



Survival Factors Attachment 9 – Good Samaritan and Witness Interviews

Penwell, Texas

HWY15MH004

(63 pages)

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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PRISON TRANSPORT BUS CRASH

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NEAR PENWELL, TEXAS

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Docket No.: HWY-15-MH-004

JANUARY 14, 2015

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Telephonic Interview of: [REDACTED]

Central Fire Station
Odessa, Texas

Sunday,
January 18, 2015

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice.

BEFORE:

[REDACTED]
Survival Factors Investigator

APPEARANCES:

████████████████████, Survival Factors Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

I N D E X

ITEM

PAGE

Telephonic Interview of [REDACTED] :

By Mr. [REDACTED]

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I N T E R V I E W

1

2 BY MR. [REDACTED]:

2

3 Q. Hello, I'm looking for --

3

4 A. Hello?

4

5 Q. Yes, I'm looking for Mr. [REDACTED].

5

6 A. You got me.

6

7 Q. Mr. [REDACTED], my name is [REDACTED]. I'm with the
8 National Transportation Safety Board.

7

9 A. Yes, sir. How are you doing, [REDACTED]? I
10 understand you've been a busy man.

9

11 Q. Yes, sir, I have. I just wanted to -- I got your
12 contact information from Trooper [REDACTED].

11

13 A. Yes, sir.

13

14 Q. This is regarding the crash that you went down and
15 helped on back on the 14th, last Wednesday.

14

16 A. Yes, sir.

16

17 Q. Okay. Mr. [REDACTED], your first name is [REDACTED]? Is it
18 [REDACTED]?

17

19 A. No. Yes, sir, just [REDACTED], just like it's spelled.
20 Yes, sir.

19

21 Q. Okay. And [REDACTED] is [REDACTED] --

21

22 A. Like it sounds, rather. Yes.

22

23 Q. -- [REDACTED]?

23

24 A. Yes, sir.

24

25 Q. Okay. And do you have a couple of minutes I can talk to

25

1 you, then?

2 A. Oh, I do. I've got all -- plenty of time. Just take
3 your time. I'm driving. I'm good.

4 INTERVIEW OF [REDACTED]

5 BY MR. [REDACTED]:

6 Q. Okay. Well, basically, I just want to get a description
7 of what you saw, if you --

8 A. Okay.

9 Q. And then what all you did. I heard you were a big help
10 down there and I just want to get a statement from you as to what
11 you saw and what you all did.

12 Q. Certainly. Well, (indiscernible) as I recall -- see,
13 I've been trying to, you know, think about this quite a bit. But
14 as I recall, we were -- most everybody was in the left-hand lane
15 because the trooper was on the side, and it was still dark,
16 mostly.

17 First thing it seemed like I heard was a very large boom
18 that -- now, what that was, I do not know. And then it seemed
19 like everything just went -- stuff started happening. The bus
20 seemed to be swerving. And again, this is kind of a -- it's not
21 going to be a very great description, but something was going on
22 there. I couldn't tell exactly what. And all of a sudden there
23 was a piece of -- or the end of the whole thing, of the guardrail,
24 came to peel out. And, of course, when all of this started
25 happening, I started getting over and braking and going to the

1 right lane. There was also a car there, and I'm not sure exactly
2 how it got involved. I do know it ended up with a flat tire and a
3 dinged-up left quarter fender. And there was a pickup truck
4 there. I don't think it was involved at all or had any damage to
5 it.

6 But anyway, got around to the right, and as I was
7 approaching, the bus was swerving. It seemed like it kind of
8 hopped up or something, went sort of sideways, and then, for lack
9 of a better description, it seemed like it just dove off to the
10 left, down between the bridge, and disappeared. And by that time,
11 I was up to it and saw the train going by.

12 I braked and -- you know, and still continuing to brake,
13 got right past the edge of the bridge and pulled over, hit my
14 four-ways and jumped out and ran back to see -- I checked with the
15 guys in the car. They were okay. And then I took off down in
16 between the -- in through the median to go down to where the
17 tracks, to where I knew that bus and what a very, very, very bad
18 thing happened to happen was there.

19 And I slipped initially, slightly, on the concrete -- I
20 didn't realize there was ice there -- and crawled all the way
21 down. Apparently, a real thin coat of ice. Got down there to the
22 tracks and could not figure out where -- what in the world that
23 bus must have been hauling for all those passengers to be
24 everywhere. And then I saw the bus on down the tracks, the other
25 side of the bridge, right, you know, where it was.

1 Ran down there, saw the two -- realized it was a prison
2 bus when I saw the two guards. The one gentleman was dead. The
3 other one, his right leg there, I could see his face. He was not
4 dead yet. He was breathing. Climbed up on the bus and looked
5 down and saw the -- all the bodies, all the guys that was dead.
6 It was no sound at all.

7 Hollered is anybody alive, and there was a couple of
8 them were still conscious and they, you know, made some racket or
9 -- to help us get them out, that kind of thing. And by then, not
10 long after that, the trooper got there, and we tried to figure out
11 what to do and everything else. Another other gentleman came -- I
12 don't know where he came from -- a little bit later.

13 We got a seat out of the way so that I could actually
14 get some access to the bus. We got down in there trying to help
15 the guys, the two that were conscious. It was one of the -- I
16 don't remember their names, but I just, well, know they were all
17 cuffed together in duals and it was just a mass of bodies more
18 than anything else. And one gentleman was -- the one in front was
19 alive and conscious said, you know, can I get him unhandcuffed.
20 The trooper tried to get me the key and we finally got him
21 uncuffed. But it just kind of went on from there, just trying to
22 get them out.

23 Q. Okay, and --

24 A. I did not --

25 Q. Go ahead.

1 A. Go ahead. I'm sorry.

2 Q. No, no, no. You go ahead. You go with your whole
3 story. Go ahead.

4 A. I've heard the initial -- the reports about the ice. I
5 can't -- I didn't experience any ice. I don't know what happened.
6 I'm trying to figure that out. I really don't know. I can't say
7 what happened to that bus. So, I don't know what --

8 Q. Okay. But again, start -- kind of start over.

9 A. -- what (indiscernible).

10 Q. You mentioned that the bus kind of -- it looked like it
11 hopped, hopped up?

12 A. It did. It did.

13 Q. And then it swerved?

14 A. It seemed like it did. Like it swerved, like maybe -- I
15 was thinking maybe it got on the guardrail or something. The
16 light wasn't that good because it was still pretty dark, but I
17 remember seeing it like it -- it was like it -- it ended up sort
18 of sideways after the boom and the guardrail comes flying out into
19 the left lane. And then it just seemed like it was just, it just
20 went -- it went down -- it was like it was almost on autopilot,
21 went between the bridges down, disappeared.

