17 DR. BARTH: Okay. What's his last name; do you know? His
18 last name?

19 MR. BERRY: Do we need it?

20 DR. BARTH: Huh?

21 MR. BERRY: Is it necessary?

22 DR. BARTH: Well, yeah, I'd like to talk to him. I mean,
23 it's up to you whether you want to tell us, but I'd like to talk
24 to him, because part of these instances is the evacuation from the
25 vehicles, especially in a burning vehicle. One of the things

1 we're looking into is, you know, electric vehicles, they start on
2 fire, the timing for how quickly that fire envelopes, whether or
3 not people had time to get out, whether or not they got help
4 getting out. It's helpful for us to understand that aspect of it.

5 MS. HARLEY: I tell you what. Let's do it this way. If
6 you're not feeling comfortable doing that, would you think about
7 giving him our phone number, and ask him to give us a call?
8 Because one of the things that we want to see is, he saw -- he
9 probably saw more than you remember, and that's important.

10 And I'm not going to ask you -- I'm not asking you to do
11 something that you're uncomfortable with. But maybe he would be
12 willing to talk to us over the phone. Again, he can't get in
13 trouble. None of -- nobody can get in trouble here. Okay. But
14 it's kind of important, because he may have actually seen
15 something, and the other kid too. Give them our cell number.
16 Okay?

17 MR. BERRY: Okay.

18 MS. HARLEY: And say look, no harm no foul. We just need to
19 talk to them. All right.

20 MR. BERRY: Okay.

21 MS. HARLEY: Feel better about that?

22 MR. BERRY: Uh-huh.

23 MS. HARLEY: Okay.

24 DR. BARTH: I had a question. Did they -- so were you guys
25 all familiar with this roadway? Has the driver, do you know if

1 the driver has driven this roadway in the past?

2 MR. BERRY: Yes.

3 MS. HARLEY: Question. Do you have any idea what the speed
4 limit on that road is?

5 MR. BERRY: I'm not sure, probably around 40.

6 MS. HARLEY: Okay. Do you drive?

7 MR. BERRY: I do.

8 MS. HARLEY: You do?

9 MR. BERRY: Yeah.

10 (Pause.)

11 MS. HARLEY: So, do you have any questions for us?

12 MR. BERRY: No.

13 MS. HARLEY: No?

14 MR. BERRY: No.

15 MS. HARLEY: Okay.

16 DR. BARTH: Is there anything else you can think of that
17 maybe we didn't ask you, that might be important?

18 MR. BERRY: I don't really remember much. I'm sorry.

19 DR. BARTH: No, that's fine.

20 MS. HARLEY: So you've got our card. You know, talk it over
21 with your parents. If there's something you remember later on,
22 please give us a call. Let us know. Even if you think it's not
23 important, and it's something small, call us anyway. All right.
24 And my phone number's a 24-hour number. All right?

25 MR. BERRY: Okay. Okay.

1 MS. HARLEY: All right. Mom and dad --

2 DR. BARTH: Okay. This is Tom, ending interview.

3 MS. HARLEY: Any other questions?

4 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: TESLA ELECTRIC PASSENGER VEHICLE
 COLLISION AND POST-CRASH FIRE
 FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA
 MAY 8, 2018
 Interview of Alexander Berry

ACCIDENT NO.: HWY18FH013

PLACE: Fort Lauderdale, Florida

DATE: May 9, 2018

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.



Pamela Jacobson
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

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TESLA ELECTRIC PASSENGER VEHICLE *

COLLISION AND POST-CRASH FIRE * Accident No.: HWY18FH013

FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA *

MAY 8, 2018 *

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Interview of: CHIEF STEPHEN GOLLAN
Fort Lauderdale Fire and Rescue

Via Telephone

Thursday,
May 10, 2018

APPEARANCES:

THOMAS BARTH, Ph.D., Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

CHIEF LEWIS
Fort Lauderdale Fire and Rescue

I N D E X

ITEM

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Interview of Chief Gollan:

By Dr. Barth

4

I N T E R V I E W

1
2 DR. BARTH: This is, what is this? May 10th now. This is
3 Tom Barth, interviewing Chief Gollan, G-o-l-l-a-n.

INTERVIEW OF CHIEF STEPHEN GOLLAN

4
5 BY DR. BARTH:

6 Q. And so, why don't you go ahead and describe what unit, what
7 units you were on, and essentially what happened during this
8 event?

9 A. I was assigned to Battalion 13 for this incident. The call
10 had come out for a vehicle fire, with possible entrapment, in 49
11 alpha zone, or 49 zone. The appropriate units were dispatched,
12 which was an engine and a rescue. I went ahead and had them add
13 myself to the call, and requested that -- there was another unit
14 at 49, which is Ladder 49, that they have Ladder 49 and an
15 additional engine respond to the scene, based upon the possible
16 entrapment.

