



Survival Factors Factual Report

Attachment: Witness Interviews

Rochester, Indiana

HWY19MH003

(154 pages)

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

PICKUP TRUCK AND SCHOOL BUS CRASH

ROCHESTER, INDIANA

OCTOBER 30, 2018

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* Accident No.: HWY19MH003

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Interview of: [REDACTED]14448 East 100 South
Akron, IndianaWednesday,
February 13, 2019

APPEARANCES:

KENNETH BRAGG, Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

SHERYL HARLEY, Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

[REDACTED]
([REDACTED] mother)

GREG LOVE, Esquire
Attorney for Lowe Family

I N D E X

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(11:18 a.m.)

MR. BRAGG: Today is Wednesday, February 13. It's 11:18 a.m., and we're in Akron, Indiana. This interview is in relation to the Rochester, Indiana school bus crash which occurred on October 30, 2018.

My name is Kenny Bragg. I'm an investigator from the National Transportation Safety Board, from the Office of Highway Safety. In addition, I have --

MS. HARLEY: Investigator Sheryl Harley, also from the Office of Highway Safety, National Transportation Safety Board.

MR. BRAGG: Okay. Ma'am, I'm going to ask you to state your name?

[REDACTED] mother.

MR. BRAGG: Okay. Can you spell your first and last name please?

[REDACTED]

MR. BRAGG: Okay. And state and spell you first and last name.

[REDACTED]

MR. BRAGG: Okay. And it is with your knowledge and consent that this interview is being recorded, correct?

[REDACTED] Yes.

MR. BRAGG: Okay. Great. And on the phone we have legal representation. Sir, can you state your name loudly.

1 MR. LOVE: Yes, Greg Love.

2 MR. BRAGG: Great. Thank you. And that's L-o-v-e, correct?

3 [REDACTED] Yes.

4 INTERVIEW OF [REDACTED]

5 BY MR. BRAGG:

6 Q. So I'm just going to ask you, [REDACTED] just go ahead and
7 start telling us about your morning, the day that the accident
8 happened.

9 A. Okay. So it was already a pretty rough day because I didn't
10 have really anything to eat that morning. So I just ate a slice
11 of cheese, and I had a bad feeling about that day. And that day,
12 we had got me a new backpack that went over my shoulders and not
13 around my neck.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. And I actually didn't have my trombone that day. And so I'm
16 just walking to the school bus stop, and my friends, their sister
17 isn't with them because she had a doctor's appointment. So I was
18 walking across the street with them, and then I remember seeing a
19 light and then getting hit. I don't remember getting hit. I just
20 remember waking up with a face full of dirt, rolling myself over,
21 and then I remember opening up my eyes again, and then I was in
22 the helicopter. And then I went back to sleep and then I woke up
23 and I was in this room.

24 Q. Okay. So let's talk a little bit about when you were waiting
25 for the school bus. How long had you been out there?

1 A. I had been out there for -- because I wait until everybody is
2 already out there. So I usually wait about 2 or 3 minutes.

3 Q. Okay.

4 [REDACTED] He's a procrastinator.

5 MR. BRAGG: That's okay.

6 [REDACTED] I don't like to get out of my bed.

7 BY MR. BRAGG:

8 Q. Nor do I, trust me.

9 A. I almost missed the bus one morning.

10 Q. So as you were waiting, where were you standing?

11 A. I was standing with [REDACTED] brother, brothers and sister
12 because I was going to walk across with them.

13 Q. Okay. And [REDACTED] what's her last name? Do you know?

14 A. [REDACTED]

15 Q. And who are her brothers and sister?

16 A. [REDACTED] and then her brother -- I mean her sister, is
17 [REDACTED]

18 Q. Okay. And where exactly were you standing? Describe as best
19 you can where you were standing?

20 A. So we would have -- it would be right here, where we would
21 all stand. I was about in the right corner.

22 [REDACTED] Like where were you at in the trailer park, [REDACTED]
23 (ph.)?

24 [REDACTED] Oh, at one of the entrances. There were two
25 entrances on this side. We were in the middle one.

1 BY MR. BRAGG:

2 Q. So -- and when you were facing the road, was the bus coming
3 from your left or your right?

4 A. My right.

5 Q. Okay. And so what was to your left?

6 A. My left, I saw cars coming.

7 Q. Okay. But what was -- so were you standing at the edge of
8 the road or were you a little further back?

9 A. I was a little back.

10 Q. So you're next to a trailer?

11 A. No.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. I was kind of near the yard of the trailer.

14 Q. Okay. And so how far down to your left could you see? I
15 mean could you see completely down to the curve or --

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Okay. And when did you realize that the bus was coming?

18 A. As soon as I -- because I looked both ways, at all times,
19 looking for the bus in case they change the route.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. And they came that way, which I don't think they would ever
22 do. So I looked that way. I saw the light, and then they went
23 over, and I don't know why, but whenever I started walking across,
24 I looked this way, and I could already see a light.

25 Q. When you say this way, do you mean to your left?

1 A. Yes, I looked to my left and I saw, I saw a light at the
2 curve, at the end, and I went, oh, she's going to stop. No, she
3 didn't.

4 Q. Okay. When you first saw the light to the left, where were
5 you standing? Were you in the road already?

6 A. Yes. I was like -- I was at the beginning of the highway --

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. -- the road, the edge.

9 Q. So if you can guess, how long was the school bus stopped
10 before you saw -- well, how long was the school bus stopped before
11 you started to cross the road?

12 A. About 10 seconds.

13 Q. About 10 seconds. And was there -- did anyone from the bus
14 tell you to cross the road or --

15 A. No, usually we just go across after like 5 or 10 seconds.

16 Q. Okay. And when you crossed the road, where exactly were you
17 looking?

18 A. I was looking straight ahead at first until I heard the bus
19 driver honk his horn.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. And then I started to look left, and I saw a light.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. And then I'm like, she did not stop.

24 Q. Okay. And so there were three other kids who were hit as
25 well.

- 1 A. Yes.
- 2 Q. Where were you standing in relation to them?
- 3 A. I was right, I was right here and they were all right here.
- 4 Q. So remember this is recording and so try and describe? Were
- 5 you on the far right? Were you on the far left? Were you in the
- 6 middle?
- 7 A. Like what do you mean?
- 8 Q. I mean -- okay. Who was standing to your right? And I'm
- 9 speaking --
- 10 A. Oh, it was -- it went [REDACTED]
- 11 Q. Okay. And then you?
- 12 A. Yes. And then I was on the left side of all of them.
- 13 Q. You were on the left side of all of them?
- 14 A. Yes.
- 15 Q. Okay. So were you the first, were you the first kid to get
- 16 hit?
- 17 A. Yes.
- 18 Q. Okay.
- 19 A. I took all -- mostly all the impact.
- 20 Q. Okay. And so from that point forward, you don't -- you said
- 21 you don't remember anything?
- 22 A. I remember hugging them. Because [REDACTED] had -- [REDACTED] and
- 23 [REDACTED], and then I hugged them.
- 24 Q. And this is just before the car hit you?
- 25 A. Yes.

1 MR. BRAGG: Okay. Sheryl, do you have any questions?

2 MS. HARLEY: Yeah.

3 BY MS. HARLEY:

4 Q. So the other kids that were out there with you --

5 A. Um-hum.

6 Q. -- in addition to [REDACTED] and her two brothers, there was
7 [REDACTED].

8 A. Um-hum.

9 Q. Was she out there?

10 A. (No audible response.)

11 Q. Okay. Was [REDACTED] (ph.) out there with you?

12 A. Yeah, she had -- whenever I first got hit, she was already
13 halfway on the bus.

14 Q. She was already halfway on the bus. What about [REDACTED], is
15 that the --

16 A. I think that -- she was with [REDACTED], too. And [REDACTED]
17 little brother was also with her.

18 Q. What's [REDACTED] little brother's name?

19 [REDACTED] Oh, man. I can't remember.

20 [REDACTED] I can't remember either.

21 BY MS. HARLEY:

22 Q. Okay. Do you remember seeing [REDACTED] (ph.) --

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. -- and his sister?

25 A. Um-hum.

- 1 Q. Where were they?
- 2 A. I don't remember.
- 3 Q. You don't remember. Okay. So when the bus first pulled up,
- 4 all of you were standing further back. You were behind the fence.
- 5 Is that correct?
- 6 A. Yes.
- 7 Q. Okay. And [REDACTED] mother was also there?
- 8 A. I can't remember.
- 9 Q. Okay.
- 10 A. I think she was.
- 11 Q. All right. How long have you been riding the school bus?
- 12 A. It started in kindergarten.
- 13 Q. In kindergarten.
- 14 A. But I've always been going back and forth.
- 15 Q. Okay. All right. So when you started riding the school bus,
- 16 did the schools -- did the school ever tell you kids that there
- 17 were rules about riding the school bus?
- 18 A. Yes.
- 19 Q. Okay. Do you remember what they said about riding the school
- 20 bus?
- 21 A. Um-hum. Always face forward, never -- don't put your feet in
- 22 the aisleway. Don't -- if you're in the front seat, don't lean
- 23 out of your seat and forward in front of the yellow line.
- 24 Q. Okay.
- 25 A. And then no chewing gum, only if the bus driver would let

1 you. You were allowed to have water, but it had to be in a
2 container, and it had to stay in your backpack. And then no
3 standing up.

4 Q. No standing up. Boy, there were a lot of rules. Did they
5 ever tell you that when you guys were crossing, you had to wait
6 for the driver?

7 A. He did -- I think he only did that once or twice.

8 Q. Okay. This is Mr. Robert?

9 A. I can't really remember his name.

10 Q. Okay. Do you remember Ms. Melina? Was that your other
11 driver, the lady that was before this driver? Do you remember
12 her?

13 A. What's her last name?

14 Q. Ms. Pratt?

15 A. Did she drive that same bus that Robert --

16 Q. Um-hum. Yes.

17 A. No, I started whenever Robert did.

18 Q. You started with Robert?

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. I did ride a bus before that, but that was on a different
22 house, and that was Mrs. Howard, Bus 30.