22 Q. Right. So the boom you heard, is that the noise when
23 you heard it go through the guardrail?

24 A. No, sir. That was before then.

25 Q. That was before?

1 A. That was -- well, that was before I -- that was before I
2 saw the guardrail peeling out. I don't know -- like, my first
3 thought, and from the sound -- and I don't know this. I'm not
4 saying this is what happened --

5 Q. Sure.

6 A. -- but it sounded like a tire blew. It sounded -- the
7 sound was similar to what I've heard when my 18-wheeler tires blow
8 out. It was a big boom.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. Whether that was when that bus -- did it slip on ice and
11 hit the guardrail? I don't know. There was definitely a boom.

12 Q. Okay. And that's when you saw --

13 A. That was my first thought.

14 Q. So you heard the boom --

15 A. Right. Then I saw everything going crazy.

16 Q. Right.

17 A. Right.

18 Q. Okay, so you heard --

19 A. It just got all hectic, right.

20 Q. So you heard the boom and then you see it kind of
21 swerving a little bit, or --

22 A. Swerving. It seemed like it swerved hard.

23 Q. Hard which way?

24 A. I wasn't focusing on it.

25 Q. Which way did it swerve?

1 A. Seemed like hard to, hard to the left. It swerved to
2 the left.

3 Q. Swerved to the left?

4 A. As I recall.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. Yes, sir. And that's what made me think -- I mean,
7 because it all happened so, so fast.

8 Q. Sure.

9 A. I mean, it was just over just like that. And I was in
10 the lane behind, because like I said, we were moved over because
11 the trooper -- you know, giving him the lane because there was a
12 -- and what he was doing on the right, I don't know. I don't
13 remember if he was giving somebody a ticket. I don't remember if
14 there was another car there. But I know he was over there.

15 Q. Right.

16 A. And that's why we were -- I was in the left lane behind
17 him. We were probably running about, I'm going to -- I run
18 normally about 55 or 60 because I try to conserve fuel. So I'm --
19 we were probably in that range, between 55 and 60, if that.

20 Q. Okay. Now, what --

21 A. At that time.

22 Q. Did the roads seem icy to you?

23 A. No, sir.

24 Q. No?

25 A. And I'll tell you this, because I'm trying to figure it

1 out. Later on, I -- well, it was -- there may have been some
2 icing. I don't know, but there was ice on my mirrors. I had to
3 turn on my mirror heaters to clear my mirrors. I mean, ice would
4 form on the front of them mirrors. You could see it frozen on the
5 mirrors.

6 As far as on the road, I had not experienced any icing.
7 I left Big Spring, Texas that morning, had come through Midland
8 and Odessa, and I had not experienced any icing. And that -- and
9 what puzzles me about the ice was that when that happened, I know
10 I got on my brakes hard and swerved to the right, to the right
11 lane, to get over so I wasn't hitting that guardrail.

12 Q. Right.

13 A. I didn't -- and I was on brakes hard enough to where I
14 could stop as soon as I could, and I stopped as soon as I -- and I
15 pulled up literally right as I got past the bridge so I could be
16 further off the road. I didn't experience any traction issues.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. As far as anybody else, I cannot say, but I know I
19 didn't. I was loaded. I weighed about 58,000 pounds, 18-wheeler,
20 running 55 or 60 or so. I didn't experience any. Now, whether it
21 was there or not, I cannot say. And I was the same lane he was.
22 You know, and the accident --

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. You know, ever since -- the fact that the bus went down
25 in between the bridge, I know he did not make it to the bridge

1 because it went down between the bridges.

2 Q. Right.

3 A. As I'm sure you guys know.

4 Q. Yeah, yeah. Now this other car that you said that
5 had --

6 A. Yes, sir.

7 Q. -- like a flat tire, and you think it had the left rear
8 quarter panel damage from the guardrail hitting it?

9 A. I'm not -- I thought that was what it was from. I asked
10 him when I came back up, when I left the scene. He was still
11 there sitting in his car, asking, you know -- because he never
12 left, went down there. He was still there. He said I heard it's
13 bad. I said, yeah, it's really bad. And he said he -- I think he
14 -- I can't quote what he said verbatim, but he said he didn't
15 (indiscernible) something about the guardrail or something hitting
16 him, and that's all.

17 Q. Okay. Okay, so how much did you get -- how much did
18 you --

19 A. Left-front corner damage to his car and a flat left
20 steering tire.

21 Q. Okay. And then -- but how much -- when you got down to
22 the bus and you saw the two guys, one deceased --

23 A. Yes, sir.

24 Q. -- and one that was still partially breathing and --

25 A. Yes, sir. He was still breathing because he had -- I

1 could see his breath coming, you know, it was frost.

2 Q. Sure.

3 A. You know, when your breath's cold, that -- you know, and
4 I told the trooper when he got there that this man's dead and this
5 guy's still alive, and there's guys, you know, in there. Don't
6 know how many. Had no idea. They were all just piled up.

7 Q. And so you did get into the bus, then, to try to help
8 out?

9 A. Yes, sir, yes, sir.

10 Q. Okay. And you helped remove at least two people?

11 A. At least two. Sure.

12 Q. Okay. And one was --

13 A. Well, one was (indiscernible) and one was deceased. We
14 just -- the paramedics got there and their lady, a paramedic lady
15 named [REDACTED], and I can't remember the gentleman's name, we were in
16 there quite a bit. We just could not -- I can't describe how
17 tangled up they were. I mean, you may have a -- again, the fact
18 that they were -- I can't imagine how to describe how difficult it
19 was just to try to get them out. The fact that they were all just
20 piled -- you know, you have 12 people piled on top of each other
21 in every shape of the human body can be.

22 The two conscious ones -- and, I don't know, maybe
23 three. There was one guy, I never did see his face till we got
24 him -- till he came out, because all I could see was his foot
25 sticking out and he was moving it. But, yeah, we worked for a

1 long time trying to get them out. Couldn't get them out. Hard to
2 get them out. Because the one lady's name was Kayla, she was
3 there about all the time I was.

4 Q. Yeah, I talked to her yesterday.

5 A. Okay, okay, yeah. Good people, both of them. Matter of
6 fact, everybody I saw there was doing phenomenal job considering
7 the situation. It was very bad.

8 Q. Right. Yeah, that's what the firefighters and EMT or
9 paramedics were telling me, that --

10 A. Yes, sir.

11 Q. Okay. So you removed at least two people, probably
12 more, you think, with the help --

13 A. Probably more. I was still in there when we started
14 cutting everything out. Because we couldn't, we just couldn't get
15 -- the condition everything was in, and the cage was such that you
16 couldn't -- you had to actually physically lift the bodies up to
17 get -- after you got them unhandcuffed just to get them out. Got
18 them on -- put them on a backboard just to get them out of -- it
19 was a very small access point considering the fact that the bus
20 was on its side.