17 Rescue 49 was the first unit on scene. They advised that
18 they had one vehicle with heavy flames coming from the front of
19 the vehicle, and intense heat. They pulled past the vehicle and
20 blocked traffic on the southbound side of the incident. Within a
21 minute or so -- it was relatively quick -- Engine 49 arrived on
22 scene and provided a scene size-up of one vehicle fully involved.

23 They stretched their front bumper line, which is an inch and
24 three-quarter preconnect, to the fire and began fire attack. They
25 were utilizing the foam, or wetting agent that we have on the

1 truck, which is FireAde. They started off about a 0.5 percent and
2 ended up at a 1.5 percent mixture with that, to get a good blanket
3 coverage on it.

4 While they were conducting fire attack, Ladder 49 arrived on
5 scene and myself arrived on scene. I was immediately, upon
6 arrival, given the update that there was two fatalities in the
7 vehicle, and that they were having a little bit of a hard time
8 getting the fire out.

9 Ladder 49, at that point, they were at about a half a tank of
10 water, so I had requested Ladder 49 to go ahead and assist with
11 stretching a 5-inch supply line to the hydrant, which was located
12 about, I would say about 150 feet to the north of the engine,
13 Engine 49, which was the primary unit on scene.

14 Q. What -- let me interrupt real quick. That inch and three-
15 quarter front line, what's the -- what flow rate were you running
16 at, do you know?

17 A. Well --

18 Q. Or approximately?

19 A. I'd have to check with the driver.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. I didn't see any of the -- I'm not sure what he had it dialed
22 up to.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. I would imagine -- I'm not even going to estimate. I'd
25 rather him --

1 Q. That's fine.

2 A. -- say exactly what he had it at.

3 Q. Okay. And then the tank, the tank truck that -- the ladder
4 truck tank, what's the capacity of that ladder truck tank?

5 A. So he didn't have the ladder truck tank. It was the engine
6 tank that they were on.

7 Q. Oh, I'm sorry.

8 A. Which would have been 500 gallons.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. So they would have utilized about 250 gallons at that point.

11 Q. Okay, great. Thanks. Okay.

12 A. So they advanced that -- caught the water supply which was
13 there, and supplied the engine. They continued on fire attack.
14 As mentioned in the report, there was -- two of the -- you know, I
15 utilized the Tesla app when I went arrival on scene, to get a
16 detailed explanation of the vehicle, and where our cuts and no-
17 cuts and things of that nature were. And it had indicated where
18 the batteries were located up underneath the vehicle.

19 On approaching the vehicle, the auxiliary battery, which
20 looked like an ordinary battery, was located to the west of the
21 vehicle, by the right rear quarter panel, probably about 15 feet
22 from the vehicle. And then there was another one of the larger
23 batteries, one of what I understand to be 14 of the total
24 batteries underneath, one of the larger batteries was located off
25 the front right quarter panel, probably about 10 feet out.

1 And it was smoking. It wasn't active firing, but it -- and
2 it was making that electric sound, you know, bzz, bzz, type thing.

3 Q. Arcing, yeah. Let me just clarify.

4 A. So --

5 Q. So when you said auxiliary battery, you weren't talking about
6 the lead acid traditional battery. You were talking about one of
7 the modules of the lithium ion battery?

8 A. So the lead battery was located about 15 feet off the rear
9 quarter panel of the vehicle that was sitting there. It -- I
10 don't remember, on the initial contact, if one of the leads was
11 already gone off of it or not. But I do know that later when we
12 came back, that one of the contacts was completely gone. I don't
13 know if it was the positive or the negative.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. I don't --

16 Q. Okay. So the lead acid battery, the traditional auxiliary
17 battery was 15 feet away from the vehicle on the west side. And
18 then the other one that you talked about, that was sparks,
19 sparking and -- or smoking, about 10 feet away was the, one of the
20 modules from the lithium ion battery pack?

21 A. It was completely intact, that battery pack. I didn't see
22 any exposures or anything like that. Like I said, just light
23 smoke coming from it.

24 Q. What's the size -- are we talking about like a 4-foot by 5-
25 foot flat plate battery, or are we talking about a little --

1 what's the size of that, that you're talking about?

2 A. Twenty-four inches long, if that.

3 Q. Okay. So this must have been a piece of the main battery.
4 Okay. So 24 inches long and like maybe 6 or 10 inches wide, and a
5 few inches thick?

6 A. Thereabouts.

7 Q. Okay. So that's a -- what that is, is that's a, that's one
8 of the modules, or maybe it could have been two of the modules
9 from the main battery pack. Okay. That makes sense.

10 A. Okay. Now there was another one of those that was in half,
11 and that was located underneath the A post. It had gone up in
12 between where the right front wheel would have been and the A
13 post, is where that second one was at.