23 Q. Okay. So when you rode with her, did she, did she tell the
24 kids when to cross?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. She did. Okay.

2 [REDACTED]: That morning, the bus driver didn't wave you
3 across the road?

4 [REDACTED] I don't usually remember seeing that. So I don't
5 really know or not. I just go whenever else starts to go.

6 [REDACTED] Okay. I thought that's what you had said.

7 BY MS. HARLEY:

8 Q. So I know [REDACTED] said you like listening to music. Were you
9 listening to music that day?

10 A. No. Before I get on the bus and I cross the road, I -- for
11 some reason, I always put my headphones in my backpack or
12 something. I don't think I had headphones or earbuds that day. I
13 just had my phone, and surprisingly my phone stayed in my pocket
14 the entire time.

15 Q. Okay. Well, that's good. All right.

16 A. It didn't get any cracks or anything on it either.

17 Q. Okay. All right.

18 MR. BRAGG: What kind of phone did you have?

19 [REDACTED] Small iPhone 5.

20 MR. BRAGG: Okay.

21 [REDACTED] I still have it. It's somewhere.

22 [REDACTED] In my room.

23 BY MS. HARLEY:

24 Q. So I just -- all right. So I just wanted -- so when you
25 looked to the left, that's where that curve is, where the vehicle

1 came from --

2 A. Um-hum.

3 Q. -- and you were first, and then it was [REDACTED] --

4 A. [REDACTED]

5 Q. -- [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. Do you remember who was directly behind you?

8 A. No.

9 Q. No. And who was in front of you?

10 A. Nobody.

11 Q. Nobody was in front of you?

12 A. No, I can't really remember --

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. -- who was in front of me.

15 Q. All right. That's fine.

16 [REDACTED]: Are you okay?

17 MS. HARLEY: Yeah.

18 [REDACTED] Yeah, I'm just tired.

19 [REDACTED] Okay.

20 BY MR. BRAGG:

21 Q. So one more quick question. From the moment you first saw

22 the headlights, you were, you were in the road, correct, and were

23 you still walking at that point?

24 A. I kind of stopped walking. Like hugged them.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. So not really.

2 Q. Did you hear -- did you at any point hear brakes or tires
3 squealing?

4 A. Not so ever. Not slightly at all.

5 Q. Okay. And how long do you think before you saw it that you
6 actually got hit? Was it like a split second, almost instantly
7 or --

8 A. Three seconds.

9 Q. About 3 seconds. Okay.

10 BY MS. HARLEY:

11 Q. I have one other question. When you heard the bus driver
12 honk his horn --

13 A. Um-hum.

14 Q. -- does the bus driver ever honk his horn to, to warn you
15 kids? Is that something that the bus driver usually do?

16 A. He's never done it because we never had anything happen like
17 this. So we don't really know.

18 Q. Got it.

19 A. I think he was honking the horn to get her attention.

20 Q. Okay.

21 MR. BRAGG: Is there anything else that you can think of that
22 would be useful for us to know?

23 [REDACTED] No.

24 MR. BRAGG: Okay. How about you, mom? Any questions?

25 [REDACTED] I have a million questions, but that's probably

1 irrelevant.

2 MS. HARLEY: So I do have one question for you. Have you had
3 contact with Mr. Max Green. He's our -- from the NTSB?

4 [REDACTED] Uh-uh, I haven't.

5 MS. HARLEY: All right. If you don't mind, I'd like to give
6 him your information. What happens is he's what we call a
7 transportation disaster assistant specialist. Basically his job
8 is to make sure that you understand what we're doing --

9 [REDACTED] Um-hum.

10 MS. HARLEY: -- and we keep you informed of what's happening
11 in the investigation.

12 [REDACTED]: Okay.

13 MS. HARLEY: So you might actually hear from him, and if you
14 have any questions, that's the person that you can certainly call
15 --

16 [REDACTED]: Okay.

17 MS. HARLEY: -- and they'll help you through this and then
18 you can ask any question you have, okay.

19 [REDACTED]: Okay.

20 MS. HARLEY: So if you don't mind, I'll just give him your
21 information and he'll just reach out and let you know that he's
22 the person to talk to if you have any questions.

23 [REDACTED]: Okay. That's fine. And I don't get very good
24 service out here. So you'll probably have to leave a message.
25 The best way to contact me is through text message. I know that

1 sounds crazy but it's like the most reliable for some reason.

2 MR. BRAGG: Okay.

3 MS. HARLEY: Understood.

4 MR. BRAGG: Okay. The time is 11:32 a.m. I will conclude
5 the interview. Thank you very much.

6 MS. HARLEY: Thank you.

7 (Whereupon, at 11:32 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: PICKUP TRUCK AND SCHOOL BUS CRASH
 ROCHESTER, INDIANA
 OCTOBER 30, 2018
 Interview of [REDACTED]

ACCIDENT NO.: HWY19MH003

PLACE: Akron, Indiana

DATE: February 13, 2019

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]

Kathryn A. Mirfin
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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PICKUP TRUCK AND SCHOOL BUS CRASH *

ROCHESTER, INDIANA *

OCTOBER 30, 2018 *

* Accident No.: DCA19MH003

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Interview of: [REDACTED]

Parkview Hospital
2200 Randallia Drive
Ft. Wayne, Indiana

Monday,
November 19, 2018

APPEARANCES:

JOSH MALLER, Detective
Indiana State Police

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] mother)

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Interview of [REDACTED]		
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I N T E R V I E W

(11:50 a.m.)

1 DET. MALLER: Today's date's November 19th, 2018. Current
2 time is about 11:50 in the morning. My name's Josh Maller. I'm a
3 detective with the Indiana State Police. I'm sitting in room --
4 is this 1420? Is that correct?

5 [REDACTED] Yes, sir.

6 DET. MALLER: At, it's, at 220 Randallia Drive, Fort Wayne,
7 Indiana, at the hospital. This is a recovery room, or a rehab
8 room, I guess, it might be better described.

9 [REDACTED]: Both, I think.

10 DET. MALLER: In the room with me is [REDACTED], and also
11 his mother.

12 If you could introduce yourself for the record.

13 [REDACTED]

14 DET. MALLER: All right. And we spoke briefly prior to me
15 turning on the recording about what I was here for. Also we took
16 some photographs of your injuries.

17 INTERVIEW OF [REDACTED]

18 BY DET. MALLER:

19 Q. [REDACTED] do you remember what I asked you to -- remember what
20 I asked we were going to talk about today?

21 A. Uh-uh.

22 Q. Okay. I'm here to talk to you about the incident that
23 brought you here.

1 A. Okay.

2 Q. Do you remember that day?

3 A. Yeah. I had a, whenever I woke up, I kind of had a bad
4 feeling about that day. My mom always says go with what you feel.

5 Q. Um-hum.

6 A. Like, and I just didn't have a good feeling about that day.
7 So, I was heading out, and, you know, it was just a normal day.
8 And as I was walking out, it seemed a lot darker outside than
9 usual, kind of. And as, and I walked over there, and we waited
10 for the bus. And the bus came, and we, I had saw three cars stop
11 behind the bus. And I think one or two cars stop on this side.
12 And then as we got, like, halfway across, I was talking to my
13 friends. And then we heard the bus, and then I heard the bus
14 driver say stop. And then I turned, and I see a car headlights.
15 And it was pretty close. So, I just turned, and, like, tried to
16 cover my friends. And then after that, I don't really remember
17 getting hit. I just remember laying down in the grass, and
18 waiting, and saying I'm over here.

19 Q. Okay. So, that morning when you were waiting for the bus, do
20 you remember seeing the bus arrive?

21 A. Um-hum.

22 Q. Do you remember seeing the bus lights turn on?

23 A. Yep.

24 [REDACTED] Honey, you have to answer out loud. Okay?

25 BY DET. MALLER:

1 Q. What lights on the bus do you remember seeing?

2 A. I remember seeing the stop sign, the, I think it was the ones
3 in the inside for us to see if walked in, or when we walked in,
4 and then the front headlights of the bus.

5 Q. Do you remember how many other kids were thee with you?

6 A. That got hit, or how many, just --

7 Q. How many total were you sitting there to get on the bus?

8 A. Oh. Counting me, or no?

9 Q. Yes.

10 A. Okay. So, it was me, I think it was around 11 to 13 kids
11 counting me.

12 Q. And is that how many kids there are usually waiting for the
13 bus?

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. And are any of those kids older than you?

16 A. One of them -- wait, hang on. I think two of them are. I
17 don't remember. Because I don't really ask people for their age.

18 Q. Sure. Are they in a higher grade than you? Or are in the
19 same grade?

20 A. Yeah, a higher, higher grade. I think she's, like, 13 or 14.

21 Q. Do you remember any grownups standing around before you got
22 on the bus?

23 A. [REDACTED] the one that I just talked about, the 13- or 14-year-
24 old, that's [REDACTED] Her mom was there. I don't remember any
25 other parents being there. I'm pretty sure there was one more,

1 but I forget whose it was.

2 Q. Do you remember what you guys were doing just before the bus
3 showed up? Were you talking about anything, or --

4 A. Yeah. We were just, I just, like, don't really talk that
5 much. I just, like, stand around, wait for the bus. Sometimes I
6 might talk. That day I didn't really talk to anybody.

7 Q. Okay. Is there anything else you remember about that day?

8 A. No. Not really.

9 Q. Do you remember what happened after you were hit by the
10 truck?

11 A. I just remember me laying in the, feeling wet grass. I think
12 that's what I was feeling. I didn't feel no pain, at all. And
13 then after, like, 5 minutes, I remember being hoisted up into a
14 helicopter. And then I fell asleep on the helicopter.

15 Q. Okay. Do you remember where you were standing at, if you
16 were going to be the first one on the bus, or the last one on the
17 bus, or someplace in between?

18 A. I don't really remember that.

19 Q. Do the kids line up? Or do they kind of stand in a crowd?

20 A. We just go, like --

21 Q. It's not like a single-file thing?

22 A. No. We're just, like, all, and some days we just, like,
23 like, speed walk across. That day we were just, like, walking,
24 the, that day, across.