21 Q. Right.

22 A. And the cage was all crumpled up and all of them were
23 now piled up.

24 Q. Below it, below that opening.

25 A. They only (inaudible) live guys.

1 Q. Right.

2 A. Yes, sir. Yes, sir. And then at one point they -- the
3 fire department guys, the rescue guys got the -- they sawed and
4 got access to it that way, to the side, which made getting them
5 out actually possible. And I left after there were no -- the live
6 anyway -- the survivors were out. There were about 3 or 4 of the
7 deceased guys were in there, and there was probably 100 people
8 there by then, so I left.

9 Q. Sure, okay. Okay, if you don't mind, if I have any
10 follow-up questions, any problem with me giving you a call back?

11 A. Oh, certainly.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. Certainly, sir, any time. Not a problem. Be glad to
14 help any way I can.

15 Q. Well, I thank you very much for your time and want to
16 thank you for also going out to help out in this tragic situation.
17 Initially, I'm sure -- I know eventually they had plenty of
18 people, but initially, you know, you were -- from what I'm hearing
19 from the firemen and paramedics, you were a big help out there,
20 including the battalion chief said the same thing.

21 A. That's very gracious of them. I appreciate that. I was
22 impressed by all of them. I thank you very much. You have a very
23 difficult task. I appreciate what you do.

24 Q. Well, thank you, sir, and safe driving to you.

25 A. Always. Thanks you very much.

1 Q. Okay, sir. Bye-bye.

2 A. All right, bye-bye.

3 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: PRISON TRANSPORT BUS CRASH
 NEAR PENWELL, TEXAS
 JANUARY 14, 2015
 Telephonic Interview of [REDACTED]

DOCKET NUMBER: HWY-14-MH-014

PLACE: Odessa, Texas

DATE: January 18, 2015

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.

[REDACTED]
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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PRISON TRANSPORT BUS CRASH

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NEAR PENWELL, TEXAS

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Docket No.: HWY-15-MH-004

JANUARY 14, 2015

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Telephonic Interview of:



Odessa, Texas

Sunday,

January 18, 2015

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice.

BEFORE:



Survival Factors Investigator



APPEARANCES:

██████████, Survival Factors Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

I N D E X

ITEM

PAGE

Telephonic Interview of [REDACTED] :

By [REDACTED]

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I N T E R V I E W

1

2 BY MR. [REDACTED]:

2

3 Q. Can I speak to Mr. [REDACTED], please?

3

4 A. This is he.

4

5 Q. Mr. [REDACTED], my name is [REDACTED]. I'm an
6 investigator with the National Transportation Safety Board.

5

7 A. Yes, sir.

7

8 Q. And I got your name and contact information from Trooper
9 [REDACTED].

8

10 A. Yes, sir.

10

11 Q. And this is regarding the bus crash back on Wednesday.

11

12 A. Yes, sir.

12

13 Q. And do you have a couple minutes I can talk to you?

13

14 A. Sure. I'm driving down the road, so if I lose you, I'll
15 call you back.

14

16 Q. Okay, I appreciate that.

16

17 INTERVIEW OF [REDACTED]

17

18 BY MR. [REDACTED]:

18

19 Q. So, Mr. [REDACTED], your last name is spelled [REDACTED]?

19

20 A. Yes, sir.

20

21 Q. Okay, first name [REDACTED]?

21

22 A. Yes, sir.

22

23 Q. Okay, great. So, Mr. [REDACTED], if you can just tell me
24 where you were and what you saw and what you all did regarding the
25 crash on the 14th?

23

24

25

1 A. I pulled up pretty close to -- what was the trooper's
2 name that gave you my name?

3 Q. [REDACTED].

4 A. I was -- I pulled up right behind him, and we went
5 down -- hang on just one second. Okay.

6 Q. Yeah, that's much better.

7 A. I pulled up right behind him. I saw the guardrail
8 stretched out across the interstate and, you know, we could tell
9 that an accident had just happened. And then the trooper pulled
10 around me and stopped, and I stopped behind him. We went down
11 there to the crash site. We didn't know exactly what it was until
12 we got down in the bottom where the railroad tracks were. And
13 then we went to start assess, you know, whether or not we had any
14 live patients or victims or, you know, what exactly we had down
15 there.

16 We saw the two cab occupants, the two -- I guess the
17 officers that were working in the bus, and I guess the driver and
18 the co-pilot, probably.

19 Q. Yes.

20 A. They were exposed, laying outside of the vehicle. I
21 noticed one was deceased. The other was unconscious and
22 nonresponsive. He was still breathing at the time. And then
23 there were several inmates in the bus screaming for help. And so
24 I went back up to my truck and I got my first aid medical kit that
25 I carry with me, and by the time I got back down there, the

1 corrections officer that was breathing had stopped breathing. I
2 reassessed him for a pulse and I couldn't find a pulse on him.

3 By that time, the first units for the Odessa Fire
4 Department had arrived on scene, and that was the battalion chief
5 and their first EMS unit. And we went -- one of their
6 firefighters got into the bus with another bystander, and they
7 started assessing people that were inside the bus. And then they
8 said that we had another person in the back of the bus. So myself
9 and two other gentlemen that were bystanders that were there went
10 and lifted up the back door, and I started to pull some debris
11 away and saw the third officer -- and I have dropped his name for
12 some reason, but I want to say it was [REDACTED] something.

13 Q. Okay. Yeah, I just know of the -- Trooper [REDACTED]. I
14 didn't, I didn't -- I don't recall any other troopers.

15 A. Well, he wasn't a trooper. This was the other
16 corrections officer that was in the bus.

17 Q. Oh, yes.

18 A. He was a surviving officer, and I think his last name
19 was [REDACTED].

20 Q. Yes.

21 A. I think his first name was [REDACTED].

22 Q. Yes, that's correct.

23 A. Okay. So we -- by this time, another firefighter
24 arrived to help me, and we put a KED and a C collar on Mr. [REDACTED]
25 and proceeded to extricate him from the back of the bus, and we

1 loaded him and an inmate in the ambulance.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. And then the battalion chief asked me if I would go walk
4 the rails down to -- there were several other firefighters that
5 arrived at this point, and he was concerned that there may be
6 somebody else strung up down the rail line where the train had
7 come to a stop. So I told him I would go walk the rail line.

8 I'm a retired firefighter. I was a firefighter a little
9 over 22 years. So I told him that I would go take care of that,
10 and I went and walked down to the end of the train where the train
11 had stopped and didn't -- I didn't see any other, any other
12 victims laying there. And then I caught a ride back to the scene
13 of the crash with a sheriff's deputy, and then I just stood around
14 and observed for a few minutes, and I asked the DPS trooper if he
15 needed me to stay around.

16 At the time that I left, we had 5 confirmed fatalities,
17 and then I learned later that we had a total of 10 in the crash.

18 Q. Right. So were you there with the trooper, and were you
19 there when he was trying to pull that -- the jump seat out? Or
20 was that already done while you were going to get your medic bag?

21 A. They were pulling the jump seat out when I was headed up
22 to go get my medic bag. And then by the time I got back down --
23 I'm guessing it was a jump seat. It was whatever was blocking off
24 their access into the actual bus.

