



Survival Factors Attachment – First Responder Interviews

Concan, Texas

HWY17MH011

(239 pages)

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

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CHURCH BUS AND TRUCK CRASH NEAR
CONCAN, TEXAS ON MARCH 29, 2017

* Accident No.: HWY17MH011

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Interview of: DIANE ROGERS
Administrator, Frio Canyon EMS

APPEARANCES:

RONALD KAMINSKI, Senior Survival Factors Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

I N D E X

ITEM

PAGE

Interview of Diane Rogers:

By Mr. Kaminski

4

I N T E R V I E W

1

MW. ROGERS: Hello.

2

3

MR. KAMINSKI: Hello, Ms. Rogers.

4

MS. ROGERS: Oh.

5

MR. KAMINSKI: Hi. This is Ron Kaminski with NTSB.

6

MS. ROGERS: Yes, sir. I think it's your phone because I
7 still can hardly hear you.

8

MR. KAMINSKI: Oh, okay. Well, it is my phone. I've got one
9 of the new LifeProof cases, and so it has -- people tell me it
10 sounds muffled. Does it sound muffled?

10

11

MS. ROGERS: Well, if I can't hear you, it won't be too good,
12 but go ahead.

12

13

MR. KAMINSKI: Okay. Well, I can hear you perfectly, so
14 that's the main thing. I guess if you could just -- I'm calling
15 regarding the crash back on the 29th, and I'm calling all the
16 -- a lot of the first responders who were first on scene and just
17 getting a statement from them.

17

18

INTERVIEW OF DIANE ROGERS

19

BY MR. KAMINSKI:

20

Q. And just wondering if you could just give me a statement from
21 the time you guys rolled up, and just go from that point.

21

22

A. Are you not talking to any other people? I already gave a
23 couple of statements.

23

24

Q. The only other -- well, the DPS and us are doing parallel
25 investigations. So I don't know who else you talked to other than

25

1 the DPS, but -- because I have -- I, you know, I know that you've
2 talked to them, and they've talked to everyone else that I've
3 already talked to as well, from your crew as to the sheriff that
4 responded from Real and the people from Utopia, Concan. So it's
5 just a process we go through, and just going through and getting a
6 statement.

7 A. Well, we just drove up on the scene, and there was a crash,
8 and there was four people still alive in the van, and one in the
9 truck. And I went over and administered aid to the people in the
10 van until Utopia got there, and then we left.

11 Q. Okay. And so you were transporting a patient down to Uvalde,
12 correct?

13 A. Yes, I was.

14 Q. Okay. And there's three of you in the van, or in the
15 ambulance?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Right. Plus the patient, four.

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Right. Okay.

20 A. One driver that's not a medic or anything.

21 Q. Right.

22 A. Another ECA, and she was over talking to the driver. She
23 couldn't get in. Everybody was pinned in, so --

24 Q. Right. And did you interact with anybody more than -- any of
25 the patients that survived on the bus?

1 A. No.

2 Q. You didn't have any conversations with anybody on the bus,
3 Ms. Rose?

4 A. I just asked them where they were hurting.

5 Q. Okay. Well, I'm just saying, any conversations or anything
6 that was said? I mean, that's all. Just were they -- did you
7 notice how many people you talked to or attended to or --

8 A. I talked to two people.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. And one was having difficulty breathing, so I gave her -- put
11 her on some oxygen. And then another one was bleeding out of a
12 radial artery and I tried to wrap that up. And she had bad head
13 injuries. She was talking, but not very coherent. The lady that
14 I gave oxygen told me her name was -- I can't even remember what
15 it was. And I think she's the one that died on the aircraft going
16 into -- to San Antonio. Those are the two patients I talked to.

17 Q. Okay. Now did you notice, were they wearing their seatbelts?

18 A. No, I didn't notice that.

19 Q. Okay. Neither of them, you didn't notice if they were
20 wearing seatbelts. Okay. And, I guess, what -- about what time
21 did you guys depart the scene then?

22 A. I'm not sure. It's been a long time.

23 Q. Okay. Now do you guys have --

24 A. Soon as Utopia, soon as Utopia got there and AirLIFE had
25 landed, I left.

1 Q. Okay. And then your position with the Frio Canyon EMS is
2 what?

3 A. I'm an administrator.

4 Q. Administrator. Okay.

5 A. And a paramedic.

6 Q. So would you guys have -- would you have policies and
7 procedures on -- that you can send me regarding how you guys
8 handle these things when you're out of the county? Is there any
9 kind of policies and procedures on how you -- you know, in this
10 type of situation how you handle stopping for -- render aid for
11 other crashes? Do you have anything in your policies and
12 procedures?

13 A. Not really, I don't think.

14 Q. Okay. Would you be able to check and get back to me? I can
15 give you my email address.

16 A. Sure.

17 Q. Okay. [REDACTED] --

18 A. I know that we have a policy if we're outside the -- and
19 we're answering a call for mutual aid and everything, but I really
20 don't have a policy for passing by. I've just got through doing
21 all my protocols, so --

22 Q. Okay. So would you have been called -- I guess, would you
23 guys have been called as mutual aid in this?

24 A. I don't know. You would have to correspond with Utopia.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. They would have called us, and I don't know what their
2 procedures are.

3 Q. I'm just trying to think ahead here. So you have a policy
4 for responding for mutual aid, but the -- as far as you know,
5 there's no policy for whether to respond or not for crashes
6 outside the county when you're transporting. Is that correct?

7 A. Yes. Had my patient been unstable, we wouldn't even have
8 stopped probably.

9 Q. Sure. Sure. I understand. Well, I thank you very much for
10 taking the time, and if you don't mind, if I have any follow-up
11 questions, I'll give you a call back, if that's okay?

12 A. That's fine.

13 MR. KAMINSKI: Okay. Thank you very much.

14 MS. ROGERS: Uh-huh. Bye-bye.

15 MR. KAMINSKI: Bye-bye.

16 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

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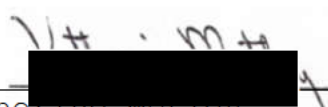
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Interview of Diane Rogers

ACCIDENT NUMBER: HWY17MH011

PLACE: Via Telephone

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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.


Katherine Motley
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

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CHURCH BUS AND TRUCK CRASH NEAR
CONCAN, TEXAS ON MARCH 29, 2017

* Accident No.: HWY17MH011

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Interview of: SHERRI SOLLERS
Frio Canyon EMS

Via Telephone

April 2017

APPEARANCES:

RONALD KAMINSKI, Senior Survival Factors Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

I N D E X

ITEM

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Interview of Sherri Sollers:

By Mr. Kaminski

4

I N T E R V I E W

1

MR. KAMINSKI: Sherri Sollers?

2

3

MS. SOLLERS: Yes.

4

MR. KAMINSKI: Hi, this -- my name is Ronald Kaminski. I'm
with the National Transportation Safety Board.

5

6

MS. SOLLERS: Yes.

7

MR. KAMINSKI: And I'm calling regarding the crash back on
the 29th.

8

9

MS. SOLLERS: Yes, sir.

10

MR. KAMINSKI: Do you have a couple of minutes I can get a
statement from you? I know you've talked to the police and that,
but we do parallel investigations. So I -- sometimes, you know,
we end up -- when we can't do the interviews together, we're doing
them separately. So I was wondering if you have --

14

15

MS. SOLLERS: That's fine.

16

MR. KAMINSKI: -- a few minutes.

17

MS. SOLLERS: Sure. Go ahead.

18

MR. KAMINSKI: Okay. Do you mind if I tape this?

19

MS. SOLLERS: No.

20

MR. KAMINSKI: Okay. I think it's going -- no -- yes, it's
going now. Okay. Again, name is Ronald Kaminski.

21

22

INTERVIEW OF SHERRI SOLLERS

23

BY MR. KAMINSKI:

24

Q. If you could spell -- I'm with the National Transportation
Safety Board. And you can spell your first and last name for me,

25

1 please?

2 A. First name is Sherri, S-H-E-R-R-I; last name Sollers,
3 S-O-L-L-E-R-S.

4 Q. Okay. And your position there with the Frio Canyon EMS?

5 A. I'm a medic, and I'm also deputy administrator.

6 Q. Okay. And basically what I'm looking, if you could just give
7 me a general description of -- I know you guys were driving
8 southbound transporting that patient to Uvalde Hospital, and just
9 kind of give me a description of what -- you know, when you came
10 upon the crash, what you saw, what you did, and then I'll just
11 follow up with some questions afterwards.

12 A. Okay. We came up on the wreck. I was in the back of the
13 unit with the patient. I did not see it until we -- the medic
14 over me said to go by it, but my driver, thank goodness, stopped.
15 Anyway, we got out, and saw a white four-door truck kind of into
16 the side of a small bus. There was fluids leaking all over
17 everywhere, and people hanging out of the bus, and other body
18 parts.

19 Q. Sure.

20 A. Got out, tried to administer aid to some, but was prevented
21 from doing so by senior medic because it was not our county.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. Which that didn't stop us from putting a few bandages on and
24 some oxygen, things like that.

25 Q. Sure.

1 A. The driver of the truck was trapped in the truck, and I could
2 not get to him because all the doors were shut. A bystander had a
3 punch, punched a window. A big dog jumped out, and then they got
4 the door open so we could look in on him, but still couldn't get
5 to him because he was up under the dashboard.

6 Q. Now which window would that have been? The front passenger
7 window or the driver's window right next to the driver?

8 A. On which one?

9 Q. On the pickup truck. You said you had to break the window or
10 a passerby did.

11 A. It was the passenger rear window.

12 Q. Passenger rear window. Okay. So the front window, do you
13 recall, was that still intact or was that --

14 A. No. It was broke.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. It was either broke or down, but I didn't see glass there.

17 Q. Okay. I'm surprised the dog didn't jump out of that one.

18 A. I think it was because of the seat was so pushed up he
19 probably couldn't get to it.

20 Q. Oh, sure, sure. Yeah. Okay. Yeah, there was a lot of
21 intrusion to the front.

22 A. I mean, he was kind of a big dog, and it was a little space.

23 Q. Okay, okay. I understand. Go ahead. I'm sorry to interrupt
24 you.

25 A. No, that's -- unless you ask me a specific question, I mean,

1 that's --

2 Q. Oh, okay. Well, so you just kind of, you kind of worked with
3 the driver then. You didn't -- you saw the passengers in the bus
4 and you did a couple of things, and you went over to the truck
5 driver then.

6 A. Well, we looked in on the bus, and the senior medic was
7 looking at the guys in the -- the people in the bus, and she told
8 me to go check on the truck driver, but I could not get to him.

9 Q. Right.

10 A. And then once they broke the window, someone else, I don't
11 know who it was, went in. And all I could see on him was a hole
12 in his arm, and he was pushed up under the dashboard. I couldn't
13 do any kind of assessment on him because I couldn't get to him.

14 Q. Okay. And which arm was that, his left or right arm?

15 A. Left.

16 Q. Okay. His forearm area?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. Okay. And did he happen to say anything to you?

19 A. He said he hurt, and just get him out. That's all he said to
20 me.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. And once they started going through the truck and there was
23 no room for me, I went back around to the bus and tried to help a
24 couple of people.

25 Q. And who was "they" that was also going in ahead of you in the

1 truck, to the truck?

2 A. There was a fireman, I believe, from Utopia, and the deputy
3 sheriff from here, Ted Douthit.

4 Q. Oh, okay.

5 A. He was there at the truck also.

6 Q. Sure. Okay. And did you happen to -- when you were talking
7 with the truck driver in the white Dodge, did you happen to smell
8 anything funny or anything like that?

9 A. The whole scene smelled bad, but --

10 Q. Yeah.

11 A. I smelled -- truck smelled like heated oil or transmission
12 fluid.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. Just normal truck stuff. There was the smell of -- you
15 talking about the truck or the whole thing?

16 A. The truck, basically the truck. Focusing on the pickup truck
17 driver.

18 Q. There was a weird -- okay. There was a weird smoke smell.
19 It wasn't quite like a cigarette, and I didn't know if it was --
20 because when I got there, there was, you know, steam coming up out
21 of the truck, so I wasn't sure --

22 Q. Sure.

23 A. -- if that's what the smell was.

24 Q. Right.

25 A. Because there were so many other smells going through.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. But all I knew it was a smoky smell. I was actually afraid
3 that one of the vehicles was going to catch on fire.

4 Q. Right. Right. So you mentioned that -- your supervisor.
5 Would that have been Diane Rogers?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Okay. Yeah, I've got a call in -- I just called her right
8 before you, and just left a message on her cell phone. I've been
9 trying to get a hold of her for a couple of weeks. I'm not
10 getting any call back. So I guess if you could -- I'd appreciate
11 it if you talk to her the next time you can mention I'm waiting
12 for a call back, I'd appreciate that.

13 A. Okay. She's out of town until Monday.

14 Q. Okay. Well, that's good to know. I won't bother her anymore
15 until next week then.

16 A. Okay.

17 Q. But one question I have is, so -- is that you mentioned how
18 she didn't want to stop and render aid. Is that kind of a county
19 policy that, you know, that's out of your county, just to move on
20 or do you know?

21 A. I really don't know. But being's we were in Uvalde County,
22 she said let Uvalde take care of it, and that -- I think that's
23 the part -- I mean, the wreck upset me terribly.

24 Q. Sure.

25 A. But I think her disregard for wanting to stop and help,

1 because she just flat told our driver just go around it; it's not
2 our county. And as far as I know that is not our policy.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. Thank goodness our driver is a stubborn old cuss and he
5 stopped anyway.

6 Q. Right, yeah. I mean, you're there for -- your medical
7 assistance, I mean, surely it was -- helped out. It's a good
8 thing you guys did stop.

9 A. I wish we could have done more, but -- this is something
10 else, but --

11 Q. Yes.

12 A. -- she kept telling us not to help because it was not our
13 county. But, I mean, there's a woman bleeding arterially, and she
14 bled out right there in front of me because -- Diane finally did
15 put a bandage on her, but she -- she did begrudgingly render aid,
16 but not to the extent of what we're trained to do.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. She did not want us getting in there. She kept saying it's
19 not our county, it's not our county. I don't care whose county it
20 is. If I can help someone, I'm going to help.

21 Q. Sure.

22 A. But it was just her coldness about the whole thing. If we
23 would have just driven on past and gone on to Uvalde, she would
24 have been happy.

25 Q. Yeah. But you would have had --

1 A. And it --

2 Q. -- to live with that then.

3 A. Oh, I couldn't have lived with that one.

4 Q. Yeah. Yeah, I understand.

5 A. It's bad enough getting over this, but it's just her whole
6 attitude about the whole thing. She just flat told our driver
7 just go around, don't stop.

8 Q. Right. Well, I'm sure those people -- at least the couple
9 survivors are very happy you guys did stop and help them out.
10 Especially I know that Ms. Rose that was in the very back that
11 survived.

12 A. Right. You know, it -- that one woman that she just kept
13 crying, help me, help me, and Diane wouldn't let us get in there.
14 She just -- I mean, we could have gone through the back door.

15 Q. Right.

16 A. The back door opened. We could have gone in there. And if
17 we could have been able to pull somebody out, we might have been
18 able to save one. They tell me we couldn't have, but it would
19 have eased my mind knowing I at least tried.

20 Q. Sure. Sure. Well, we haven't gotten the --

21 A. I'm sorry.

22 Q. -- autopsy -- no, that's okay. I understand. It was a very
23 tough situation. I've talked to several people with Utopia and
24 even Uvalde people, and yeah, it was a very upsetting sight. So I
25 understand what you're probably going through. So I won't keep

1 you, but I will -- want to thank you for taking the time to give
2 me a statement, and this is my -- I'll give you my phone number.
3 If there's anything else you want to -- feel free to give me a
4 call back. I can give you my phone number, and you can give me a
5 call back if you want to add anything else.

6 A. Okay.

7 Q. My phone number is [REDACTED]. I'm here in the Dallas-
8 Fort Worth area.

9 A. Okay.

10 Q. And my name again is Ronald Kaminski, K-A-M-I-N-S-K-I.

11 A. Do you need to talk to our driver that day?

12 Q. Yes. Is he available?

13 A. Well, he's not, but I can give you his -- either his phone
14 number or I can call him and have him call you.

15 Q. Okay. Yeah. I do have -- the number I have for him is an
16 [REDACTED].

17 A. Let me see -- it's --

18 Q. Oh, no, no. I'm sorry. That's for the DPS guy, or that's
19 for the Real County sheriff's deputy. Clay Atchison?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Okay. I've got [REDACTED].

22 A. Right.

23 Q. Okay. Well, I appreciate --

24 A. That's his home phone, and sometimes he answers; sometimes he
25 doesn't.

1 Q. Well, I'll give it a shot, and if you happen to talk to him
2 before I do, tell him that I'm going to give him a call, and just
3 wanted to gather a statement.

4 MS. SOLLERS: Okay. Thank you.

5 MR. KAMINSKI: All right. Thank you very much for what you
6 did out at the scene. I appreciate that. Appreciate your
7 service.

8 MS. SOLLERS: I wished I could have done more.

9 MR. KAMINSKI: I understand. I understand. Okay. Thanks
10 again. You take care.

11 MS. SOLLERS: All right, thank you.

12 MR. KAMINSKI: Bye-bye.

13 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)
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CERTIFICATE

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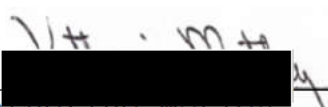
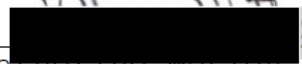
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Transcriber

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Investigation of: *

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CHURCH BUS AND TRUCK CRASH NEAR
CONCAN, TEXAS ON MARCH 29, 2017

* Accident No.: HWY17MH011

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Interview of: CLAY ATCHISON
Frio Canyon EMS

Via Telephone

April 2017

APPEARANCES:

RONALD KAMINSKI, Senior Survival Factors Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

I N D E X

ITEM

PAGE

Interview of Clay Atchison:

By Mr. Kaminski

4

I N T E R V I E W

1
2 MR. KAMINSKI: -- tape this conversation?

3 MR. ATCHISON: No.

4 MR. KAMINSKI: Okay. Great.

INTERVIEW OF CLAY ATCHISON

5
6 BY MR. KAMINSKI:

7 Q. Okay. Clay, could you -- Clay, your first name is C-L-A-Y.

8 Could you spell your last name for me, please?

9 A. A-T-C-H-I-S-O-N.

10 Q. And your position there with the Frio County EMS?

11 A. I'm a volunteer driver.

12 Q. Okay. And are you an EMT or you have any qualifications for
13 giving emergency -- tending to injured?

14 A. Yeah. What I do is I assist with lifting and helping and
15 riding, and I am CPR qualified.

16 Q. Okay. And so if you could, sir, just give me a brief
17 description of -- I know you guys were driving south carrying a
18 patient. And just go from there as to what you saw and what you
19 all did.

20 A. Well, I think I'm wanting to say we were the first vehicle
21 headed south after the wreck. There might have been one in front
22 of us. And we were carrying -- you know, me non-medical, but it
23 was a non-life-threatening patient to Uvalde. And when, when I
24 saw the wreck, you know, I came up on it and I stopped. So --

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. And then we did what we could. I mean, I felt very limited
2 because we had no tools. We're going to get a crowbar on there,
3 those ambulances.

4 Q. Okay, yeah. You never know what you come across.

5 A. Yes. You know, I felt like I could have done a lot more if
6 I'd have had a crowbar. So --

7 Q. Right. Okay. So once you got out there, once you stopped,
8 did you have to -- did you call into dispatch? Did you check with
9 anybody or did you just -- you guys all climb out and see what you
10 can do at the crash site?

11 A. Oh, I got out, and I saw what I could do. But there wasn't a
12 lot we could do because everybody was pinned in there so bad.

13 Q. Right. Right.

14 A. And I mean, I climbed up there on the guardrail and opened
15 that back bus door, you know, and I talked to the lone survivor.

16 Q. Oh, Ms. Rose?

17 A. Yes. There was another -- you know, she told me, help me,
18 please. She said I have -- I hurt, and I have all my teeth in my
19 hand. And she showed me her teeth. And then I saw that there
20 -- there was a body beside her that was just -- I'm sure you've
21 seen the pictures.

22 Q. Yes. Yeah.

23 A. I mean that body was -- I can't even figure in my mind how
24 that body got like that.

25 Q. Right.

1 A. And then the man next to her, I believe there was a man next
2 to her. Is that correct?

3 Q. Yeah. It was a husband and wife.

4 A. He was alive.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. Yeah, he was alive. Yeah, I figured they were husband and
7 wife. I don't think -- I don't believe she was alive, but I
8 believe the man was alive. And then, you know, when I got down --
9 you know, we knew there were three dead. And when I got down, I
10 told them there's two more dead. So, and then our paramedic had
11 me carry oxygen over, and we put oxygen on the -- I carried a
12 bottle over there and laid it inside the bus and put it on the
13 lady that was sitting in front of Rose because --

14 Q. She was still gurgling?

15 A. She was alive.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. Yes. And then the woman that was on the opposite side of the
18 bus from the woman we put oxygen on, I know we bandaged her up,
19 and she was bleeding, but I guess she bled out. And I remember I
20 talked to the, I guess, the people that did the -- took the video.

21 Q. Oh, yeah, the --

22 A. You know, when I got there.

23 Q. Yeah, that was following the pickup truck driver, yes.

24 A. Yes. I mean, they talked to me. They were there before we
25 were, but not much.

1 Q. Sure. It sounds like the accident just happened --

2 A. Yeah, they talked to me, yeah.

3 Q. -- right as you -- right before you guys crested the hill.

4 A. Yes. We must have, yeah, come around the curve, and it must
5 have just happened. So they told me -- and I said, well, has 911
6 been called? You know, to the best of my memory, they said, we
7 called them and we told them that the -- you know, this guy was
8 driving crazy. And I said, well, have they been called since the
9 accident? And that I never was -- I think they said we tried.
10 And I don't know what really went on, but then I got on the radio
11 and called the Real County Sheriff's Office and told them how bad
12 it was.

13 Q. What did you tell them? Do you recall specifically what you
14 told them? Was it just two vehicles or was it a church bus?

15 A. The Sheriff's Office?

16 Q. Yes. What did you -- when you called them.

17 A. Oh, I told them --

18 Q. Yeah.

19 A. I told them, we have a terrible head-on accident here
20 involving a church bus. I remember that. And I don't know that I
21 used the word cavalry, but I said send it all.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. Helicopters, jaws of life, fire department, we need
24 everything. And I've been told that the Real County Sheriff's
25 Office records those radio conversations.

1 Q. Right. Yeah. I think the DPS has some of those, and I may
2 request some as well.

3 A. Okay. And I, you know, we were there doing what we could. I
4 remember some people pulled on the door and out ran his dog.

5 Q. Oh, yeah. I did talk to Sherri this morning.

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Who was on there with you. I talked to her, and she had
8 mentioned how she kind of went directly to the -- she kind of
9 looked in, I guess, and did a couple things for the bus
10 passengers, but then, I guess, Diane told her to go over and check
11 on the truck driver, and then she did that. And she mentioned how
12 somebody broke out the back window and tried -- so they could get
13 to him because he was pretty much pinned in there by the dash and
14 steering wheel and that.

15 A. Yes. Now I never saw the truck driver. I don't know, maybe
16 I -- this jerk caused this; he can wait in line, you know.

17 Q. Right.

18 A. I don't know if that's a proper thing to say, but I'm just a
19 volunteer flunky.

20 Q. Right. No. Come on now. You're a big service to the
21 community there, so don't put yourself down like that. You're --
22 you know, they need more volunteers --

23 A. But, I mean, he was --

24 Q. -- like yourself.

25 A. He was the least of my worries.

1 Q. Sure. Right.

2 A. So, and then I remember, you know, the -- well, the first law
3 enforcement officer was our deputy, Ted.

4 Q. Douthit, yeah.

5 A. And -- yeah. Now Ted was waiting at the county line for him.

6 Q. Oh, is that what he said?

7 A. You know, for -- oh, yes.

8 Q. Okay. Yeah, I got a call into him. I haven't heard back
9 from him, Deputy Douthit, as well.

10 A. Yeah. But he's -- you know, we passed him on the way down.

11 Q. Oh, okay.

12 A. We're small, so we know each other.

13 Q. Sure.

14 A. We wave at each other on the way by. And then I know he said
15 when he heard my radio call, you know, it's probably about -- I
16 measured it myself. From 1050 it's like 1.8 miles to the wreck,
17 and then it's another 2 miles from the county line. So he was
18 less than 4 miles from the wreck when the call came in.