25 Q. Okay. When you pull up, or when the bus pulls up and stops,

1 do you go when you want to go? Or do you go when somebody else
2 wants you to go?

3 A. I just follow my friends.

4 Q. Okay. When your friends start walking to get on the bus, you
5 just follow them?

6 A. Um-hum.

7 Q. Okay. Do you know if anybody signals them to get on the bus?
8 Or do they go when it's --

9 A. They just go.

10 Q. Okay. And who are your friends?

11 A. [REDACTED] oh wait, no, they were behind me.

12 [REDACTED] Take your time, buddy. It's okay.

13 THE WITNESS: I wasn't with, I wasn't standing with my
14 friends that day to walk across. But I was standing right beside

15 [REDACTED]

16 BY DET. MALLER:

17 Q. Um-hum.

18 A. And I was just standing beside the, oh, standing beside them
19 and walking across.

20 Q. All right.

21 A. Then that's really all it was.

22 Q. Okay. All right. Well, I can't think of any other questions
23 to ask you. Is there anything you can think of that we haven't
24 spoken about?

25 A. Nope.

1 Q. All right. Do you remember how well you could see that night
2 or that morning? You said it was pretty dark. Do you remember,
3 could you see anything?

4 A. Um-hum.

5 Q. Well, are there any lights out there shining?

6 A. No. Not really usually.

7 Q. Okay. Well, I don't think I have any more questions for you
8 right now. If I do, would it be okay if I came back and talked to
9 you again?

10 A. Yep.

11 Q. All right. Well, I appreciate that.

12 DET. MALLER: I'll go ahead and shut the recording off. The
13 current time is, it's right at noon.

14 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)
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 ROCHESTER, INDIANA
 OCTOBER 30, 2018
 Interview of [REDACTED]

ACCIDENT NO.: HWY19MH003

PLACE: Ft. Wayne, Indiana

DATE: November 19, 2019

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

[REDACTED]

Karen Coen Brooks
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

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PICKUP TRUCK AND SCHOOL BUS CRASH *

ROCHESTER, INDIANA * Accident No.: HWY19MH003

OCTOBER 30, 2018 *

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Interview of: [REDACTED] Minor
Mother4684 North State Route 25
Rochester, Indiana - Lot #5Tuesday,
February 12, 2019

APPEARANCES:

SHERYL HARLEY, Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

KENNETH BRAGG, Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

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I N T E R V I E W

(1:46 p.m.)

MS. HARLEY: All right so it's February the 12th and it's
1:46 p.m. and this is [REDACTED] and this is number
[REDACTED]. Lot number [REDACTED]

MS. HARLEY: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]: Uh-huh. [Affirmative]

MS. HARLEY: Okay. And this interview is going to be
conducted with [REDACTED]

MS. HARLEY: [REDACTED] --

MS. HARLEY: [REDACTED] okay.

MR. BRAGG: And just for the transcription, can you spell
your first and last name, please?

MR. BRAGG: Thank you. Spell your first.

[REDACTED] (indiscernible.)

MS. HARLEY: Yeah.

MR. BRAGG: (Indiscernible.)

MS. HARLEY: I already have. And also present is
Investigator Sheryl Harley at the National Transportation Safety
Board and --

MR. BRAGG: My name is Investigator Kenny Bragg. Also

1 Highway Safety, National Transportation Safety Board.

2 INTERVIEW OF [REDACTED]

3 MS. HARLEY: Okay. So today we're here to talk about the
4 crash that occurred out here on State Route 25 on October the 30th
5 around 7:12 in the morning. Okay, and so what I'm going to ask
6 you to do is just kind of walk me through it at first and so just
7 tell me what time you got up and then what time you walked out to
8 the bus stop and just go from there.

9 [REDACTED]: Well, we get up at 6:30 and --

10 [REDACTED]: I didn't get out of bed until like 7:00.

11 [REDACTED]: Yeah.

12 [REDACTED]: And then she's like yelling at me.

13 [REDACTED]: We're usually outside by like 7:05, 7:07. I
14 mean, it just depends and I mean everybody was coming down to the
15 bus stop, all the other kids and stuff. We'd all meet out here at
16 the little intersection here and we were just standing there
17 waiting for the bus and to me it was an odd morning. I don't know
18 it was just, I don't know it felt odd but all of us were talking.
19 She was sharing her drink with a little girl, [REDACTED], and we all
20 seen -- because we can see the bus coming from down that way
21 because the road curves that way and if you look over towards that
22 farmhouse down here you can see the bus. So we're like, okay,
23 well the bus is coming, you know, and we all start to go, you
24 know, towards the bus stop.

25 Well, I don't know like, you know, like I said it was odd but

1 everybody didn't go up together, you know, it was [REDACTED] kids,
2 you know, and then [REDACTED] and then [REDACTED] kids --

3 [REDACTED]: [REDACTED] --

4 [REDACTED]: [REDACTED] kids. I mean, everybody's usually in
5 a group. Well, everybody was like strung out like, you know, not
6 together, not -- I don't know. Because she was talking to [REDACTED]
7 who's about to drink --

8 [REDACTED]: Okay. Well, she got my -- okay, when I brought
9 the drink out she's like is that like (indiscernible) because her
10 favorite drink is the French vanilla breakfast drink. So when I
11 make it I usually try to hide it from her because she's always
12 like, "I want that. I want that." I'm like, "Okay, fine here."
13 And then she got a drink and I just never watched away because I
14 wanted to keep it but, I don't know, she got a drink and she's
15 like, "Yum, my favorite. I love you." And I'm like, "I love you,
16 too."

17 And then the bus showed up and then [REDACTED] turned to me and
18 usually I was -- when I -- I thought he was (indiscernible) he
19 was listening to music (indiscernible) play with his music and
20 change it each time. He was like, "Was I just listening to this?"
21 I'm like, "No." And then I'd change it and I'd play a game with
22 his thing and then he would like stand there and talk to me for
23 like the whole time until the bus came and then the boys were
24 running around playing, like around us, and I'm like, "Hey, guys,
25 calm down. The bus should be here any minute." And then I could

1 see the lights down there. So I'm, "Okay, guys. Come on." And
2 then -- so the -- for instance so bus is facing here
3 (indiscernible) there's another side of the road right here that
4 we have to cross to go around --

5 [REDACTED] Which is right out here.

6 [REDACTED]: And then get on to the bus from there. Usually,
7 I stand right here and wait for all the cars coming from that way
8 to stop and I won't let them cross -- I won't let nobody cross
9 until all the cars are stopped and I say, "Okay, guys. Come on."
10 And I won't let them go --

11 [REDACTED]: Because --

12 [REDACTED]: -- like in front of me --

13 MS. HARLEY: -- they're all --

14 [REDACTED]: -- so I would make them go around.

15 [REDACTED]: -- out there together, you know, and everybody
16 -- we try to keep everybody behind the fence because there's been
17 several -- I mean, I've been out here for -- this will be our 13th
18 year out here. People have ran from that way and three years ago
19 the bus got rear ended out here while it was waiting to pick up
20 the kids. The kids were walking across the street as the lady hit
21 the back of the bus.

22 [REDACTED]: And so I had, that year I had all of them line
23 up on the middle of the road because cars were passing and trying
24 to get by and I'm like (indiscernible) --

25 [REDACTED]: And then we've had parents out here that would

1 stand with flashlights like, you know, there's kids getting on the
2 bus here, you know, I mean it's been a lot of different things.
3 You know, some people will sit out here with their car lights on,
4 you know, but that morning with that cup she knew that if she took
5 the cup on the bus that Robert, the bus driver, would give her a
6 hard time about it. Well, she walked back to me and handed me the
7 cup so, therefore, she wasn't that far out. But with the girl and
8 the truck, I mean, we honestly I mean, she came from nowhere. I
9 mean just because were back by my -- my son lives next door. We
10 were by his -- just right by his shed and his, like, back porch so
11 we couldn't see her until she was actually past the trailer -- the
12 fence and the trailer right there. I mean, she -- I'm sorry but
13 she -- I will swear on everything she was doing more than 45.

14 [REDACTED]: She was at least going 75 to 80, at least.

15 [REDACTED]: I mean --

16 [REDACTED]: She (indiscernible) --

17 [REDACTED]: -- it's been --

18 [REDACTED]: -- (indiscernible) hit her brakes.

19 [REDACTED]: -- rough for the two of us because we were

20 standing there. [REDACTED] was on her way down. So was [REDACTED]
21 They were both out the door heading this way when they heard
22 screaming. She screamed so loud the people down here by the river
23 heard her.

24 [REDACTED]: I was the only one that said (indiscernible) --

25 [REDACTED]: Because she called her dad. She says, "Dad,

1 what's up? Why are the kids screaming?" Because they -- he has a
2 police monitor and he's like, "Well, I don't know." He's like,
3 "Let me, you know, listen," and they found out that, you know, the
4 kids had gotten hit.

5 [REDACTED]: And like when she hit the boys I watched her hit
6 the boys and like they went up and then they went (indiscernible,
7 crying). I was the first one up to the boys, too.

8 [REDACTED]: I couldn't hold on to her. I tried to grab her.
9 She literally, when the truck went by, she was like --

10 [REDACTED]: I'm very quick on my feet. So when I --

11 [REDACTED]: -- on that side of, you know, that side of the
12 park right there. She was already out to the road. Once the
13 truck had passed, she ran out to the boys. I mean, she was the
14 first one out there and I couldn't get her to come back in because
15 I was the only person out there. But I'm thinking, okay, and for
16 some reason that morning nobody's cell phones wanted to work.
17 Heather couldn't get hers to work. [REDACTED] couldn't get hers to
18 work. I'm the only one with a home phone. I don't know why but
19 nobody out here thinks, oh, we have to a home phone. Well, me --
20 I freaked out. I couldn't move. I mean, I was just like, oh my
21 God.

22 [REDACTED]: I was the only one like, everybody that could
23 actually move.

24 [REDACTED]: She was the only one. I literally felt like I
25 stood there forever. I was like, oh, my God. I'm like, oh, my

1 God I've got to go get help.

2 [REDACTED]: And I'm screaming at her, I'm like, "Mom, go get
3 the phone," and then it --

4 [REDACTED]: That's how her -- I mean, I threw her cup and
5 broke it.