14 Now that battery pack was the one that had been broken in
15 half, and it looked like a bunch of double-A batteries in there,
16 is what it looked like to me, after the fire.

17 Q. Right.

18 A. You know, maybe a thousand double-A batteries. That was the
19 battery pack, the one that had ruptured was the one that was
20 giving us such a hard time, getting it to go out, until such time
21 as we dialed the foam up to that 1.5 percent and completely doused
22 it.

23 Q. And that's the -- and so again, that's another one that's
24 about 24-inches long, the one that's below the A pillar. Or is
25 that a bigger one? What I'm trying to do is --

1 A. It was out in the middle of the road.

2 Q. What I'm trying to do is understand the -- so the way this
3 vehicle is constructed is it has one big flat plate with either --
4 I don't know yet, we're trying to find out, either 14 or 16
5 modules. And then the modules are about, maybe, you know, a
6 couple of feet long by 10 inches wide, or what -- or 6 inches
7 wide, and then a couple inches tall.

8 And so what -- it sounds like what you're describing is that
9 there's been a couple of these modules that got separated from the
10 main case. And so what you're saying is the --

11 A. Main case.

12 Q. The one that's underneath the A pillar is this, like a little
13 separated module that's just like a couple of feet long. Or is it
14 part of a really big case that's 4 feet long and 5 feet wide?

15 A. That's kind of a trick question, because originally it would
16 have been part of the large 4-foot by 6-foot one that was
17 underneath. But it had separated from the -- the two that I'm
18 mentioning had separated from the main battery.

19 Q. Okay. Yeah. That's what I was trying to understand. That
20 clarifies it for me. Thanks. Yeah. So these are modules that
21 separated from the main battery, and they are sitting some
22 distance away from the main battery, but they're still on fire and
23 arcing?

24 A. But completely separate from the main battery, and as
25 mentioned, was about 10 feet to the west of the vehicle off the

1 front quarter panel. The one that was underneath the A post was
2 separated from the main battery, but still in contact with the
3 main battery system. It wasn't completely separated. It had
4 gotten --

5 Q. Got you.

6 A. -- dislodged from the main battery, but was not isolated from
7 the main battery, it appeared.

8 Q. Right.

9 CHIEF LEWIS: Still wired to it.

10 BY DR. BARTH:

11 Q. Yeah. So there's bus, main bus bars going to the electrical
12 connection points going to it. Okay. That helps.

13 A. Yeah. That was the one that was giving us all the problem
14 and was still on fire, was that one that -- and that module had
15 completely broken open and in half, so you could see what was
16 inside of that module.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. And that's where the fire was continuing to burn, that we
19 weren't -- we were having a hard time with getting that battery
20 pack out.

21 Q. And at this point, the big main battery case, you know, the
22 one that I'm referring to that's, you know, 4 or 5 feet by a
23 couple, you know, 3 or 4 feet, or 5 feet --

24 A. The one underneath the vehicle, yeah.

25 Q. Yeah. Was it -- was that still underneath the vehicle? Or

1 was it partially separated from the shell of the vehicle?

2 A. (Indiscernible) to the ground.

3 Q. I'm sorry. The phone broke up there. I didn't catch that.

4 A. It was underneath the vehicle, but it had dropped down to the
5 ground.

6 Q. Great. Okay. Thank you. Okay. So then what happened?

7 A. So then they -- we got the foam mixture, and that was able to
8 put the battery out, which a majority of the fire damage to the
9 vehicle was on that passenger side, underneath that A post, right
10 where that battery pack was at.

11 We wet the rest of the vehicle down, secured the scene. We
12 then went with, you know, cooling down the other battery pack that
13 was out there, which it wasn't smoking any longer, or anything
14 going on with that. And then that took us to them starting their
15 investigation, which all we did was secure the scene and left
16 everything in place for them to get their photos.

17 We were called back to the scene a while later, to pop the
18 door, to gain access to the first victim, which was the driver,
19 which there was no damage to the passenger compartment on the
20 driver's side at all. It was completely intact. The steering
21 wheel, the dashboard, all of that, there was no damage to.

22 We thought the passenger, or second victim on the passenger
23 side of the vehicle was also completely free. The door of the
24 vehicle had already been gone, from the impact. And -- but it
25 appeared -- so we left the scene. We were called back maybe

1 another hour later by West Way Towing, by Darren, that they were
2 going to load the vehicle, and wanted us to stand by and help
3 remove the second victim out of the vehicle.

4 When we came back, the second victim wasn't able to be
5 removed from the vehicle because their left foot was entangled in
6 wires and debris that were down in the, would have been the foot
7 compartment of the passenger side front.

8 Q. Okay. And --

9 A. We were able to free them from that. All of the wires that
10 were running up the lower part of the car, they were all exposed.
11 We were able to free that foot, remove that second victim out of
12 the vehicle. And then after that, the -- West Way began to move
13 the vehicle.