19 Q. Right.

20 A. And he got there and helped us with traffic, which we really
21 didn't have much of an issue because I -- the way I parked the
22 ambulance, I pulled around in front of the ambulance but blocked
23 -- in front of the wreck, but -- on the south side, but blocked
24 everything off.

25 Q. Right.

1 A. So --

2 Q. And then who was the first fire department there? Do you
3 know?

4 A. The first fire department was Concan.

5 Q. Okay. And do you happen to know the gentleman who was the
6 first, his name?

7 A. No.

8 Q. Okay. Because I have talked to several people. I think the
9 gentleman, the first one, I think the one -- the first Concan
10 firefighter that was on the scene, I haven't talked to him yet.
11 But I was just wondering if you knew his name.

12 A. Okay, well --

13 Q. But I'll -- I'm sure the chief will know. I'll talk to
14 Chief Jefferies.

15 A. Yeah. For some reason I'm wanting to say Jim, but --

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. You know, I went up to him -- well, let me -- you know, after
18 -- so I guess a few minutes later Uvalde Sheriff's Department
19 showed up. And he asked, he said, what do we have? I said, we
20 have at least three dead and, I mean, it's bad. And then I
21 remember then Concan came, and I said, we need your jaws of life.
22 He said, I don't have it. And I said, you're freaking kidding me;
23 aren't you?

24 Q. Did he come in his personal vehicle? Did he come in a --

25 A. No. He came in a, he came in a truck, you know, like a

1 pickup truck.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. But it was Concan, so --

4 Q. Okay. Okay. And so --

5 A. And then --

6 Q. What did -- was he able to do anything on scene, I mean,
7 without any kind of tools?

8 A. No. No. I think he made a call and I think he turned around
9 to go get them. I'm not really sure what he did.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. But I said, we've got to have the jaws of life.

12 Q. Right.

13 A. And then I think the first state trooper showed up.

14 Q. Yeah.

15 A. And he asked me, what do you have? I don't know why. I
16 guess I was just in the right spot. And I said I know we have at
17 least five dead. And the helicopter got there real soon too.
18 And I remember with the helicopter --

19 Q. Well, that was probably from you calling it in.

20 A. Yes. But there wasn't much the helicopter could do because,
21 I mean, we couldn't get anybody out.

22 Q. Oh, okay.

23 A. And then Utopia, whose area it is, showed up. And then what
24 I remember, everybody started showing up. And then they told us
25 to go ahead and take our patient on to Uvalde.

1 Q. Who told you that? Do you recall?

2 A. Sir?

3 Q. Do you recall who told you just to go ahead and take your
4 patient?

5 A. Yes. It was the, I think the lady who -- the --

6 Q. Oh --

7 A. -- that medic from Utopia that --

8 Q. Garofano?

9 A. That I -- I really, I can't tell you her name.

10 Q. Okay. Okay.

11 A. I'd say she's probably about 40 years old.

12 Q. Yeah. Yeah, I think --

13 A. White.

14 Q. -- I know who you're talking to. I think I talked to her.

15 A. Yeah. So then we took our patient to Uvalde, and then we
16 came and -- we came back by and, you know, they let us through.
17 And then we talked to -- we ran into her again as we pulled up,
18 and she told us there were 12 dead.

19 Q. Oh, yeah. And it would be a shock. You probably weren't
20 expecting that.

21 A. No, I didn't even know there were that many people on the
22 bus. I remember -- you know, you looked in there and you probably
23 thought there were more dead, but I didn't think there were 14
24 people on that bus the way it was crumpled.

25 Q. Right. Right.

1 A. Now who are you with? Are you with the --

2 Q. I'm with the National --

3 A. -- Department of Public --

4 Q. I'm with the National Transportation Safety Board, NTSB. And
5 we're --

6 A. Oh, okay.

7 Q. -- doing parallel investigation along with the DPS into this
8 crash. And so --

9 A. Okay, yeah. I --

10 Q. We're on scene. We were out there for like 8 days, 8 or 9
11 days.

12 A. Yeah. You know, I drive by, and I saw you all out there.

13 Q. Okay. Yeah.

14 A. It's just when you live where we live -- you know, the
15 closest Walmart is Uvalde and that's 38 miles away.

16 Q. Yeah, yeah.

17 A. So --

18 Q. It's beautiful country out there, that's for sure.

19 A. Oh, yeah. Yeah, I'm retired. I mean, we're real lucky. We
20 live on the Frio River. Did you get a good look at the Frio?

21 Q. No, I did not. There was -- I know I may have passed over
22 because I did go -- do I go over it when I went to Utopia, but I
23 didn't get up to --

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. -- Frio Canyon, up that way, but I did go out to Utopia.

1 That was pretty out that way.

2 A. Yeah, if -- yeah, as you -- you drove by Garner State Park?

3 Q. Yes. Yeah.

4 A. Yeah. Right at that big bridge, that's the Frio.

5 Q. Oh, okay. Okay.

6 A. Yeah. And, you know, give you a history lesson. John Vance
7 Garner was the vice president of the United States.

8 Q. I did not know that.

9 A. Yeah. And now I'm almost embarrassed because I can't tell
10 you whose he was.

11 Q. Oh.

12 A. Was it McKinley? Somewhere in there, but --

13 Q. Okay. So it was back in the late 1800s, then, early 1900s.

14 A. Early 1900s, yeah.

15 Q. Right. So --

16 A. That's a beautiful park.

17 Q. Okay. Yeah, I didn't get a chance to go in. I just drove by
18 it, but that whole area out there is just gorgeous.

19 So okay, Mr. Atchison, this is my phone number: [REDACTED].

20 If there's anything else you want to add to your statement, I'd
21 appreciate it. Just give me a call and -- but I very much want to
22 thank you for stopping out at the scene and doing what you could
23 for those people.

24 A. Well, you know, I'm doing all right with it. And I know if
25 you -- have you talked to Sherri?

1 Q. Yeah. She seems, Sherri seems to be having a tougher time.

2 A. Yeah. Well, I know that the trooper gave a number to call.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. And, you know, I guess that the Department of Safety uses,
5 but -- yeah, you know, I wasn't in church Sunday because I went
6 and saw my kids and grandkids, but, yeah, they said Jack Young
7 went -- came to my church.

8 Q. Oh.

9 A. So, you know. I guess he has two broken arms.

10 Q. Yeah. I haven't seen anything with his medical records. I
11 know we did get a brief statement from him as well with the --
12 with DPS. But I haven't seen much of anything on his injuries.
13 We've subpoenaed those records, but haven't gotten them yet. But
14 I do want to thank you, Mr. Atchison, for giving me a call back.

15 A. You know --

16 Q. Yes, sir?

17 A. -- I guess I could probably do it, but can I ask a favor of
18 you?

19 Q. I'll see if I can help you.

20 A. Are you going to request that radio transcript?

21 Q. Yeah. I'm going to see if the DPS may have it, and I'm going
22 to go through --

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. -- all their information first. But they may have that
25 already.

1 A. Yeah. And I'd just like to -- you know, the other ambulance
2 was out, and they said I didn't get hysterical. I'd just like to
3 remember what I -- hear what I said.

4 Q. Sure. Yeah. I don't know if I -- I'm not sure I can give
5 you that information, especially if I got it from the state, from
6 the DPS, but I'm sure you can --

7 A. Yeah. I mean, I --

8 Q. -- put in a -- it's a Freedom of Information, FOIA, Freedom
9 of --

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. -- Information Act, and you can request that, if you like.
12 I'm sure they'd give that to you.

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. Especially since --

15 A. Oh, I'm sure, if I --

16 Q. -- it's you calling in.

17 A. Yeah. If I went up to the Sheriff's Department, they'd give
18 it to me.

19 Q. Sure. Especially since you're a volunteer with the EMS,
20 so --

21 A. Yes. So -- okay. Yeah, if you -- and I guess, you know, I
22 guess the trooper, they're going to file some charges on him, I
23 believe.

24 Q. Yeah. It looks like they've filed a couple of things from
25 their news reports that have come out, so I'm sure there's going

1 to be some charges down the road.

2 A. Yeah. The thing, you know, I know that kid's totally messed
3 his life up and -- but in this community here, you know, I don't
4 know how safe the boy is in this community right now.

5 Q. Oh, okay.

6 A. You know, this is a pretty redneck -- you know what I'm
7 talking about, I mean.

8 Q. Very conservative, sure. I understand.

9 A. Yeah. And he was a nonconformist, you know: I'm going to do
10 what I want, when I want and how I want.

11 Q. I don't know anything about him, so, yeah, you're telling me.
12 I don't know.

13 A. Yeah. He hadn't been arrested yet. He was just always right
14 there on the line because -- well, I won't take up any more of
15 your time, but --

16 Q. Well, I did want to ask you -- I know when I did talk to
17 Sherri, she did mention that initially that, I guess, Diane
18 Rogers, who is, I guess, the administrator for the EMS, did not
19 want to stop.

20 A. Yeah. She's a paramedic. No. I mean, she goes -- I said --
21 you know, I'm yelling back there to them. They're both in the
22 back. I said, there's a wreck up here. And Diane said go around
23 it, go. I got closer. I said, Diane, there's a bad wreck. She
24 said, go around it. I said, it's a really bad wreck, and I said,
25 we're stopping. And I don't remember if she replied or not, but I

1 stopped.

2 Q. I guess I'll need to take a look at the kind of policies and
3 procedures they have, but I would think as first aid givers that
4 you would want to stop even if it's in your county or not. But I
5 guess I have --

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. -- to look at the county's policies and procedures to figure
8 that out.

9 A. Yeah. But, I mean, I was going to stop. I don't care if she
10 would have got in the ambulance and left me there and drove off.
11 I wasn't going to drive by that accident.

12 Q. Right. Sure. That's kind of hard to do when you're driving
13 an ambulance.

14 A. Yeah. And I think, you know, when we got there Sherri felt
15 the same way. I think that's one of the things that bothers
16 Sherri the most.

17 Q. Yeah. She expressed that in the statement she gave me
18 earlier today.

19 A. Yeah. So --

20 Q. So -- okay, sir.

21 A. Okay.

22 Q. I thank you very much.

23 A. Like I say, if you have any questions -- you have any
24 questions -- I don't think I'll think of anything else, but if you
25 want to talk to me, feel free to give me a call. I'm in and out,

1 so --

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. You have my cell phone, but cell phones don't work too good
4 up here.

5 Q. I found that out. I got Verizon. It doesn't work too good
6 up there. It does nothing.

7 A. Oh, yeah. It has to be AT&T.

8 Q. Yeah.

9 A. Yeah, AT&T.

10 Q. Right. Okay, sir.

11 A. Okay.

12 MR. KAMINSKI: I thank you very much --

13 MR. ATCHISON: I'll talk to you later.

14 MR. KAMINSKI: -- for your help, sir, and God bless you for
15 helping out --

16 (Barking dogs.)

17 MR. ATCHISON: Oh. Sounds like you got a couple of --

18 MR. KAMINSKI: Yeah, I do. Thank you, sir.

19 MR. ATCHISON: I do too.

20 MR. KAMINSKI: Bye.

21 MR. ATCHISON: Okay, bye.

22 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

23

24

25

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

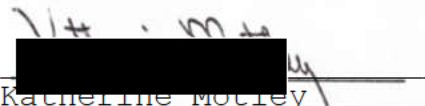
IN THE MATTER OF: CHURCH BUS AND TRUCK CRASH NEAR
CONCAN, TEXAS ON MARCH 29, 2017
Interview of Clay Atchison

ACCIDENT NUMBER: HWY17MH011

PLACE: Via Telephone

DATE: April 2017

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.


Katherine Motley
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of: *

*

CHURCH BUS AND TRUCK CRASH NEAR
CONCAN, TEXAS ON MARCH 29, 2017

* Accident No.: HWY17MH011

*

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Interview of: JOHN GAROFANO
EMT Basic

Utopia Volunteer Fire Department
Utopia, Texas

Wednesday,
April 5, 2017

APPEARANCES:

RONALD KAMINSKI, Survival Factors Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

I N D E X

ITEM

PAGE

Interview of John Garofano:

By Mr. Kaminski

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I N T E R V I E W

1
2 MR. KAMINSKI: Today's date is April 5th. My name is Ronald
3 Kaminski with the National Transportation Safety Board. I'm here
4 at the Utopia Fire and EMS Station, and I will be talking with
5 Mr. John Garofano, G-a-r-o-f-a-n-o. He is an EMT Basic.

INTERVIEW OF JOHN GAROFANO

6
7 BY MR. KAMINSKI:

8 Q. So, Mr. Garofano, if you could just give me a description
9 when you got the call and what -- when you got out here what all
10 you did and what you saw.

11 A. We were toned out by Uvalde dispatch at approximately 12:20.
12 Times are fuzzy. We left here about 6, 7, 8 minutes later. The
13 tone-out was for a two-vehicle head-on collision on Highway 83. I
14 think the original tone-out was for 3 miles south of Garner, and
15 then I heard another --

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: But it was not clear.

17 MR. GAROFANO: Yeah. But then I heard another statement that
18 it was 7 miles north of Concan. So it's in an area that's -- the
19 mileage doesn't really mean much. The description of the
20 tone-out was for two injured, and three possibly deceased in the
21 vehicle.

22 Jennifer and I left the building. Almost immediately out of
23 the building, I called for AirLIFE helicopters. One initially,
24 and then I called for three. We run under a red-blue trauma
25 criteria from the STRAC -- the RAC that we're in here in this part

1 of the state. And just from the description of the accident, with
2 the possibility of the number of injured and deceased in the
3 vehicles, that, plus the type of trauma it is, they're qualified
4 for a helicopter at least to be put in the air.

5 BY MR. KAMINSKI:

6 Q. And you called for how many --

7 A. I called for one initially, and then I called for two more
8 because of the number of possible injuries.

9 And then, so en route the fire rescue was toned out to assist
10 because they have the rescue tools. There was a lot of radio
11 chatter because there was all kinds of things going on. We went
12 to the scene. As we pulled into the scene -- I'm trying to get
13 this -- I'm trying to play the picture in my head. As we rounded
14 the scene, I think both Jennifer and I were expecting two cars,
15 two pickup trucks. When we got there, the first thing you noticed
16 was First Baptist Church on the side of a church bus, and it's
17 like -- and all we could think of was there were kids because
18 there's a lot of kids that come out here.

19 What I noticed, there was responders on scene. There were
20 DPS --

21 Q. Already?

22 A. It was DPS on scene. And there was -- I thought there was a
23 sheriff's department. I thought there was a vehicle -- well, I
24 thought there was a truck. It may have been Leakey Fire. I don't
25 know that for a fact. I mean, it was kind of chaotic at first.

1 Frio Canyon EMS, that's the EMS in Leakey, was on scene when
2 we pulled up. They had a patient they were taking to Uvalde
3 Memorial Hospital, and they stopped to render aid with the
4 permission of their patient, who was not critical.

5 The first thing I remember seeing was a Dually -- a Dually
6 Dodge, excuse me, pickup, corner-to-corner with this church bus.
7 Both vehicles were crushed up to the windshield. We -- Jennifer
8 and I both got out of the vehicle and we went to go assess the
9 situation to see what was going on, because it was obvious there's
10 more than just two or three injured people. It's a bus.

11 I called out to the driver of the pickup. He responded. I
12 looked in the truck. He was pinned between his steering wheel and
13 the seat of his truck with his hands up somewhere around his
14 chest. He was alive and talking at the time, at that point. I
15 left Jennifer with him to assess him, and I moved into the bus.

16 I went around -- well, at that time -- let me get this all
17 straight. What I could see was that there were some people from
18 the Leakey EMS who were dressing the wounds of a woman on the --
19 at the middle of the bus on the driver's side, who either hit the
20 window on that side or was thrown against the window. So she had
21 contusions. From what I could just look, and just looking at her
22 real fast, looks like she might have had a facial fracture or
23 orbital fracture. She had some cuts, and they were dressing
24 those.

25 And I went around the truck, the pickup truck, to get in the

1 bus. And on the other side, Diane Rogers and one of her medics
2 were taking -- were giving oxygen to a lady who was at the middle
3 of the bus on the passenger side. That would be Ms. Addie. I
4 got -- I went --

5 Q. In that middle, in that middle area as well?

6 A. Yes. On the opposite side from the lady that they were
7 working on.

8 Q. Right.

9 A. As I was going in the bus, I noticed that there were at least
10 two bodies up front. There was the driver, who was crushed and
11 pinned against the dashboard and steering wheel, and his head was
12 unfortunately impaled on the frame of the -- probably the door
13 frame. There was another person next to him. I couldn't tell if
14 it was a man or a woman. And I climbed over that person. Turns
15 out there was three people -- when I -- when we were finished and
16 I had some time to look at the scene, there was actually three
17 people up front, and one of them was under the two, and it
18 appeared to be a female because that person had like hose, support
19 hose on.

20 And I got in the truck and looked around, and the first thing
21 I noticed was there were four patients in the truck. There were
22 two at mid-truck -- mid-bus, excuse me, who were on the driver's
23 side: The one lady that was out the window partly that was being
24 tended to by Frio Canyon; there was a lady next to her, who was
25 forward and kind of pinned between her seat and the seat in front

1 of her. So she was folded over. She was moving, but she was
2 stuck. Then there was Ms. Addie, who was mid-bus, and had oxygen
3 on by the time I got in the truck. And then there was Ms. Rose,
4 Rose Harris, in the very back of the truck. And next to her was
5 her friend, who was obviously alive.

6 I moved into the truck. Had to climb over a few people who
7 were stuck between seats and things like that. Moved the -- I
8 picked the lady up who was next to the lady and the window. I
9 could not get her to sit up straight. The seats were all
10 deformed. All the seats in the truck stayed. They didn't break
11 free. But because of the people from the back moving forward --
12 this is my assessment, they -- all the seats were bent forward
13 probably about 20 degrees. So the most that I could get her to
14 sit up was probably about 60 degrees.

15 I could not get to Ms. Rose. Ms. Rose was talking. She was
16 leaning on her left side. She told me she was hurting bad. I
17 told her to hang in there, and that we'd get her out as soon as we
18 could.

19 Jennifer and I were pretty much -- from that point we were
20 pretty much right where we were. Jennifer was keeping the lady at
21 the window on the passenger side up, and I was keeping this lady's
22 neighbor up. We put C collars on. There wasn't any way to -- I
23 mean, we checked for pulses, and both of them were -- had pulses.
24 They had femoral pulses, but they were weak. I could not feel any
25 radial pulses on my lady, and there was no way to get to her femur

1 to check the femoral pulse because of the way she was bent over in
2 the seat.

3 Everyone that I could see that was still sitting in a seat
4 had a lap belt on. I could hear the fire guys working on the man
5 in the pickup. One of the rescue crews, I'm assuming it was
6 Uvalde, went around back and started cutting the back of the bus
7 out to get Ms. Rose out. I think she got out -- I don't know if
8 she was one of the first ones out of the bus or the second one. I
9 mean, like I said, at that point I was just interested in figuring
10 out what was going on.

11 They eventually took Ms. Addie out of the truck, because the
12 way the situation was no one could get out of that vehicle from
13 that part of the truck until she got out without cutting another
14 portion of the truck out and maybe making it structurally
15 unusable.

16 And then we eventually put all of the patients on backboards
17 and moved them out. They went to their various destinations.
18 Ms. Addie went with AirLIFE 5; Ms. Rose went with Air Evac 3, I
19 think it was. The ladies, the other two ladies were out of the
20 truck and went to the ambulance. I never -- at that point, from
21 that point I never saw anybody. There was already enough -- there
22 were so many people doing things that -- they went to the truck,
23 and I think they were pronounced there by AirLIFE 4, I believe.
24 Q. I heard there was five that responded, and I think one was
25 turned back, and the other four -- I'm not sure. I think four

1 landed, but three transported.

2 A. Four landed. I don't think there was a fifth one. I think
3 there was a fifth one en route.

4 Q. Right, yeah.

5 A. But there was AirLIFE 4 -- AirLIFE 4, AirLIFE 5, and Air Evac
6 3; and then PHI landed, but at that point everybody that was
7 -- that could have been viable or was viable had already been
8 removed out. The two ladies in the ambulance, like I said,
9 expired on the scene. I was told Ms. Addie expired just before
10 getting to the hospital. She had a cardiac arrest en route.
11 Ms. Rose was taken to SAMMC.

12 Q. SAMMC is?

13 A. Fort Sam -- Brooke Army Medical Center.

14 Q. Oh, yeah.

15 A. And she's doing good.

16 Q. We're going to talk to her today.

17 A. Yeah. I went to see her.

18 Q. Oh, nice.

19 A. Yeah, I went out to see her. Because I told her, hang in
20 there. That -- I mean, there -- we did what little medical we
21 could do. AirLIFE came in and started an IO on the lady that I
22 was holding up, and she was alive enough at that point to pull it
23 out. So we had to drill her again. So we had to do another IO in
24 the femur where she couldn't get to it. And then I did an IO on
25 the other lady by the wall after we moved her out because of the

1 delay in -- just the obvious delay in trying to move people out of
2 the bus. What do you need to know?

3 Q. Whatever you want to tell us.

4 A. Most of the people who I could see that were deceased or
5 obviously deceased were trapped between some seat and themselves.
6 The two ladies we worked on were trapped. Their legs were trapped
7 under the seat. When the seats deformed, they were pushed
8 forward, and they were really slumped down. So there was no way
9 just to pick them up and get them out.

10 The truck -- the bus itself, amazingly, was intact. I was
11 incredibly surprised when I walked inside the bus, given the
12 number of people that must have moved around inside that bus when
13 they hit the truck or when the truck hit the bus, whatever the
14 story was. The interior was intact.

15 The front of the bus was gone, like I said, but so was the
16 front of the pickup truck. I mean, the engines, you couldn't even
17 tell where the engines were. So they had to be under the
18 vehicles.

19 As far as I'm concerned, given the extent of the damage, the
20 number of victims, the number of patients, the location, I think
21 everything went well. I mean, that's again my opinion. But you
22 were asking about what could be done better or what. I think
23 Mr. O'Bryant said it: It was a total dead zone. Radios --
24 locally we could talk radio to radio, if you had the chance. The
25 cell phones didn't work. The radios didn't work. When I reported

1 to my medical director after I was released, after I got out of
2 the bus, I had to walk about a half a mile down the highway to a
3 spot where I was out of the canyon. And even then the signal
4 wasn't -- I think I only had one bar.

5 Q. I've seen -- found out. I've got Verizon and I've been told
6 that Verizon --

7 A. No. You have no, you have no bars here.

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No, you (indiscernible) --

9 BY MR. KAMINSKI:

10 Q. -- Verizon don't work here.

11 A. No.

12 Q. Yeah. No service.

13 A. So if, if I -- if it was the perfect world where you could
14 run the perfect mass casualty, it would have been nice if there
15 was actually -- we didn't -- as far as I could tell, I was in the
16 bus so I didn't have the big picture outside for most of the
17 thing. But there was no, there was really no one person in
18 charge. And it should have been Concan and/or Utopia because of
19 being either that area or being first on the scene.

20 Uvalde's Fire seemed to take over, and I assumed they assumed
21 they had more experience than anybody. Again, that's my
22 assumption. But they -- still was no coordination, I didn't see,
23 between within the bus and outside. People were doing stuff, and
24 that's good, but who knows who was doing what.

25 Police and DPS were great. They were doing everything they

1 could do. JP showed up. I actually, I forgot to say that. Since
2 there were victims already stated, I called for the JP right away
3 because they have -- he has to be there.

4 I mean, can I make a personal opinion here?

5 Q. Sure.

6 A. Personally, I think the State of Texas is partially at fault
7 at this too. The driver of the truck and his statements, I did
8 not hear those statements. The passengers in the bus -- I'll tell
9 you what Ms. Addie told me because I specifically asked her. But
10 that spot is notorious for accidents. The speeds going into that
11 spot are too high.

12 Q. Seventy miles an hour?

13 A. The road is canted the wrong way. So if you're coming into
14 it at the speed limit or higher, and you know people fudge 10
15 miles because that's allowed, there was no way that that kid, if
16 it turns out it's his fault, could have missed that bus. There's
17 no way. Not at the speed. Coming -- and even then, it doesn't
18 drop down to 60 until you're out of that curve heading toward the
19 old Garner State Park entrance.