6 [REDACTED]: See?

7 [REDACTED]: I mean, I ran in the house. I kicked the doors
8 open. Grabbed the phone. Ran back out.

9 [REDACTED]: (Indiscernible) I hope that, like, exact time
10 that it happened which I didn't remember that I wrote it down. It
11 was around 7:10 to 7:15 a.m. that it happened.

12 [REDACTED]: I mean, it was just, I mean, and like, you know,
13 after, you know, we sat here for a few days (indiscernible) I kind
14 of remembered like different things. You know, like, okay, the
15 bus driver did honk but, like I told everybody else, when he honks
16 almost every morning, nine times out of ten, the cars that are
17 behind him are honking and throwing a fit --

18 [REDACTED]: Are always laying on their horns.

19 [REDACTED]: -- because they don't want to wait. Because
20 we've got [REDACTED]. He forgets his coat or he forgot a shoe or, you
21 know, he's running out and getting dressed trying to catch the bus
22 or we've got the kids way down on that side that are running to
23 catch the bus. I'm like, "Hold on, hold on, we got more coming."

24 [REDACTED]: That's the other reason why I always stand right
25 here on the road and if I would have been standing there that

1 morning and nobody else was standing there with me like normal, I
2 would've --

3 [REDACTED] If they would have all been right up there we
4 would have probably all got hit because the little girl that lives
5 over here in this green trailer, she was behind [REDACTED] kids.
6 She tried to grab her backpack and when she did, she literally --
7 she felt the truck go right by her feet. I mean, she's like, "I
8 remember," she's like, "it almost got my feet."

9 [REDACTED]: And if I wasn't wearing a backpack that morning,
10 which I wasn't because I had my navy binder thing with me which I
11 haven't touched since that day which I have stuff in it I need to
12 get but I haven't messed with it. So I threw that and took off
13 running towards [REDACTED] and I was screaming, [REDACTED]" and, [REDACTED]
14 and when I grabbed [REDACTED] I slipped and I almost broke my leg that
15 morning and they had to reup all those back into place.

16 [REDACTED]: Yeah, they had to like --

17 [REDACTED]: -- and everything.

18 [REDACTED]: The fireman, he (indiscernible). He said,
19 "Well, you probably just popped it out," kind of, you know.

20 [REDACTED]: His name was Dax. He was the firefighter. Dax.

21 MS. HARLEY: So I'm going to start back a little bit. So you
22 come out and you're walking to the road --

23 [REDACTED]: Uh-huh. [Affirmative]

24 MS. HARLEY: -- and with you are -- it's you and [REDACTED]

25 [REDACTED]: Uh-huh. [Affirmative]

1 MS. HARLEY: It's [REDACTED] kids, which was [REDACTED]
2 and [REDACTED] Okay.

3 [REDACTED]
4 [REDACTED]
5 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] had to go get her six grade shots that
6 day.

7 MS. HARLEY: So that's why --

8 [REDACTED]: Yes, she --

9 MS. HARLEY: -- [REDACTED] didn't make the bus.

10 [REDACTED] Yes.

11 MS. HARLEY: Okay. There was [REDACTED]

12 [REDACTED] Yes.

13 MS. HARLEY: So then was it [REDACTED] --

14 [REDACTED] --

15 MS. HARLEY: -- they are --

16 [REDACTED] -- and [REDACTED]

17 MS. HARLEY: They're the [REDACTED] kids.

18 [REDACTED] yes.

19 MS. HARLEY: [REDACTED]. Okay.

20 [REDACTED]

21 MS. HARLEY: Okay. They were [REDACTED].

22 [REDACTED] I remember the exact outfit I was wearing that
23 morning. I was --

24 [REDACTED] And then --

25 [REDACTED] -- wearing my blue shirt --

1 [REDACTED]: What are [REDACTED] -- I know [REDACTED]. There's
2 [REDACTED] --

3 MS. HARLEY: So [REDACTED] and her --

4 [REDACTED] What's her little girl's name? [REDACTED]
5 [REDACTED]

6 [REDACTED] And --
7 [REDACTED]
8 [REDACTED]

9 MS. HARLEY: Okay.

10 [REDACTED] This was the (indiscernible). This was in my
11 backpack which was on the road so I picked it up and then I have
12 [REDACTED] (indiscernible) off her backpack.

13 MS. HARLEY: So as the school bus arrives, do you remember
14 how the kids were as they were walking towards the school bus,
15 walking across the road?

16 [REDACTED] It was [REDACTED] three --

17 [REDACTED] No.

18 [REDACTED] Yes, [REDACTED] always in the middle and she has
19 the boys on the outside.

20 [REDACTED] Yeah, but it was [REDACTED] and then, it was [REDACTED] --

21 [REDACTED] And then [REDACTED] always on this side of one
22 of the boys.

23 [REDACTED] Yeah but [REDACTED] was up there because when they all
24 scattered, [REDACTED] was to -- [REDACTED] was at the bus. [REDACTED] and them
25 were --

1 ██████████ Over here by the fence.
2 ██████████: With you.
3 ██████████: Yes.
4 ██████████ ██████████ was over there. The boys were in the
5 road. ██████████ was over here in the grass by the --
6 ██████████: By the pole right here.
7 ██████████ By the pole. ██████████ was clear down there and
8 ██████████ was with me.
9 MS. HARLEY: Uh-huh. [Affirmative]
10 ██████████ And like as everybody scattered, like, I heard
11 ██████████ scream, "Scatter," and ██████████ grabbed the boys, ██████████
12 grabbed them and then out of all that she grabbed my hand and her
13 had was like this with mine and when the truck took her, her hand
14 got ripped out of mine and I was the last connection with ██████████.
15 ██████████: She was actually the last person --
16 ██████████: Actually talk to her and whatnot.
17 ██████████: Uh-huh. [Affirmative]
18 MS. HARLEY: So the bus is there. So you have -- ██████████ is
19 holding her two brothers.
20 ██████████: Uh-huh. [Affirmative]
21 MS. HARLEY: Is that correct? Do you remember which side
22 ██████████ was on? Which side was ██████████ holding ██████████ on?
23 ██████████ Well, because --
24 ██████████: (Indiscernible.)
25 ██████████: When the boys, like, were on the road, ██████████ was

1 facing this way, [REDACTED] was facing that way and I was holding her
2 boys. The first thing I did when I got up and was -- I checked
3 for their pulses. [REDACTED] died on impact and he had, like, tears
4 all over his face and his eyes were open (indiscernible) --

5 [REDACTED]: (Indiscernible.)

6 MS. HARLEY: Yeah. When they first started --

7 [REDACTED]: She was on the right, he was on the left.

8 [REDACTED]: [REDACTED] was on this side, [REDACTED] was on this side.

9 MS. HARLEY: Okay. So suppose you're [REDACTED] on the bus and
10 you're facing me, okay, and so [REDACTED] was on -- to her left and
11 [REDACTED] was on--

12 [REDACTED]: Yeah.

13 MS. HARLEY: -- her right side.

14 [REDACTED]: Yes.

15 MS. HARLEY: Okay.

16 [REDACTED]: And then [REDACTED], he was still alive and the last
17 thing he told me was, "I love you (indiscernible) and tell mom and
18 daddy and [REDACTED] that I loved her." And then he died and I told
19 him I promised I tell them so I did.

20 MS. HARLEY: So where was [REDACTED] at the time just before
21 the crash?

22 [REDACTED]: [REDACTED] was next to [REDACTED] and her boys. He
23 was --

24 [REDACTED]: He always walks like on -- to the right --

25 [REDACTED]: Yeah.

1 [REDACTED] -- of them.

2 [REDACTED]: And --

3 MR. BRAGG: So closest to the bus.

4 [REDACTED]: Yes, he -- it would literally be [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

5 [REDACTED], [REDACTED] was always right here. He always walked right
6 here.

7 MS. HARLEY: So [REDACTED] was on the farther end. Okay.

8 [REDACTED] And if [REDACTED] would have been out there she
9 would have been with me.

10 [REDACTED] Yes, them two would have been like right there
11 by [REDACTED]

12 MS. HARLEY: So behind these four was [REDACTED] --

13 [REDACTED]: [REDACTED] --

14 [REDACTED] And [REDACTED]

15 [REDACTED] And then [REDACTED] and them were, like, over here.

16 [REDACTED] Yeah.

17 [REDACTED]: It's usually -- [REDACTED] thinks she's a prissy
18 princess (ph.) so she's more likely up there and then it's --

19 [REDACTED]: They all just kind of like --

20 [REDACTED] Yeah they kind of just like --

21 [REDACTED]: -- follow each other. I mean, they don't -- she
22 doesn't hold their hands or nothing. They just kind of follow
23 along behind their big sister.

24 MS. HARLEY: Okay. So -- but they were behind.

25 [REDACTED] Yes.

1 MS. HARLEY: And you were -- so --

2 [REDACTED]: Yes.

3 MS. HARLEY: Okay. So they were not actually in the road.

4 [REDACTED]: No but almost.

5 [REDACTED]: Just about.

6 MS. HARLEY: Okay. So when you start off, do you actually
7 walk up the road to the actual road edge?

8 [REDACTED]: We go up to where the -- our fence is up there.

9 MS. HARLEY: To the fence?

10 [REDACTED] I make everybody stay behind the fence just
11 because of other incidents that have happened that, you know, cars
12 have went around other cars. Like, a couple years back [REDACTED]
13 almost got hit --

14 [REDACTED] And she also got (indiscernible) back, too.

15 [REDACTED] -- and that's why I told her, I was like, "You
16 need to stay behind the fence because if they take the fence out
17 the fence can be replaced, you can't.

18 [REDACTED]: I also --

19 [REDACTED] -- I said, "Stay back."

20 [REDACTED] -- (indiscernible) that day, too, as well.

21 MS. HARLEY: Okay. All right. So none of the kids actually
22 boarded the bus. Okay.

23 [REDACTED] Nobody made it to the bus.

24 MS. HARLEY: Okay.

25 [REDACTED] Nobody made it.