14 As soon as they moved the vehicle, there was sparking from
15 that same battery pack that was underneath the A post. It
16 immediately started to spark.

17 Q. Okay. Let me interrupt real quick and ask a couple of
18 questions before I forget. So when they were -- when you were
19 putting out the fire, what was the distance that they were
20 streaming to the fire, and were there concerns from electrical
21 arcing and things like that, that they were taking into
22 consideration?

23 A. We were taking into consideration of, you know, that the
24 hazards of the electrical arcing and it being an electric vehicle
25 and all that. But with, you know, the risk versus reward and two

1 victims in the vehicle, but both victims were still moving when we
2 started our fire attack inside the vehicle. So there was a sense
3 of urgency to get the fire out immediately.

4 The firefighter that was on the line is a very, very
5 knowledgeable and aggressive firefighter, and he was all the way
6 up into the vehicle with the nozzle, getting an aggressive attack
7 on it. The vehicle was situated with -- it was facing southbound
8 in the northbound lane, up on the sidewalk, with -- the right side
9 of the vehicle was still in the roadway and the left side of the
10 vehicle was all the way up against the driveway on the other side.

11 So there was a runoff channel for the water in the roadway.
12 So as they were flowing, you were getting the water down into the
13 roadway, which there was some concern with that running water now,
14 and the electricity of the vehicle, with the battery pack having
15 dropped down into that water, what exactly we had.

16 So we had cleared to the south, which was the direction the
17 water was running, had cleared to make sure that there was no one
18 in that running water, on the approach to the vehicle.

19 Q. Okay. And so it sounds like what you're describing is that
20 the interior -- could you describe the thermal damage to the
21 interior and the dashboard? And like, it doesn't sound like there
22 was, like there wasn't a raging interior fire, at this point.

23 A. Well, upon arrival, the dashboard forward was completely
24 engulfed. The interior of the car had -- was pretty well ignited
25 from, I would say, the back of the seats forward, all the way to

1 where the front axle would have been.

2 Q. Back of the front seats?

3 A. Yeah, yeah. So the dashboard on the driver's side was -- or
4 not on the driver's side, on the passenger's side, that dashboard
5 was completely engulfed in flames. And the whole front engine
6 compartment and, I mean the dash all the way across, but the fire
7 was most intense directly in front of that front passenger, in
8 that dashboard area.

9 Q. Okay. Did you notice if the passengers were -- could you see
10 if they were seat-belted or not?

11 A. No, they -- no. It was unrecognizable.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. The front passenger had his right leg out of the vehicle when
14 we approached the vehicle. His left leg was still in the vehicle,
15 and the left leg was the one that later we learned was entrapped.
16 But I don't know if the foot was entrapped from the material that
17 had dropped from the dashboard down and melted around his foot, or
18 if it was metal. We didn't have to cut him out. We simply pried
19 the foot out.

20 Q. Okay. That was the right front passenger, had his right --

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. -- leg out of the vehicle?

23 A. Had his right leg out of the vehicle, and the door was
24 completely gone.

25 Q. The door was completely gone? From -- okay. So maybe

1 from --

2 A. The vehicle.

3 Q. -- from the -- but you guys didn't cut it away. It was like,
4 from separated from the crash impact?

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. Yes? I'm sorry. The phone --

7 A. Yes. It was separated from crash impact. It was up in front
8 of the vehicle, up by the quarter panel, at that point.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. But it was completely open.

11 Q. Okay. Got it. Okay. And then the other thing I wanted to
12 ask while we're still talking about the victims was, the third
13 passenger, where did you guys first recognize the location of the
14 third passenger?

15 A. So he was located directly behind the vehicle, approximately
16 probably 20 to 30 feet behind the vehicle, seated on the sidewalk,
17 sitting up, breathing, alert, awake, oriented. And there was two
18 other people that -- their friends that were in another car, that
19 were with them during the whole thing, following them, they
20 actually went over and were sitting on the sidewalk with him.

21 Q. Did he show any signs of thermal -- that he had been exposed
22 to heat, or fire?

23 A. No. He had none of that.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. Now the two, the two individuals that were on the sidewalk

1 with him did say to me that when the car initially went up on the
2 sidewalk -- the car was heading southbound. And so it --
3 originally, when he lost control, it went up on the sidewalk on
4 the west side of the street.

5 Q. Right.

6 A. Made contact with the walls on the west side of the street,
7 and then looked like it may have rolled, relieving the roof, the
8 glass roof of the vehicle, which was in the center of the street.
9 And then the vehicle came to rest on the sidewalk on the east side
10 of the street.

11 The two individuals that were in the other car that were
12 following them said that when the vehicle made contact with the
13 sidewalk in, at the first, on the east side of the -- on the west
14 side of the street, that when it made that first contact on the
15 west side of the street, that there were sparks underneath the car
16 that came out.