25 Q. Yeah.

1 A. So I'm guessing it was part of the jump seat. It was
2 hard to tell what it was. But when I got back, another gentleman
3 that was a bystander, and I didn't get his name, he was already
4 inside the bus, and the first medical unit from the Odessa Fire
5 Department had made its way down to the crash site and a female
6 firefighter was crawling up in the bus with the other gentleman to
7 start assessing the patients that they had in the bus.

8 Q. Okay. So you never got in the bus?

9 A. I never got in the bus. I went -- I was standing
10 outside waiting for them, see if they were going to start handing
11 people out. And then they said that they heard somebody screaming
12 in the back of the bus, and so me and another firefighter, we went
13 to the back of the bus and that's where we found Mr. [REDACTED].

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. And we began working on him and extricating him from the
16 back of the bus.

17 Q. Okay. I'm just trying to write all this down. So you
18 didn't -- I mean, in treating Mr. [REDACTED], what all did you try
19 doing?

20 A. All we did was we put a C collar on him. He was
21 conscious. He was able to tell me his name. And so, you know, he
22 had several lacerations to his face and head, and he obviously had
23 a broken left humerus and probably radius and all that. I didn't
24 really look at this entire arm. We just know that when we went to
25 pick him up his arm looked pretty mused. You could tell that he

1 had, you know, a broken humerus. But we put a C collar on him and
2 then a KED extrication device on him, and then we got him -- once
3 we got him all strapped in, myself, a firefighter, and the
4 battalion chief, which is [REDACTED], with two bystanders
5 holding the door open and holding a piece of debris back so that
6 we could get the injured officer out, we proceeded to extricate
7 him from the back of the bus.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. Other than that, that's really all I had to do with as
10 far as treating anybody. That's -- all we did was just extricate
11 him from the bus and put him in the ambulance.

12 Q. Right. And I guess one of the firefighters, the
13 paramedics got some kind of KED, I guess it's called?

14 A. Yes, sir.

15 Q. Then wrapped it around him to --

16 A. Yeah, we put the KED on Mr. [REDACTED] in order for us to get
17 him out.

18 Q. Okay. So you didn't see the accident. You just saw
19 when you came up, you saw that the guardrail was swept out into
20 the lanes, and so then you kind of just followed up behind the
21 trooper when he pulled in and parked there?

22 A. Correct. I parked right behind him. We didn't know
23 what had happened. I mean, I knew somebody had obviously gone off
24 right there, but we didn't know what it was. And, I mean, it must
25 have happened just minutes ahead of me because I was traveling

1 westbound headed out to -- towards Mencos (ph.). So --

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. Well, once we got down there, we saw the bus, and that's
4 when we realized we had a really bad accident, so I didn't -- all
5 I saw was the guardrail, and people in front of me were swerving
6 around the guardrail. I didn't even see that there was a pickup,
7 a dually pickup rolled over on the eastbound lane until after I
8 was coming back up the second time to get my medical bag. So I
9 didn't even see that initially.

10 Q. Right. Okay, so -- and when you're saying "we" who else
11 are you -- did somebody else go down with you, or --

12 A. Well, I'm talking about me and the DPS officer. We were
13 the only two that -- I mean, when we got to the bottom, there
14 was -- I assumed the guy was a truck driver. He was walking up
15 from the other side of the overpass, from the west side of the
16 overpass. We went down on the east side of the overpass, down the
17 concrete embankment, and then went down into where the crash was.

18 Q. Okay. Okay. I appreciate your taking some time to talk
19 with me, and if you don't mind, if I have any follow-up questions,
20 any problems with me giving you a call back?

21 A. Not a problem at all. Anything you need from me, I'll
22 be glad to help you.

23 Q. Okay, sir. I appreciate your help and appreciate you
24 helping out at the scene.

25 A. Yeah. You know, what else can you do?

1 Q. Sure.

2 A. Yeah, it was a -- that was a really bad deal, so --

3 Q. I understand. Oh, yeah. Okay, Mr. [REDACTED], I appreciate
4 your help very much.

5 A. All right, thank you.

6 Q. Thank you.

7 A. All right. Bye-bye.

8 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: PRISON TRANSPORT BUS CRASH
 NEAR PENWELL, TEXAS
 JANUARY 14, 2015
 Telephonic Interview of [REDACTED]

DOCKET NUMBER: HWY-14-MH-014

PLACE: Odessa, Texas

DATE: January 18, 2015

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.

[REDACTED]
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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PRISON TRANSPORT BUS CRASH

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NEAR PENWELL, TEXAS

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Docket No.: HWY-15-MH-004

JANUARY 14, 2015

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Interview of: [REDACTED]

Central Station
Odessa Fire Department
Odessa, Texas

Tuesday,
January 20, 2015

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice.

BEFORE: [REDACTED]

Survival Factors Investigator

APPEARANCES:

████████████████████, Survival Factors Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

SGT. ██████████

████████████████████

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By Mr. [REDACTED]		13

I N T E R V I E W

1
2 MR. [REDACTED]: Today's date is January 20th. I'm at the
3 DPS station here in Odessa with Sgt. [REDACTED], [REDACTED], and
4 myself [REDACTED]. And we're here to get a statement from
5 Mr. [REDACTED].

6 So do you want to start off, Sergeant?

7 SGT. [REDACTED]: Yes, sir. What I've been sent is a list
8 of -- it's 25 questions generated by the state crash team that
9 works for DPS.

10 MR. [REDACTED]: Okay.

11 SGT. [REDACTED]: So unless you guys have a different plan,
12 I was just going to run through these questions. And --

13 MR. [REDACTED]: Okay.

14 SGT. [REDACTED]: -- answer them, I guess, as best as you
15 remember.

16 MR. [REDACTED]: Okay.

17 SGT. [REDACTED]: Right. He's got a statement that I read
18 over earlier and will cover a lot of these questions. I'm not
19 sure if you all would want a copy of that later, or however that's
20 going to work.

21 MR. [REDACTED]: Yeah.

22 MR. [REDACTED]: Sure.

23 SGT. [REDACTED]: All right.

24 INTERVIEW OF [REDACTED]

25 BY SGT. [REDACTED]:

1 Q. What vehicle were you driving?

2 A. I was driving a 2013 Ford F550, with a flatbed with a
3 gooseneck trailer.

4 Q. What direction were you traveling?

5 A. West.

6 Q. What were the present conditions of the roadway when you
7 crossed the overpass?

8 A. It was misty. I remember it being 34 degrees on my dash
9 temperature readout. And I was using my windshield wipers
10 intermittently for the road grime and the mist.

11 Q. And can you remember the -- approximately how fast you
12 were travelling over the overpass?

13 A. I was doing about 65.

14 Q. Did the existing conditions cause you to reduce your
15 speed below the posted speed limit?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Did the existing conditions cause you to take any other
18 precautions in this specific area?