1 MS. HARLEY: All right. And when was -- in the -- tell me,
2 again, the first time you saw the truck?

3 [REDACTED] It would have been --

4 [REDACTED] Until it's too late.

5 [REDACTED] Probably, I mean, if you was to look at here at
6 my son's trailer, I mean, where his trailer ends is almost the
7 same as ours. I mean, we did not see her until the front of her
8 truck was like just coming past the side of his trailer.

9 MR. BRAGG: So --

10 MS. HARLEY: Now is that [REDACTED], next door?

11 [REDACTED] Yes.

12 MS. HARLEY: Okay.

13 MR. BRAGG: So what you're saying is your vision to the left
14 is blocked by your son's truck.

15 [REDACTED]: By his trailer, yes.

16 MR. BRAGG: By the trailer. So you can't see any traffic
17 coming down --

18 [REDACTED]: No. I mean, not --

19 MR. BRAGG: -- until the point where --

20 [REDACTED]: -- unless we stand --

21 MR. BRAGG: -- until the point where they pass the trailer.

22 [REDACTED]: Yes, unless we stand completely, like, all the
23 way out.

24 MR. BRAGG: So I --

25 MS. HARLEY: All right.

1 [REDACTED]: I just don't feel comfortable letting the kids
2 out that far.

3 MR. BRAGG: Okay. So I have a question about where you guys
4 were standing. So you're standing facing the road. Correct?

5 [REDACTED]: I wasn't --

6 MR. BRAGG: I mean, you're standing at the road.

7 [REDACTED]: Yeah.

8 MR. BRAGG: And if you were facing the road the bus would
9 have been coming from your right. Correct?

10 [REDACTED]: Yes.

11 MR. BRAGG: And the (indiscernible) from the left. I'm just
12 making this point clear because this is going to be transcribed so
13 the morning of the incident, how far back did you see the school
14 bus approach?

15 [REDACTED]: Like, I mean, we can see him from, you know,
16 coming from, like, that curve up there because there's other stops
17 right there.

18 MR. BRAGG: And it was dark, right?

19 [REDACTED]: Yes.

20 MR. BRAGG: So how can you first tell it's the school bus?

21 [REDACTED]: We see the light on top of the bus.

22 MR. BRAGG: That little --

23 [REDACTED]: That flashing light, like the fog light or
24 whatever it is. Yes.

25 [REDACTED]: The fog light and the --

1 MR. BRAGG: Yeah. What color is that light?

2 [REDACTED]: White.

3 [REDACTED]: It's just a bright light. Right?

4 MR. BRAGG: Bright light white, okay. So you --

5 [REDACTED]: And --

6 MR. BRAGG: -- that's how you know the school bus is coming.

7 [REDACTED]: Yes.

8 MR. BRAGG: And so tell me what the school bus did as it
9 approached the stop.

10 [REDACTED]: Normal. He pulled up, stopped. He sat there
11 and he waited. You know --

12 MR. BRAGG: Did he have any lights on?

13 [REDACTED]: Yes.

14 [REDACTED]: Yes.

15 [REDACTED]: He had --

16 [REDACTED]: He had --

17 [REDACTED]: -- the inside lights on. He had the --

18 [REDACTED]: He turns --

19 [REDACTED]: -- stop arm --

20 [REDACTED]: Yep.

21 [REDACTED]: -- lights on. He had his arm thing extended.

22 [REDACTED]: And he --

23 [REDACTED]: Everything.

24 [REDACTED]: -- does like he normally does, you know, even

25 Ms. Pratt, the prior bus driver, you know, they look, you know,

1 they look out the window and he must not have seen her either
2 until -- and you know he must not have noticed that, you know, she
3 -- because if something's coming from that way you really don't
4 know if it's stopped or not.

5 MR. BRAGG: So here's the next question. So when he -- you
6 came up to the --

7 [REDACTED] The --

8 MR. BRAGG: -- the bus stop. He stopped.

9 [REDACTED] Yes.

10 [REDACTED] -- (indiscernible) coming (indiscernible) --

11 MS. HARLEY: Oh, yeah, we'll do that.

12 MR. BRAGG: We'll do that (indiscernible) later. To my
13 question, he stopped. What was -- the lights are on, the stop arm
14 comes out.

15 [REDACTED]: Uh-huh. [Affirmative]

16 MR. BRAGG: How long before he had been stopped before the
17 kids began across the road?

18 [REDACTED] Gosh.

19 MR. BRAGG: I mean were they waiting in anticipation?

20 [REDACTED] Yeah, I mean, everybody was, you know, like I
21 said, you know, we had up to there and for some reason I don't
22 know, I mean, I know that he motioned the kids across.

23 MR. BRAGG: And how do you know that?

24 [REDACTED] Because he -- we seen (indiscernible) --

25 MR. BRAGG: So you saw him --

1 [REDACTED] Yeah. He goes like that --

2 MS. HARLEY: So were all the kids still behind the fence?

3 [REDACTED]: Yeah. Everybody --

4 [REDACTED] No.

5 [REDACTED] Yes, everybody was still walking up to the road
6 because, like I said, not everybody -- we worked there together as
7 a group that morning.

8 MR. BRAGG: Okay. How many groups -- how many different
9 groups were there?

10 [REDACTED] Oh, usually there's 12 kids but the older kid on
11 the end he didn't get on and [REDACTED] didn't get on. So there was
12 ten of them but I mean most generally --

13 [REDACTED]: No, because she got into the accident at the
14 high school, remember?

15 [REDACTED]: -- everybody's like we're all up there, you
16 know, we're standing there, we're waiting. But I mean, we were
17 all like in motion to like, you know, go up and then, you know,
18 the bus pulled up and then and, like I said, I mean, it was, like,
19 so fast I mean because he -- I mean, I remember him motioning the
20 kids across and I also remember him hitting the horn.

21 [REDACTED]: Laying on the horn.

22 [REDACTED] But like I was saying --

23 MR. BRAGG: So let me -- why do you think he was laying on
24 the horn?

25 [REDACTED] Because he must have noticed that she wasn't

1 stopping.

2 MR. BRAGG: Okay. And I'm asking this, you know, does he
3 normally lay on the horn like that?

4 [REDACTED] No.

5 [REDACTED] No.

6 MR. BRAGG: No, so he normally just --

7 [REDACTED] No.

8 MR. BRAGG: Does he normally wave the kids to --

9 [REDACTED] Yes.

10 MR. BRAGG: -- to the bus. He normally does that. So --

11 [REDACTED] But usually I'm standing out there and, like,
12 after he waves us across I go out. They wait for me to get out
13 there and look and wait and then I'm like, "Okay, guys. Come on."
14 And then they go around me and then -- so we had --

15 [REDACTED] Most generally the older kids get on, you know,
16 before all the littler kids because they like go across and they
17 wait for everybody else to come across.

18 MR. BRAGG: So the other question is does this school bus
19 take kids to different schools?

20 [REDACTED]: No.

21 [REDACTED] What do you mean?

22 MR. BRAGG: I mean does it go to the elementary school and
23 the high school and the middle school --

24 [REDACTED] Yes.

25 MS. HARLEY: Yes, it does.

1 [REDACTED] Oh, okay.

2 [REDACTED] It goes to the high school and then the kids get
3 off to the different bus --

4 MS. HARLEY: Yeah.

5 [REDACTED] That would be my question.

6 [REDACTED] And then they go to the elementary school.

7 [REDACTED] Okay. So we, like, in the mornings he drops the
8 middle school kids off which is me and then he goes to the high
9 school and then he goes to, like, where, like, the football field
10 and whatnot is for the high school and then they turn toward the
11 kids from our bus to Ms. Egoff's (ph.) bus. Ms. Egoff takes --

12 [REDACTED] And then she --

13 [REDACTED] -- them to the elementary.

14 MS. HARLEY: Right.

15 MR. BRAGG: Okay.

16 MS. HARLEY: Yeah.

17 [REDACTED] But in the afternoon he comes and picks us up.

18 We go to the high school, pick the high school kids up --

19 [REDACTED] Uh-huh. [Affirmative] And then go pick the --

20 [REDACTED] -- then we head for Mentone (ph.). We get the

21 Mentone kids and then we start our route. That's pretty much.

22 MR. BRAGG: Okay. So how many school buses stop at this bus
23 stop or this location?

24 [REDACTED] Just the one.

25 [REDACTED] We have just their bus but then there's another

1 bus that comes from the elementary --

2

3 -- school that comes in and takes Allen's little
4 girl down here on the end.

5 MR. BRAGG: Okay.

6 MS. HARLEY: Okay.

7 : She pulls into the park and picks her up.

8 MR. BRAGG: I guess she's special needs. Is that why?

9 : Yes.

10 MR. BRAGG: Okay. So there's only two buses.

11 : Yes.

12 MS. HARLEY: Hold on a sec. Is that another Valley bus?

13 : Yes.

14 MS. HARLEY: Okay.

15 MR. BRAGG: Is it a full size bus or --

16 : Yes.

17 MR. BRAGG: -- is it a small bus?

18 MS. HARLEY: Okay.

19 : Full size bus.

20 MS. HARLEY: Okay. Does the -- does Rochester school also
21 pick up here?

22 : Uh-uh. [Negative]

23 : No.

24 : No.

25 MS. HARLEY: No? Okay.

1 [REDACTED]: No the cut off line's down here by the old
2 muffler shop and that yellow house down the road.

3 MS. HARLEY: Okay. All right.

4 [REDACTED]: Anything past that is Tippy (ph.).

5 MR. BRAGG: So I'm going to ask each of you this question.
6 You may have different answers, you know, you may have the same
7 one. At what point were you aware of the pickup truck? Was it
8 when it passed the fence?

9 [REDACTED]: Right as she passed the backside of my son's
10 house.

11 MR. BRAGG: Okay. And what can you tell me about what you
12 saw when you remember -- when you first saw it? What did you
13 first notice about it?

14 [REDACTED]: Me it was shock because I mean it was just so
15 fast that, I mean -- and [REDACTED] and everybody's asking me
16 they're like, well, was there anything that you could have done?
17 I'm like, no, I mean, it was just, bam, she was there.