17 Q. Okay. And did you say that they indicated that they thought
18 the vehicle rolled?

19 A. (Indiscernible).

20 Q. I'm sorry. The phone broke up there.

21 A. I don't think the vehicle -- I don't think the vehicle
22 completely rolled, but I think it came up on its side.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. The glass for the roof was located in the middle of the
25 street. And it was my understanding that when the first arriving

1 police officer was there, that there were bystanders tending to
2 the person that was thrown from the vehicle, who was located in
3 the back seat, that he was in the bushes behind the vehicle.

4 Q. Okay. So that would be, let me think of the scene here. So
5 that would be -- the vehicle was -- the vehicle ended up facing
6 southbound, basically, in the -- and so that means that the person
7 in the back seat would have been thrown into the bushes to the
8 north of the vehicle.

9 A. To the north of the vehicle. Yes. That's correct. On the
10 east side of the street.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. Directly behind the vehicle, approximately 20 feet or so
13 behind the vehicle, on the north side of the street.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. Or I'm sorry, on the east side of the street, north behind
16 the vehicle.

17 Q. Got it. Okay. And so it was pretty clear that he was
18 ejected then? I mean, you weren't there immediately, but the
19 indications on scene were that it sounded like he was ejected from
20 the vehicle.

21 A. (Indiscernible), and the bystanders had stated that he was
22 found in the bushes. I did speak to him. The only thing that he
23 had remembered was being in the vehicle, and that they were doing
24 approximately 90 miles an hour. He didn't remember any of the
25 incident at that time.

1 Q. Okay. I'm going to have to have you repeat. This phone, for
2 some reason it, sometimes it cuts off the first part of your
3 sentence. So could you repeat your description of what he
4 remember -- or about the ejection question?

5 A. (Indiscernible) --

6 Q. Oh, I'm not hearing you.

7 A. -- remember how he --

8 Q. Okay. Now you're good.

9 A. Are you there?

10 Q. Yeah. Now you're good.

11 A. Okay. Speaking with him, he did not know how he had gotten
12 out of the vehicle. He only -- he didn't remember the accident.
13 He remembered the beginning of the accident, and that was it. He
14 did say that, you know, that they were traveling about 90 miles an
15 hour, during -- when the accident took place.

16 Q. Okay. And did he describe anything about getting helped out?
17 Like at one -- when we interviewed him at the hospital, he had
18 two -- he kind of didn't remember, but then at one point he said
19 he thought one of his friends helped him. It was unclear whether
20 it was out of the vehicle or away from the vehicle. Did he say
21 anything like that?

22 A. Everyone that I talked to on scene said that he was in the
23 bushes.

24 Q. Okay. Okay. Okay. So that -- I think that's all I had, as
25 far as the victims. Or well, I'll have you describe that as you

1 continue the story, how they were, you know, picked up by EMS or
2 whatever. But continue with, go ahead with where you -- you left
3 off about the time that -- let's see here. You left off about the
4 time that you had to be called back out again when they were
5 loading the vehicle.

6 After you extricated -- after you helped extricate the right
7 front passenger -- or did you say you had to -- why don't you
8 finish with that? Did you have to extricate both the -- help
9 extricate both passengers, or both front passengers?

10 A. For the driver of the vehicle, Victim 1, that in -- all we
11 did was pop the door, the driver's door of the vehicle, so that
12 they could remove him.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. We didn't physically remove him. The Coroner's Office did.
15 We had left, and then when we came, were requested to come back,
16 for the Victim Number 2, which was the front passenger victim,
17 because of the leg, the left foot being entangled underneath the
18 dash and wires and various debris.

19 Q. Okay. When -- this is -- when you said that the victims were
20 moving when you first were responding to the crash, were they --
21 did they show indications of being conscious, or was it just
22 movement?

23 A. (Indiscernible) movement.

24 Q. I'm sorry. The phone cut out again.

25 A. There was no audible. There was no indications of any type

1 of consciousness, just physical movement.

2 Q. Okay. Thank you. Okay. So then, after helping to
3 extricate, why don't you continue from extricate, after helping to
4 extricate after the right front passenger?

5 A. (Indiscernible) there was loads of debris around the right
6 front passenger's foot. We were able to wedge it, and pry the
7 material away from the foot, and then remove the passenger and
8 turn him over to the coroner.

9 At that point, West Way then began to move the vehicle, so
10 that they could load it. They had attached their rigging to the
11 right rear of the vehicle. I believe it was actually the C post
12 that they had attached to. As soon as they started moving it, we
13 started to see some sparks and smoke coming from the engine
14 compartment area, pretty much that same location as where that
15 battery was, underneath the A post, from the A post up to that
16 front, where the wheel would have been.