19 A. I wasn't driving with cruise control.

20 Q. And you normally would, I guess?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Okay. Was there a black and white DPS patrol car
23 present anywhere near this location at the time you passed over
24 this overpass?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. If so, were the lights activated?

2 A. They were.

3 Q. Which lights were activated?

4 A. The red and blue rear -- rear side of the cab.

5 Q. Okay. And did you notice any caution arrows directing
6 any lane changes?

7 A. No.

8 Q. Did you see any other fire, EMS, or first responder
9 personnel stopped at or near this location when you passed?

10 A. No.

11 Q. Did you see any tow trucks in the area?

12 A. No.

13 Q. Did you see any signs of a wreck in this area?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. What can you remember about the right side of the
16 roadway in this area when you passed?

17 A. There was a red Ford pickup facing the opposite --
18 facing oncoming traffic, off of the pavement, between the north
19 service road and the westbound lanes of I-20.

20 Q. And you said you'd seen a wreck. So this red pickup was
21 the wreck vehicle?

22 A. That was that vehicle.

23 Q. What can you remember about the left side of the roadway
24 in this area as you passed?

25 A. As I approached the bridge, I checked my right mirror to

1 make sure that I was clear of the slower moving semi-trailer that
2 had entered the roadway from the weigh station. And we had
3 passed, already passed the trooper on the side of the road. And
4 as I was looking to see if I was clear, I noticed the guardrail
5 extended out into the passing lane past the solid yellow white
6 line. It was probably sticking out 2 foot.

7 Q. And did you call that line yellow and white?

8 A. I called that line yellow.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. And the dotted line in the middle would have been white.

11 Q. Got it, okay. This gets into a little bit more
12 specifics, but let's go to that guardrail. What conditions can
13 you remember about the left-side guardrail protecting the center
14 median?

15 A. It was peeled back into the -- I guess it would have
16 been back towards the west, into the lane, the passing lane of
17 westbound I-20.

18 Q. Yes, sir. Was any part of the guardrail in or near any
19 lane of travel near the overpass?

20 A. It was in the left passing lane.

21 Q. Okay. How far into the road would be your -- what would
22 be your estimation of how far into the road the guardrail was?

23 A. About 2 foot.

24 Q. Did you hit the guardrail when you passed it?

25 A. No. I barely missed it.

1 Q. And did you stop after passing the guardrail in the
2 road?

3 A. No.

4 Q. Did you have to change lanes to avoid the guardrail?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Can you describe that one? That lane change.

7 A. Like, I had -- like I said, I had already looked in my
8 passenger side mirror to check to make sure I was past the semi.
9 And then I looked back and seen that guardrail, and I remember
10 saying, oh shit, and pulled to the right. No blinker, no nothing,
11 just getting over, and I feel like I barely missed that guardrail.
12 And then I made sure that I was in the right-hand lane. And then
13 I looked to my driver side mirror again to see if the semi behind
14 me made it, because there was one right behind me. And he made
15 it.

16 By this time I'm almost all the way at the bottom of the
17 cap rock. And I look ahead in my lane to make sure there's
18 nothing else. Look back in my driver side mirror, and that's when
19 I saw what I now know was the bus going off the overpass. At the
20 time I didn't know what I'd saw.

21 Q. Do you remember the roadway being icy near the bridge?

22 A. No, it was not icy. Not that I -- I never slipped, lost
23 traction. I do remember it being wet.

24 Q. You may have answered this already, but just for
25 clarity, and it's on the list, did you see any vehicle hit the

1 guardrail?

2 A. I did not see them hit the guardrail, no.

3 Q. Did you see the inmate bus prior to the crash occurring?

4 A. No.

5 Q. Could see the crash occur from your vantage point?

6 A. I saw what I now know was the back of the bus
7 disappearing between the two bridges. At the time I thought it
8 was a semi-truck or wasn't sure that I saw what I saw.

9 MR. [REDACTED]: You saw that in the rearview mirror?

10 MR. [REDACTED]: In my side view mirror, yes, sir.

11 MR. [REDACTED]: Side view mirror.

12 BY SGT. [REDACTED]:

13 Q. Did you see any other vehicles traveling with or around
14 the inmate bus?

15 A. No. I never saw the inmate bus.

16 Q. And how much time elapsed between you passing the
17 guardrail in the road and what --

18 A. What I saw was 30, 45 seconds probably.

19 Q. And I know it's in your statement from earlier, but can
20 you give us a ballpark on the times?

21 A. It was 7:45.

22 Q. Because you left from?

23 A. Odessa. I left my Odessa yard at 7:30. And I remember
24 -- well, I had gotten a phone call right before that happened.
25 Then I went back and checked the time on that phone call.

1 Q. And was it daylight?

2 A. It was -- it should have been, but with it being misty
3 and overcast it was gloomy.

4 Q. Yes, sir.

5 A. I mean, we was still traveling with headlights on.

6 Q. Right.

7 A. And that guardrail blended right in to all the gray
8 behind it.

9 SGT. [REDACTED]: Gentlemen, any other questions or some
10 follow-up?

11 BY MR. [REDACTED]:

12 Q. Yeah, you know -- I'm going to draw a little picture
13 here. You know sometimes you're driving down the road and you see
14 the very end of a guardrail and it will be black and yellow with
15 striped diagonals?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Was that the part that was laying the road?

18 A. It was the knuckle, what I would call the knuckle of the
19 guardrail where it's curved. It was peeled back.

20 Q. It was peeled back?

21 A. Yes, sir.

22 Q. Okay. So all you could was gray; you didn't see this
23 black and yellow?

24 A. No, sir. I did not see the black and yellow.

25 Q. Okay. It was probably bent around. That end piece was

1 probably bent around. You said it was like curved around?

2 A. Yes, sir. It was -- I guess the guardrail's got that
3 knuckle on -- I call it -- I don't know what else to call it other
4 than the knuckle.

5 Q. That's the end of it?

6 A. Yeah, where it's always curved back in towards to the
7 inside of the median.

8 Q. Yeah.

9 A. That part was out. You could see the cup in there.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. And that was, like I said, about, yay far out into the
12 lane, about 2 foot.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. If I hadn't seen it when I did, it would've blown out my
15 left front tire and probably I'd have been the one at the bottom
16 of the bridge.