20 So all the way through that curve technically it's 70 miles
21 an hour. And the road surface itself is not bad, but like I said,
22 so I think that -- and they -- and I think people -- somebody in
23 TEXDOT knew this for a long time, and it hasn't been done.
24 Because they've had 18-wheeler accidents there. They've had
25 individual car accidents in that area. It's just -- that's my

1 personal opinion. I don't -- if I get in trouble --

2 Q. Yeah. Our highway engineer, he's been out there. He's
3 looking at it. They're going to do some testing on the friction
4 of the road, and looking at all those factors with the slopes and
5 all that.

6 A. Well, it used to be 55 all the way down to that point and
7 then until it got -- once you pass that canyon, it tends to be
8 more straight and tends to go all the way to Uvalde, the City of
9 Uvalde, as a relatively straight road. There's ups and downs, but
10 it's pretty straight.

11 Q. Right.

12 A. It was 55 until 2 years ago. I don't know why -- I guess
13 like everything else, like all the roads around here, they're all
14 kind of high. So that's my personal opinion with that.

15 Now I did go to see Ms. Addie because I got this bond with
16 her. I talked with her most of the time I was there. I'm a big
17 believer --

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You saw Ms. Rose.

19 MR. GAROFANO: Ms. Rose, not Ms. Addie. I did speak to
20 Ms. Addie. And then, like I said, Leakey was working on her, and
21 that point she had a mask on, I couldn't talk to her. Ms. Rose in
22 the back, and she was talking to me and I was talking to her. So
23 I kind of got this bond with this lady, so we went to see her.
24 And I was just amazed. This is one tough woman. She's a tough
25 woman. She's doing good. She had a fractured arm and three

1 fractures of the pelvis, by her statement. That's what she told
2 me specifically. I got to know her, where she came from, all
3 that, originally, how long she'd been in Texas. She's only been
4 around here 2 years, I think she said.

5 I did -- I asked questions. I did ask her two questions:
6 One, about the lap belts because I knew that would be an issue.
7 She said when they started the bus out everybody was in lap belts.
8 And I believe she said the driver made sure that they were all on
9 correctly. So as far as my knowledge from her statement was, and
10 you can -- you'll be talking to her. She can tell you whatever.
11 Everybody had lap belts on. She said she couldn't see the driver,
12 but I -- when I -- he -- when I looked for him and the person that
13 was next to him, he had a -- he still had lap belt on.

14 And then I asked them also, because it was very curious the
15 way they were going home, to me. I've lived out here in this area
16 specifically for over 12 or 13 years. So it's, to me you go the
17 shortest way unless there's a reason. They were coming out of
18 Alto Frio, okay. So in my mind, they would have either headed
19 north and cut across to Kerrville, head across the hills to
20 Bandera, head over to Concan and jumped on 90 maybe. But they
21 -- but that's the longest, most difficult way to get to New
22 Braunfels, if you're going to go to New Braunfels from here.

23 Q. To go all the way down to Uvalde?

24 A. Yeah. To go to Uvalde, you're adding another 50 or 60 miles
25 to the trip because you're actually going west, and then you're

1 coming back. And if you're on 90, Highway 90, you have to
2 literally -- the easiest way to get to New Braunfels is either to
3 go into San Antonio and go up 35, which is slow and dangerous, or
4 go to Highway 123, which is west of San Antonio, and come up 123
5 through Seguin and into New Braunfels, or 46. Either one of those
6 two.

7 Q. Yeah. We kind of thought the same thing, is what -- it
8 seemed like why were they going --

9 A. Well, now this is the interesting point. I specifically
10 asked that question. I said, Ms. Rose --

11 Q. To Ms. Rose?

12 A. -- do you know why you were all going to Uvalde? It seemed
13 like the worst way to go. And she said, oh, yeah, honey, I know
14 exactly why we went to Uvalde. She said they wanted to go to
15 McDonald's to eat lunch.

16 Q. You're going to drive 60 miles to go to McDonald's?

17 A. Um-hum. Well, they're retired. They have nothing
18 technically -- what else are they going to do?

19 Q. Right.

20 A. So I said, so you all wanted -- she said, well, I didn't want
21 to go to McDonald's, but she -- they all went -- and so the only
22 McDonald's in this area is in Uvalde. There's no McDonald's in
23 Bandera. There's a McDonald's in Kerrville, but --

24 Q. Right.

25 A. -- they probably didn't know that and, you know. So -- and

1 again, it seems like it's out of their way; it's actually closer,
2 but -- so that's where -- that's why they were heading south on
3 Highway 83. And it's like, you know, made me stop and think about
4 things. And I said, okay, it's good. So --

5 After they took the last two ladies out of the truck and put
6 them in the ambulance where, like I said, where AirLIFE declared
7 them, we stayed on scene to help move some of the victims for the
8 mortuary because there was just a lot of people.

9 Q. Right.

10 A. And then --

11 Q. I talked to Paul Stephens. He was out --

12 A. Yeah. He was actually working as a fire person at that time.
13 We were there probably -- I called the doctor, called Dr. Gerhard
14 and talked to him. He wanted us to leave the scene, and I said,
15 okay, I'll leave. I'll leave when it's appropriate, when I can.

16 Q. And Dr. Gerhard is?

17 A. Is our medical director.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. So because every unit has a medical director. Some --
20 they're not all the same, so -- in this -- in Texas, period. We
21 were there --

22 MS. GAROFANO: You called me.

23 MR. GAROFANO: I called -- yeah, I called my boss, Rhonda
24 Garofano, and told her what was going on. I had to wait around
25 because like the two ladies that were in the ambulance that were

1 declared, they had not gotten to them yet to move them out of the
2 truck. They had set up a temporary morgue on the highway. I
3 mean, like I said, I just was kind of like -- at that point
4 everything was -- had slowed down because it was -- other than
5 moving the vehicles or moving the victims, there was not much.

6 Q. Right.

7 A. As soon as we got the two ladies out of the ambulance, I went
8 over and checked on the JP. He's local here. He's a friend, and
9 he's also 80, 78 years old, 80. And while he's dealt with these
10 kind of victims, he's never dealt with these kind of victims in
11 the number. So I checked on him to make sure he was okay. And
12 then Jennifer and I came back to the station, and just put the
13 truck back and -- well, it was out of service for a little while
14 because I had to clean it. But we put it back in service, and
15 then by then it was -- you know, that was it. That's the whole
16 run, so --

17 MR. KAMINSKI: Okay. You've given me some great detail. I
18 don't really have any --

19 MR. GAROFANO: No questions?

20 MR. KAMINSKI: -- questions for you. Very nice job.

21 That concludes our interview here of Mr. Garofano. It's
22 approximately 9:44.

23 (Whereupon, at 9:44 a.m., the interview was concluded.)
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25

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: CHURCH BUS AND TRUCK CRASH NEAR
CONCAN, TEXAS ON MARCH 29, 2017
Interview of John Garofano

ACCIDENT NUMBER: HWY17MH011

PLACE: Utopia, Texas

DATE: April 5, 2017

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.

Katherine Motley
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of: *

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CHURCH BUS AND TRUCK CRASH NEAR
CONCAN, TEXAS ON MARCH 29, 2017

* Accident No.: HWY17MH011

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Interview of: JENNIFER DAVIS

Emergency Care Attendant, Utopia VFD

Utopia, Texas

Wednesday,
April 5, 2017

APPEARANCES:

RONALD KAMINSKI, Survival Factors Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

JAMES O'BRYANT, Chief
Utopia Volunteer Fire Department

I N D E X

ITEM

PAGE

Interview of Jennifer Davis:

By Mr. Kaminski

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I N T E R V I E W

1
2 MR. KAMINSKI: Today's date is April 5th. My name is Ronald
3 Kaminski with the National Transportation Safety Board. I'm here
4 at the Utopia Fire Department and EMS, and I'll be speaking with
5 Ms. Jennifer Davis, who is the emergency care attendant who was --
6 who responded to the scene. And she's going to give us a
7 description of when she got the call and she got out there, what
8 she saw and what she all did.

INTERVIEW OF JENNIFER DAVIS

9
10 BY MR. KAMINSKI:

11 Q. Okay, Ms. Davis. If you could just start off from the point
12 when you got the call?

13 A. The call came in, and it was a two-vehicle collision with
14 three patients, two deceased. And then when we called back, it
15 ended up being three patients, three live patients, two deceased
16 patients. We actually contacted for three helicopters then. At
17 the time we had no idea what was going on. The fire department
18 was then toned out for their -- what's it called?

19 MR. O'BRYANT: Extrication tools.

20 MS. DAVIS: Thank you. Extrication tools.

21 MR. KAMINSKI: Okay.

22 MS. DAVIS: Arriving on scene, that's when we discovered it
23 was a bus and a truck.

24 BY MR. KAMINSKI:

25 Q. Okay. You don't have to wait for me. That's why I got the

1 tape so I don't have to --

2 A. Okay.

3 Q. Just take your time.

4 A. Did a walk-around. I couldn't get to the driver of the
5 truck. He was pinned.

6 Noticed we had four other patients in the bus, one in the
7 very back, one on the passenger side of the bus that like EMS was
8 -- had given oxygen to. And then there was two more on the
9 driver's side.

10 Q. That were viable?

11 A. Yes, sir. The rest were deceased. Being as I could not get
12 into the truck, actually could almost reach in and touch him to
13 see if he actually had a pulse, and he had turned around and
14 started -- turned his head and started talking.

15 Q. And this was the truck driver?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. But because I couldn't get in there, I just told him to stay
19 still and that help was on the way. I had got out, and actually
20 my partner was in the bus, and I had gone to one patient on the
21 outside of the bus also.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. And that's -- a off-duty, like, EMS personnel showed up, and
24 she took care of one of the patients in the back of the bus. And
25 her daughter came, and was also a nurse from Uvalde, and she

1 actually helped.

2 Q. So you got there before the off-duty EMS?

3 A. Yes, sir.

4 Q. Okay. And then she went in to take care of the person inside
5 the bus?

6 A. She took care of the one in the very back of the bus.

7 Q. The one that's still (indiscernible)?

8 A. Yes, sir.

9 MR. O'BRYANT: Outside, or did she get in the bus?

10 MS. DAVIS: She was in the back of the bus.

11 BY MR. KAMINSKI:

12 Q. The very back, right.

13 A. On the outside, yeah.

14 Q. Yeah. The viable ones, of course, that -- so, that were in
15 the bus, the extrication hadn't started, so they hadn't been
16 pulled out yet, correct?

17 A. No, sir.

18 Q. Okay. And at that point you just kind of stood back and
19 waited for extrication --

20 A. Yes, sir.

21 Q. -- on that?

22 A. We had to wait. Yes, sir.

23 Q. Okay. Okay, that's -- you pretty much, you good?

24 A. I mean, I --

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. Do I need to tell you --

2 MR. O'BRYANT: She's got more to tell you.

3 MR. KAMINSKI: Okay.

4 MS. DAVIS: After the driver of the truck was pulled out, he
5 actually got put into our ambulance with AirLIFE, and I had
6 actually got back there with AirLIFE, and that's when he stated --
7 the patient stated that he had been texting.

8 BY MR. KAMINSKI:

9 Q. And this, he said this when he was in the back of AirLIFE?

10 A. In the back of the ambulance.

11 Q. In the back of the ambulance.

12 A. Yes, sir.

13 Q. Anything else other than he was texting?

14 A. He was texting. That was it. That's all I got.

15 Q. And that's all he said the whole time or that just that --
16 they didn't ask --

17 A. Yes, sir.

18 Q. Okay. And what -- do you recall what types of injuries he
19 had?

20 A. At first we thought it was a femur fracture, a hip fracture,
21 and he was complaining of both of his arms. But later --

22 Q. Okay. And in the past -- do you feel the response went well,
23 that dispatch -- was there -- did you feel there was enough help
24 got there soon enough or do you feel that they probably should
25 have called out more help, or do you have opinion?

1 A. I don't feel like there was enough help, honestly. Not that
2 our guys aren't great, but there's not enough help. And where we
3 were, there was no cell phone and no radio service.

4 Q. Radio too?

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. So what do you guys -- what do you do in that --

7 MR. O'BRYANT: This was a dead spot. Every once in a while
8 with this folded up terrain that we have, there are places that
9 may not be but a quarter mile or a half a mile long, but there are
10 absolute dead spots where nothing works. And it just
11 unfortunately happened to be in one of those spots.

12 MR. KAMINSKI: Right. And that was Chief Jim O'Bryant,
13 O-B-Y-R-A-N-T [sic], that was just --

14 MR. O'BRYANT: O-B-R-Y-A-N-T.

15 MR. KAMINSKI: -- that was just speaking.

16 Okay. That concludes our interview here at approximately
17 9:20.

18 (Whereupon, at 9:20 a.m., 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: CHURCH BUS AND TRUCK CRASH NEAR
CONCAN, TEXAS ON MARCH 29, 2017
Interview of Jennifer Davis

ACCIDENT NUMBER: HWY17MH011

PLACE: Utopia, Texas

DATE: April 5, 2017

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.

Katherine Motley
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of: *

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CHURCH BUS AND TRUCK CRASH NEAR
CONCAN, TEXAS ON MARCH 29, 2017

* Accident No.: HWY17MH011

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Interview of: JAMES O'BRYANT
Fire Chief, Utopia VFD

Utopia Volunteer Fire Department
Utopia, Texas

Wednesday,
April 5, 2017

APPEARANCES:

RONALD KAMINSKI, Survival Factors Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

I N D E X

ITEM

PAGE

Interview of James O'Bryant:

By Mr. Kaminski

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I N T E R V I E W

1
2 MR. KAMINSKI: Today's date is April 5th. My name is Ronald
3 Kaminski with the National Transportation Safety Board. I'm here
4 at the Utopia Fire and EMS Station, and I'll be talking to Utopia
5 Fire Chief James O'Bryant, O-B-R-Y-A-N-T.

6 INTERVIEW OF JAMES O'BRYANT

7 BY MR. KAMINSKI:

8 Q. And, Chief, why don't you give me a description of when you
9 got toned out and what all you did and what all you saw.

10 A. Okay. On March 29, 2017, Utopia Fire Department responded to
11 a report of a two-vehicle collision with multiple patients
12 entrapped and two dead on scene. We were paged out by Uvalde
13 dispatch at 12:23 p.m. The rescue truck left the station at
14 12:35 p.m. with three personnel on board. They picked up two more
15 personnel en route to the scene.

16 While en route to the scene, Utopia Fire requested the Concan
17 Fire Department be dispatched en route to the scene if they were
18 not already. Utopia Fire Department arrived on scene at
19 12:50 p.m. Two more Utopia Fire personnel arrived on scene via
20 personal vehicle from Uvalde approximately 7 to 10 minutes after
21 rescue arrived on scene.

22 Utopia Fire conducted an inner and outer safety circle, scene
23 safety circle. Utopia Fire stabilized vehicles, disabled the
24 batteries on both vehicles. Utopia Fire found multiple patients
25 in distress. Finding critical, viable entrapped patients that the

1 medics on scene could not access because of entrapment, we began
2 extricating the patient entangled in the pickup truck.

3 While this was happening, Uvalde Fire Department came on
4 scene along with Concan Fire and other departments and agencies.
5 Uvalde Fire assumed incident command. Uvalde Fire worked
6 alongside with Utopia Fire to help achieve access to the driver's
7 side of the pickup. Uvalde Fire then shifted their attention to
8 gaining safe access to the church bus. Utopia Fire completed the
9 removal of the patient from the pickup truck with the help of a
10 Concan Fire medic or EMS medics and helicopter medics to treat who
11 were on scene.

12 At this time Utopia Fire assisted Uvalde Fire with equipment
13 and manpower for patient removal from the church bus until all
14 viable patients were removed and transported. At this point
15 Utopia Fire regrouped and made a decision to send three of our
16 firemen back to Utopia to cover our area in case we had any other
17 calls. The remaining four Utopia firemen stayed behind with the
18 rescue truck to assist Uvalde Fire with the extrication of the
19 remaining deceased victims from the church bus.

20 After being given permission to do so by DPS, Utopia Fire
21 Department cleared the scene at 1555 p.m.

22 Q. Okay. And anything regarding the dispatch or communications?
23 Any issues with that out at the scene?

24 A. Well, the dispatch and communications were nonexistent on
25 scene because of the radio dead spot on scene. I can easily

1 understand why things were as confused as they were given our
2 different frequencies, our mutual aid to the scene. But the
3 reality is in Uvalde County that only Uvalde Fire and Utopia Fire
4 in Uvalde have access and capability of heavy cutting equipment.
5 We are the only two agencies in the county that have heavy rescue
6 capability, and so it is necessary and normal that we would be
7 dispatched to that scene.

8 Q. Wouldn't you have thought that, although you guys would go,
9 but --

10 A. I would expect that --

11 Q. -- Uvalde would have been called out a little earlier?

12 A. Uvalde was there within minutes of the time we got there,
13 10, 15 minutes. And they have further to travel to get there than
14 we do.

15 MR. CANTRELL: I'm going to say they were there 20 minutes
16 after we arrived, which is probably about right.

17 MR. O'BRYANT: For where we are in these rural communities, I
18 mean that's not, that's not really bad.

19 BY MR. KAMINSKI:

20 Q. No, not at all. No.

21 A. I mean, when you consider the distance that we have to
22 travel, that Uvalde Fire had to travel 20, 25 miles. We had to
23 travel -- 18 miles.

24 MR. CANTRELL: Yeah. And even though Uvalde is a paid
25 department.

1 MR. KAMINSKI: Can you give your name you're speaking?

2 MR. CANTRELL: I'm sorry. Jim Cantrell, Assistant Chief.

3 Even though Uvalde is a paid department or partial paid
4 department, I mean that's a skeleton crew. They still have to
5 assemble, you know, just --

6 MR. O'BRYANT: Just as we do when we get toned, people have
7 to come from where they're working --

8 MR. CANTRELL: Yes. Yeah.

9 MR. O'BRYANT: -- to the station to get on the truck, and
10 then go en route to the scene. And sometimes it takes a volunteer
11 department longer than it does a paid department, who have paid
12 people there at the station ready to roll trucks.

13 MR. KAMINSKI: Right.

14 MR. O'BRYANT: So as far as we were concerned, our dispatch,
15 our time to get to the scene, we were well within our parameters.
16 We thought it was -- we thought it was a good response.

17 BY MR. KAMINSKI:

18 Q. And everybody worked well, you mentioned, together, and --

19 A. Seamlessly.

20 Q. Yeah. And then but you did say that the one problem in that
21 location is your radios didn't work and there's no cell phone
22 coverage there?

23 A. That made it, it made it difficult. It made it difficult to
24 land helicopters. We dispatched one of our members, who is
25 probably less physically capable than some of the rest, and he

1 pretty much got behind the fire trucks and he landed the
2 helicopters via hand signals. Because by the time we got on scene
3 10 minutes in, that was already happening. AirLIFE was already
4 circling. I mean, so we were going to have AirLIFE medics on the
5 ground really quick, but they were trying to figure out what the
6 heck because they had no radio com with anybody. And so one of
7 our members went back there, and he was giving them the, you know,
8 come in, come down, right here. And they were circling around low
9 enough to see that, and so they -- he brought them in right there.

10 Q. Great. Yeah, that's an issue too. I mean, but I don't know
11 how that can be fixed when you get in these dead spots in these
12 rural areas, it just --

13 A. It just happens. It's something we deal with quite often out
14 here.

15 Q. Sure.

16 A. Because every time you get back in a little fold or a little
17 tight valley, radio doesn't work.

18 MR. KAMINSKI: Right. Okay. That concludes our interview
19 here with Chief James O'Bryant. And it's approximately 10:15.

20 (Whereupon, at 10:15 a.m., 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: CHURCH BUS AND TRUCK CRASH NEAR
CONCAN, TEXAS ON MARCH 29, 2017
Interview of James O'Bryant

ACCIDENT NUMBER: HWY17MH011

PLACE: Utopia, Texas

DATE: April 5, 2017

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.

Katherine Motley
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of: *

*

CHURCH BUS AND TRUCK CRASH NEAR
CONCAN, TEXAS ON MARCH 29, 2017

* Accident No.: HWY17MH011

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Interview of: JAMES CANTRELL

Assistant Fire Chief, Utopia VFD

Utopia Volunteer Fire Department
Utopia, Texas

Wednesday,
April 5, 2017

APPEARANCES:

RONALD KAMINSKI, Survival Factors Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

JAMES O'BRYANT, Chief
Utopia Volunteer Fire Department

JAMES GAROFANO, EMT
Utopia Volunteer Fire Department

I N D E XITEMPAGE

Interview of James Cantrell:

By Mr. Kaminski

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I N T E R V I E W

1
2 MR. KAMINSKI: Today's date is April 5th. My name is Ronald
3 Kaminski with the National Transportation Safety Board. I'm going
4 to be talking with the Utopia Assistant Fire Chief James Cantrell,
5 C-a-n-t-r-e-l-l.

6 INTERVIEW OF JAMES CANTRELL

7 BY MR. KAMINSKI:

8 Q. So, Mr. Cantrell, could you give us when you got toned out,
9 when you -- what all you did, what all you saw on scene?

10 A. Right. I mean, it's pretty much, well, this. I have a
11 couple of things I want to add. So do you want me to go through
12 this again?

13 Q. No, no. If there's anything different, I mean, other than
14 the statement that the chief just gave, if there's anything you
15 can add to that or if you just want to tell me anything else you
16 feel that is important.

17 A. Okay. All right. So, yeah, the times and the basic scenario
18 was the same. The only thing is, is when we were en route over
19 there, we formulated a plan, the five members that were on the
20 truck. So we pre-planned what we were going to do when we got on
21 the scene.

22 Q. Now at that point did you know it was a bus? You just
23 thought it was --

24 A. No. No, no.

25 Q. -- two vehicles, correct?

1 A. We just thought it was two vehicles, and at that point I
2 think we thought it was either four or five total --

3 MR. O'BRYANT: Patients total.

4 MR. CANTRELL: -- personnel.

5 BY MR. KAMINSKI:

6 Q. And that's coming -- and when you say it's two vehicles,
7 that's coming from Uvalde dispatch, correct?

8 A. Yes. Uvalde dispatch said it was two vehicles, and at first
9 I think it was one or two patients.

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Two patients deceased.

11 MR. CANTRELL: And two --

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: One viable, or something.

13 MR. CANTRELL: Two deceased. So we were thinking three or
14 four patients, something like that, you know, which is what you'd
15 expect from two vehicles.

16 BY MR. KAMINSKI:

17 Q. Right.

18 A. So anyway, we kind of pre-planned. It was like, okay, the
19 driver's going to stay with the truck. He'll position the truck
20 to protect us, protect the EMS. We had another member who was
21 going to augment getting everything we needed off of the truck.
22 We had one that was going to take the stuff between the scene and
23 the truck, and then two of us were going to do the assessment, you
24 know, make sure everything was safe, check out what we needed to
25 do, and then we'd formulate a plan and go ahead and start.

1 So when we hit the ground, I mean, we didn't deviate from
2 that. And I'm going to say, we had decided where we were going to
3 start and we had the tools fired up within 4 or 5 minutes. So --
4 Q. You were saying you put together a plan on the way, but then
5 when you get there, it's a bus, and you see it's a bus, it kind of
6 throws the plan into a --

7 A. It does. It does. It doesn't change. We're still there for
8 extrication. So the tools have to come off the truck. The truck
9 has to protect us. You know, so it --

10 MR. O'BRYANT: You have to do the scene safety.

11 MR. CANTRELL: Yeah, it's, it's --

12 MR. O'BRYANT: You need to disable batteries. You've got to
13 do the chocking of the vehicles to stabilize everything. Those
14 things don't change from scene to scene.

15 MR. KAMINSKI: Okay.

16 MR. CANTRELL: So it's -- yeah, I understand it's dynamic.

17 BY MR. KAMINSKI:

18 Q. And who was going to do what and all that when you got on
19 scene, okay.

20 A. Yes. Everybody was pre-assigned.

21 Q. Okay. But, I guess, I -- I have a slight problem with this.
22 I don't know if you guys have heard the 911 calls, the 911 tapes?

23 A. No.

24 MR. O'BRYANT: No.

25 BY MR. KAMINSKI:

1 Q. Well, the call came in as a vehicle versus a church bus. Now
2 when you hear it's a church bus --

3 A. We didn't have that come --

4 MR. O'BRYANT: It didn't come across on the radio.

5 MR. GAROFANO: I'm telling you, the 911 call we got was for a
6 two-vehicle head-on collision on 83 south of Garner State Park.
7 No -- as far as I know, nobody was expecting a church bus.