17 As it starts sparking, then they relocated to the front, and
18 got the flatbed in there. When the flatbed took hold of it and
19 started pulling it forward, that battery once again started
20 sparking, some smoke and some light fire. We stopped the
21 operation, and then wetted the entire vehicle down with a 2
22 percent foam mixture this time, using once again a half a tank of
23 water on the truck, just completely dousing it with foam.

24 From that point forward, then when they moved the vehicle,
25 there was no more sparks or fire or anything like that. However,

1 as they moved it, I don't know if it was the motor, something
2 large from the front came up underneath the vehicle, and then
3 pushed the entire battery pack out the back end of the vehicle, as
4 it was being pulled onto the flatbed.

5 Q. Okay. And what were they using -- how were they attaching to
6 the vehicle? What were their attachment points? Like with
7 chains, they were using chains, and they were trying to --

8 A. No, no. He was using some sort of soft nylon device, and
9 they were attaching to anything that they could possibly find that
10 would hold.

11 Q. Okay. Okay. And so then the, so the battery case got
12 separated from the vehicle, from the -- that is the drive, the
13 main drive motor in the front, it sounds like. And then how did
14 they deal with it after that?

15 A. (Indiscernible) possibly put onto the flatbed, with the
16 battery pack hanging off of the flatbed by probably a foot or two,
17 strapping the car down onto the flatbed. At that point, there
18 were no hazards present in any way that we could see. At that
19 point, we cleaned up and left the scene while they continued to
20 clean up the debris in the roadway.

21 Q. You said the battery case was hanging off the back of the
22 flatbed. Is that because it was attached by cables or something,
23 or?

24 A. I don't really know what it was attached with. It -- just as
25 they were pulling it up onto the truck is when, what the motor had

1 pushed it out the back. It appeared to still be connected to the
2 vehicle, because it was moving forward with the vehicle, but it
3 was slowly coming out the back end of the vehicle.

4 Q. Okay. Okay, so then you guys packed up and left. And then
5 you got called back out again, right?

6 A. (Indiscernible) close to 1 o'clock at that point.

7 Q. I'm sorry. The phone broke up again.

8 A. Yeah, I know. No. That would have been -- once the car was
9 loaded, we were done. We didn't come back out. It was, the car
10 was loaded onto the flatbed, and there was nothing else. They
11 were picking up the debris in the roadway.

12 It appeared that once they started to move the vehicle, and
13 that battery module that was underneath that A post, once that
14 module was completely separated from the vehicle, and had slid
15 back, that there were no more hazards after that point, or no more
16 obvious hazards that we were seeing.

17 Q. Okay. So you were -- when you first left the scene, it was
18 because you -- you know, the vehicle was out, and you hadn't
19 realized that they needed help extricating that passenger. And so
20 when you got called back out to the scene, it was, the purpose of
21 that was to extricate the remaining occupants of the vehicle. And
22 then you were, you happened to be there when they were loading it
23 onto the tow truck, and that's when it, you saw more activity?

24 A. My -- removing the patients, or the victims from the vehicle
25 is rather gruesome. And for the mental aspect of it, and the

1 captain of the engine knowing one of the victims in the vehicle, I
2 felt that it was best not to have the crews on scene when they
3 were physically removing the victims from the vehicle.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. My hope was that the coroner was going to be able to do that
6 without our assistance. So we provided access for them by popping
7 the door, and then hoped that they would be able to do everything
8 else on their own.

9 Q. Got it.

10 A. That was why we had cleared the scene, was so that there
11 would be no more mental exposure. I had called the same crew back
12 that had the fire attack and had been all the way up in with the
13 patients, because I didn't want to expose additional crews to the
14 mental anguish of the two victims.

15 However, after we were called back the last time, by West
16 Way, for the -- because the passenger was not able to come out
17 because of the entanglement of the foot -- when I originally went
18 over the car, and we popped the door, it just looked like light
19 debris on the foot, so I didn't think that the foot was completely
20 entangled in the wires. We thought that they'd just be able to
21 pull him out, or possibly use a bone saw and leave part of the
22 extremity there in the vehicle.

23 Q. Got it.

24 A. When they called back out, the coroner had stated that they
25 wanted to keep the body intact, and asked if we could try to

1 remove the debris around it. At that point then, I called, and I
2 sent a different engine in, because I knew that they were going to
3 have to have contact with the body, and actually physically remove
4 the body. So I had Engine 13 respond back out the second time,
5 which was a different crew, because the engine captain of the
6 initial engine, Engine 49, just had had too much exposure to what
7 was taking place, and I didn't want to him to have to touch the
8 victims.

9 Q. Got it. Okay. And then, when I was speaking with the tow
10 truck -- the guy here at the tow company, he had described that,
11 you know, they had -- they had some battery parts arc and smoke
12 and things when they were loading, and they were separated debris
13 onto the flatbed. And I wasn't clear whether or not they had
14 called you guys out again for that, or whether they just -- I
15 think it stopped.