17 Q. Okay.

18 MR. [REDACTED]: So you were westbound?

19 MR. [REDACTED]: Yes, sir.

20 MR. [REDACTED]: And so after you barely missed the
21 guardrail, got into your right-hand lane. Once you got past it,
22 do you go back into the left-hand or do you stay --

23 MR. [REDACTED]: No, I stayed in the right-hand lane.

24 MR. [REDACTED]: Okay. I stayed in the right-hand lane
25 all the way to Pecos.

1 BY MR. [REDACTED]:

2 Q. And you were looking in your side mirror to see if the
3 truck behind you --

4 A. To make sure that the vehicle that was directly behind
5 me missed it.

6 Q. Yeah.

7 MR. [REDACTED]: And he missed it?

8 MR. [REDACTED]: Yeah, he missed it, because he got over in
9 the right lane and then he pulled over. And I didn't know if it
10 was because he clipped part of it, or -- I didn't know what it
11 was. He pulled over and then I glanced back up and looked back in
12 my mirror and that's when I saw just some white go --

13 BY MR. [REDACTED]:

14 Q. Yeah. You didn't know what it was at the time?

15 A. I didn't know what it was.

16 Q. What did it look like? I mean, kind of describe what it
17 looked like. I mean I know you don't know what it was at the
18 time, and --

19 A. What I thought it was at the time was I thought it was
20 the very back end of a semi, a closed dry box van --

21 Q. Yeah.

22 A. -- truck that disappeared between the two roads.

23 Q. Yeah.

24 A. That's what it looked like to me.

25 BY SGT. [REDACTED]:

1 Q. And when you talked about the patrol car being on the
2 shoulder?

3 A. Yes, sir.

4 Q. Were all the vehicles moving to the left lane for
5 that -- for the --

6 A. Yes. Except for the semi that had just gotten on from
7 the weigh station area.

8 Q. But he had --

9 A. Yeah, he was probably doing 30 or 40 miles an hour.

10 Q. Right, okay.

11 MR. [REDACTED]: Did you see when you were driving
12 westbound, did you see anybody else that was in that left lane
13 kind of divert over?

14 MR. [REDACTED]: Ahead of me?

15 MR. [REDACTED]: Yes.

16 MR. [REDACTED]: No. There was nobody -- there was a large,
17 large gap between where I was and any other traffic. They were
18 way down the road.

19 MR. [REDACTED]: Okay.

20 BY MR. [REDACTED]:

21 Q. After you saw what at the time looked like dry box van
22 disappear between the two roads, did you see anything else after
23 that?

24 A. No, sir.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. Like I said, by that time I was all the way down the
2 heel and fixing to start back up the next overpass going over the
3 intersection in Penwell.

4 Q. Where you were you going to? Were you going to get off
5 the road in Penwell, or --

6 A. No, I was going to Pecos.

7 MR. ██████████: Pecos, yeah.

8 BY MR. ██████████:

9 Q. Pecos?

10 A. Yes, sir.

11 Q. And so when did you realize that there was wreck out
12 there?

13 A. After I got to Pecos.

14 Q. After Pecos?

15 MR. ██████████: What did you hear?

16 MR. ██████████: I heard that there was a bus crash. And the
17 first thing I thought was a bunch of school kids. And that was --
18 I didn't find that out until about 9:00 in the morning. And then,
19 of course, I finished out my work day, and came back and watched
20 the news to find out what I could find out. And that's when I
21 heard that they were asking for anybody that was in the area and
22 saw anything to call that phone number, and that's when I called.
23 I had actually already called this office as soon as I got home.

24 BY MR. ██████████:

25 Q. Did you hear people talk about it in Pecos, or did you

1 hear it on the radio?

2 A. I heard it on the radio. They heard on a radio. I
3 guess they broke in the broadcasting on one of the local Pecos
4 stations to talk about. That's how I found out it was a bus. And
5 then shortly after that, national news picked it up on Fox News.

6 Q. So you got home later that day and then called DPS?

7 A. Yes, sir. I called -- it was probably about 5:30 when I
8 called this office.

9 MR. [REDACTED]: That's all. I don't have anything else.

10 MR. [REDACTED]: I'm done.

11 SGT. [REDACTED]: I'm good.

12 MR. [REDACTED]: Okay.

13 MR. [REDACTED]: I'll get the tape, so --

14 MR. [REDACTED]: Okay, that concludes the interview here
15 with Mr. [REDACTED]. It's approximately 25 minutes after 2:00.

16 (Whereupon, at 2:25 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: PRISON TRANSPORT BUS CRASH
 NEAR PENWELL, TEXAS
 JANUARY 14, 2015
 Interview of [REDACTED]

DOCKET NUMBER: HWY-14-MH-014

PLACE: Odessa, Texas

DATE: January 20, 2015

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.

[REDACTED]
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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PRISON TRANSPORT BUS CRASH

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NEAR PENWELL, TEXAS

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Docket No.: HWY-15-MH-004

JANUARY 14, 2015

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Telephonic interview of: H. [REDACTED]

Odessa, Texas

Saturday,
January 17, 2015

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice.

BEFORE: [REDACTED]

Survival Factors Investigator

APPEARANCES:

██████████, Survival Factors Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

I N D E X

ITEM

PAGE

Telephonic interview of H. [REDACTED] :

By Mr. [REDACTED]

4

I N T E R V I E W

1

MR. [REDACTED]: Hello.

2

3

MR. [REDACTED]: Hello. May I speak to Mr. [REDACTED],
4 please?

4

5

MR. [REDACTED]: This is.

6

MR. [REDACTED]: Mr. [REDACTED], my name is [REDACTED].
7 I'm with the National Transportation Safety Board.

7

8

MR. [REDACTED]: Yes, sir.

9

MR. [REDACTED]: I'm just calling you regarding the crash
10 back on the 14th. I got your name and contact information from
11 Trooper [REDACTED].

11

12

MR. [REDACTED]: Okay.

13

INTERVIEW OF [REDACTED]

14

BY MR. KAMINSKI:

15

Q. I'm just calling the witnesses that he talked to and
16 trying to get some information, I guess what you saw and what, if
17 anything, you did out there on the scene?

17

18

A. Okay. I guess I can just start I'm on Frontage Road,
19 right near the scale station there before you drop off the cap
20 rock. Getting on the freeway -- I'd like to interject. That part
21 of the freeway is always slimy and nasty from the trucks coming
22 out of the service yard and out of the caliche pit. Always poor
23 traction there.

23

24

Anyway, getting onto the freeway, I want to say before
25 entering the freeway, as I was coming up Frontage Road, I seen a

25

1 bulk hauler of some form, sand or --

2 Q. A what?

3 A. A bulk hauler, like a sand or cement hauling truck.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. Getting on the freeway, egressing there, you know, you
6 have to slow down quite a bit anyways. It's a tight, short
7 egress. As I'm there, I do not -- cannot say I seen the bus
8 itself, but I got a sense that traffic wasn't flowing correct.
9 Not necessarily tapping brake lights, none of that, it just had a
10 funky look or feel to it, if that makes sense.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. I rode a motorcycle in heavy city traffic for multiple
13 decades so you just get that feel. As I'm traveling, I do hear my
14 tires go quiet, patchy. You know, makes me think we got a little
15 bit of ice, low traction. As I get on the interstate proper, then
16 of course that drop-off is nearly immediately after that. As I
17 get on the freeway, I back off the throttle because it really just
18 feels funky. I can't say I see the bus, but something feels
19 funny.