8 MR. O'BRYANT: No, no.

9 MR. KAMINSKI: Well, that's kind of a key --

10 MR. O'BRYANT: Not until I got on scene, I didn't know.

11 MR. KAMINSKI: -- you want to know when you're heading out.

12 MR. GAROFANO: Yeah. Because I would -- I as a medic
13 would've called for other volunteers to get our other truck out,
14 and I would have called immediately for four helicopters. I
15 wouldn't have messed around.

16 MR. O'BRYANT: Well, we certainly would have called Uvalde
17 Fire. Maybe it (indiscernible) --

18 MR. GAROFANO: I would have called (indiscernible) --

19 MR. O'BRYANT: -- (indiscernible) their cutting tools and
20 everything like that.

21 MR. CANTRELL: When you're saying that you got this off the
22 -- or off of the dispatch, the 911. You're talking about that
23 went to Real County, right? Because, see --

24 MR. KAMINSKI: Yeah. I've heard Real County, and I've heard
25 Uvalde.

1 MR. O'BRYANT: See, some things get lost between one dispatch
2 and another.

3 MR. CANTRELL: So, you know, we're dispatched by Uvalde for
4 that.

5 MR. KAMINSKI: Okay. I'll have to go back and listen to
6 Uvalde's. I think I've listened to both of them. I thought I
7 heard both of them.

8 MR. GAROFANO: Do you want to hear it? I have it on my
9 phone.

10 MR. O'BRYANT: Yeah, you've got the dispatch.

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You've got the dispatch. Pull it up.

12 MR. KAMINSKI: Let's just finish up here with Mr. Cantrell.

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

14 BY MR. KAMINSKI:

15 Q. So you put together a plan. You got there. And anything
16 else once you got there and you saw what you had, then what? You
17 just --

18 A. There was a patient that EMS -- they were already in the bus,
19 and they were starting to triage and treat the patients in the
20 bus. There was no access to the driver of the truck. We could
21 tell that he was conscious. Looked like he had critical injuries,
22 and there was no way that anybody could access him. So that's
23 where we started, so --

24 Q. Okay. Do you have any other issues you've had in the past
25 regarding dispatch or response? Do they normally -- when you guys

1 get a call, do they normally send out Fire and EMS or do they --
2 A. In a call like this, we would've gone automatic, just like if
3 we get a structure fire, EMS goes automatic.

4 MR. O'BRYANT: To cover us.

5 MR. CANTRELL: Whether they're dispatched or not.

6 MR. O'BRYANT: Because we have an agreement between the two
7 entities.

8 MR. CANTRELL: Yes.

9 MR. O'BRYANT: We know that we're going to go to cover them
10 out there either -- on a major wreck, we're either going cover
11 them for cutting and extrication or we're going to cover them to
12 help with traffic control because 83 is an extraordinarily busy
13 highway.

14 MR. KAMINSKI: Right.

15 MR. O'BRYANT: So we have that set in place that we just, we
16 do that.

17 MR. KAMINSKI: Okay. That concludes our interview here at
18 Utopia Fire and EMS Station. It's approximately 20 minutes after
19 10.

20 (Whereupon, at 10:20 a.m., 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: CHURCH BUS AND TRUCK CRASH NEAR
CONCAN, TEXAS ON MARCH 29, 2017
Interview of James Cantrell

ACCIDENT NUMBER: HWY17MH011

PLACE: Utopia, Texas

DATE: April 5, 2017

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.

Katherine Motley
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of: *

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CHURCH BUS AND TRUCK CRASH NEAR
CONCAN, TEXAS ON MARCH 29, 2017

* Accident No.: HWY17MH011

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Interview of: RODNEY JEFFERIES
Chief, Concan VFD

Concan, Texas

Monday,
April 3, 2017

APPEARANCES:

RONALD KAMINSKI, Survival Factors Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

I N D E XITEMPAGE

Interview of Rodney Jefferies:

By Mr. Kaminski

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I N T E R V I E W

1
2 MR. KAMINSKI: Today's date is April 3rd. My name is Ronald
3 Kaminski with the National Transportation Safety Board. I'm here
4 in Cancon [sic], Texas, with Cancon Fire Chief, Rodney Jefferies.
5 And he's going to give us a description of when he got the call
6 and what all he did when he arrived on scene.

INTERVIEW OF RODNEY JEFFERIES

7
8 BY MR. KAMINSKI:

9 Q. Go ahead, Chief.

10 A. Call come -- I had already been notified by phone, and then
11 the pagers went off at 12:38, which was I think 14 minutes after
12 Utopia was paged out. And when I got on scene the second AirLIFE
13 was landing, I believe; the second aircraft was landing. And the
14 bus was already filled with responders doing extrications and
15 recoveries and all that kind of stuff. And pretty much what I did
16 the rest of the afternoon was get things that were needed and make
17 sure if anything else was needed, that I took care of that. And I
18 stayed until whatever time the accident -- 1:15? 1:15 in the
19 morning when the accident was cleared.

20 Q. Okay. And when you say you were notified by phone, that was
21 before you got --

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. -- paged out?

24 A. Yeah, Jeff called me, the captain.

25 Q. Okay. And --

1 A. Before we ever even got a page.

2 Q. Right. And so when you get -- you notified, and you got out
3 there about 12. What time did you, approximate, when you got out
4 there?

5 A. It probably took me approximately 30 minutes to get there.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. So it would have probably been anywhere from 5 to 10 minutes
8 after 1.

9 Q. Okay. And who -- I'm still trying to find out who the
10 incident commander was.

11 A. Never had one.

12 Q. There was no incident commander?

13 A. No.

14 Q. There was no command post?

15 A. No. Never was a command post set up. No IC command or
16 nothing.

17 Q. How were they -- was anybody in charge of -- nobody was in
18 charge of EMS then, or --

19 A. Utopia was in charge of EMS.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. That's their area.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. So there wasn't anybody transported by ambulance. They were
25 all, the survivors --

1 A. Yeah, they were --

2 Q. -- were transported by Life Flight?

3 A. By air, yeah.

4 Q. Okay. Is there anything, Chief, you feel that, regarding the
5 response that could be improved?

6 A. I think we should have been paged out immediately after
7 Utopia EMS because everybody in both vehicles were trapped. EMS
8 was there. They couldn't do nothing until the jaws and everything
9 were used.

10 Q. Now did you guys bring out that equipment or was that Utopia?

11 A. Utopia had it, we had it, and Uvalde had it.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. There's three different agencies that had it.

14 Q. And so what was -- so when you got there even at, say, 10
15 after 1, they were all still in -- they were still in their
16 vehicles? Everybody was still in their -- EMS was working on a
17 couple people, I guess, survivors that were in the --

18 A. I think, I think the driver was -- I don't remember when he
19 was flown out, but he had been -- he was gone. Tim handled that.
20 And after that, the second helicopter left, there was nobody else
21 to put on the helicopter. I think two people passed after you all
22 got them out of the vehicle before you got them to the AirLIFE,
23 correct?

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: That's correct.

25 MR. JEFFERIES: And one of the patients died on the way to

1 the hospital.

2 MR. KAMINSKI: Right. Right.

3 BY MR. KAMINSKI:

4 Q. Okay. So you should have been -- how do you think -- have
5 you had this problem before getting paged out in a timely manner?

6 A. Yes. Yes. I think it was spring break weekend, there was a
7 rollover at 1051, which is right there at Garner and 83. We were
8 never paged out.

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: 1050.

10 MR. JEFFERIES: 1050. Yeah, 1050 and 83. We were never
11 paged out. And I understand like the day this was going on it was
12 chaotic, but I feel like dispatch should be disciplined to handle
13 something like that. I don't know if it's their training. I
14 don't want to talk bad about them because I know they handle the
15 whole county, every agency in the county. But we're the closest
16 agency to respond to that. We should have been the first one
17 after EMS to have been dispatched to the scene.

18 BY MR. KAMINSKI:

19 Q. Right. Now is -- I haven't, other than picking up some
20 documents -- do you know if they always have probably just one
21 dispatcher probably on duty at all times or they have two?

22 A. No. They got more than one.

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Two to three.

24 MR. KAMINSKI: Okay. Okay, anything else you'd like to add?

25 MR. JEFFERIES: Nothing I can think of right offhand.

1 MR. KAMINSKI: Okay. That concludes the interview here.
2 It's approximately 5 minutes to 5.

3 (Whereupon, at 4:55 p.m., 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: CHURCH BUS AND TRUCK CRASH NEAR
CONCAN, TEXAS ON MARCH 29, 2017
Interview of Rodney Jefferies

ACCIDENT NUMBER: HWY17MH011

PLACE: Concan, Texas

DATE: April 3, 2017

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.

Katherine Motley
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of: *

*

CHURCH BUS AND TRUCK CRASH NEAR
CONCAN, TEXAS ON MARCH 29, 2017

* Accident No.: HWY17MH011

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Interview of: TIM HESTER
Assistant Chief, Concan VFD

Concan, Texas

Monday,
April 3, 2017

APPEARANCES:

RONALD KAMINSKI, Survival Factors Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

JEFF KRUGER, Captain
Concan Volunteer Fire Department

I N D E X

ITEM

PAGE

Interview of Tim Hester:

By Mr. Kaminski

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I N T E R V I E W

1
2 MR. KAMINSKI: Today's date is April 3rd. My name is Ronald
3 Kaminski with the National Transportation Safety Board. I'm here
4 in Cancon [sic], Texas, and I'll be talking with assistant chief
5 of the Cancon Fire Department, Mr. Tim Hester.

INTERVIEW OF TIM HESTER

6
7 BY MR. KAMINSKI:

8 Q. Assistant Chief, could you give me a description from the
9 time the call came in to -- and when you got out there what all
10 you did and what you saw out there?

11 A. Okay. I too was called on the phone by Jeff, the captain,
12 and that was, oh, I'm going to say around 2 --

13 MR. KRUGER: 12:23.

14 MR. HESTER: Yeah, 12, 12:20 something.

15 BY MR. KAMINSKI:

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. And I was on the north end, and so I went POV. I called into
18 the station and told the guy that was waiting on me to go ahead
19 and bring the truck and I would go POV. So when I hit 83 off of
20 348, just as I made the turn to (indiscernible), they actually
21 paged us out. So that's going to be 3:40 something, I guess. I
22 don't know exactly what time it was.

23 MR. KRUGER: 3:38.

24 MR. HESTER: 3:38. Okay. I had two of my workers with me.
25 Both of them are on the fire department, and --

1 BY MR. KAMINSKI:

2 Q. It's a volunteer department, correct?

3 MR. KRUGER: Yes.

4 MR. HESTER: Yeah, volunteer. I dropped one of them off at
5 3:50 with one of the game wardens from Garner State Park to assist
6 in traffic control, and I took the other guy to the scene with me.

7 When I arrived at the scene, I approached the bus from the
8 left side facing the bus, be the passenger side. And the first
9 two victims that I checked, they were both dead. The third victim
10 already had oxygen. Somebody had applied oxygen to her.

11 BY MR. KAMINSKI:

12 Q. Do you recall where these viable ones were seated?

13 A. The first one that I checked was a passenger in the front of
14 the bus. The second one I checked --

15 Q. Was that the right front passenger, or --

16 A. That's right front passenger.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. The second one I checked was right behind him. The third one
19 that was alive was right behind her. I couldn't go any further
20 because of the guardrail and the bus being on top of the guardrail
21 on that side. So I walked around. I did look in the pickup. He
22 looked like he was unconscious to me. He wasn't moving. So I
23 walked around the back of the truck, and that's when I came in
24 contact with Utopia EMS, and I talked to Jennifer. She was -- had
25 EMT on-site, and asked her what she wanted me to do, and she sent

1 me to the back of the bus.

2 At the back of the bus, I had four people back there.
3 Starting on the passenger side was a lady. Her head was between
4 her legs all the way to the floor, but she was still sitting in
5 the seat. Right next to her was her husband -- I think it was her
6 husband anyway -- the same position, head down between their legs
7 all the way to the floor.

8 I actually skipped the third one because I grabbed a hold of
9 the lady on the right-hand side corner of the bus, and when I did
10 that, I came back to the middle one, and she as well was all the
11 way forward and head between her legs. I did have a pulse. As a
12 matter of fact, Rose spoke to me. She said, I'm hurt, baby, I'm
13 hurt bad. And I said --

14 Q. And this is the woman that's all the way far right rear
15 corner?

16 A. That's right.

17 Q. That was still -- I believe she's still alive there.

18 A. Right. Yeah. And started helping her and getting some
19 bandages on her. Took some vitals. As I was doing that, AirLIFE
20 approached, and another lady that was a EMT paramedic actually,
21 and she assisted. And I stepped down, went back to where Jennifer
22 was, and she asked me to go to the pickup and take care of that
23 guy. So from there, I went to the pickup and started bandaging
24 him up, getting vitals. And Utopia started trying to get the dash
25 pushed back enough that we could get him. Only thing I could see

1 of him was from above his bellybutton to his head and both arms.
2 I'm pretty sure his left arm was fractured.

3 Q. The driver?

4 A. The driver, yeah. And he was the only person in that
5 vehicle. At that time, that's when Uvalde Fire showed up, and
6 they started assisting and helped us get that person out of the
7 vehicle. And when we got him out on backboard, he would have been
8 third in line to go out. We had -- they had already -- the lady
9 with oxygen on the opposite side of the bus had been air lifted.
10 The second chopper was down on the ground. But the other two
11 ladies that they had pulled out that were alive actually died on
12 the gurneys. So he moved up, and he was the next one, and that
13 would have been when you came in, Rodney.

14 After that, I went back and started helping get Rose out of
15 the back, and she would have been the next one that was flown out
16 by chopper, which she's the victim in the far right-hand corner of
17 the bus.

18 After that, just helped removed the rest of the bodies.

19 Q. Okay. Now is there anything else -- is there anything
20 regarding the response that you feel that could have been
21 improved?

22 A. I think everybody worked well together, maybe the best I've
23 ever seen. Usually there's a little this is my turf not yours,
24 you know, type of thing, but I didn't hear any of that. And
25 Utopia and Uvalde worked well together extricating people from the

1 bus, and it was top-notch. I feel like everybody got the best
2 that we had.

3 Q. Now do you guys ever get involved in any kind of NIMS
4 training, tabletops, or active drills where you work on MCIs or
5 anything with Uvalde or anybody, anybody else in the county?

6 A. I can't remember working any with any other. Maybe Reagan
7 Wells.

8 MR. KRUGER: Yeah, we work with --

9 BY MR. KAMINSKI:

10 Q. You know like a tabletop drill or something --

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. -- just kind of a practice?

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. Yeah, we've had some with Reagan Wells in the past. Never
16 Utopia or Uvalde that I'm aware of. There were two ambulances on
17 the scene when I got there. One was Utopia EMS, which had
18 Jennifer and John on board it, and then there was Frio Canyon, I
19 believe, was the other one. I don't know when that ambulance left
20 or whatever, but --

21 MR. KRUGER: They had a patient, right?

22 MR. HESTER: Yeah. They had a patient on board, and she just
23 drove up actually on the scene.

24 BY MR. KAMINSKI:

25 Q. Right.

1 A. And she's the one, I'm pretty sure, that put the oxygen on
2 the one lady that was alive on that side of the bus when I first
3 got there.

4 Q. On the passenger side of the bus?

5 A. Passenger side of the bus. That's correct.

6 MR. KRUGER: That would have been the paramedic of Frio
7 Canyon. I was told that by them.

8 MR. HESTER: Yeah.

9 BY MR. KAMINSKI:

10 Q. Okay. Anything else that you feel of interest that we might
11 want to know? Anything with -- any other problems you've had with
12 being dispatched late out?

13 A. Well, the only thing that I would probably disagree so far
14 what I heard is that we should have been second paged out. I
15 think that's bull. I think we ought to be first paged out because
16 we're closer than anybody to most of these scenes because we're
17 right in the middle. It doesn't matter if it's 1050 or 350 or
18 348, 1051; we're still the closest person or people there to those
19 scenes. And it doesn't matter what time the ambulance gets there.
20 It's who can get there and start helping those people.

21 Q. Right.

22 A. And to me Concan ought to be paged first. And it's funny, if
23 you talk to any one of those ambulance, the EMS services, they'll
24 tell you first thing they do is call for Concan as a backup
25 because they like our help.

1 Q. Now how many people in your department? I forgot to ask
2 Chief that.

3 A. Fifteen, 16, something like that.

4 MR. KRUGER: Somewhere around 15.

5 BY MR. KAMINSKI:

6 Q. Okay. And how many responded that day?

7 A. On scene, gosh, man --

8 MR. KRUGER: It's at the bottom of your report.

9 MR. KAMINSKI: Oh, okay. Okay. Oh, yeah, I see, I see
10 there's some names there.

11 MR. HESTER: Says nine.

12 MR. KRUGER: Well, you got 101, 102, 103, 105, 108, 116, and
13 then there was two more. I just didn't know what their numbers
14 were.

15 MR. HESTER: Yeah.

16 MR. KRUGER: Your two helpers that recently joined.

17 MR. HESTER: Right, right.

18 MR. KRUGER: So we had eight from Concan.

19 MR. HESTER: Okay.

20 MR. KAMINSKI: Okay.

21 MR. KRUGER: Had a chief, two assistant chiefs, myself, two
22 firefighters, and then the newest guys that were on track and
23 control assisting.

24 MR. KAMINSKI: Okay. And that is Captain Jeff --

25 MR. KRUGER: Kruger.

1 MR. KAMINSKI: -- Kruger that is -- that has been speaking.

2 BY MR. KAMINSKI:

3 Q. Okay. Anything else?

4 A. No. That's it.

5 MR. KAMINSKI: Okay. That concludes the interview here.

6 It's approximately 5 after 5.

7 (Whereupon, at 5:05 p.m., 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: CHURCH BUS AND TRUCK CRASH NEAR
CONCAN, TEXAS ON MARCH 29, 2017
Interview of Tim Hester

ACCIDENT NUMBER: HWY17MH011

PLACE: Concan, Texas

DATE: April 3, 2017

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.

Katherine Motley
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of: *

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CHURCH BUS AND TRUCK CRASH NEAR
CONCAN, TEXAS ON MARCH 29, 2017

* Accident No.: HWY17MH011

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Interview of: JEFF KRUGER
Captain, Concan VFD

Concan, Texas

Monday,
April 3, 2017

APPEARANCES:

RONALD KAMINSKI, Survival Factors Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

I N D E X

ITEM

PAGE

Interview of Jeff Kruger:

By Mr. Kaminski

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I N T E R V I E W

1
2 MR. KAMINSKI: Today's date is April 3rd. My name is Ronald
3 Kaminski with the National Transportation Safety Board. I'm here
4 at Concan, Texas. I'll be talking to Captain Jeff Kruger,
5 K-r-u-g-e-r, one 'g', K-r-u-g-e-r. And he's going to give us a
6 description of what all he did when he got the call.

INTERVIEW OF JEFF KRUGER

7
8 BY MR. KAMINSKI:

9 Q. And go ahead, Captain.

10 A. All right. On or about 12:23, the afternoon of the incident,
11 I received a telephone call from one of the medics on Frio Canyon
12 EMS, who was currently on scene. They had driven up on the
13 location. Her exact words to me were: "I need your help. I have
14 bodies everywhere. I need your help. I am 4 miles south of
15 Garner State Park on U.S. Highway 83." And the phone went dead.

16 Shortly after that, I was picking my phone up to start
17 calling the chief, the assistant chief, and our firefighters in
18 the area because I had not currently received a page-out for this
19 incident. I got a text message from one of the Uvalde County
20 deputy sheriffs, Emmanuel Zamora, Unit 715, sent me a message that
21 said, "Are you in Concan?" I then picked up the phone, called him
22 asking him why, and his response, we have a major accident, head-
23 on collision involving a bus. I then hung the phone up on him.

24 My first call was to Tim Hester, the assistant chief here
25 right now. Told him I've got bodies on the ground. This is

1 coming from -- or from Frio Canyon EMS and one of the deputy
2 sheriffs. I said, I need you en route ASAP, and gave him the
3 location of the incident, 4 miles south of Garner State Park on
4 Highway 83. He said, okay, I'm en route; hung the phone up.

5 Right after he hung up on me, I called the fire chief. Told
6 the fire chief the exact same situation. He said, 10-4 and hung
7 the phone up. Shortly after that I called other firefighters in
8 the area and told them what we had. Before I could get to every
9 one of them, our e-dispatch system went off with a page on our
10 telephones. So I let the air clear so they could go en route, and
11 I could not tie them up or slow them down.

12 I was currently not in the area. I was in another town at my
13 regular job. I could not break away at the time, so I did
14 whatever I could to get all the help rolling as fast as I could.
15 Because at 12:23, apparently, is when Frio Canyon EMS rolled up on
16 the accident. The tone-out went out at 12:38. I had people en
17 route with roughly 12 minutes prior to being dispatched by our
18 dispatch system.

19 Q. So that would have been around 12:30 or 12:26?

20 A. At 12:23 is when I got the phone call from Leakey EMS, Frio
21 Canyon EMS.

22 Q. Right.

23 A. At 12:30 is when I received the text messages and everything
24 else of what was going on from various personnel around the area.
25 Some viable, some not with any kind of emergency response, law

1 enforcement or anything like that.

2 When I got the message from the deputy sheriff that was en
3 route to the scene, I then started getting all forces, you know,
4 going towards that location. And that was Uvalde County sheriff's
5 deputy that contacted me, Unit 715. Name is Emmanuel Zamora.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. As soon as I was able to break free from work, at
8 approximately 5:20 in the afternoon, I made my way up to the scene
9 to relieve anybody that was up at the scene that needed a break
10 that was wore out. They'd been working it for approximately 4½
11 hours at this point.

12 When I got to the scene, all the victims had already been
13 removed, and so I stayed on location to assist law enforcement and
14 other firefighters with the investigation portion, whatever help
15 they needed. We remained on location at the request of Texas
16 Department of Public Safety, Sergeant Maldonado, in the event when
17 they got ready to separate the vehicles anything might have
18 happened. There was a lot of fuel. There was all kinds of fluids
19 on the ground. There were still chunks of flesh that were left
20 under vehicles and things like that. So we were required to do a
21 wash-down once the Department of Public Safety concluded their
22 investigation of the accident scene and got all the data that they
23 needed.

24 We were there for, what, approximately 10:30, 10:45 at night,
25 we were starting to get to the conclusion of the investigation,

1 they started talking to us, getting us ready. Soon as we got both
2 wreckers that were going to recover the vehicles were there, we
3 came up with a game plan with the in-charge sergeant from the
4 Department of Public Safety. Got the wreckers in position. We
5 assisted with getting the vehicles separated without incident.
6 Got them loaded up. Then we went to do a low pressure wash-down
7 of all the fluids and anything else left on the roadway that could
8 potentially be a hazard to the public once we did open the roadway
9 up.

10 Once we concluded that, we assisted with getting all of our
11 equipment and everything restored back on vehicles and at the
12 proper places. I did a walk-around of the scene to make sure we
13 didn't miss any hazards. Checked back in with the Department of
14 Public Safety, and they said go ahead; we're going to go ahead and
15 open the highway up.

16 At that point, we waited until we got all personnel back in
17 their vehicles and everybody moved out of the scene before we had
18 Texas Department of Transportation, who was also assisting with
19 road closure, to open the highway back up. Once the scene was
20 completely cleared, we slowly opened both sides back up one at a
21 time to prevent any kind of accidents from happening with the rush
22 of traffic. So we opened northbound at first, then southbound.
23 And once we did that, we returned to service and went back to the
24 fire station to start putting our gear back in service.

25 Q. Okay. Is there anything you can tell me regarding the

1 dispatch or other previous problems you've had with dispatch from
2 Uvalde?

3 A. I mean as the assistant chief and the chief said, I'm in
4 agreeance with the assistant chief. Concan Fire Department is
5 considered to be the first responders. We are the fastest. We
6 are the closest to any scene on the north end of Uvalde County.
7 And we've had problems in the past. We were notified -- we were
8 actually paged out on this incident roughly, what, 18 minutes --

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: 15.

10 MR. KRUGER: 15.

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: 14.

12 MR. KRUGER: Fourteen, 15 minutes after the EMS was paged
13 out. You know, we're called first responders for a reason; we
14 respond first. We could have had vehicles started to get
15 extricated on, and then when the EMS rolled up, it could have made
16 things a lot easier. But we didn't know about it. Dispatch is an
17 issue. They -- I believe they need to come to terms with who's
18 the closest and who's going to be the most effective for the
19 victims and the patients at every given 911 call, and I think
20 that's an issue that can be addressed.

21 Other than that, from the time got on scene to the time and
22 to the conclusion, I believe everybody worked phenomenally
23 together.