16 So you weren't called out again out to the scene for battery
17 issues?

18 A. No. We had, we'd staged on scene for probably 30, 40 minutes
19 there while they loaded the vehicle. And we didn't leave the
20 scene until the vehicle was completely secured to the flatbed.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. The only material that was still being picked up at the time
23 was the various other debris that was in the roadway, which would
24 have been the other battery module that was completely intact.

25 Q. Okay. And you never responded to anything at the tow yard?

1 CHIEF LEWIS: No. We wouldn't. We're in a different city.

2 BY DR. BARTH:

3 Q. Oh, a different -- okay. We're in a different location.

4 A. It's a different city. Yeah. So that, we wouldn't have.

5 Once -- I did pass them on Sunrise Boulevard when they were

6 westbound at approximately, I don't know, 1 o'clock in the

7 morning, 1:10 in the morning, something like that. And there was

8 no active smoke coming from the vehicle when they were westbound

9 on Sunrise Boulevard.

10 Q. Okay. Okay. And then, which paramedics and which, and what

11 transport unit attended to the surviving victim?

12 A. The surviving victim? So that was Danny Melton (ph.), Cozman

13 Alanta (ph.) and Dave Williams were the three on that vehicle.

14 Q. So what unit number was that? Was that a -- that was the

15 rescue unit or?

16 (No audible response.)

17 CHIEF LEWIS: I actually got the Sunpro (ph.) report, Steve.

18 I can look on here.

19 DR. BARTH: Yeah, I don't need -- I can look it up, but I

20 basically was just trying to understand which -- like was it a --

21 the paramedics from which --

22 CHIEF LEWIS: Rescue 49.

23 BY DR. BARTH:

24 Q. Okay. So the paramedics from Rescue 49 attended to him

25 medically, and then they load him into like a, either a BLS or an

1 ALS transport unit. What's the procedure there?

2 A. They were the first to arrive on scene. They were the ones
3 that had pulled past, had reported the vehicle fully involved and
4 with heavy flames and heat coming from the vehicle. So they then
5 treated the patient. The patient had obvious soft-tissue trauma
6 to his face. And so, based upon the mechanism of injury and the
7 report that he was in the bushes and thrown from the vehicle, we
8 went ahead and Level 2'd him, which is the next step under a
9 trauma alert.

10 Q. Okay. And then how was he transported from the scene?

11 A. So he was transported ALS to Broward General Medical Center.

12 Q. And that would have been -- where would that -- is that unit
13 number, or their --

14 CHIEF LEWIS: Yes. Narrative.

15 DR. BARTH: So it'll be in the narrative? Okay.

16 CHIEF LEWIS: Let me just make sure.

17 DR. BARTH: All right. Okay. Yes, so we can look that up.

18 BY DR. BARTH:

19 Q. Okay, so let's see here. What other -- is there any other
20 aspects of the fire response, you know, with the battery or
21 anything, that I forgot to ask about, or any other items that you
22 feel are important?

23 A. The only two things that I would mention, or go more detail
24 into is that there was a lapse when we weren't there, prior to the
25 extrication of the patients. And PD had reported that one of the

1 batteries exploded while they were there, to the point that it
2 made them jump and move across the street, or away from the
3 vehicle. But I don't know which -- they weren't able to tell me
4 accurately which battery had popped or exploded.

5 There was no fire afterwards. There was no smoke afterwards.
6 There was nothing else. I tend to think that, based upon where
7 they said that the sound had come from, that it was the auxiliary
8 battery, and that it was one of the terminal posts blowing off of
9 the auxiliary battery, but I don't have anything to confirm that,
10 because I don't remember if both terminals were on the auxiliary
11 battery when we initially made the fire attack, or if that one
12 terminal post was already off of there.

13 Q. Okay. And you mentioned --

14 A. I --

15 Q. Go ahead. What was the other thing you were going to
16 mention?

17 A. The other thing was just that, you know, like I had mentioned
18 before, those, what appeared to be double-A batteries inside that
19 main battery module, one of the two that had separated from the
20 large battery plate, that that was what was giving us the hard
21 time. I mean, there was really nothing else in the vehicle that
22 wasn't knocked down almost immediately. I mean, they were able to
23 get the fire knocked out very, very quickly. It was just that one
24 battery pack that was open that kept reigniting underneath that A
25 pan, A post there.

1 Q. Okay. And yeah, so -- and then I had a question that, it
2 sounds like, from what you're recounting is that the foam was
3 helpful in wetting out and keeping the surfaces wet, of the
4 battery and -- is that right?

5 A. (Indiscernible) we had switched to this foam, I want to say a
6 year ago, maybe two years ago. And we had done extensive research
7 on our own, on different foams. We had been with a Universal Gold
8 AFFF, and we just weren't getting the type of penetration with
9 that foam that we wanted, or the aeration. We were having a lot
10 of problems with it clogging up our foam systems on the truck.