20 Right at that time, I see debris field to my -- I guess
21 you would say to my left of my vision. At that time I'm ready to
22 hit something because I know it's going to be slick, something
23 went bad. And just as I get to the bridge drop-off, I see the
24 little gray car, maybe possibly the little gray Hyundai. I don't
25 think he hit the guardrail. I believe the guardrail came out to

1 him and he contacted it. Because he was in my lane for the most
2 part, as I can perceive it, because people were kind of jostling
3 around at this point. I wasn't sliding. I was just heavy on the
4 brakes. He contacts that guardrail, goes up in the air. I think
5 I actually went under him because I ended up going back over the
6 guardrail, and when we come to a stop, he was behind me.

7 Exited the vehicle -- well, took a second to make sure I
8 wasn't hit, on fire or anything. Got out of my vehicle to assess
9 what's happened. Went to the vehicle behind me. They appeared to
10 be physically okay. Was going to the next vehicle. A gentleman
11 forward of -- he was standing forward of me, but I believe his
12 truck was behind me, for some reason. He catches my attention not
13 by yelling, but just we kind of caught a look. I can't explain
14 it. He went over the guardrail, going to the south side.

15 I approached the guardrail thinking, wow, someone maybe
16 went off. I looked. Unbelievable debris field. I think, my God,
17 an airplane has hit the interstate. First thing I think it's an
18 aircraft hit the Interstate. Take a second, start down the --
19 start down into the underpass section, realize there's an engine,
20 there's a fire source, hey, this is a crash, it's a vehicle.
21 Still don't see the vehicle. Looked south -- well, actually it
22 was kind of southeast down the railroad track, and notice, holy
23 cow, there's a bus. If you didn't look down that direction, you
24 wouldn't see the bus.

25 Approached the bus. Upon approaching the bus, the rear

1 section looked reasonably intact. At this time kind of looking
2 for people outside the bus, not thinking a prison bus, just
3 thinking bus. Kind of scanning, don't see nobody. Get up to the
4 bus. See that the one operator or appears to be an operator, he
5 appears to be deceased. The other one took a few breaths; that
6 stopped.

7 At that point it was me, the guy in the jacket that had
8 the crane and rigging insignia. At that point we go to the front
9 of the bus to ascertain what can we do. The trooper is above us,
10 kind of on the embankment. I believe he's trying to get the
11 attention of someone on the bridge.

12 We start extricating, moving stuff, getting into the
13 front of the bus to get the victim out. At some point we had to
14 get the keys from the trooper, uncuff him, and at some point the
15 trooper was helping lift myself and everybody up into the debris
16 -- or me and the other guy up into the debris, get the prisoner
17 out or the person out. At that point it's kind of foggy, but I
18 believe he was deceased or we kind of got the sense of we've done
19 what we can do here, let's see what else.

20 I went and checked the rear of the bus on my -- I lifted
21 the rear bus door on my way to the front of the bus on the first
22 pass, didn't see anybody. Thought, shoot, no one to help right
23 this second, you know, no one to actually put hands on and help.
24 Thought look for more people. Went to the rear of the bus --

25 Q. So you were initially -- you did go inside the bus and

1 to help unlock the --

2 A. I was up into the debris, yes. Another guy in the
3 jacket, he went crawling in.

4 Q. Okay. So you didn't go in the bus and start unlocking,
5 but it was the trooper gave it to the --

6 A. No. No, no, no, no, no.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. No. No, sir. No, sir. The other gentleman did -- and
9 I had a sense, and maybe I'm wrong, that he was a firefighter or
10 police officer. He seemed like he knew some of the people later
11 on, on the scene. I don't know that. That's just -- it's a sense
12 I got.

13 After getting that first guy out, went and made a second
14 check. Opened the rear of the bus door and at that point we seen
15 the other officers. I remember seeing his hand, like maybe he
16 didn't have his hand up the first check, maybe he heard us, second
17 check he got his hand up. We spent some time extricating him.
18 Removed his -- removed some of his gear, got him out of the bus,
19 helped carry him up to the ambulances.

20 At that point, I want to say, there was one or two other
21 firefighters immediately there. And I'm guesstimating -- I know
22 time is a hard thing to pin down when you're in a situation like
23 that, but I'm looking at a couple of points in which my phone
24 rang. You know, this was maybe 15 minutes into it. At the time
25 some other professionals were there. There might have been

1 another sheriff. I want to say there's a DPS and a sheriff there
2 at the time. Got those people out. Did some more -- I don't know
3 what you'd call it, assisting, looked for other victims. You
4 know, carried some stretchers to where they needed to be, did some
5 other things like that, and that's kind of the gist of it. At
6 that point there was nothing for me to do to help anymore and at
7 that point I left and I drove to work.

8 Q. Okay. Now, I'm kind of confused on your initial when
9 you said you were on the Frontage Road, you were getting onto the
10 freeway.

11 A. Right.

12 Q. What direction were you heading?

13 A. I was heading west on the interstate.

14 Q. Okay. So you were directly behind the bus?

15 A. I cannot say that I seen or absolutely perceived the
16 bus, but I was -- I did not see a crash of any point on the off --
17 on the bridge there while looking at the bridge saying, wow, this
18 traffic feels funny. Can I say I seen the rear of the bus? No,
19 sir, I can't.

20 I perceived something happening in those -- from the
21 right lane to the left lane and a debris field. Because at this
22 point it just felt funny getting on, because I'd heard the low
23 traction, everybody is at regular speed. So I was just kind of
24 heightened up and I was just kind of overall scanning. If the
25 bridge blocks, I know to go off the other side because it's a

1 lower jump, I guess is the only way to say it.

2 I cannot say I seen the rear of the bus, but I seen the
3 debris field develop, dirt, et cetera, into my left side of my --
4 left side of my peripheral vision.

5 Q. Okay. And then you were talking about the guardrail.
6 The guardrail, so this was after the bus went through the
7 guardrail?

8 A. I want to say that the guardrail was not in the roadway
9 until post the debris field that I can't describe other than a
10 debris field. It wasn't like the guardrail was in the roadway and
11 I seen somebody hit it. A debris field developed, then I seen the
12 guardrail and the car contact it. But I cannot say I seen the
13 tail of the bus. It may have been in my field of view, but I
14 wasn't fixed on it. I was fixed a little more on my lane because
15 the -- I think I seen a car swerving and moving. It just felt
16 weird and I was backing out of the throttle.

17 Q. So you saw the debris field, then the guardrail was in
18 the roadway and then the car hit it.

19 A. Hit the guardrail, right.

20 Q. Hit the guardrail.

21 A. The guardrail was much -- 90 degrees across the roadway
22 when he hit it.

23 Q. And what lane was the car in when it hit the guardrail?

24 A. He was hammering the brakes. He started in my lane, but
25 kind of lost control, didn't stay -- I'd say he was splitting the

1 lanes when he hit it. And I winced and thought, man, I'm drilling
2 him. And I don't know if he went to my right and I went to the
3 left a little bit, because I'll be honest, I was squinting because
4 I expected broken glass and an airbag. And he went out of my
5 field of view.