24 BY MR. KAMINSKI:

25 Q. That's good to hear.

1 A. Law enforcement, firefighters from multiple agencies, I
2 believe everybody worked hand-in-hand, and there couldn't have
3 been a better way to do it. If we'd have known a little bit
4 sooner, that would have been a lot better.

5 Q. Sure. The golden hour they say, you know.

6 A. Well, in a mass casualty event, every second counts.

7 Q. Right.

8 A. And I believe that -- I can't say yes or no as to whether or
9 not more would have survived, but we are the closest, and like the
10 assistant chief said, we need to be -- we need to know about it
11 immediately, not 15 minutes after the incident occurred.

12 Q. Right. Now one thing I hadn't asked is what other, what
13 other agencies responded? I know you gave me this report. You've
14 got Reagan Wells, Utopia Fire, Utopia EMS, Frio Canyon, Leahey,
15 Uvalde Fire/EMS, and Texon. Okay.

16 As regarding law enforcement, do you recall what county
17 sheriffs, police departments came out?

18 A. We had Uvalde County Sheriff's Office, multiple deputy
19 sheriffs on the location. We had an astronomical amount of Texas
20 Department of Public Safety state troopers on location. Real
21 County Sheriff's Office, they had a deputy on location.

22 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Park rangers.

23 MR. KRUGER: Park rangers from the --

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Texas Parks and Wildlife.

25 MR. KRUGER: From, yeah, Texas Parks and Wildlife. Garner

1 State Park Police, they were there.

2 BY MR. KAMINSKI:

3 Q. Texas what is it? The Texas --

4 A. They are --

5 Q. -- Department of Wildlife?

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Parks and Wildlife.

7 MR. KRUGER: Parks and Wildlife. They have their own police
8 department. They are state police. Also had Texas game wardens
9 that were on location.

10 BY MR. KAMINSKI:

11 Q. Did anybody -- the Uvalde PD wouldn't have come up here,
12 right?

13 A. No, sir.

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I think I even seen one work crew unit
15 there.

16 BY MR. KAMINSKI:

17 Q. But they did send the --

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. -- the sheriff, the county sheriff or the county --

20 A. The sheriff's office, yes.

21 Q. Sheriff's office deputies --

22 A. We had multiple deputies.

23 Q. Okay. From Uvalde?

24 A. I had two -- 1,2 -- when I got there, there was 1,2,3 -- four
25 patrol deputies and two sergeant investigators from Uvalde. Now

1 the State of Texas and the state troopers took over all the
2 investigation. They were merely there to assist with media,
3 traffic control, trying to -- scene securement so they could --
4 the troopers could do their job and not be intervened by personnel
5 that need not be on the scene.

6 MR. KAMINSKI: Okay. Okay, that concludes our interview
7 here. It's approximately 20 after 5.

8 (Whereupon, at 5:20 p.m., 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: CHURCH BUS AND TRUCK CRASH NEAR
CONCAN, TEXAS ON MARCH 29, 2017
Interview of Jeff Kruger

ACCIDENT NUMBER: HWY17MH011

PLACE: Concan, Texas

DATE: April 3, 2017

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.

Katherine Motley
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of: *

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CHURCH BUS AND TRUCK CRASH NEAR
CONCAN, TEXAS ON MARCH 29, 2017

* Accident No.: HWY17MH011

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Interview of: LANCE BUEGELER
Firefighter/EMT, Concan VFD

Concan, Texas

Monday,
April 3, 2017

APPEARANCES:

RONALD KAMINSKI, Survival Factors Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

Also Present:

JEFF KRUGER, Captain
RODNEY JEFFERIES, Chief
TIM HESTER, Assistant Chief
Concan Volunteer Fire Department

I N D E X

ITEM

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Interview of Lance Buegeler:

By Mr. Kaminski

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I N T E R V I E W

1
2 MR. KAMINSKI: Today's date is April 3rd. My name is Ronald
3 Kaminski with the National Transportation Safety Board. I'm here
4 in Concan, Texas. I'll be talking to Firefighter/EMT Lance
5 Buegeler, B-u-e-g-e-l-e-r. He's with the Concan Fire Department,
6 and he's going to give us a description of what all he saw and did
7 when he arrived on scene.

INTERVIEW OF LANCE BUEGELER

8
9 BY MR. KAMINSKI:

10 Q. Go ahead, Lance.

11 A. Yeah. Lance Buegeler, Firefighter/EMT, Concan Fire. I, too,
12 was out of town in Uvalde, Texas, that day when I received the
13 call via cell phone call from Captain Kruger. I was down there
14 for my full-time job doing supply run. When I got the call from
15 him, I then responded from Uvalde in my POV -- that was March 29th
16 at approximately 1:10 local time -- to a known mass casualty
17 incident involving a short passenger bus and large pickup truck.
18 I arrived approximately 1335 local time, to find numerous other
19 rescue apparatus, law enforcement and helos about 2 miles south of
20 Farm-to-Market 1050, which is Garner Park Road, and on Highway 83,
21 in a large bend in the road.

22 Upon exiting my vehicle parked on the west side of the road,
23 I approached the scene to find a smaller possible 14-passenger van
24 in the southbound lane had been involved in a head-on collision
25 with an early 2000 model white Dodge four-dour Dually pickup

1 truck, and had its rear passenger side now resting on top of the
2 west side guardrail with its entire front driver side corner
3 smashed inwards to about the first rear passenger row.

4 The Dodge truck was in similar shape, but facing west, and
5 resting half over the center dividing solid yellow lines. Its
6 front driver's side was almost smashed in to the point the dash
7 was in the driver's seat, and the front axel was nearly parallel
8 with the length of the truck versus its original perpendicular
9 orientation, with front driver tire up under the cab.

10 The wheels of downhill side were already chocked. The driver
11 of the truck was already extricated by crews on scene, as well as
12 at least two patients seated near the rear of the passenger van.

13 Prior to my arrival, I was unable to make radio contact or
14 cellular phone contact with Concan units already on scene. I
15 later learned this was due to there being a dead air spot at the
16 location of the accident which was preventing the radio
17 transmissions as well as blocking reception to cell towers in the
18 area.

19 After my assessment of the scene, I made contact with my fire
20 chief on Concan Fire Rescue, Rodney Jefferies. At this point I
21 donned body substance isolation and then began to assist crews
22 with extricating the remaining victims from the van. I did so by
23 assisting with the loading of the victims on the backboards and
24 carrying them to a designated location so as to be able to later
25 match personal belongs with their -- that were recovered to where

1 the victim was actually sitting, via the tagging system that was
2 being used by the recovery crew in the van.

3 Upon successful recovery of all the victims on scene, and
4 assisting with mortuary personnel, I stood by on scene while
5 waiting for further investigative measures to be carried out by
6 specialists who were called in but had not yet arrived.

7 Later that same evening, upon the investigators' completion,
8 I observed the wrecker crews separate and load the two vehicles
9 involved in the accident. Now, as driver of Concan's Rescue 2
10 Unit, I then assisted with the cleanup of debris in the road. And
11 once we cleared the scene, at approximately zero hundred local, I
12 returned to my station and my unit for resupply at our station on
13 County Road 348.

14 Q. Okay. Anything, any experience you had with dispatch or
15 getting kind of prompt calls to --

16 A. Sure.

17 Q. -- respond to the scene?

18 A. Definitely. Just like everybody else has been saying with
19 the dispatch, it would be great to know that dispatch has like a
20 -- knows how to prioritize calls as far as locations,
21 jurisdictions and stuff. But also to piggyback on that, maybe
22 even being familiar with each agency's capabilities, like what to
23 dispatch from that: I know that guy's got a brush truck; I know
24 that guy's got a ambulance. Like what to dispatch possibly. Or
25 just be as descriptive as they can of the situation so that we

1 know what to bring. As in, for an example, if there's a heart
2 attack going on and it's dispatched at an intersection of a major
3 highway, do I know that that was from a vehicle wreck or do I know
4 that that's going to be an address to a home that's located near
5 that intersection. Because sometimes I can't get them back on the
6 radio due to dead air spots in the locations here as well, so --

7 Q. Right. I did hear that there was a problem out at the scene
8 with some --

9 A. Definitely. Definitely.

10 Q. -- dead air out there.

11 A. So that's another thing maybe too to check into if that's a
12 possibility. I'm new to the area so I don't know what's been
13 done, what's in the works or anything like that, but --

14 Q. Right.

15 A. -- communication is key and we didn't have any out there. I
16 mean, literally right where the accident was, was like the only
17 spot for that area over there that you couldn't get anything out
18 on a cell phone or on the radio. So we're kind of having to
19 piggyback with other channels, you know, depending what kind of
20 radio you're using --

21 Q. Right.

22 A. -- you'd have to piggyback with other channels that were able
23 to get out. So just one of those things.

24 MR. KAMINSKI: Okay. Now I've got all four people here and
25 that's pretty much it. I appreciate your statement, Lance.

1 Now we're going to be talking -- I'm going to ask couple of
2 questions now to all four gentlemen: Lance Buegeler, Captain Jeff
3 Kruger, Fire Chief Rodney Jefferies, and Assistant Chief Tim
4 Hester. And I was going to ask, now were you guys involved in any
5 of the extrication or the cutting up or -- of the vehicle or using
6 the jaws or anything like that? And if you -- when you -- if you
7 did something, say your name and tell me what you guys -- what
8 involvement you had.

9 MR. BUEGELER: Lance Buegeler. I just kind of helped move
10 hoses around and stuff a couple times for the guys who were
11 actually working the --

12 MR. KAMINSKI: The hydraulic --

13 MR. BUEGELER: -- tools themselves. Exactly. Other than
14 that, I pretty much was outside of the vehicles at all time.

15 MR. KAMINSKI: Okay.

16 MR. BUEGELER: I was in my civilian clothes, so I didn't have
17 appropriate attire to be in there doing that.

18 MR. KAMINSKI: Right.

19 MR. BUEGELER: So I just kind of assisted from the outside.

20 MR. KAMINSKI: Okay. Is there anybody you guys feel that
21 would be helpful for me to talk to regarding any of the
22 extrication or cutting of the vehicle to remove people? Who did
23 that? Who did a lot of that work; do you know?

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Most of that was done by Utopia Fire
25 and Uvalde Fire.

1 MR. KAMINSKI: Okay. So they would be the ones I'd want to
2 talk to?

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'd say 90 percent of it was done by
4 them.

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'd say talk to Jim with Utopia.

6 MR. KAMINSKI: Okay. Okay, that concludes our interviews
7 here. It's approximately 20 minutes to 6.

8 (Whereupon, at 5:40 p.m., 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: CHURCH BUS AND TRUCK CRASH NEAR
CONCAN, TEXAS ON MARCH 29, 2017
Interview of Lance Buegeler

ACCIDENT NUMBER: HWY17MH011

PLACE: Concan, Texas

DATE: April 3, 2017

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complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.

Katherine Motley
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of: *

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CHURCH BUS AND TRUCK CRASH NEAR
CONCAN, TEXAS ON MARCH 29, 2017

* Accident No.: HWY17MH011

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Interview of: KENNETH G. WHITE, Fire Chief
Reagan Wells Volunteer Fire Department

APPEARANCES:

RONALD KAMINSKI, Senior Survival Factors Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

I N D E X

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Interview of Kenneth G. White:

By Mr. Kaminski

5

I N T E R V I E W

1

MR. KAMINSKI: Chief White?

2

3

MR. WHITE: Yes, sir.

4

MR. KAMINSKI: Hey, this is Ron Kaminski calling you back.

5

MR. WHITE: You bet.

6

MR. KAMINSKI: Hey, you have a couple of minutes? Good time

7

to talk to you?

8

MR. WHITE: Sure, sure.

9

MR. KAMINSKI: Okay. Do you mind if I tape this?

10

MR. WHITE: No.

11

MR. KAMINSKI: Okay, great. So just what I want to get from

12

you basically is just a description of how you heard about the

13

call and --

14

MR. WHITE: You're not on speaker phone, are you?

15

MR. KAMINSKI: No, sir. No.

16

MR. WHITE: Okay. I'm having a little difficulty hearing

17

you.

18

MR. KAMINSKI: Well, I've got one of these new they call

19

LifeProof cases for my phone, and so I've been hearing that it

20

sounds kind of muddled or kind of -- so I apologize.

21

MR. WHITE: May be my hearing.

22

MR. KAMINSKI: Okay. No. It's not your hearing. It's my

23

phone. Sorry about that.

1 So, yeah, I just want to get a brief statement from you
2 regarding how you heard about the crash and then your response,
3 what you saw, what you did, and maybe any issues you feel that
4 things -- with the response that could be improved, if you saw any
5 of that.

6 INTERVIEW OF KENNETH G. WHITE

7 BY MR. KAMINSKI:

8 Q. So why don't we start off here. Give me your name and your
9 title and where you -- where you're chief at.

10 A. Kenneth White, and I'm the fire chief of the Reagan Wells
11 Volunteer Fire Department.

12 Q. Okay, Kenneth, and it's double 'N' or one 'N'?

13 A. K-E-N-N-E-T-H.

14 Q. Right.

15 A. White, W-H-I-T-E.

16 Q. Okay. And you're --

17 A. And I have a middle initial G, is what I list in there
18 normally.

19 Q. Okay. And why don't you just start with when you first heard
20 about it, and start from there.

21 A. We received the page at 12:37.

22 Q. Hello? Hello?

23 A. Okay. And then at that point whenever the page went off, I
24 contacted our other first responders, and it was Scott Powell, the
25 assistant chief, and he came to my house, which he lives 9 or 10

1 miles down the road from my house. So we went in our rescue
2 truck, and we called in the Uvalde dispatch, let them know that we
3 were en route, that we were responding to the wreck.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. When we pulled up on scene, Utopia EMS and Utopia Fire were
6 there on scene. There was another ambulance there I didn't
7 recognize at the time, but I later found out that it was Leakey
8 EMS, and there were some people that had offered to come, and one
9 of them happened to be a nurse that was en route. And so we
10 checked with the Utopia EMS and Utopia Fire to see what they
11 needed assistance, and began working on the patients that were
12 alive. They had already done a inventory and determined how many
13 were deceased and which ones that needed triage, which ones needed
14 to be taken care of.

15 Q. And who was this that was telling you this?

16 A. Utopia EMS.

17 Q. Okay. Anyone specific there at Utopia? Was it Garofano?

18 A. Well, I don't -- what I understood, was told that we need --
19 we had a couple that were still, that were breathing in the back,
20 and so they were working on those, and we had started assisting
21 them, and the young man in the pickup was entrapped in the
22 vehicle. So we started getting those out of there. We could kind
23 of divide it up and start work -- we get the -- we got one lady
24 out of the back of the bus, and by the time they got her on the
25 stretcher and was taking her over to the helicopter, the medic at

1 the helicopter said that she was not breathing. And they did a --
2 I believe they did an EKG and said that she was not breathing, so
3 -- anyway, so we just left her there, put her on the -- you know,
4 had her on a stretcher. Then we took her off of a backboard and
5 put her in a cart and covered her up.

6 Q. Right.

7 A. And then we went to start -- they said they would take care
8 of that, the one -- the lady that was survived, that was a --
9 survived. They were working on her, and me and Utopia Fire went
10 and started their -- Concan was in the truck with the young man,
11 holding him and checking him out. And then we quickly went over
12 there and started with extrication tools to get him out. We
13 talked to him, and then worked on getting him extricated.

14 Q. Do you know who the person was that was in the truck with --
15 from Concan that was talking to the --

16 A. Yeah. Tim Hester.

17 Q. Oh, okay. Yeah. I talked to him.

18 A. I think you've already spoken with him.

19 Q. Yes. I've spoken with him, but he didn't mention that.

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. Yeah. Because he met -- because he did ask me did I have a
23 C-collar in my truck in my EMS bag, and so I went over and got him
24 a C-collar and some gauze and some bandages. But he was in the
25 truck holding the young man up, and so he could put a C-collar on

1 him before we could get him out.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. And then Jim Cantrell and I -- Jim is with the Utopia Fire.

4 Q. Right. I talked to him, yeah.

5 A. And so we started with extrication tools to remove the doors
6 and stuff to get that young man out.

7 Q. Okay. Although none of the doors were removed, you just
8 popped them open, right?

9 A. Yeah. We cut -- we had to cut those doors off. We cut that
10 door -- the driver door, it was smashed in, and so we cut,
11 actually cut it off, and we threw it back out over the guardrail.

12 Q. Right. Okay.

13 A. And then we used jaws to spread that seat back away from that
14 dash because his legs were trapped up underneath the steering
15 column, the dash, and the brake.

16 Q. Right. So how many guys from your department responded?

17 A. There were only two of us.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. Scott Powell and I. He's the assistant chief, and he rode
20 with me. And all he did was -- we had him -- he's a large guy.
21 We had him on the outside. After we got the young man out, then
22 we started -- they had identified each one of the bodies. Paul
23 Stephens with Utopia -- I mean, with Uvalde Fire.

24 Q. Yes. Yeah, I talked to Paul.

25 A. He arrived on scene. And Paul works at the funeral home.

1 Q. Right.

2 A. And so he went through and he identified the location of each
3 one of the victims, where they were at in the bus.

4 Q. That really saved us a lot of work, let me tell you.

5 A. Oh, yeah, big time. Well, and he has -- he had had
6 experience with (indiscernible) he could do that on things.

7 And so after we had got the young man out, Uvalde Fire showed
8 up with their extrication tools. And so since I was the -- it was
9 my fire area, I asked the Utopia -- they wanted to know what they
10 should do, and I said we need some of you to work on this side of
11 the bus, and Utopia is here -- they were here first, so I'll work
12 with them, and we will work on this side of the bus. And so we
13 started extricating the bodies out of the bus.

14 Q. Right. Well, it sounds like -- who -- that's what I've been
15 trying to ask is who was the incident commander, and nobody says
16 there really was a -- there really wasn't an incident commander
17 per se. It was just kind of a, you know, everybody's pitching in
18 to do something, a lot of communication going on.

19 A. Everybody worked together on -- it's my fire area. And
20 Utopia was there first because they got the call because it's
21 Utopia EMS. When Utopia EMS got the call, and they heard that
22 there were people trapped, they said to send -- they asked for
23 Utopia Fire to come because they knew they had rescue tools.
24 They're right beside their -- their departments are right beside
25 each other.

1 Q. Yes.

2 A. So they knew that they had the personnel and the equipment.
3 We do not have any extrication tools in our department. And so I
4 was glad to see them on scene whenever they -- when we pulled up
5 there, that they were already on scene so that -- and when they
6 heard the number of victims there were, that's when they went
7 ahead and paged out Uvalde Fire.

8 Q. Yeah. That's what I'm trying to listen to a lot of the
9 dispatch and that, and to me it seems like when you hear it's a
10 church bus or a van, that -- and there's lots of people and it's a
11 head-on, you would send out everybody immediately, and that --

12 A. Right.

13 Q. -- doesn't seem to be the case.

14 A. Yeah. And so that's what -- you know, and I didn't know how
15 many. You know, when I got that call, and it said that it was a
16 bus, I didn't know if it was a -- I didn't know it was a church
17 bus. A lot of our schools in our area have small -- they're very
18 small schools.

19 Q. Sure.

20 A. So they have little buses that carry 18, 20 people or maybe a
21 little van sort of thing.

22 Q. Right.

23 A. And so my first thought when that -- that went through my
24 head, I was thinking it was one of our local schools. But then
25 whenever I pulled up there and saw that it was the church bus, I

1 figured it had to be from that Alto -- that they had been at that
2 senior retreat, because I was familiar with the activities that
3 were going on there.

4 Q. Okay. So regarding the dispatch and the response, any issues
5 you saw with that or is it you feel it was a pretty good response
6 all around?

7 A. Well, you know, you -- Ron, you've got to understand how far
8 out we are from anybody or everybody.

9 Q. I understand.

10 A. You know, we, we --

11 Q. No, you know, a lot of these crashes we do they're very
12 rural. So, yeah, we deal with this quite a bit.

13 A. And so the thing of it is, you know, when we're 25 or 30
14 miles away in a rural area, we don't have a lot of the resources a
15 lot of the cities and stuff do, but we -- and that was the one
16 that I -- I don't know if you saw my letter to the editor in the
17 newspaper, but everybody worked together very well on the thing.
18 And so basically what I ended up doing, Uvalde wanted to know if
19 they should leave. I said, no, all these bodies have to be
20 extricated, so we need to -- everybody needs to work together.
21 And so I asked Utopia to work on one side of the bus to start
22 retrieving bodies and Uvalde work on the other side.

23 Q. Right. It sounds like you were kind of in control once you
24 got there being it's your area?

25 A. Yeah, but that's -- it's my area. That was it. So I assumed

1 that responsibility on the thing.

2 Q. Sure.

3 A. And so and everybody worked together jointly on the thing.

4 Q. Yeah, that's what I've been hearing.

5 A. We shared --

6 Q. Yes.

7 A. We shared tools back and forth between departments. And if
8 somebody needed something, that's what we ended up doing.

9 Q. Right.

10 A. But Concan and -- Concan, Utopia and Uvalde were
11 instrumental.

12 Q. Right. Now the --

13 A. Concan, which Concan was the closest and, see, that was where
14 Tim Hester came in. He's the assistant chief up there.

15 Q. Right. And they have extrication tools, correct?

16 A. They have extrication tools, but we did not use -- and I
17 don't think that they had them in that (indiscernible) because I
18 think what -- Tim went in his personal vehicle, I'm pretty sure.
19 Because their truck came on scene later on. But since Utopia
20 already had theirs out and was working on them, we went ahead and
21 did that.

22 Q. Just used their tools?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Yeah. Okay.

25 A. They had several. They had several sets on the thing.

1 Q. Okay. And okay. So I guess anything else you want to tell
2 me that would be of interest or anything I should know regarding
3 anything with any communication anybody had with --

4 A. No. I mean, and the other thing, Ron, that was different
5 about that location, and some people have a hard time
6 understanding that, there is not cell phone service everywhere.

7 Q. Oh, I know.

8 A. A lot of people think cell phone service. But the DPS
9 troopers and us, none of us -- matter of fact, one of the
10 individuals that pulled up on scene that I know well, and as soon
11 as I saw his vehicle, I thought his pickup and trailer were
12 involved in the accident, and I thought that was him. And he
13 said, Kenneth, he said, I tried to call, but -- he said, but I had
14 no cell phone service, so I had to run down the road so I could
15 get cell phone service to call 911.

16 Q. Yeah. Well, I know. They were saying you have to have -- I
17 have Verizon, and there was nothing up there. When I went up to
18 talk to everybody in Utopia, I had nothing up there. And
19 everybody said the only thing that works up here is AT&T.

20 A. Yeah. Well, and even not even there. The DPS troopers, we
21 would have to walk down from the accident scene 100 yards or more
22 so we could even get cell phone service even with AT&T.

23 Q. Yeah. I don't think there's any way that -- unless you put a
24 cell tower right there, I don't know how that problem can be
25 corrected.

1 A. Exactly. And that's some of the same issue we have with
2 radio towers and digital radios, which we have explained that deal
3 as well too. When you're in those hilly areas, you don't always
4 have the service that everybody thinks you do when you're in the
5 city. So --

6 MR. KAMINSKI: Right, right. Okay. Well, Chief, I
7 appreciate you taking the time --

8 MR. WHITE: Sure.

9 MR. KAMINSKI: -- to talk with me. I hope you enjoyed your
10 day yesterday in San Antonio. I hope you --

11 MR. WHITE: Well, I was in a board meeting.

12 MR. KAMINSKI: Oh, okay.

13 MR. WHITE: So anyway, so --

14 MR. KAMINSKI: That's a great town, great city.

15 MR. WHITE: Yep. You bet, you bet.

16 MR. KAMINSKI: So --

17 MR. WHITE: If you need something, holler at me.

18 MR. KAMINSKI: Okay, Chief, and thank you very much for your
19 help, sir.

20 MR. WHITE: You bet. Bye-bye.

21 MR. KAMINSKI: Bye-bye.

22 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)
23
24
25

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NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

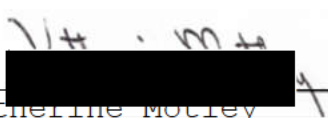
IN THE MATTER OF: CHURCH BUS AND TRUCK CRASH NEAR
CONCAN, TEXAS ON MARCH 29, 2017
Interview of Kenneth G. White

ACCIDENT NUMBER: HWY17MH011

PLACE: Via Telephone

DATE: April 2017

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.