11 So we went to -- we went out and did research, and brought in
12 a couple different foam companies, ultimately selecting to go with
13 this FireAde foam out of, I think they're out of Atlanta
14 somewhere. And because of the viscosity of the foam, it doesn't
15 clog up our foam pumps. And it also works as a wetting agent.

16 You know, part of their sales gimmick when they came down and
17 whatnot was they would wet a rag, and with this foam/water
18 mixture, and then take a blowtorch to it, and the heat wasn't
19 there.

20 They had also showed us where they would take a piece of
21 metal and heat it up, and then they would put the FireAde on it.
22 You could immediately touch the metal. It would remove the heat
23 immediately from it.

24 So they claim that you could put a car fire out with 2-1/2
25 gallons of this product but, I mean, that wasn't the case with

1 what we were using it for on that, on the Tesla fire that day.
2 But it did work. It worked great. You know, once we got dialed
3 up and got a pretty heavy mixture with it, it knocked it down
4 immediately.

5 Q. Okay. And have you guys, have you ever been, done any other
6 electric vehicle fires?

7 A. (Indiscernible). I mean, I may have been on some, you know,
8 Ford Fusions and things like that, with the rear batteries, but
9 I've never been on a Tesla fire before.

10 Q. Okay. Okay. We had our fire investigator come into the
11 office here, just arrived.

12 DR. BARTH: Joe, do you have any questions at this point?
13 Okay.

14 We can -- if he -- he might end up giving you, you know,
15 contacting you later on if he has some questions. But I think
16 that's all --

17 CHIEF GOLLAN: In other words, it was a very clean burning
18 fire. Like, you know, a lot of times with car fires, you have
19 that very dark smoke, you know, primarily from the petroleum
20 products and the tires burning and things like that. And this
21 fire wasn't that way. This fire was very intense, but very, very
22 clean burning, light smoke, a lot of heavy fire, and a lot of
23 heat.

24 CHIEF LEWIS: Yeah. I think they got pictures of it.

25 BY DR. BARTH:

1 Q. Yeah. Oh, and that was another question, just popped to
2 mind. So the way this battery case is designed is that it has a
3 series of vents that go along the rocker panels of the car. And
4 when the modules go into thermal runaway, they vent out of these
5 rocker panels. But it sounds like, because it sounds like there
6 was a couple of modules that were somewhat separated from the main
7 pack and those were where the main fire was, so did you notice any
8 venting coming laterally out of the sides of the vehicles, from
9 like the rocker panel area?

10 A. No.

11 Q. No. Is that what you said?

12 A. That's something I think I would have noticed, you know,
13 normally, because it would have changed our fire attack a little
14 bit, getting up underneath the car instead of from more of a
15 horizontal approach, you know --

16 Q. Yeah.

17 A. -- than to bounce the foam up off the ground. But the
18 firefighter, Fillyall (ph.) would know for sure, because he was up
19 in there, you know, at the time.

20 DR. BARTH: Okay. Okay. I think that's all the questions I
21 have. Do you have any questions for me, while we're still on,
22 recording?

23 CHIEF GOLAN: (Indiscernible).

24 DR. BARTH: I'm sorry. The phone broke up again. What did
25 you say?

1 (Laughter.)

2 DR. BARTH: This phone is --

3 CHIEF GOLLAN: (Indiscernible) I have no additional --

4 CHIEF LEWIS: Your phone breaks up every time --

5 CHIEF GOLLAN: -- no additional --

6 CHIEF LEWIS: -- every time you talk.

7 DR. BARTH: Like the first half second --

8 CHIEF LEWIS: The first couple seconds it's just real quiet,
9 and then you start -- you hear you come in out of nowhere. It's
10 weird.

11 CHIEF GOLLAN: That must be what the problem is with my wife,
12 is the first half second she doesn't ever hear -- my wife and my
13 kids, they don't hear the first half-second of messages I say.

14 No, I have nothing additional.

15 DR. BARTH: Okay. So I'm going to end the recorded
16 interview. But I'm going to turn on the recording real quick and
17 just make that note so it doesn't get lost. So the question was
18 whether or not the firefighters actively fighting the fire were
19 wearing, you know, protective breathing apparatus, and the
20 indication was yes. The two firefighters directly involved were
21 using full SCBA.

22 CHIEF LEWIS: And bumper gear.

23 DR. BARTH: And bumper gear. Good.

24 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

25

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: TESLA ELECTRIC PASSENGER VEHICLE
COLLISION AND POST-CRASH FIRE
FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA
MAY 8, 2018
Interview of Chief Stephen Gollan

ACCIDENT NO.: HWY18FH013

PLACE: Via Telephone

DATE: MAY 10, 2018

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.



Pamela Jacobson
Transcriber