6 I honestly think -- I think he went over me, but I
7 cannot say that for sure. Because when I walked back to the
8 bridge, that guy -- those two guys in that car were on top of the
9 bridge still and they're like, what's the deal? Because we were
10 -- me and the other guy were down there probably a half hour or
11 more. And I told the man a bus went off the bridge. And he just
12 kind of looked at me like, what, you know, and I walked away. I
13 didn't communicate with him anymore at that time.

14 I want to say if he started anywhere, he started in the
15 slow lane, in the lane I was in.

16 Q. Okay. So when you -- but you're saying -- you mentioned
17 you got on the freeway and you saw a debris field. So the debris
18 field was what --

19 A. Well, I was already on the freeway and in motion to the
20 drop-off and then I seen the debris develop. I wouldn't call it
21 debris on the road. It was more of a cloud, dirt -- dirt, mud
22 sort of cloud.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. Right. I didn't see parts. I didn't see guardrail at
25 that time. I don't remember seeing any plastic off the cars or

1 anything. I just remember a cloudy field in the left-hand side of
2 my view.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. And then poop hit the fan.

5 Q. Right. And then so you then -- you went down and then
6 you saw the -- the trooper's already inside the bus at the front
7 of the bus trying to get the seat off.

8 A. No, the -- as I approached the front of the bus, it was
9 me and the other guy in the jacket. The trooper appeared to be
10 trying to signal someone on the bridge --

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. -- and/or using communications. And then me and him
13 immediately went to the front. We seen the two people there, knew
14 we couldn't work there, and got up into the debris of the front of
15 the bus, started to extricate stuff. And at that point I believe
16 the DPS officer was with us and assisting.

17 Q. And that's when you guys were able to pull out that
18 other seat that was partially there, partially attached?

19 A. Yes, sir. There was a seat partially attached and we
20 got that out, yes, sir.

21 Q. Okay. And then after you got that out of the way, then
22 you were able to start getting the people through that small
23 opening?

24 A. Right. Right. We got the -- I assisted in getting the
25 one person out that opening.

1 Q. That was --

2 A. I never got a second person out.

3 Q. Was that person alive or was that deceased? Do you
4 know?

5 A. I perceive him as deceased, but I don't know that.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. Because once he was out, we didn't -- I didn't think to
8 do CPR. I didn't think to give him any respiration, nothing along
9 those lines.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. And I'm not a professional at it, but I've been on
12 response teams at my other work and worked at the (indiscernible),
13 and if I -- I'm thinking; I may be incorrect -- if I perceived he
14 needed some breath or something I could do, I think I would have,
15 but I can't tell you clearly.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. I believe he was picked up -- well, the chronologic -- I
18 don't -- I won't be able to put together, in all honesty, total
19 chronological. I think he was picked up a little later in the
20 incident. I think we were already working on the guy in the back
21 and he was still lying there.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. And at some point I -- he got moved up to the ambulance.
24 But I -- I'll be honest, it's kind of a fog because we were trying
25 to get the guy out of the back.

1 Q. Sure. Sure. Okay.

2 A. And, you know, someone may have rendered aid shortly
3 thereafter getting him out. I know we got him out. My perception
4 was deceased, find something else to do.

5 Q. Right.

6 A. You know, I know that sounds horrible, but that was my
7 mindset.

8 Q. Well, and that's why you went around to the back, right?

9 A. Now maybe after that, that someone worked on him. You
10 know, I'm not sure.

11 Q. Right. And that's why you went around to the back?

12 A. That's why -- that was my second trip to the back.

13 Q. Oh.

14 A. I checked the back immediately. I know that -- I just
15 know there's a guy rides in the back of the bus often, and I don't
16 know why I was thinking that. Maybe I did read the Corrections
17 sign, I don't know. So I checked the back of the bus immediately
18 and missed that guy.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. Yeah. I missed him on the first pass, absolutely.

21 Q. Okay. I hope you don't mind if I have any follow-up
22 questions after going through all this, I may --

23 A. No, no, man. I wished I could be more concise and
24 precise, but I'll be honest, it went from a fender bender on the
25 freeway to oh, my goodness, so quick. You know, and I'm trying to

1 slowly (a) not fill in the blanks myself, but what exactly do you
2 remember that's valid.

3 Q. Right.

4 A. You know, I remember a bunch of little silly stuff like,
5 my God, why are all these wristwatches here? But I, you know, I
6 -- unfortunately. But man, you know, feel free to call me.

7 Q. Was that from the debris from the train?

8 A. Yeah, because I remember after kind of calming down and
9 more rescue crews got there and I wasn't doing anything, you know,
10 just kind of -- well, I did walk along the tracks a little more
11 just looking for maybe some would come outer parts, you know, just
12 doing that. I do remember the wristwatches just kind of -- they
13 burned in my head and I don't know why.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. But, you know, like I said, I'm trying to take time to
16 really remember what I really saw and not fill in the blanks, and
17 try to get some chronological order a little better.

18 Q. Yeah.

19 A. Because, you know, the big impacts in your mind they
20 kind of take precedent, but they might not be in the right time
21 frames. But I'm pretty solid on this time frame.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. Got down, opened the rear of the bus, went to the front
24 of the bus, two people hopeless. Working to get a seat removed,
25 getting that person extricated, unlocked and extricated out of the

1 bus. From that position, back to the rear of the bus to check
2 again. Extricating that officer out of the rear of the bus and
3 taking that officer directly from the rear of the bus to the
4 ambulance.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. That I'm sure of, that timeline and exactly what
7 happened there. But the other, you know, I'm still honestly just
8 kind of thinking through it in my mind so I don't make it up as I
9 go along. You know, I --

10 Q. Sure.

11 A. -- for lack of a better way to describe it. It's easy
12 to fill in the blanks, you know, but don't want to do that when
13 talking to you guys. It's important to think, so --

14 Q. Right.

15 A. But, yes, if you need -- if I can be of any help, feel
16 free and if you want to ask me again later and see if things line
17 up the same, please feel free to do that, too.

18 Q. Okay. And if you come -- if you recall anything that
19 comes up, feel free to give me a call.

20 A. You got it. I surely will.

21 Q. Okay, Mr. [REDACTED], I thank you very much for your time.

22 A. Thank you. Have the best day you can.

23 Q. Thank you, you, too, sir.

24 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

25

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: PRISON TRANSPORT BUS CRASH
NEAR PENWELL, TEXAS
JANUARY 14, 2015
Telephonic Interview of [REDACTED]

DOCKET NUMBER: HWY-14-MH-014

PLACE: Odessa, Texas

DATE: January 17, 2015

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.

[REDACTED]
Transcriber