18 [REDACTED]: (Indiscernible) for you guys?

19 MS. HARLEY: Uh-uh. [Negative]

20 [REDACTED]: I mean and there was nothing I could do, like I
21 said, I mean, I felt like I stood there forever but I know it
22 wasn't.

23 MR. BRAGG: Okay.

24 [REDACTED]: I mean, it was just shock because I was like
25 trying to comprehend what just happened, you know.

1 MS. HARLEY: The other thing is you said that [REDACTED] was
2 listening to music that morning.

3 [REDACTED]: Yeah.

4 MS. HARLEY: Okay. Did you see [REDACTED] just before the bus
5 hit him? Did he hear the truck or see the truck coming, do you
6 know?

7 [REDACTED] Well, like everything for me, like, happened in
8 slow motion, like, I've been having these dreams where, like, I
9 can actually, like it's weird to explain. Like, I can actually,
10 like, see -- like the dream that I had last night I saw
11 everybody's face. I saw [REDACTED] face. I saw [REDACTED] face. I
12 saw the boys' face. I saw everybody's face before the truck hit
13 them. It was going in, like, slow motion and, like that morning,
14 like, while she was holding my hand she mouthed something to me
15 but I don't remember what it was but, like, it's just been
16 terrible for me.

17 [REDACTED] I do remember [REDACTED] because when she said the
18 truck almost hit her foot because she felt it literally go right
19 past her shoe, she said she remembered seeing the car but she,
20 like, she didn't realize either, you know, except for just to try
21 to grab [REDACTED] that, you know, she -- like, there wasn't even time
22 to, like, yell or you know, because she said she remembered. She
23 looked and she seen it but, like I was saying, when he hit the
24 horn the kids don't react to that --

25 [REDACTED]: It's startled to them. Startled them.

1 [REDACTED] -- because they hear the people behind the bus
2 every morning that are impatient blowing the horn saying, "Hurry
3 up." So they didn't probably think nothing of that because
4 they're used to hearing the horns.

5 MS. HARLEY: Right.

6 [REDACTED]: It really didn't faze us. Well, when I saw the
7 truck I saw it, like, there's going by, like, the guardrail
8 because there's like a guardrail right here. That was where I
9 first saw the truck and I was the one who screamed and [REDACTED]
10 heard me scream, "Scatter," so [REDACTED] grabbed [REDACTED] and the
11 boys and I'm like screaming, "Everybody move," because like --

12 [REDACTED] But there wasn't time.

13 [REDACTED] -- me and [REDACTED] both knew that the truck
14 wasn't going to stop so [REDACTED] grabbed [REDACTED] and them and he
15 was hoping to absorb most of the impact.

16 [REDACTED] She's talked to [REDACTED] at school.

17 [REDACTED] Yeah. I was just talking to him the other day.
18 He's going to start coming back for three hours a day and, like,
19 it's, like, every day that, like, I see him. Like, it hurts but
20 it's actually kind of nice to see him because that morning he was
21 screaming my name and my name only and when he got to the hospital
22 and woke up and whatnot he started screaming my name and he wanted
23 to see me only. Which I didn't get to go see him while he was in
24 the hospital. So the first day that he came back to school I was
25 walking down the hallway to go to my locker because I had to hurry

1 and get to my third (indiscernible) and Mr. Backus (ph.) yelled at
2 me like I was in trouble. He's like, [REDACTED] I'm like, "What?"
3 And he's like, "Come here." And I didn't think to look by the
4 office so he's like, "Hey, come here." I'm like, "Yeah, am I in
5 trouble?" He's like, "No." And then I got a glimpse of blue hair
6 and I'm like -- I look over and I was in tears and, like, I walked
7 over to [REDACTED] and when [REDACTED] hugged me he squeezed me and he
8 buried his face in my sweatshirt and started crying.

9 MR. BRAGG: So you say [REDACTED] was listening to music that
10 morning.

11 [REDACTED] Yeah.

12 MR. BRAGG: How was he listening to it?

13 [REDACTED] He has the Beats. The -- I think they were
14 blue.

15 [REDACTED] I don't remember if he had them on that morning
16 or not.

17 [REDACTED]: Yeah, he did. They were blue. Because I had
18 his iPod and I was playing with it and his -- he can either
19 Bluetooth them or he has this cord that he can plug into them and
20 plug into his phone but I think he had them Bluetoothed that
21 morning because I was playing on his phone while talking to [REDACTED]
22 because she kept taking the cup out of my hand and drinking it.

23 MR. BRAGG: Yeah.

24 MS. HARLEY: So did [REDACTED] have anything over top of his
25 head?

1

2

MS. HARLEY: Was he wearing a --

3

His hoodie.

4

5

I don't know if he did or not. I didn't really pay a whole lot of attention to him that morning.

6

His hoodie.

7

8

I mean sometimes he talks to me and sometimes he don't and sometimes he just, you know, kind of hangs out with her and --

9

10

11

12

He's always hanging out with me because he -- he still has a crush on me. So he's always, like, talking to me and whatnot. Always.

13

MR. BRAGG: Okay.

14

15

16

17

18

MS. HARLEY: So let me ask you a question. So what did -- how does the school -- what does the school tell you guys about how to get on and off the bus? Do they actually kind of give you training or they tell you what you should do if you're going to use the bus?

19

20

No. Well, like they don't really give training at all. Really, to be honest.

21

22

23

I mean they've had the same bus driver for the last, what, 12 years and she just recently retired before the end of the school year last year.

24

MS. HARLEY: That's Ms. Pratt?

25

Ms. Pratt, yes.

1 [REDACTED]: And Robert was new so I mean, he was still
2 trying to, you know, feel the kids out and, you know --

3 MS. HARLEY: Okay.

4 [REDACTED]: -- get everything --

5 [REDACTED]: Because usually I'm standing here and then
6 they're all standing like right around here and then Robert is
7 right here, usually, and they always have the lights on. There
8 were three kids --

9 [REDACTED]: Yeah. He always has the lights on, the arms out
10 --

11 [REDACTED]: There were three kids already on the bus that
12 morning. There was [REDACTED] --

13 [REDACTED]: Yes, there was --

14 [REDACTED]: -- [REDACTED] --

15 [REDACTED]: -- three kids on the bus --

16 [REDACTED]: -- and --

17 [REDACTED]: -- another boy.

18 MR. BRAGG: And they're from another stop. Correct?

19 [REDACTED]: Yes. From the previous stops just up the road
20 here.

21 [REDACTED]: Yeah. It was [REDACTED] and --

22 [REDACTED]: There was another boy because when they all got
23 off the bus I'm like, "Who are you, who are you and who are you?"
24 I'm like, "Where do you belong?"

25 [REDACTED]: I don't the other kid's name.

1 [REDACTED] I'm trying to make sure, you know, who's missing
2 and who's here.

3 MR. BRAGG: You went to mom, mode. I get it.

4 [REDACTED]: Oh, yes. Trying to keep it cool but it was kind
5 of hard.

6 MS. HARLEY: So I understand, and correct me if I'm wrong on
7 this, did you ever have a conversation with the school --

8 [REDACTED] Yes.

9 MS. HARLEY: -- about the bus?

10 [REDACTED]: Yes.

11 MS. HARLEY: Okay. Do you remember when that was?

12 [REDACTED]: Since my first grade year.

13 [REDACTED] It's been off and on. Like I said, you know,
14 with prior things that have happened out here, you know, I don't
15 think any of the other parents out here had called except for
16 [REDACTED] Her and I have been like the last three years or better
17 trying to, you know -- we've even asked Ms. Pratt, you know, well,
18 what would the school say, you know, if we called and said, "Hey,"
19 you know, "Can the bus pull in here," and she's like, "Well, this
20 is the rules." This is, you know, it would be a -- what'd she
21 call it?

22 [REDACTED] Give me a good example and I'll tell you.

23 [REDACTED] It wouldn't be good for the school if the bus
24 came in here, like a liability.

25 [REDACTED]: Yeah, but here's the thing. How come Allen's

1 kid can get a full --

2 [REDACTED]: I know.

3 [REDACTED]: -- size bus in here and we couldn't?

4 [REDACTED]: And she's like, well, it would be a liability
5 because of pulling out -- back out on to the highway. Not so much
6 coming into here except for, like, if it tore up the pavement or,
7 you know, but she said it would be -- the issue would be for the
8 bus to pull back out onto the highway --

9 [REDACTED]: And --

10 [REDACTED]: -- without like --

11 MS. HARLEY: So you never made any official complaints with
12 the school about it?

13 [REDACTED]: Yes.

14 [REDACTED]: Just called and talked -- I think I talked to
15 Mr. Backus but it might have been Mr. Cooper. God, it's been a
16 few years ago.

17 [REDACTED]: We have talked to a superintendent who was
18 recently superintendent which was Mr. Boggs.

19 [REDACTED]: Boggs.

20 [REDACTED]: Yes.

21 [REDACTED]: But I mean they just kept telling us, oh, well,
22 you know, this has to be done or --

23 [REDACTED]: (Indiscernible) --

24 [REDACTED]: -- four more children out here have to have an
25 IEP.

1 [REDACTED]: We all have IEPs.

2 [REDACTED]: Every child that's out here -- she has two IEPs.

3 [REDACTED] kids.

4 MR. BRAGG: Okay. IEP, is that what you're saying?

5 [REDACTED]: It's an individualized education plan.

6 MR. BRAGG: Okay.

7 [REDACTED]: I have a speech --

8 [REDACTED]: They're like -- they're not special needs.

9 They're like special ed --

10 [REDACTED]: Hey.

11 [REDACTED]: -- you know, for certain things. We're, like,
12 all the kids out here have them. Oh, well, the bus still can't
13 pull in out there.

14 MS. HARLEY: So the question is what does the IEP have to do
15 with the actual bus?

16 [REDACTED]: That's what we wanted --

17 MS. HARLEY: Did they explain it to you?

18 [REDACTED]: No. They're like, oh, well, each kid, you know,
19 there has to be four more children out there that have an IEP.
20 She has four kids of her own. They had IEPs. Mine's got two.