Katherine Motley
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

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CHURCH BUS AND TRUCK CRASH NEAR
CONCAN, TEXAS ON MARCH 29, 2017

* Accident No.: HWY17MH011

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Interview of: ROBERT TREVINO
DPS Trooper

Concan, Texas

Wednesday,
April 5, 2017

APPEARANCES:

RONALD KAMINSKI, Survival Factors Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

I N D E X

ITEM

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Interview of Robert Trevino:

By Mr. Kaminski

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I N T E R V I E W

1
2 MR. KAMINSKI: Today's date is April 5th. My name is Ronald
3 Kaminski with the National Transportation Safety Board. I'm going
4 to be talking to DPS Trooper Robert Trevino, T-r-e-v-i-n-o, and
5 he's going to give us a description of when he got the call, and
6 his response and what all he saw when he arrived on scene.

INTERVIEW OF ROBERT TREVINO

7
8 BY MR. KAMINSKI:

9 Q. Go ahead, Trooper.

10 A. Okay. On that day, we were on US 90 in the City of Uvalde.
11 We were -- we got -- we heard the call come out saying -- they
12 were calling another trooper who was busy at the hospital. And I
13 got on the radio and said, hey, we're on; what do you have? And
14 they told us there was a crash on US 83 north of Concan, about 4
15 miles. They didn't give us no -- whether there was any injuries
16 or fatalities.

17 So we started driving up this way. We -- I asked dispatch if
18 there was any injuries. They said there was two fatalities, I
19 believe. And that's when we just drove up here. And I told my
20 partner, hey, if they're already deceased, we're not going to go
21 150 miles an hour trying to get up here and wind up being in an
22 accident ourselves. So we kept driving up.

23 And then when we got here, one of the deputies told us it was
24 five fatalities. Parked my car right about where it's -- right
25 there.

1 Q. South of the accident scene?

2 A. Yes. Just south of the accident scene. Couple of the
3 deputies came and started talking to us, letting us know quick
4 synopsis about the people who had videotaped it. There was people
5 parked on -- north of the accident scene who almost drove into the
6 accident scene.

7 Q. Right.

8 A. There was -- the driver to the pickup truck was still pinned
9 in the truck and they were trying to get him out. It was just a
10 mess. You could see some of the people inside the bus. Some of
11 them were already being helped by the EMS personnel and of them,
12 they were beyond help.

13 Q. Okay. When you say the deputies, who were they -- where were
14 they from?

15 A. One was from Uvalde, Deputy Zamora; and the other deputy was
16 from Real County, Deputy Dolith (ph.), I think is his name.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. Or Dothick (ph.).

19 Q. And so when you got out here, there was EMS out here already?

20 A. Yes. There was actually a ambulance that was going into
21 Uvalde with a patient already, and they stopped to help.

22 Q. Oh, they're from Leakey?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Yeah.

25 A. I believe that's where they were from.

1 Q. Okay. And then you just proceeded to call in. You probably
2 called your reconstruction team and your --

3 A. Well, we called our sergeant, let her know what we had, and
4 we started working on what we could for all the information and
5 things we could on scene.

6 Q. Right.

7 A. There was a lot of stuff we just -- we couldn't do because of
8 the people that were being helped.

9 Q. Sure. Sure. And so the two deputies, the EMS -- so it was
10 just the two deputies and the one EMS that was out here, and they
11 were already trying to work?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. Had Utopia arrived yet or not yet?

14 A. I don't remember when what agencies got here.

15 Q. Okay. Fair enough.

16 MR. KAMINSKI: That concludes our interview here with Trooper
17 Trevino. And if you don't mind, if there's any follow-up
18 questions, I've got a contact number for you here --

19 MR. TREVINO: Sure.

20 MR. KAMINSKI: -- and I'll give you a call back, but --

21 MR. TREVINO: I could tell you I talked to the driver.

22 BY MR. KAMINSKI:

23 Q. Oh, what did -- okay.

24 A. The driver to the pickup truck. And he told me that -- I
25 asked him if -- where he was coming from, and he -- where he lived

1 and everything, and he told me he lived in Leakey. He told me he
2 was coming from the Walgreens in Uvalde. He was picking up his
3 medication.

4 While the firemen were working on him in the truck, I had
5 seen pills all over the truck on the inside of the truck,
6 different pills. The one that was probably the most of was a
7 little green pill.

8 He said he had just picked up his medication. I asked him if
9 he took any of the medication, and he said, yes, he had taken two.
10 We asked him how long ago. He said about an hour ago. So an
11 hour before the crash. I asked him if it made him drowsy, and he
12 said, yes. I asked him what he took it for. He said for PTSD. I
13 also asked him, well, were you in the military? And he said, no.
14 And they were trying to get an ambulance after that, so --

15 Q. Okay. And talk to anybody else in the -- you didn't talk
16 -- well, there was nobody really viable on the bus.

17 A. Yeah. I didn't talk to nobody on the bus. I talked to the
18 lady who is still in the hospital right now.

19 Q. Ms. Rose?

20 A. Yeah, right, Ms. Rose. And I just asked her where they were
21 coming from and where they were going. She was -- you could see
22 that she was in a lot of pain.

23 Q. Yeah, yeah.

24 A. So I tried not to go too much into depth with her on the
25 questions.

1 MR. KAMINSKI: Okay. Well, thanks for telling me about the
2 driver part, portion.

3 But, okay, that concludes the interview here. It's
4 approximately 11:25.

5 (Whereupon, at 11:25 a.m., the interview was concluded.)

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NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: CHURCH BUS AND TRUCK CRASH NEAR
CONCAN, TEXAS ON MARCH 29, 2017
Interview of Robert Trevino

ACCIDENT NUMBER: HWY17MH011

PLACE: Concan, Texas

DATE: April 5, 2017

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complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
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Katherine Motley
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of: *

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CHURCH BUS AND TRUCK CRASH NEAR
CONCAN, TEXAS ON MARCH 29, 2017

* Accident No.: HWY17MH011

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Interview of: GENE AYALA
Chief, Uvalde Fire Department

Uvalde, Texas

Friday,
March 31, 2017

APPEARANCES:

RONALD KAMINSKI, Survival Factors Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

I N D E X

ITEM

PAGE

Interview of Gene Ayala:

By Mr. Kaminski

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I N T E R V I E W

1
2 MR. KAMINSKI: Today's date is March 31st, 1917 -- excuse me
3 -- 2017. I'm Ronald Kaminski with the NTSB, and I'm here with
4 Chief Gene Ayala, the Fire Chief for the Uvalde, Texas Fire
5 Department. And he's going to give us a description of what all
6 he did and what all he saw when he got the call and he went to the
7 scene of the MCI on 83.

INTERVIEW OF GENE AYALA

8
9 BY MR. KAMINSKI:

10 Q. Go ahead, Chief.

11 A. Okay. Well, actually we were -- I was having lunch with a
12 sergeant from DPS when we got a text message that there was a
13 vehicle accident on 83 North by Garner Park, possibly two or three
14 fatalities. He looked at me, and I said, well, it's out of my
15 area, you know, if they need help, they'll call us.

16 So as we're sitting there, he got the phone call, so we made
17 our way out that way. And as we were going, the fire department
18 did get paged out to -- for assistance to Utopia Fire Department.
19 At that time I advised them, let them know that I was already en
20 route with him. Called one of my assistant chiefs, let him know I
21 was already on my way.

22 We rolled our primary pumper, which, you know, we do have a
23 paid guy at the station, so the minute the page goes off the truck
24 leaves with under 3 minutes. In about 6 minutes later, we rolled
25 our second truck. We had another set of Hurst tools just to make

1 sure in case we needed something. I mean, it was that far out,
2 it's better to have more than not enough.

3 Upon arrival, I get there and I see a white Dodge Dually with
4 some firefighters -- at the time, I didn't know who they were,
5 what department -- trying to extricate the driver of the Dodge
6 pickup, and we had some people looking into the church van or bus.

7 As I got off the car, went up to them, and they were having
8 some difficulty trying to take the door off. Tried to work with
9 them for a little bit, but they kind of looked like they knew what
10 they were doing, so we let that alone.

11 Went and observed the van. We had some people that were
12 making noise so I knew we still had some people alive in the bus.
13 They had somebody already attended to one of the patients that
14 they had already removed, making their way to the ambulance. At
15 the time I got there, there was already one, if not two, birds --
16 I don't recall exactly -- on the ground.

17 Q. When you got there --

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. -- there was already one on the ground?

20 A. One, if not two. I can't -- I remember seeing one. And they
21 were trying to work on one patient. At that time Richard Williams
22 pulled up, asked me what I needed. I said, look, right now let's
23 just figure this out. Let's see who do we have alive, who's dead.
24 You know, let's start triaging who do we need to work with.

25 He came back said, look, I'm going to help the guys at the

1 door. He said, I really can't get into the bus because of the way
2 it was without starting extricating the bus. So we're waiting on
3 our tools to get here.

4 Q. So you're the only department with tools, the Utopia and --

5 A. No. Utopia does have tools.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. Concan, they did have tools, and don't quote me on this, but
8 what I heard was they showed up with the wrong truck so they sent
9 a second truck, and the tools showed up a little bit later.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. So they got there. You know, our department does have tools.
12 We actually have a set of tools in every engine, and one spare
13 set. So we have five sets of tools in our department.

14 So as they were extricating the guy in the Dodge pickup, I
15 was just basically observing the scene, walking around trying to
16 see, okay, what's going to be the first thing we're going to do.
17 I was trying to see if we had any more people alive in the bus to
18 start working on.

19 At that time I realized that we had the lady in the back
20 corner. So I think I put Chip King on there real quick because he
21 used to be a medic. So at least he had an idea what to look for.
22 And we went and grabbed some O2 from the unit, and started giving
23 her O2, which I believe she's still the one that's alive. As the
24 people from AirLIFE or Air Evac, I can't remember which one, were
25 working on the other individual.

1 About that time my department finally showed up. We started
2 cutting at the bus to try to figure out how we're going to get
3 these people out on stretchers. Made way on the back door, and
4 then we started opening the driver's side middle window. We
5 started cutting it down because we figured we were going to need a
6 place to start sliding the backboards out easier. By that time I
7 probably had about four or five volunteers. I had Mario Rangel
8 (ph.), Mark Zamora, Patrick Williams, Richard Williams, and Paul
9 Stevens, who also works for the funeral home. I put them inside
10 the bus to start looking to see who else we might still have that
11 was alive at the time.

12 After they made their sweep around, they pretty much
13 confirmed that they thought everybody was dead, but there were
14 still people on top of one another and they were trying to figure
15 that out, where the seats had collided on top of each other.

16 At that time Justin Schmidt, and I threw him in there because
17 he's one of our paid individuals so he would have more -- you
18 know, he's got a certified degree in firefighting.

19 So at that time, I had looked back and I seen Emmanuel
20 Zamora, one of the deputies. I said, hey, you know, where's
21 Uvalde EMS? Says, I don't think we called them. I said, man, I
22 said, you know, you've only got one ambulance here. We need more
23 medics if these people are still alive. Since we put a cardiac
24 monitor -- we can't confirm whether they're dead or not. I said,
25 and I don't know if the JP's going to ask for strips on all these.

1 So at that time he went and he asked dispatch to make sure
2 they called and sent paramedics only. I don't know exactly how
3 long it took for them to get there. I --

4 Q. How many paramedics were there when you got there?

5 A. I could not confirm how many --

6 Q. Or EMS?

7 A. EMS that I saw, two that came on Utopia's unit, and I saw two
8 bystanders that were out of Leakey that I couldn't tell you their
9 qualifications. I just know they weren't -- they were just there.
10 So at the time, at any given time, I saw four that were there.
11 Didn't see anybody on a cardiac monitor. Didn't see anybody
12 inside trying to run strips, trying to figure out if any of these
13 people were alive or, you know, which ones to start triaging.
14 None of that was going on.

15 Q. What were they doing if they weren't doing that, helping
16 with --

17 A. They were just kind of trying to look at that guy that was
18 still alive in the pickup, and basically just -- I hate to say
19 this, but freaked out. I don't think they see anything like
20 that --

21 Q. That many people.

22 A. That many people. And I don't mean to brag on our
23 department, but we work the majority of the calls because we're
24 the biggest department in the area. We cover the bigger area. So
25 we do work a lot of these fatalities. We go down south to here

1 and assist with the -- we assist all the small towns when it comes
2 to major wrecks like this.

3 So anyways, we were there. There was no triage. Nobody was
4 basically in charge saying, okay, you know, this one right here is
5 a black tag, this is a green tag, whatever. We had no idea yet
6 who was what.

7 Q. And is that what Paul was kind of help doing?

8 A. Paul was in there doing that because he's mortician so he can
9 -- he knows what to look for.

10 Q. Right.

11 A. So that's when I put Paul in there. I said, look, I said, I
12 need to know do we have somebody alive on bottom, somebody else?
13 If so, just get them out of the way. Let's start treating.

14 So at that time we started cutting seats because it was no
15 way we could get to everybody. And I advised the trooper, I said,
16 look -- the sergeant, I said, look, man, we're going to start
17 cutting seatbelts because we got to get to the people that are at
18 the bottom just to make sure.

19 So at that time we started breaking the seats down with the
20 Hurst tools, with the cutters, trying to get to everybody and
21 check everybody. By this time, I guess, 30, 45 minutes had
22 probably passed. I have no idea. Confirmed that everybody was
23 deceased. So at that time we stopped. Got with DPS and said,
24 okay, look, everybody's deceased, we're going to leave them where
25 we moved them to. But before we did that, Paul had marked

1 everybody on their arms with a marker to who was in what position
2 of the vehicle. And then I made him draw a map when he was done
3 to give over to DPS to know, okay, this is the location of
4 everybody, in case if he got shipped off somewhere or whatever, at
5 least we would have --

6 Q. Well, that was a great decision because that would have
7 taken, that would have taken us weeks to figure --

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. -- try to put that together.

10 A. So once we figured that out and got DPS, JP showed up. When
11 we got everybody situated, we figured out -- I think we took the
12 last two ladies out at the back that were still alive. Flew them
13 two out. Flew the guy out from the pickup. And that one other
14 lady that they were working on didn't make it in the ambulance.
15 So --

16 Q. What, she expired before they could get her in the ambulance?

17 A. I think before they could fly her out.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. I was trying to keep an eye on what was going on over there,
20 at the same time keep an eye on what was going on in here.

21 About that time Uvalde EMS finally pulled up, and I
22 instructed -- I said, look, said, unfortunately I think they're
23 all dead. I said, you know, it's been too much lapse of time. So
24 they just went in there, confirmed. They did their -- you know,
25 they walked in and they confirmed what I confirmed, you know, they

1 were all passed away already.

2 So at that time I went ahead and sent them back because the
3 JP, I guess, didn't request any cardiac strips. They didn't ask
4 for any from our part. So I said, okay, I'm not going to tie
5 three paramedics up here for this. Send them back to Uvalde. So
6 they went back. We sent Uvalde's bird back.

7 And talking about that, thinking about that Uvalde bird, one
8 of the things I wish we could have done different or they should
9 have different is, we have a helicopter that sits in Uvalde, which
10 could have been there in 10 minutes, and these birds came out of
11 San Antonio and Kerrville, which is roughly a 20, 30-minute
12 flight, which to me was a big upsetting thing knowing that we have
13 a helicopter sitting in Uvalde.

14 Q. Yeah.

15 A. You know, it goes -- tie in with Uvalde EMS. It's actually
16 run by Uvalde EMS paramedics. So they know the area. They know
17 -- you know, basically we just say 83 North, they know exactly
18 where to start flying. They can follow the road. Compared to
19 when you bring somebody from out of town doesn't know, you know,
20 when it comes to landing and stuff. And they know different
21 places they can land if that area was too tight or just wasn't an
22 area they could land in. That's a whole other story.

23 But anyways, once we confirmed JP, everything else, got with
24 (indiscernible) DPS Sergeant Juan Maldonado, and I said, okay,
25 when can we start taking the bodies out because it's getting hot?

1 So about that time, they all got what they needed and said, okay,
2 let's start. So what we did is we put two troopers on the back of
3 each side of the bus. So as we were taking out their belongings,
4 they could mark where they were coming out of. And they -- we had
5 somebody keeping track of what belongings were coming out.

6 So we did that, took all the bodies out. We lined them up on
7 the roadway. By this time we made sure that all the civilians
8 were completely gone. There was nobody around that didn't need to
9 be there because we were going to be doing that. So we laid the
10 bodies down on the roadway and covered them up with a white sheet.

11 Q. Hold on. Sorry about that.

12 A. That's okay. So as we were taking the bodies out, we started
13 lining them up, and we were covering them with a white sheet,
14 putting them on backboards. At this time we still had to cut more
15 seats, cut them out from wherever they were. Probably took us
16 -- I think we -- I think Chip had said it was like a 2-hour, 2-
17 hour to almost 3-hour ordeal by the time we cut everybody out the
18 way they were. Some of them --

19 Q. Now when you said they were -- were they -- you couldn't get
20 to them. Is it because there was so much intrusion from the front
21 that they were kind of --

22 A. Well, yeah, the --

23 Q. -- the seats were bent up?

24 A. Yeah. The driver -- for instance, the driver for one part
25 you could only see his head. Everything else he was just

1 underneath all the, I guess, the whole dashboard and everything
2 that came over him.

3 Q. Right.

4 A. There was one lady that the seat had broken, it had come all
5 the way to the top up front. And then the two behind the driver,
6 the middle seat ended up against the front seat, which pushed her
7 up against the railing. So she was halfway out and --

8 Q. Just because there was so much shear intrusion coming in?

9 A. Yeah, intrusion.

10 Q. Yeah.

11 A. So it just came in -- it might have looked like the seats
12 broke, and it might have not been that they broke. It's just
13 where it just all came together.

14 Q. Right.

15 A. Like smashing a can, and that's where they were. So we had
16 to break the seats down to get them out, and then we'd break the
17 next seat down to take the next one out. So it was a process.

18 Q. Right.

19 A. And then of course respect of the body. I've always told the
20 guys, you know, we've got to respect them just as if they were
21 alive. They're somebody's loved ones.

22 Q. Right.

23 A. So we took our time doing that as well. Once we took them
24 all out, DPS -- started going through the belongings and trying to
25 find driver's license so that way they could start identifying who

1 by name and so forth.

2 Q. Right.

3 A. About this time, the funeral home did show up. They were
4 probably there while we were extricating. They were just standing
5 to one side just ready to go in case we needed them.

6 Once we extricated the very last ones, we hung around for a
7 little while just to make sure. We didn't wash any of the area
8 off like we normally do because we knew there was going to be an
9 investigation on it. So normally we'll wash off any debris and
10 stuff like that. We didn't do it because we knew that the state
11 team was coming in, and then we heard that you guys were coming in
12 as well. So we left that alone. We rolled up our hose. I sent
13 our primary pumper back to Uvalde, sent the backup unit back to
14 Uvalde.

15 Q. About what time was that now when you --

16 A. About 4:30.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. About 4:30. I'm going to say it was give or take around that
19 time. I don't have the time in front of me, but --

20 Q. Sure.

21 A. -- it was around that time that they started going back to
22 Uvalde. I cleared all my guys out. I hung around probably an
23 extra 15, 20 minutes with the sergeant, see if he needed anything.
24 I had a guy waiting for me to give me a ride back. And then I
25 made my way back to Uvalde.

1 Q. Okay. Now when you got the call -- or when you got, said you
2 got the call, and then when you got out there, so there was only
3 two medics or four medics --

4 A. That I could see, yes.

5 Q. Okay. And so that would have been two ambulances?

6 A. No, just one ambulance.

7 Q. Just one ambulance. So with all those people, there was only
8 one ambulance.

9 A. Correct.

10 Q. And you got there at what time?

11 A. Roughly, I think, the sergeant said we got there probably
12 about 1:10.

13 Q. 1:10. And the crash happened at 12:20?

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. So at that point, that's -- did you say then that Concan, do
16 they have an EMS? Did they come out, or --

17 A. When --

18 Q. Who was the next EMS unit that came out?

19 A. Uvalde EMS came out whenever I requested them. And there's a
20 time --

21 Q. Requested more?

22 A. I requested Uvalde EMS. That's when I requested the
23 paramedics, because at this time we still hadn't gotten to all the
24 bodies inside yet, and I was afraid that if we had somebody still
25 alive somewhere in there, I wanted to make sure that we had

1 somebody that could treat them.

2 Q. That's like 50 minutes.

3 A. I know it is. Yeah.

4 Q. I'm just trying to figure out where is everybody -- why
5 wasn't EMS called, I'm wondering?

6 A. I don't know why they didn't call a backup EMS. I mean, it
7 was Utopia's area. I don't know why they didn't call for backup
8 knowing that they -- I guess they were relying on just the
9 helicopters to treat everybody. I do not know.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. I don't know what their protocol is.

12 Q. So there was -- before you got there, there was nobody that
13 went in the bus to check on the viability of --

14 A. I can't confirm that before I got there. I cannot confirm.

15 Q. Because I know I heard that there was this one EMS -- there
16 was one ambulance that was coming.

17 A. Correct.

18 Q. That was transporting somebody --

19 A. They were transporting, yes.

20 Q. -- here, and they came across the scene, and they stopped. I
21 guess, I need to talk to them to find out if they --

22 A. That would be Frio Canyon EMS out of Leaky. Because actually
23 when -- on our way up there, I told the sergeant, said, wow,
24 they're already transporting somebody to Uvalde. And that's what
25 we thought from the get-go. And now that you said that, I

1 remember I got there, I said, you already transported one. And
2 they told me, oh, no, that ambulance was going through with a
3 patient.

4 Q. Okay. So that's Frio Canyon?

5 A. Frio Canyon, yes. They're out of Leakey.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. But, yeah, I mean, in my opinion, if I pulled up before
8 anybody and saw that, you know, you've already got a van full of
9 people, you're asking for as much -- I mean, if you've got --

10 Q. Any help you can get.

11 A. Yeah. If you've got 14 people, you're taking 2 per
12 people, you need 28 medics right off the bat to make it run
13 smooth. Are you going to get 28? No.

14 Q. Right.

15 A. But if I could at least have half, it helps.

16 Q. So I guess I'll have to find out who the initial people were
17 that --

18 A. That showed up at --

19 Q. -- that showed up.

20 A. Which I'm going to say was Utopia. Utopia was the first one
21 to be on the scene.

22 Q. Okay. Do you know who was the -- which chief was the
23 incident commander?

24 A. I do not know. I hate to say this, but when we got there and
25 Chip come from -- it looked like nobody was in charge. I mean, it

1 was like, like either they were short-handed --

2 Q. And they were just trying to --

3 A. They didn't have enough --

4 Q. -- pitch in themselves.

5 A. They were just trying to -- they were doing their thing. You
6 know, it's -- I understand everybody works different. We're very
7 fortunate in Uvalde. We have 39 guys. Out of the 39 -- 1,2,3,4,5
8 -- we have 8 that are employed, 6 that are certified, and we have
9 one guy that's on shift 24 hours a day. So that way the minute
10 the call goes, the truck leaves.

11 And, of course, out of our department, we have eight of us
12 that are also medics as well, and we both volunteer or work for
13 Uvalde EMS. So that gives us the flexibility to work on their
14 ambulances at any given time.

15 Q. Okay. So besides -- every city has then the -- here has the
16 fire department and they have a separate EMS, separate EMS?

17 A. Here it's separate. Utopia it's together.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. Yeah, Utopia. And Concan does not have one. What they have
20 is what they call a first responders. So they're either like an
21 ECA, what we call Band-Aid people. You know what I mean? They
22 can't do anything. They can't intubate. They can't push drugs.
23 They can't do anything basically. What we call Band-Aid pushers.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. I hate to say it that way, but you know what I mean.

1 Q. Right, right.

2 A. I mean, that's all they have.

3 Q. Now have you had issues with dispatch on getting enough
4 people out to a scene before?

5 A. Yes. We've had dispatch issues. We used to have monthly
6 meetings, and that kind of just went by the wayside. You know, we
7 complain. We've --

8 Q. And who are you complaining to?

9 A. We've complained to the city manager. We've complained to
10 the mayor. We've complained to the chief.

11 Q. And do you get any kind of response?

12 A. Well, the problem is, is they tell us they're going to work
13 on it, but we don't get any feedback saying these are the things
14 we implemented to try to correct that problem. We don't get any
15 feedback, and that's the hard part. And my problem is, is the way
16 we see it here is our dispatch is paid by the city, which is under
17 the police department. So, therefore, their duty, to me, is
18 they're going to go to the PD first before they treat everybody
19 else because that's who writes their paycheck.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. See what I'm saying?