21 [REDACTED] have IEPs. I mean, I don't understand --

22 [REDACTED]: I have a math IEP and a speech IEP.

23 MS. HARLEY: Okay.

24 [REDACTED]: Because --

25 [REDACTED]: But I mean we just kind of kept getting --

1 [REDACTED] -- I used to have a stuttering issue.

2 [REDACTED] -- one thing over another, you know, like to,
3 not necessarily to like push it aside but I don't know if they
4 were trying to hopefully maybe get us to, like, give up on the
5 idea.

6 [REDACTED] They tried.

7 [REDACTED] But I mean that -- I mean, she called prior to
8 this school year starting, can we please have the bus pull in
9 here?

10 MS. HARLEY: Who was that [REDACTED]

11 [REDACTED] yes.

12 MS. HARLEY: Okay.

13 [REDACTED] She was supposed to come down today but she out
14 -- no, I didn't want to --

15 [REDACTED] This was something --

16 [REDACTED] -- push her --

17 [REDACTED] -- that she made for me a couple months ago
18 before the accident she made that for me because I have several
19 nicknames which one of them is [REDACTED]

20 MS. HARLEY: [REDACTED]

21 [REDACTED] Yes, [REDACTED]

22 MS. HARLEY: Why [REDACTED]

23 [REDACTED] Well, I used to like that one Disney show,
24 Descendants.

25 [REDACTED] Descendants.

1 [REDACTED] And they always thought of me as [REDACTED] and so
2 that became my nickname from her. So I'm like, okay, whatever.
3 And she made that for me.

4 MS. HARLEY: Okay. Do you have any other questions?

5 MR. BRAGG: I don't.

6 MS. HARLEY: So I tell you what, you want to take a walk
7 outside and we can do this?

8 [REDACTED] Do you want me to finish hunting down the rest
9 of the stuff (indiscernible)?

10 [REDACTED] No.

11 [REDACTED]: (Indiscernible.)

12 [REDACTED]: I know but I don't know what Maverick wants to
13 do with anything.

14 [REDACTED] (Indiscernible) didn't wash it for him.

15 MS. HARLEY: Okay. Well, it's 2:22 and we'll go ahead and
16 we'll go outside.

17 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

18

19

20

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25

CERTIFICATE

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

IN THE MATTER OF: PICKUP TRUCK AND SCHOOL BUS CRASH
 ROCHESTER, INDIANA
 OCTOBER 30, 2018
 Interview of [REDACTED]

ACCIDENT NO.: HWY19MH003

PLACE: Rochester, Indiana

DATE: February 12, 2019

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]

Beverly A. Lano
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of:

PICKUP TRUCK AND SCHOOL BUS CRASH
ROCHESTER, INDIANA
OCTOBER 30, 2018

* Accident No.: HWY19MH003

* * * * *

Interview of: [REDACTED] and

Fulton County Sheriff's Office
Rochester, Indiana

Tuesday,
October 30, 2018

APPEARANCES:

MIKE LORONA, Detective
Indiana State Police

I N D E XITEMPAGE

Interview of [REDACTED]

By Det. Lorona

4

P R O C E E D I N G S

(9:45 a.m.)

DET. LORONA: Hello. I'm Trooper Lorona with the State Police. I'm a detective. I should say Detective Lorona. I'm not here under good circumstances. Actually I'm just going to talk to you.

INTERVIEW OF [REDACTED]

DET. LORONA: Were you out there?

[REDACTED] (Indiscernible).

DET. LORONA: Okay. And you were out there, too.

[REDACTED] (Indiscernible).

DET. LORONA: And I just want to talk you about what I saw, and go from there, okay. Do you need anything to drink or anything?

[REDACTED] report to drinks.)

DET. LORONA: You have something already. Okay. Okay. Do you have ID, ma'am?

[REDACTED] (Indiscernible).

[REDACTED] to Det. Lorona.)

DET. LORONA: What's the address on there? I can't --

[REDACTED]
DET. LORONA: Okay.

[REDACTED]
DET. LORONA: So you live in the trailer park?

[REDACTED] Yes.

1 DET. LORONA: Okay. And what's the name of that? Meiser's.

2 [REDACTED] It used to be River Park Properties, but he shut
3 it down. It's just four trailers out there.

4 [REDACTED] (Indiscernible).

5 [REDACTED] It was Meiser's back in the day.

6 DET. LORONA: (Indiscernible) Meiser's Trailer Park
7 (indiscernible).

8 [REDACTED]: It was River Park Properties.

9 DET. LORONA: Do you have a phone number?

10 [REDACTED]

11 DET. LORONA: That's a cell.

12 [REDACTED] That's a home phone.

13 DET. LORONA: That's a home phone, okay. And a cell number?

14 [REDACTED] That's my husband and I's.

15 DET. LORONA: Okay. That's a cell?

16 [REDACTED] Um-hum.

17 DET. LORONA: And what's your husband's name?

18 [REDACTED]

19 DET. LORONA: (Indiscernible).

20 [REDACTED] Okay. That's D.

21 DET. LORONA: Okay. (Indiscernible). Okay. What's your
22 name?

23 [REDACTED] (indiscernible) across the
24 last A.

25 DET. LORONA: What?

1 [REDACTED] She has a hyphen on her A (indiscernible).

2 [REDACTED]

3 DET. LORONA:

4 [REDACTED] Same.

5 [REDACTED] Um-hum.

6 DET. LORONA: And how old are you?

7 [REDACTED] Fourteen. My birthday's in January.

8 [REDACTED]

9 DET. LORONA: [REDACTED]

10 [REDACTED] Yeah. That's really weird to write.

11 DET. LORONA: (Indiscernible). Okay. And you go to -- what
12 school do you go to?

13 [REDACTED] Tippecanoe Valley.

14 [REDACTED] Valley.

15 DET. LORONA: Okay. What grade are you in?

16 [REDACTED] Eighth.

17 DET. LORONA: Eighth grade. Okay. Were you both at the bus
18 stop?

19 [REDACTED] I go out with her every day.

20 DET. LORONA: Okay. How many, how many kids are at the bus
21 stop?

22 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] got four. [REDACTED] got three.

23 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] wasn't out there. [REDACTED] wasn't out

24 there. [REDACTED] has to go get her shots. So she wasn't out there.

25 [REDACTED] And then there was [REDACTED] and then [REDACTED] (ph.)

1 and [REDACTED] (ph.). So that would be what? Eleven.

2 [REDACTED] The kids that were present --

3 [REDACTED] And 12 with what's his name.

4 [REDACTED] -- was the two boys, (indiscernible), [REDACTED]

5 DET. LORONA: All right. So there were four people that got
6 hit. They were there.

7 [REDACTED] Yes.

8 DET. LORONA: You were there. So that's 5.

9 [REDACTED] That was four.

10 DET. LORONA: What's that?

11 [REDACTED] Four.

12 [REDACTED] You make five.

13 DET. LORONA: And you make five.

14 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] got three. So that's eight. [REDACTED]

15 got two. That's 9, 10, and there's [REDACTED] and what's the other
16 kid?

17 [REDACTED] I counted [REDACTED]

18 [REDACTED] The other kid? So over 10.

19 [REDACTED] (ph.), he wasn't out there. He was not.

20 [REDACTED] He wasn't there, but he usually rides.

21 DET. LORONA: Who was out there today?

22 [REDACTED] So 10.

23 [REDACTED] Ten minus [REDACTED]

24 DET. LORONA: So --

25 [REDACTED] There was 10.

1 DET. LORONA: -- there was 10 there today. Okay. And nobody
2 made it on the bus?

3 [REDACTED] Nobody.

4 DET. LORONA: Okay. So the first ones to start crossing were
5 the kids --

6 [REDACTED] Um-hum.

7 [REDACTED] I usually cross first because I'm the oldest,
8 and --

9 DET. LORONA: Um-hum.

10 [REDACTED] -- (indiscernible) but today, I didn't cross
11 first because I went back and gave mom my cup because our bus
12 doesn't like having like cups without lids on the bus --

13 DET. LORONA: Um-hum.

14 [REDACTED] -- and then I went back and gave it to her, and
15 I turned around and that's when it happened.

16 [REDACTED] It's just like it's -- because there's a curve
17 on the far end coming from Talma and she wasn't there.

18 DET. LORONA: Everything -- (indiscernible) if you could just
19 draw like a diagram of the area and what -- where everything was
20 and what you saw.

21 [REDACTED] Okay.

22 DET. LORONA: Can you do that? So this would be the north,
23 you know, up here. I think the road runs north and south.

24 [REDACTED] Yeah. It runs this way, you know. We were like
25 right here in the park.

1 DET. LORONA: So just kind of draw the area and where
2 everything was located. Like, you know --

3 [REDACTED] I'm just going to draw --

4 DET. LORONA: -- the entries into the trailer park, draw
5 those.

6 [REDACTED] Yeah.

7 DET. LORONA: And then where the bus was at.

8 [REDACTED] I'm drawing a sketch, okay.

9 DET. LORONA: Okay. You draw it any way you want.

10 [REDACTED] I'm a really good drawer. Like I
11 (indiscernible).

12 DET. LORONA: Yeah.

13 [REDACTED] This is the highway and then right here would be
14 one entrance, and then we were here. And then there's another one
15 right here. And here's like our (indiscernible).

16 [REDACTED] Everything was out. They should have stopped.
17 Even the arm was (indiscernible).

18 [REDACTED] This would be our trailer. This was like
19 individual.

20 [REDACTED] This is the road.

21 [REDACTED] And the bus was right here. He always stops
22 right here (indiscernible).

23 DET. LORONA: Okay.

24 [REDACTED] And I mean he had everything out. I mean the
25 kids didn't even -- like this right here, is the highway, where

1 the highway starts. I mean the kids were like here.

2 [REDACTED]: This was (indiscernible).

3 DET. LORONA: Okay.

4 [REDACTED] Because these three right here, she walks
5 holding her brothers across the street because they're so little.

6 DET. LORONA: Um-hum.

7 [REDACTED] And [REDACTED] was like right here out with them.