22 Q. Right.

23 A. You know, so -- you know, and I know they send them to a 40-
24 hour training class, but it's like I tell them, you know, is it 40
25 hours of just law enforcement? How about EMS? What about fire?

1 Q. Well, usually, I mean, in other situations they'll call the
2 police department or DPS right away, but then the next call is
3 going out to fire and EMS.

4 A. Yeah, it should be. And we've always told them, I'd rather
5 you call us first, because the way I've been told by DPS people,
6 the scene doesn't change. Whether you get there before us or
7 after us, until you all are done, we can't touch the scene anyway.
8 The brake marks aren't going to move. It's not like you all are
9 going to be moving cars more than an inch or two if you have to
10 when you're cutting. So he said so the scene theoretically is not
11 going to change.

12 Q. Right.

13 A. So that's always been our issue is -- like, for instance,
14 knowing that it was almost 30 miles out, I'd much rather have
15 drove 18 miles and cancel; say, you know what, it's not as bad as
16 they say it was, you all can return back to the station. You
17 know, I --

18 Q. Well, the bottom line is, had more of those people been
19 viable --

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. -- it could have been -- it really could have looked bad
22 because there could have been people dying on the scene just for
23 the fact that you didn't, you guys -- or there wasn't enough EMS
24 or wasn't enough response.

25 A. Correct. And I agree with you there. And there -- you know,

1 and I heard the 911 call earlier. I didn't get to hear the whole
2 -- I haven't heard the whole traffic yet. But when the man calls,
3 he clearly states there's a wreck between a Dodge pickup -- head-
4 on between a Dodge pickup and a church van, and he says, and
5 hopefully they're still alive. At that point -- and I guess I've
6 been doing this for too long, but I would have sit there and said,
7 how many people are we looking at? It's a church van. That
8 should have -- red flag.

9 Q. Minimum of maybe --

10 A. Yeah, 15-passenger van or are we --

11 Q. -- 10.

12 A. Yeah, 10. What are we looking at?

13 Q. Right.

14 A. Is this van full of people? Those are just certain questions
15 I wish would have been asked. Because maybe if he would have
16 said, yeah, it's full of people; I don't know how many but it's
17 full. Well, to me the dispatcher hopefully would have known like,
18 you know, okay, well, this is a van. Most people know a van fits
19 at least 10.

20 Q. Right.

21 A. If you only got one ambulance, common sense tells you one
22 ambulance can't accommodate 10 people.

23 Q. Handle that many, right.

24 A. Or at least given that information to Utopia and let them
25 make that judgment call. Hey, they're saying it's 10 people.

1 Start rolling me Sabinal's ambulance, Leakey's ambulance, Uvalde's
2 ambulance, you know, let's start getting more here.

3 Q. Okay. Now what types of training have you guys had, MCI
4 training?

5 A. MCI training, we do the -- I went blank.

6 Q. Okay. So training again is --

7 A. For that -- the guys have done like the NIMS courses, the
8 100, 300 to 700 that they do through ICS. We've done that as
9 well. The guys have that. I know the paid guys have it for sure.
10 And on scene we had two paid guys. One there is a volunteer, and
11 the other one running the truck.

12 Q. Now have you guys ever done any kind of -- it sounds like
13 you're kind of prepared, but have you done table tops or live
14 drills with --

15 A. We take --

16 Q. -- regarding MCI's?

17 A. We practice. Like we do extrication. And the way I do it
18 is, if we're doing an extrication class, I'll pull to one side,
19 and I won't -- the guys don't know who we're picking yet, and
20 we'll pick them and say, okay, here's your scenario, go. And I
21 give them the scenario. I'm still sitting there being the chief.
22 And I'll have them try to come back to me, hey, we have this, hey,
23 we have this. So we do that. And we do put some of our firemen
24 in the vehicles so that we -- it gives them that patient concept
25 of how they're going to set the tools and so forth.

1 Q. Right.

2 A. And usually everything is run through -- if I'm there, it
3 will be myself. Or, if not, if one of the assistant chiefs are
4 there. Or any given time if I end up having to be on the Hurst
5 tool or go into a house fire or whatever, then I'll get on the
6 radio and say, hey, be advised unit, you know, assistant unit 12
7 or whatever, I'm going in with the guys; you'll be in charge as
8 soon as you pull up. And at that time, my duty goes to the paid
9 individual on shift. He knows that he's in charge until the next
10 assistant pulls up.

11 Q. Okay. Now has there ever been a kind of a whole county type
12 of -- with Concan and -- I'm not aware of, I'm not aware --

13 A. Yeah. No --

14 Q. -- of other cities around here, but --

15 A. We've never had one with Knippa, Sabinal, Concan.

16 Q. Yeah, Sabinal.

17 A. Utopia and Uvalde. We've never had a --

18 Q. So they've never had one?

19 A. We've never had one all together. Like let's say we're
20 working a major scenario wreck table top for every department.
21 We've never had a really big sit-down. I guess because we're all
22 volunteers, and you would kind of say, okay, how many do you want
23 to pull from Utopia, how many can you pull from Sabinal? And, of
24 course, like I say, we're fortunate we have so many --

25 Q. Right.

1 A. -- that I could send 10, and I've still got 20 some odd guys
2 here. I'm okay.

3 Q. And when there's volunteers, a lot of the guys will have to
4 take off and --

5 A. Correct. And I looked at the times earlier, you know,
6 between the time the call came in and time Utopia went en route, I
7 think they told me was about 10 minutes. Because it's a
8 volunteer. They got to go wherever they're at.

9 Q. Sure, sure.

10 A. Get to the station. Wait for somebody.

11 Q. Right.

12 A. And that's usually why we've always told dispatch we've got
13 somebody on shift. It's going to be the quickest response.

14 Q. Right.

15 A. Even though they're like, well, they're 10 miles closer than
16 you are. Yeah, they're 10 miles closer than we are, but we leave
17 10 minutes faster. So --

18 Q. Right.

19 A. -- you've got to drill that into their head that, yeah, they
20 might be closer, but when you got somebody leaving right then and
21 there, it's a little bit different.

22 Q. Right. Now with dispatch, is pretty much everybody on the
23 same frequency, same --

24 A. No.

25 Q. -- using the same radio?

1 A. No. We use an Icom system. We don't -- we're not allowed on
2 this Motorola system, whatever this Homeland Security system
3 that --

4 Q. Why aren't you allowed on that?

5 A. Because --

6 Q. And who's using that, I guess?

7 A. The PD, the Sheriff's Department. I know Utopia does not
8 have it. Sabinal doesn't have it. We don't have it because it's
9 too expensive. I don't know what -- well, Knippa is just a
10 one-person fire department so we basically cover that town too.

11 Q. Right.

12 A. Something to do with Austin, because they're not Motorola
13 radios so we're not allowed on this middle Rio Grande system, is
14 what we call it. Our system --

15 Q. Now does that ever cause any --

16 A. It does, because we worked a call one time years ago when the
17 system first came in. We had a freight -- we had a train that got
18 hit by a tractor that was leaking some type of chemical that we
19 weren't aware of yet. So we were still sizing up the scene. A
20 deputy drove by us. Well, I have to call dispatch to call the
21 deputy to tell him to turn around. So, you know, if it would have
22 been fatal, he would have died in his patrol car down the road.

23 So we don't have the capability to talk to the PD or the SO.
24 We can talk to dispatch. We can talk to Uvalde EMS. We can to
25 Sabinal fire. We can talk to Utopia because they're not on that

1 system. Of course, it is a P-25 or whatever they call it. I
2 mean, it's digital. It's got everything it has, it's just not a
3 Motorola.

4 Q. Okay. So other than dispatch, any other issues you think
5 that could have -- well, in this case, just because of the
6 severity of the crash and the injuries and things like that, this
7 could have been a lot worse.

8 A. Oh, yeah. I mean, this could have been a lot worse. I still
9 think that -- and like I said, I just think it comes from years of
10 experience, unfortunately, is the questions to ask when that 911
11 call comes in. You know, the information you need to gather.
12 Instead of just saying, yeah, okay, it's a wreck, yeah, there
13 might be possible injuries. Well, we saw what possible injuries
14 ended up being.

15 Q. Right, right.

16 A. And it could have been a lot worse. We're lucky we didn't
17 have any other cars run into that and have multiple vehicles
18 involved.

19 Q. So who is your EMS person? Do you think I should give them a
20 call?

21 A. You could. Stephen Stephens is the EMS director.

22 Q. Stephen Stephens?

23 A. Yep.

24 Q. He's the EMS director here. And like I said, there's a lot
25 of us -- like I volunteer with EMS as well. My brother is one of

1 the flight medics for the helicopter that's here, and he's also
2 one of the paid -- he's a paid -- I mean he's a certified
3 firefighter, but he's not paid. He volunteers. But he also rides
4 out on the ambulance as well as a paramedic. So -- yeah, small
5 town.

6 Q. Well, when you get a chance, if you can send me --

7 A. I will send it to you in a minute, once we get done.

8 MR. KAMINSKI: Okay. Well, if you don't mind, I appreciate
9 you taking the time and coming out and talking with me. And I
10 guess, you know, if I have any follow-up, then --

11 MR. AYALA: Yeah. Any other questions, feel free to call me
12 back. You got my number and so forth.

13 MR. KAMINSKI: Okay. That concludes our interview here. It
14 is approximately 5 after 2.

15 (Whereupon, at 2:05 p.m., 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: CHURCH BUS AND TRUCK CRASH NEAR
CONCAN, TEXAS ON MARCH 29, 2017
Interview of Gene Ayala

ACCIDENT NUMBER: HWY17MH011

PLACE: Uvalde, Texas

DATE: March 31, 2017

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.

Katherine Motley
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of: *

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CHURCH BUS AND TRUCK CRASH NEAR
CONCAN, TEXAS ON MARCH 29, 2017

* Accident No.: HWY17MH011

*

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Interview of: RICHARD WILLIAMS
Firefighter, Uvalde Fire Department

APPEARANCES:

RONALD KAMINSKI, Senior Survival Factors Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

I N D E X

ITEM

PAGE

Interview of Richard Williams:

By Mr. Kaminski

4

1

I N T E R V I E W

1
2 MR. KAMINSKI: Oh, hello, Mr. Williams. This is Ron Kaminski
3 with NTSB.

4 MR. WILLIAMS: Oh, how's it going, Ron?

5 MR. KAMINSKI: Good. We talked at the tow yard that one day.

6 MR. WILLIAMS: Right, right, right, right. Yeah.

7 MR. KAMINSKI: A couple of times I think you came by, but --

8 MR. WILLIAMS: Yeah, yeah.

9 MR. KAMINSKI: Do you have a couple of minutes so you can
10 give me a statement we talked about?

11 MR. WILLIAMS: I guess so.

12 MR. KAMINSKI: Okay. And if you don't mind, I'm going to
13 tape this so I don't have to interrupt you. You can just talk,
14 and I don't have to stop you while I'm trying to take notes.

15 MR. WILLIAMS: Okay.

INTERVIEW OF RICHARD WILLIAMS

16
17 BY MR. KAMINSKI:

18 Q. So why don't we just start on the 29th when -- if you can
19 give me a guesstimate of the time you got the call, when you got
20 out there, and what all you saw and what you did.

21 A. Well, I mean, it came -- the call came in during lunch,
22 somewhere between 12 and I don't know. I mean, those times you
23 bound to have all that down, you know.

24 Q. Okay.

1 A. Yeah. So I don't --

2 Q. And you're a volunteer firefighter with the Uvalde County
3 Fire Department, correct?

4 A. Uvalde, yeah. It's not Uvalde -- it's the City of Uvalde.
5 Uvalde County is also, but (indiscernible) we call it the Uvalde,
6 Uvalde Volunteer Fire Department.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. Covers the county and the city.

9 Q. And but you do have some paid full-time employees, correct?

10 A. Right. We have three of them.

11 Q. Okay. So when you got the call, why don't you just, from
12 that point when you got out there, what did you see and what did
13 you do?

14 A. Well, when I got there, of course, we had our truck behind
15 us. I bunkered up, and I -- of course, Utopia was there, and so I
16 tried to help with them until our tool got there. And then, but
17 they weren't having any luck getting that guy out of the Dodge
18 pickup. So as soon as our tool got there, I took our spreader --
19 I mean, our rams, set of rams, and pushed the truck apart and got
20 him out, and then we moved on from there to work with the lady in
21 the very back of the bus.

22 Q. The survivor?

23 A. The one that survived.

24 Q. And what did you do there? What did you do to get her out?

25 A. Well, I needed to get -- they couldn't get her over the top

1 of the seat, so in, you know, in my mind, I had to break that seat
2 down and, of course, I couldn't break it down because it was so
3 close to the back of the bus. So the first -- so what we did
4 first was we snipped the bottom of the door and the top of the
5 door over there with our cutter. Then we took the saw out and
6 sawed all the way over to the edge, and then we had -- we had
7 other firemen that grabbed a hold of it and just broke that. If
8 you've seen that --

9 Q. You broke the seat back, yeah.

10 A. No, no. We broke the back end of the bus.

11 Q. Oh, sure. Yes.

12 A. Where the opening, made the opening bigger.

13 Q. Right.

14 A. And that way we were able to get our cutter in there, and we
15 just went in there and, of course, it's -- I don't know the lady's
16 name that was there trying to take care of the survivor anyway.
17 So we just, we cut the back on each side. It's just pipe comes
18 up. We cut it there on one side. And she said, well, I could
19 see, felt -- she said I can tell it moved. And so then we cut the
20 other side, and then the seat just comes down. So once the seat
21 was down, then they were able to put a backboard under her and get
22 the lady out.

23 Q. Okay. Once the seat back -- you're talking about the back
24 rest part was cut off?

25 A. Yeah, the back, the whole back of the seat which you put your

1 back against.

2 Q. Right. Right. Okay.

3 A. Once we cut those -- both sides of it, then it just collapsed
4 backwards, you know, it came off. And then she was free. You
5 know, it was like sitting down on a chair with no back.

6 Q. Right.

7 A. So you could put a backboard under her rear and get her out
8 of there. She was out. And then from then we went on to work
9 with trying to get the other two out that --

10 Q. That were still viable? The other two that were still
11 viable? Yeah.

12 A. I mean, there were still people working with them so we
13 treated them like they were. And we had already had two of other
14 firemen -- they asked me what to do. I told them, well, cut two
15 slots in the side of, the side of that window on the passenger
16 side and bring that -- bring it down further. You know, it's got
17 a metal square tube and frame inside and --

18 Q. Right.

19 A. -- you know, on the outside. Anyway, they cut that down. So
20 then we went up there and started bringing those out.

21 Q. Was that difficult to cut through that material?

22 A. Do what now?

23 Q. Was it difficult to cut through the --

24 A. I mean, the Sawzall will cut through that. It's just 1-inch
25 square.

1 Q. Right.

2 A. Is what that --

3 Q. The tubing.

4 A. -- 1-inch square frame --

5 Q. Right.

6 A. -- tubing, covered from the inside and outside. And of
7 course it's rigid because it's like a box, you know. Once a box,
8 once it's all put together, it's strong. But, you know, if you
9 take a lid off a box, it becomes weak.

10 Q. Sure.

11 A. And so it's simple thinking about how it works. But anyway,
12 then we just got those other two people out, got them on
13 backboards, and they brought them both out that window in the
14 passenger side. And then, of course, you know, I'm not sure which
15 one was deceased there or on the air, you know, what. But anyway,
16 at that point, we knew that we got all the live patients out of
17 the bus. So I think then they regrouped and decided what to do
18 and we started going in there and taking the bodies out of the --
19 you know, starting in the back. We started in the back and worked
20 our way to the front.

21 Q. Right.

22 A. Take one at a time.

23 Q. Right. Now were you involved in any of the extrication for
24 the church bus driver or any of the passengers towards in the --
25 the right front passenger or the passenger behind the driver?

1 A. Yeah. When we got down, as we worked our way to the front,
2 we had to keep extricating and cutting seats and cutting -- you
3 know, we cut the seat. When you've got somebody that's pushed
4 down, you cut the seat out from under them, then they -- you know,
5 then that gives you room.

6 Q. Right.

7 A. So we kept cutting the bottoms out of those seats so --
8 either the backs or either we cut them from the floor and we could
9 pull the seat out from under. That would relieve the pressure
10 from the top. And then eventually the driver and the lady --
11 actually the lady behind him, they were kind of just right there
12 together, and --

13 Q. Right.

14 A. We used a ram, put it in the floor, and just pushed that top
15 off of him and her, and then they were able to come out. Sounds
16 easy, but we were there 3 hours.

17 Q. Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. I understand that. There's nothing
18 easy when it comes to extrication of a vehicle like that with that
19 much damage.

20 A. You're sitting -- you're on a slope. It was sloped, and you
21 got all them fluids in there, and you're sliding the whole time,
22 and it's not -- you know, it's just a -- it's an effort to even to
23 make one cut. You make one spread, then, you know, you do what
24 you can.

25 Q. Right. I understand. Now do you recall the -- that survivor

1 that was in the very back, her name -- everybody's referring to
2 her as Ms. Rose.

3 A. Right.

4 Q. Do you recall was she wearing her seatbelt?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. And you recall that how? You saw that? You undid it?

9 A. I didn't undo it. We cut them from behind, from the back.
10 She was belted in. She couldn't -- I mean, the lady standing
11 above her, and I guess -- I don't know what her name is. I mean,
12 I'm sure you have it.

13 Q. Yeah. I know. She's from Frio Canyon, I believe.

14 A. Yeah. Anyway, she could verify that she had her seatbelt on,
15 but we had to -- we cut all those belts from the back, you know,
16 just cut them with our knives.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. We cut them.

19 Q. Okay. Well -- now was there anyone else that was
20 instrumental in -- other than yourself, in the extrication you
21 feel it would be worthwhile for me to talk to?

22 A. Well, there's Mark Zamora in our fire department. And, you
23 know, he was very instrumental. And then Patrick, my son, he made
24 some of those cuts on the back side of the bus. He was standing
25 up there. He made, I think he made the top cut.

1 Q. Right. Okay. So Mark Zamora and your son. And his name?

2 A. Patrick Williams.

3 MR. KAMINSKI: Okay. Well, I'm going to go through, and once
4 I talk with -- I still need to talk to some people at -- up in
5 Frio Canyon. And when I get more information, I'll talk with
6 Chief. I'll get contact information for Mr. Zamora and
7 Mr. Williams, if I feel I need to get more information regarding
8 extraction. But you've given me a real good description of what
9 you all, what you guys did while on scene. So I appreciate your
10 statement.

11 MR. WILLIAMS: No problem.

12 MR. KAMINSKI: Okay, sir.

13 MR. WILLIAMS: Glad to help.

14 MR. KAMINSKI: You take care. Thanks again for your service.

15 MR. WILLIAMS: All right, you too.

16 MR. KAMINSKI: Okay. Bye-bye, sir.

17 MR. WILLIAMS: Bye-bye.

18 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)
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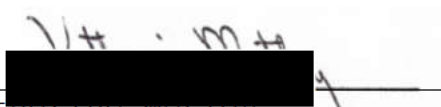
IN THE MATTER OF: CHURCH BUS AND TRUCK CRASH NEAR
CONCAN, TEXAS ON MARCH 29, 2017
Interview of Richard Williams

ACCIDENT NUMBER: HWY17MH011

PLACE: Via Telephone

DATE: April 2017

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.


Katherine Motley
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of: *

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CHURCH BUS AND TRUCK CRASH NEAR
CONCAN, TEXAS ON MARCH 29, 2017

* Accident No.: HWY17MH011

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Interview of: STEPHEN STEPHENS
Director, Uvalde EMS

Uvalde EMS station
Uvalde, Texas

Tuesday,
April 4, 2017

APPEARANCES:

RONALD KAMINSKI, Survival Factors Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

I N D E XITEMPAGE

Interview of Stephen Stephens:

By Mr. Kaminski

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I N T E R V I E W

1
2 MR. KAMINSKI: Today's date is April 4th. My name is Ronald
3 Kaminski with the National Transportation Safety Board. I'm here
4 at Uvalde EMS in Uvalde, Texas, and I'll be talking with Stephen
5 Stephens, S-t-e-p-h-e-n, last name Stephens, S-t-h --
6 S-t-e-p-h-e-n-s. He is the director of EMS in Uvalde.

INTERVIEW OF STEPHEN STEPHENS

7
8 BY MR. KAMINSKI:

9 Q. So, Mr. Stephens, why don't you just tell me about the
10 incident the other day, about the call-out, and any issues you've
11 kind of come across with this incident, as well as maybe in the
12 past.

13 A. Yes, sir. So according to our records, this -- pardon me --
14 occurred approximately 12:20 on March the 29th, 2017. We were
15 actually dispatched to respond up there at 1326, 1-3-2-6. Or,
16 pardon me, 1-3-2-7. They received that call for us to respond at
17 1-3-2-6. And we went en route at 1-3-2-8, 1328. And we were at
18 scene at 1-3-5-7, 1-3-5-7. So you can see it took us 29 minutes
19 to go that distance.

20 Q. Right.

21 A. So, you know, that's right past our jurisdictional line. So
22 we were called as a mutual aid. So we responded with one unit
23 with three people on board: There was a paramedic, an
24 intermediate and a basic EMT on that ambulance.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. And we had actually a truck not available that day so we sent
2 an extra person on that ambulance.

3 Q. Okay. Was that a BLS or ALS unit?

4 A. It's a -- it's considered a MIC unit because there was a
5 paramedic on board. So ALS/MICU.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. So and we always try to staff, you know, at least -- 80
8 percent of the time we have two paramedics on two of the
9 ambulances, and then the third ambulance might be ALS or BLS
10 ambulance.

11 Q. Okay. So you sent out one with three paramedics or
12 three --

13 A. One paramedic, one basic EMT, and one advanced EMT.

14 Q. Okay. So three went in the one unit?

15 A. One unit, yes, sir. So they did arrive there at 1357. The
16 original -- and I'll give you a copy of this. They just -- I'm
17 going to read the narrative to you so you can have a full
18 understanding. So everybody can hear me.

19 Unit 415, which was the ambulance, was dispatched to Highway
20 83, approximately 4 miles south of Garner State Park for a two-
21 vehicle MVC with injuries. Dispatch further advises of two DOAs.
22 When en route, contacted dispatch to launch an additional
23 aircraft, Uvalde MedAir 1. Dispatch further advised of two, in
24 total, DOA and three injured.

25 Upon arrival, our crew met with the fire department. Was

1 advised at that time there were seven deceased. Our guys pulled
2 all their equipment out of the ambulance, made it to where the bus
3 was located at. Incident Command Gene Ayala with the Uvalde Fire
4 Department advised that there were 10 in the bus that were DOA,
5 and 2 in Utopia ambulances, and that three patients had been flown
6 out before we ever made scene. So this scene had been ongoing
7 before we ever got there --

8 Q. Right.

9 A. -- quite substantially.

10 Q. Right.

11 A. About an hour or so. And it was advised by both Gene Ayala
12 and Utopia EMS crew that that was the case. We weren't needed for
13 any further assistance to check anybody because everybody had
14 already been --

15 Q. Deceased.

16 A. -- deceased, and that we could clear the scene. We did leave
17 some backboards to help remove the deceased from the bus. We left
18 some water there for the firemen and people that were working on
19 scene.

20 Q. Sure.

21 A. And then we cleared the scene and went back in service at
22 2:40 p.m., 1-4-4-0.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. 1440.

25 Q. So when you got on scene, one thing I have heard is -- when I

1 talked to Concan, that -- I said, who was the incident commander?
2 And they said, you know, everybody was pitching in; there really
3 wasn't an incident command post.

4 A. Correct.

5 Q. And I was like, there was -- so there was really nobody in
6 charge. But when you guys got there, you just went to Chief
7 Ayala?

8 A. Right. Because we have a working relationship. So we try to
9 respond -- we're supposed to be dispatched together on major
10 incidents, whether it's fire or a multi-casualty incident.

11 Q. Right.

12 A. Apparently we -- he got there before us because he went with
13 a trooper, I believe. And so when we got there, he walked up and
14 explained to us that everybody on the bus was already deceased and
15 that, you know, don't pull any equipment off, any more equipment
16 off. So --

17 Q. Okay. In the past, have you had issues with dispatch? I
18 mean, does -- when you get dispatched, when dispatch calls you, do
19 they send both Fire and EMS out, or how does that work?

20 A. We've had some issues where it is not a simultaneous
21 dispatch. We've been trying to work towards that over the last 2
22 years. And, you know, I think one of the issues is the
23 dispatchers turn over so much it's hard to keep them trained.
24 Most of the dispatchers don't have our -- don't have the
25 jurisdictional lines memorized. And I will make sure you take a

1 picture of that map so you can show everybody.

2 Q. Well, I would think they should have that map.

3 A. Yes. And I don't understand why they don't have that map.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. So, and so, you know, we -- you know, I by no means am
6 territorial. I'm not here to take over anybody's, other's
7 jurisdiction. We are here to do what's best for the patients.

8 Q. It's a mutual aid call.

9 A. Exactly. And my biggest concern is we should have been
10 called immediate. Everybody should have been dispatched to this.
11 And I don't think -- you know, I think that is one of the failures
12 or problems in this incident is that we weren't dispatched soon
13 enough.

14 Q. Right.

15 A. So, and that to me is a big concern. You can always turn us
16 around and say, oh, never mind, we don't need you.

17 Q. Right.

18 A. And I think that is a concern shared amongst us and Uvalde
19 Fire both.

20 Q. Right. Concan expressed the same.

21 A. Right. So Concan is in our jurisdiction. They are not a
22 registered first responder yet, but we are working towards that
23 goal. And we had started that process 3 or 4 weeks ago prior to
24 -- or 2 weeks ago, started getting in talks; hey, we need to get
25 some guys trained so you can first respond and give that first 20

1 minutes of care before we get there.

2 Q. Do you think maybe because they're not certified that maybe
3 -- could that be a reason why they don't get called out like they
4 feel they should, earlier, or in other incidents like they should?

5 A. I think they --

6 Q. Or would dispatch even know that?

7 A. We always ask them whether they're certified or not because
8 they have like an AED and stuff. So they can do that without even
9 being a registered first responder. I'm trying to get them
10 trained up to at least the ECA or basic level so they can first
11 respond and give that. And we have actually started seriously
12 about a week ago. I was talking to one of the gentlemen, I said,
13 we really need to make you all a true, legitimate first responder
14 organization.

15 Q. Yes.

16 A. And so that's what -- because it is 20 minutes. We're in a
17 rural area. And, you know, it's going to take 20 minutes for
18 somebody to get to Concan, which that's part of living in a rural
19 area.

20 Q. Yes.

21 A. That I do not, you know, I don't fault anybody on. It's just
22 part of life in rural area.

23 Q. Right.

24 A. And you've probably investigated many incidents --

25 Q. Rural crashes.

1 A. -- in rural area where --

2 Q. Yes.

3 A. -- there might be one ambulance every 70 miles. So, and in
4 far west Texas it is that way.

5 Q. Right.

6 A. But we've got to learn to make it work better for us. And I
7 think that's one positive direction that we could take is get them
8 up to being a first responder organization, and at least get them
9 trained.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. And there have been some trained EMTs, and they just let it
12 lapse. So we need to keep them in the pipe and try to say, hey,
13 stay current; we'll help you get your CE's, things like that.

14 Q. Okay. I appreciate your taking the time to talk --

15 A. Yeah. One other thing I just want to point out, look,
16 because this has come out possibly. But like on long weekends
17 where it's a holiday during the summer, we do staff an ambulance
18 and put it up there about 12 hours a day in Concan.

19 Q. Yeah. I heard because of the -- they have that tubing and
20 all that stuff.

21 A. Right, right.

22 Q. And they were saying around July 4th --

23 A. Right.

24 Q. -- it's just crazy over there.

25 A. Yeah. So we do try to do that --

1 Q. Great.

2 A. -- just to decrease -- you know, peak times we try to get an
3 ambulance. Can't guarantee it all the time, but we do try to put
4 something up there.

5 So, you know, this was a mid-week. We're still in April.
6 The tourist season hadn't really kicked off. So that kind of --
7 you know, we wouldn't have been there anyhow. But on a busy
8 weekend where it's crazy and there's 10-, 20,000 people extra in
9 the community --

10 Q. Right.

11 A. -- we're trying to cover that area.

12 Q. Right. Well, that's great that you would think of doing that
13 to kind of --

14 A. Right. So hopefully, you know, this might open some eyes
15 that, hey, we need to maybe do this more often. Again, this is
16 mid-week April. But during the summer, we do run about eight and
17 nine calls up there during the summer a month. So it's a
18 substantial increase.

19 Q. Right. Right. Well, that's why it's smart you guys have at
20 least during the summer, the busy months --

21 A. Right. Right.

22 Q. -- you've got somebody up there at least 12 hours a day.
23 That's great.

24 A. Right.

25 MR. KAMINSKI: Okay, Mr. Stephens, I appreciate you taking

1 the time and giving me your statement.

2 And this will conclude our interview here at Uvalde EMS
3 Station at 219 South Getty. It's approximately 9:20.

4 (Whereupon, at 9:20 a.m., the interview was concluded.)

5 MR. KAMINSKI: It's Part 2 interview with EMS Director
6 Stephen Stephens. He's going to describe STRAC. That's spelled
7 S-T-R-A-C-K.

8 MR. STEPHENS: No. Just C.

9 BY MR. KAMINSKI:

10 Q. S-T-R-A-C. Okay. What is STRAC?

11 A. Okay. STRAC is our -- Texas is divided into trauma regions.
12 So STRAC is South Texas Regional Advisory Council, which is TSA-P.
13 That's our Trauma Service Area-P. It encompasses 26 counties
14 within the Southwest Texas Region.

15 So we have mutual aid. You know, you brought up the -- just
16 now that why I wanted to explain it because if weather was bad, we
17 would -- we actually have two am buses, which can carry 10 people,
18 whether litters or, you know, in stretcher setting, whatever. So
19 we would actually dispatch them to something in the region that
20 required multiple transport of people in the event that the
21 critical patients can be flown out. So the first in would
22 transport the critical, and time the regional am bus would get
23 here, they would take the greens and the yellows.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. So, but all we have to do is we -- you know, if we have a

1 disaster, we just call one phone number. It's called MedCom, and
2 they start getting us outside resources.

3 So those outside resources -- you know, we're going to rely
4 on mutual aid first. And once we're overwhelmed, which in this
5 case we'd have been overwhelmed rather quickly at the very
6 beginning, we would have started calling in additional resources
7 to help us. Say all 12 of those people survived and needed
8 transport, we're going to need more ambulances. And they get them
9 rolling. It would take 45 minutes up to an hour and a half to get
10 them here, but we can stabilize on scene till they got here.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. So but it's a regional. We meet bimonthly. So we have an
13 EMS committee, a hospital committee and all that. So we try to
14 improve trauma care, and now we're working in the medical side of
15 it to try to improve stroke care and heart attack care. So it's a
16 region-wide effort. So we have things in place, because we're
17 such a rural area, where we can get additional resources to us
18 fairly quickly.

19 MR. KAMINSKI: That's great. I'm glad you brought that up.

20 MR. STEPHENS: Yes, sir. So I was just trying to explain
21 that you so everybody would have an understanding for our area.

22 MR. KAMINSKI: I appreciate that, sir.

23 Okay, that concludes the second part of our interview here.
24 It's approximately 9:25.

25 (Whereupon, at 9:25 a.m., the interview was concluded.)

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: CHURCH BUS AND TRUCK CRASH NEAR
CONCAN, TEXAS ON MARCH 29, 2017
Interview of Stephen Stephens

ACCIDENT NUMBER: HWY17MH011

PLACE: Uvalde, Texas

DATE: April 4, 2017

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.

Katherine Motley
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

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CHURCH BUS AND TRUCK CRASH NEAR
CONCAN, TEXAS ON MARCH 29, 2017

* Accident No.: HWY17MH011

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Interview of: PAUL STEPHENS

Firefighter/Basic EMT, Uvalde VFD

Uvalde EMS Station
Uvalde, Texas

Tuesday,
April 4, 2017

APPEARANCES:

RONALD KAMINSKI, Survival Factors Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

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Interview of Paul Stephens:		
By Mr. Kaminski		
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I N T E R V I E W

1
2 MR. KAMINSKI: Today's date is April 4th. I'm here at the
3 Uvalde EMS Station. I'll be talking with Mr. Paul Stephens, a
4 volunteer firefighter and a Basic EMT.

INTERVIEW OF PAUL STEPHENS

5
6 BY MR. KAMINSKI:

7 Q. Mr. Stephens, if you can --

8 MR. KAMINSKI: Stephens is spelled S-t-e-p-h-e-n-s.

9 BY MR. KAMINSKI:

10 Q. If you can give me a brief description of when you got the
11 call or when you got paged out and when you got -- what all you
12 did from that point.

13 A. Paged out with the fire department, and responded up there.
14 Once we got there, surveyed the scene, and realized the magnitude
15 of it. And I'm also a funeral director with Rushing-Estes-Knowles
16 Mortuary, which is our county morgue. And so we got there and
17 took a quick look around, and realized what we had. And went back
18 and -- to my car, my vehicle, and got a Sharpie and started
19 marking the individuals as best I could as to where their location
20 was. One, to number them to see how many we had; and, two, to
21 mark their location in the event they had to be removed to get to
22 more viable sustainable patients.

23 Once we did that, we went and called our funeral home office
24 to advise them of the situation, and told them to be prepared and
25 maybe start heading up to Concan. And then called mutual aid from

1 Nelson's Funeral Home in Camp Wood, and to assist in transporting
2 the individuals, the deceased individuals to our facility. Once
3 there -- went back to see what I could do to assist in rescue and
4 extrication of the viable individuals. And then when my
5 co-workers got there with other equipment, started tagging the
6 deceased individuals and transferring the numbers that I had
7 placed on their person onto the tags, and hoping that they would
8 be concurrent.

9 And then went back and assisted in trying to remove the live
10 individuals. And then waited for DPS to give us the go-ahead to
11 start making the removal or the extrication or recovery of the
12 individuals that were in the bus.

13 Q. And so when you got there, you said you started marking. Was
14 that a way that you were kind of putting together like a seating
15 chart?

16 A. More or less. Yes, sir. Because I figured it would -- we
17 would need to know, if nothing else, for identification purposes.
18 Maybe we could figure out who they were as to where they were
19 seating, sitting, as well as to just keep a map of what was going
20 on.

21 Q. Okay. So when you got there, approximately what time do you
22 think you got there?

23 A. I'm going to say 20, 25, 30 minutes after the initial page.
24 I don't know what time that was that the pagers went off, but I
25 immediately headed up there once the pagers went off.

1 Q. So that would have been -- I mean, so the crash happened at
2 12:20. You got called out. I think you guys got called out maybe
3 about 20 minutes after or so.

4 A. Okay. Yes, that --

5 Q. So you were up there approximately maybe --

6 A. Let me, let me --

7 Q. Look at your phone and --

8 A. Yeah. Because I've looked at it earlier, and it has a record
9 of when I called. I called my office at 1:21. I called my
10 manager, co-worker, at 1:22. I called Nelson's Funeral Home for
11 mutual aid at 1:23. And then went back to see what I could do to
12 assist in the rescue and extrication of the individuals.

13 Q. So when you got up there, there were still viable ones still
14 in the bus?

15 A. Yes. Yes.

16 Q. So they hadn't been moved out yet?

17 A. No, sir.

18 Q. Okay. How many other ambulance units were up there?

19 A. That I -- I never saw. I mean, I saw Utopia's, but I guess
20 kind of a tunnel vision kind of thing that was -- I saw, I think,
21 at least one bird on the ground, and just a myriad of rescuers
22 and, you know --

23 Q. But everybody was still as --

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. -- still in the bus?

1 A. As far as I remember. There's one I'm not sure. I don't --
2 I can't recollect if she was still in there, where we made access
3 into the back part of the bus, because the initial entrance was
4 kind of blocked by the driver of the bus as well as just debris.
5 And it was kind of a -- unable to crawl in the normal door.

6 Q. Okay. And so that's when they started doing the extrication
7 in order to get the viable ones out?

8 A. We never removed, we never had to remove anybody to get to
9 the viable ones. Because it seemed all the viable ones were
10 across from each other, except for the Ms. Rose that was in the
11 back corner.

12 Q. The survivor?

13 A. The passenger -- yeah, the sole survivor.

14 Q. Sole survivor right now. Okay. And was there any issues you
15 feel regarding the response, the timeliness or --

16 A. It's all hindsight because you don't know what's going on and
17 how long they had been there. But as we've gone back and reviewed
18 with the department, reviewed the tapes and everything, they're
19 just -- and I don't know it's because of lack of information that
20 dispatch had or if there was a breakdown in communication once
21 dispatch got the information. So it's kind of hard to say. Here
22 again, hindsight is 20/20, and we can go back and say, well, you
23 should have, should have, should have, but, you know --

24 Q. Right. Okay. Anything else you feel that it's important I
25 should know about?

1 A. Not that I can think of. Not right off.

2 MR. KAMINSKI: Well, of course, I have your contact
3 information. If there's anything else, we can follow-up.

4 So, okay, that concludes our interview here with our
5 statement from Mr. Paul Stephens.

6 It is approximately 5 minutes after 10 or -- 5 minutes after
7 10.

8 (Whereupon, at 10:05 a.m., the interview was concluded.)

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Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of: *

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CHURCH BUS AND TRUCK CRASH NEAR
CONCAN, TEXAS ON MARCH 29, 2017

* Accident No.: HWY17MH011

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Interview of: AMURO FUENTES
Intermediate EMT, Uvalde EMS

Uvalde EMS Station
Uvalde, Texas

Tuesday,
April 4, 2017

APPEARANCES:

RONALD KAMINSKI, Survival Factors Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

I N D E X

ITEM

PAGE

Interview of Amuro Fuentes:

By Mr. Kaminski

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I N T E R V I E W

1
2 MR. KAMINSKI: Today's date is April 4th. My name is Ronald
3 Kaminski with the National Transportation Safety Board. I'm here
4 at the Uvalde EMS Station. I'm going to be talking to Amuro, A-m-
5 u-r-o, Fuentes, F-u-e-n-t-e-s. He is an Intermediate EMT here
6 with the Uvalde EMS, and he's going to give us a brief description
7 of when he got the call and he got up there, what he saw and what
8 he all did.

INTERVIEW OF AMURO FUENTES

9
10 BY MR. KAMINSKI:

11 Q. Go ahead, sir.

12 A. So we got the call. Can't really remember the times exactly,
13 but I know it was about -- after 1:00.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. And we made scene there -- like I say, I can't remember the
16 time exactly. I guess it was a little bit before 2 p.m. when we
17 got there. Because I know it was like 2:02 when I saw the time
18 there on scene, and we had already been there for like at least
19 maybe like 10 minutes.

20 We took off. The dispatcher on the radio, she said there
21 were two fatalities and three injured. That was what we heard on
22 the radio from our dispatch.

23 So the first thing we did was we requested MedAir 1 to
24 launch, MedAir 1 helicopter here, we have local in Uvalde. And
25 but now the dispatch actually, they actually said Uvalde, to

1 Uvalde Fire. They didn't even say EMS. They dispatched Uvalde
2 Fire. So, but we still ended up leaving because we knew it was an
3 accident. So we took off. And then I remember I called Aaron,
4 one of the firefighters, because I told him, hey, did you all go
5 to that call? Because, you know, they paged out Uvalde Fire.

6 Q. Right.

7 A. He's like, yeah, they paged out like 30 minutes ago. So
8 right away, I mean, I kind of like had in my mind that we're kind
9 of late for this accident.

10 Q. Right.

11 A. Because he said 30 minutes ago, that they had been there for
12 awhile already. So we still had the helicopter, everybody going
13 en route. And we get there on scene, and I got up -- I was in the
14 passenger, front passenger. I got up from my side, and Gene
15 Ayala, the guy from the fire department, Uvalde Fire --

16 Q. Yeah.

17 A. He was approaching us, and first thing he kind of did was
18 this to me like, you know, it's like --

19 Q. Over?

20 A. -- no use coming over. Yeah, it's over.

21 Q. Right.

22 A. I get off the truck, he's like -- and I told him how many?
23 He's like seven, seven fatalities. I'm like, seven? He's like,
24 yeah. And then he's like, I don't know if you all want to like,
25 you know, put the leads on for the JP, because they need that

1 strip, the cardiac monitor strip to like pronounce them.

2 Q. Right.

3 A. So, and then we get closer to the bus -- he's like, here,
4 I'll show you. We get closer to the bus, somebody else said there
5 was 10 fatalities, and that there was 8 in the bus, and they had 2
6 in the ambulance, Utopia ambulance.

7 So he takes me inside the bus, you know, it was like two or
8 three steps I went in there. Just took a look at everything and,
9 sure enough, you know, I think we counted like eight, eight in
10 there in the bus. And then my partner -- what's his name -- Rick
11 Ramos, he went in the ambulance. He said they had two over there.
12 So that was 10.

13 And he was talking to the guy from Utopia EMS, and I think
14 the Utopia guy agrees that he was going to do the charts for all
15 the patients because it was their district, their jurisdiction
16 over there. So we're like, all right, anything else we can do?
17 Like there's nothing we can do here anymore.

18 Q. Right.

19 A. So he's like, no. You all got some backboards? We left like
20 three backboards just to help out, I guess, taking the deceased
21 people out.

22 Q. Right. Now have you ever -- has there been problems before
23 that you -- how long have you been with the department here?

24 A. Here in Uvalde, I've been here for like 5½ years.

25 Q. Okay. And has there been other incidents that have come up

1 where you guys are kind of toned out late to the accident or
2 that --

3 A. No. This is actually like the first time we're like super
4 late. Like by the time we got there, it was maybe about an hour
5 and a half --

6 Q. Right.

7 A. -- from what the time that the incident happened. It had
8 been about an hour and a half. I mean, you can even tell on the
9 deceased people there, I mean, their color, you know --

10 Q. Sure.

11 A. -- the way they were like, you know.

12 Q. Right.

13 A. I mean, I took a look in there. It was --

14 Q. It was bad.

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. So as far as your -- with your experience, there hasn't been
17 too many issues with --

18 A. I'm in EMS for almost 20 years now.

19 Q. Right. But as for response. I mean, with the dispatch,
20 they've -- when Fire goes out, you guys go out, or not all the
21 time, or --

22 A. Usually, yeah. Usually when they page us for like a major
23 accident, Uvalde, they'll go. But sometimes they -- I guess they
24 assume that we're en route as well. But I think what I heard was
25 that Gene got there, and Gene asked the guy from Utopia, hey, do

1 you have anybody else en route coming over here? And I think he
2 was the one that called dispatch to page us out. Because the
3 Utopia guy, the Utopia EMS, they didn't page out anybody else.
4 They didn't call for backup at all. I think they only asked for a
5 helicopter, whatever. But --

6 Q. Yeah. I think they had five helicopters and --

7 A. Like five. I think I called dispatch on the phone. They
8 said they had five already en route. And -- yeah, because I --

9 Q. And I think three landed, and I think only two transported.

10 A. Yeah, three landed. A fourth one landed, which was the one I
11 requested, PHI. But they landed and everybody was deceased, so
12 they just landed and then they took off. You know, they got off
13 the helicopter, but somebody told them, hey, you can go ahead and
14 disregard, you know, they're all deceased. They just walked back
15 to the helicopter.

16 Q. Took off.

17 A. Took off, yeah.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. Yeah. By the time we got there, the third one was already
20 launching out. That was Air Evac.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. The other two had already gone. The third helicopter was
23 just taking off when we got there. And like I say, we got there,
24 everybody was deceased, you know, obvious deaths.

25 Q. Right.

1 A. So, I mean, my partner talked to the other guy about who was
2 going to do the charts for who. They agreed they were going to do
3 them all, so we just left.

4 Q. Yeah, I'm going up to Utopia tomorrow morning.

5 A. Yeah. So --

6 Q. Take care of that.

7 A. But, yeah, I mean, I think first thing they should have done
8 was like dispatch everybody.

9 Q. Right.

10 A. You know, I mean, especially --

11 Q. You can always call them back.

12 A. Yeah. But, I mean, especially like as soon as they make
13 scene, they should have right away called dispatch, just tell
14 them, hey, we got 15 patients; you know, whoever is the closest
15 one, dispatch everybody, I mean.

16 Q. Right.

17 A. We've had incidents where we had a school bus roll over.

18 Q. Oh.

19 A. Two, 3 years ago. And we had three trucks here, and I as
20 coming in from San Antonio with my partner, and the first thing I
21 told dispatch, go out and dispatch Alamo as well. They're the
22 ones across the street. You know, we have --

23 Q. Because there's a private, private service.

24 A. Yeah. They said like 15, 16 patients. So, you know, we took
25 off, all three of them. They have like three or four trucks. So

1 they took off as well, so -- and then we got there and we -- it
2 wasn't that bad of a deal. So my -- our clinical director was
3 there, so he kind of like triaged everybody so -- but everybody
4 got to, you know --

5 Q. Right.

6 A. -- do patient care, transported. We flew out like three
7 patients, some of them to the hospital. The ones that were
8 walking, not too badly hurt, I think they all went like on
9 different bus. Everybody got checked out.

10 Q. Right, right.

11 A. But, yeah, first thing we do is, multiple patients we always
12 dispatch other resources.

13 MR. KAMINSKI: Okay. That concludes our interview here.
14 It's approximately 9:50.

15 (Whereupon, at 9:50 a.m., 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: CHURCH BUS AND TRUCK CRASH NEAR
CONCAN, TEXAS ON MARCH 29, 2017
Interview of Amuro Fuentes

ACCIDENT NUMBER: HWY17MH011

PLACE: Uvalde, Texas

DATE: April 4, 2017

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.

Katherine Motley
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of: *

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CHURCH BUS AND TRUCK CRASH NEAR
CONCAN, TEXAS ON MARCH 29, 2017

* Accident No.: HWY17MH011

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Interview of: AMANDA SHOEMAKE

Basic EMT, Uvalde EMS

Uvalde EMS Station
Uvalde, Texas

Tuesday,
April 4, 2017

APPEARANCES:

RONALD KAMINSKI, Survival Factors Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

I N D E X

ITEM

PAGE

Interview of Amanda Shoemake:

By Mr. Kaminski

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I N T E R V I E W

1
2 MR. KAMINSKI: Today's date is April 4th. My name is Ronald
3 Kaminski with the National Transportation Safety Board. I'm
4 going to be talking with Amanda Shoemake, S-h-o-e-m-a-k-e. She is
5 a Basic EMT here at the Uvalde EMS Station.

INTERVIEW OF AMANDA SHOEMAKE

6
7 BY MR. KAMINSKI:

8 Q. So, Amanda, if you can please just give me a description of
9 when you got the call and when you got up there what you saw and
10 what you all did.

11 A. All right. So when we got paged out, we were paged out as
12 Fire. So we went en route. Our supervisor called dispatch to be
13 sure that it was our call, that they needed us and it wasn't
14 Utopia's call. So she went ahead and let us know that it was our
15 -- that we were assisting Utopia.

16 So once we made scene, one of the firefighters had said there
17 were seven DOA on scene. As we made it up to the actual wreck, I
18 believe it was Gene Ayala who said there was 10 DOA; there's -- in
19 the, in the bus. There was two deceased in the ambulance, and
20 that three had been flown. Somebody had asked why we weren't
21 removing -- why the patients weren't being pulled out of the bus,
22 and I believe it was a firefighter or police officer said they
23 were waiting for the JP to make scene. So -- and everything that
24 we could see was, I mean, obvious signs of death. So --

25 Q. And you guys got out there a little bit late. Do you have a

1 -- was it like 1:30 you got out there?

2 A. It was an hour and a half after the initial, after Utopia got
3 paged out as well, when we made scene. So it was a good while.

4 Q. Yeah, yeah.

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. And by then it was, everything was pretty much -- the
7 deceased were there; they had already transported everybody that
8 was viable?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. And so once we made scene -- and nobody was doing anything.
12 I mean, the generators were still running for the jaws of life and
13 stuff, but nobody was cutting. None of the EMTs or paramedics
14 were actually doing anything on scene. Everybody's just kind of
15 walking around.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. So that's what we walked up on.

18 Q. And have you had -- how long have you been with the
19 department and an EMT?

20 A. July will be 3 years.

21 Q. Okay. And have you noticed, has there been any other issues
22 regarding late dispatch or late notification to respond? No?

23 A. Not that -- no, not while I'm on shift, I don't believe.

24 Q. Okay. And so everything was pretty much over when you got
25 there, and --

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Okay. Did you guys -- did the firefighters, they did all the
3 removal of the bodies and --

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. -- extrication, all that stuff.

6 A. They did all that.

7 MR. KAMINSKI: Okay, Okay, that should be it. I thank you
8 for your time and your statement.

9 It is approximately 9:40.

10 (Whereupon, at 9:40 a.m., the interview was concluded.)

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