8 DET. LORONA: Okay. And then this is --

9 [REDACTED]: This is --

10 DET. LORONA: -- this is going south, right?

11 [REDACTED] Yeah, this is towards Talma.

12 DET. LORONA: Okay. Talma, okay.

13 [REDACTED] And this would be Rochester, right. But I mean
14 Robert always, even Ms. Pratt, they look, and he doesn't wave the
15 kids across until like everybody's stopped.

16 DET. LORONA: Okay.

17 [REDACTED] Like I said, this curve over here is the
18 direction she came. I mean --

19 DET. LORONA: Okay. So --

20 [REDACTED] -- she literally --

21 DET. LORONA: Put her car, the way her car was coming.

22 [REDACTED] She was right here.

23 DET. LORONA: Were there any other cars in the area?

24 [REDACTED] Uh-uh.

25 DET. LORONA: No cars.

1 [REDACTED] There was that little semi box truck here and
2 then, you know.

3 DET. LORONA: He was stopped.

4 [REDACTED] He was right behind the bus, yes. He was
5 stopped.

6 [REDACTED] I don't know where [REDACTED] was because --
7 He was up here.

8 -- because I walked out, he was --

9 [REDACTED] He was -- it was him. He always has his
10 headphones in. so I don't know -- I mean if he even heard or I
11 mean he's always got like his hood up and his earphones in. So I
12 mean he probably -- I mean didn't even see because he probably
13 would have said something but she was going this way. I mean we
14 were all here --

15 DET. LORONA: Okay.

16 [REDACTED] -- all the rest of us. I mean we were literally
17 -- they were getting all ready to get on the bus --

18 DET. LORONA: Okay.

19 [REDACTED] -- and I mean she literally didn't -- I mean
20 never stopped --

21 DET. LORONA: Okay.

22 [REDACTED]: -- I mean just --

23 [REDACTED] (Indiscernible).

24 [REDACTED] -- plowed right into them.

25 [REDACTED] And the first thing that I did, I started

1 screaming all of their names, and the first thing I did, I went to
2 the little boys, and I checked their pulses and they weren't
3 breathing. I didn't know [REDACTED] got hit either. It was just like
4 blinking your eyes and like -- I mean like she came out of
5 nowhere. I mean because there was like -- I don't even remember
6 if there was cars on this side.

7 [REDACTED] On which side?

8 [REDACTED] On the side like our house.

9 [REDACTED] There wasn't.

10 [REDACTED] I don't think there was.

11 [REDACTED] There wasn't because she would have had to stop.

12 She, she didn't stop.

13 [REDACTED] Because I mean she just kept right on going.

14 DET. LORONA: Okay.

15 MS. KEGLEY: Until --

16 [REDACTED] She saw the boys and [REDACTED], she should have
17 known.

18 [REDACTED] Everything was flashing. I mean he had his
19 lights on, his stop sign was out.

20 DET. LORONA: Okay.

21 [REDACTED] It was --

22 [REDACTED] I was screaming, and I was screaming.

23 [REDACTED] -- just so fast.

24 [REDACTED] I was looking for [REDACTED] and I couldn't find
25 her and I was screaming for her.

1 [REDACTED]: I mean there may have been a few more cars back
2 here, but --

3 DET. LORONA: Definitely none of those (indiscernible)?

4 [REDACTED] Yes.

5 DET. LORONA: She was going south, right?

6 [REDACTED] Yes, she was heading towards Rochester.

7 DET. LORONA: Okay.

8 [REDACTED] And I just threw her cup. I told her. I broke
9 her cup. I said you can have mine.

10 [REDACTED] I don't care.

11 [REDACTED] But I just ran to the house and got my phone.
12 I'm the only one that had a home phone.

13 [REDACTED] There was a box truck behind her.

14 [REDACTED] Yeah, a little box truck. All I seen was just
15 like the pickup truck was like pieces everywhere.

16 DET. LORONA: Okay. The bus --

17 [REDACTED] Yes.

18 DET. LORONA: -- had his stop arms out.

19 [REDACTED] Yes.

20 DET. LORONA: Lights out.

21 [REDACTED]: He puts the arm out because he makes all the
22 kids pass all the way out in front of him, and had his stop sign
23 out, his lights were flashing and --

24 [REDACTED] I pulled [REDACTED] back. I couldn't get anybody
25 else.

1 [REDACTED]: It just missed [REDACTED] the other two
2 little kids that were out there. I mean she, she --

3 [REDACTED] I have a bruise on my hand from pulling [REDACTED]
4 back because -- I don't care. It's not that much of an injury.

5 DET. LORONA: Well, how long was the bus stopped and the
6 lights on and everything?

7 [REDACTED] He just pulled up.

8 [REDACTED] He pulled up. He stopped.

9 [REDACTED] He gives us a motion to cross.

10 [REDACTED] He was looking, and he was getting ready to
11 motion the kids across and it must have, from the whole time like
12 when he did this to this, I mean she came out of nowhere.

13 DET. LORONA: So the kids don't cross the road until he --

14 [REDACTED]: Until he says to go across, and I'm like, okay,
15 Robert said okay.

16 [REDACTED] I'm usually the first one to cross because I
17 don't want them to get hurt. The one day that I'm not standing
18 there, they get hurt.

19 [REDACTED]: It's not your fault.

20 DET. LORONA: It's not your fault.

21 [REDACTED] It's so dark.

22 [REDACTED] She should have seen the boys, mom.

23 [REDACTED] She should have seen the lights flashing.

24 DET. LORONA: So you don't know about how long it was --

25 [REDACTED] I would say what?

1 DET. LORONA: -- from the time he stopped until the time he
2 motioned them?

3 [REDACTED]: Maybe a minute or two.

4 DET. LORONA: Okay.

5 [REDACTED]: I mean he pulls us. I mean he will look and,
6 you know, he does this. He always, you know, because we've had
7 several incidents before in the past with people not stopping or
8 the bus being rear ended.

9 DET. LORONA: About a minute before he waves them on.

10 [REDACTED]: Yes. And then he looks over, makes sure they're
11 paying attention, and he's like (makes motion to come on) --

12 DET. LORONA: Okay.

13 [REDACTED]: -- you know, go ahead and cross.

14 [REDACTED]: I told them (indiscernible).

15 [REDACTED]: And it was just like you blink your eyes. It
16 happened that fast, and there was nothing I could do but run home
17 and get the phone. I remember hearing somebody out on the road
18 screaming, call 9-1-1.

19 [REDACTED]: Mom, it was me.

20 [REDACTED]: I don't know who it was.

21 [REDACTED]: Mom, it was me. I --

22 [REDACTED]: I just knew. I ran home and got the phone.

23 [REDACTED]: How did [REDACTED] wind up on the cornfield, mom?

24 [REDACTED]: I have no idea, dear. I really don't.

25 [REDACTED]: How did [REDACTED] --

1 [REDACTED] she never stopped.

2 DET. LORONA: Okay. So you usually cross them.

3 [REDACTED] Yeah.

4 DET. LORONA: Take them across.

5 [REDACTED] I usually stand --

6 DET. LORONA: But you just happened to take your cup over.

7 [REDACTED] Yeah.

8 [REDACTED] Okay. So here's the bus. It's always on that
9 side.

10 [REDACTED] Yeah.

11 [REDACTED] And I usually stand right here in front. I
12 usually watch the cars. And like I wait until everyone passes and
13 then I go.

14 [REDACTED] Most generally I mean -- and this morning, I
15 mean some of the kids were kind of lollygagging. So we were like,
16 come on, you know, the bus is here. We were all walking towards
17 the highway to get on the bus. And before everybody actually got
18 to the highway --

19 [REDACTED]: Mom, I should have got the boys. I should have
20 got [REDACTED].

21 [REDACTED] (Indiscernible).

22 [REDACTED] And [REDACTED] took her drink, that I always drink.

23 [REDACTED] I know.

24 [REDACTED] The French vanilla --

25 DET. LORONA: Who did you pull back?

1

2

3 DET. LORONA: So you pulled her back off the road.

4

5 [REDACTED] She kind of grabbed her. I mean she -- [REDACTED]
6 will tell you, she felt -- I mean it was like literally like -- I
7 mean just -- she felt the truck going past her.

7

8 [REDACTED]: I barely got to her in time. I barely got to
9 her in time.

9

10 DET. LORONA: You probably saved her life.

10

11 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] says she's not talking. Little [REDACTED]
12 babbling.

12

13 [REDACTED] I'm surprised I'm even talking, mom.

13

14 [REDACTED] She's been puking.

14

15 [REDACTED] She just took a drink of my drink, too. Mom.

15

16 [REDACTED] I know. I've been putting her on -- I don't let
17 her go out by herself because of the fact of the highway.

17

18 DET. LORONA: So do you usually sit -- do you usually go to
19 the bus stop all the time?

19

20 [REDACTED] Twelve years.

20

21 [REDACTED] She always goes with me.

21

22 [REDACTED] I don't, I don't -- I mean I have to be like
23 deathly sick. I hate for the children out there to cross that
24 highway for this reason.

24

25 [REDACTED] I have been crying ever since it happened.

25

DET. LORONA: Okay. How long did you guys -- were you guys

1 out waiting for the bus when you --

2 [REDACTED]: We usually --

3 DET. LORONA: What time does the bus pick you up?

4 [REDACTED]: Between 7:13 and like 7:15.

5 [REDACTED]: It depends on when he gets there.

6 [REDACTED]: We --

7 DET. LORONA: I mean usually -- is he usually pretty
8 accurate?

9 [REDACTED]: Oh, yeah. He's always --

10 DET. LORONA: You said 7:13 to 7:15?

11 [REDACTED]: He's always on time because they're the fourth
12 stop on the bus route. So first on, last off.

13 DET. LORONA: How many kids were on the bus? Do you know?

14 [REDACTED]: Three.

15 DET. LORONA: Three kids were already on the bus?

16 [REDACTED]: Yes. I talked to them. I didn't know who they
17 were.

18 [REDACTED]: I know their names. [REDACTED] -- I don't know
19 her last name.

20 [REDACTED]: The girl told me where they lived.

21 [REDACTED]: What's his face?

22 [REDACTED]: The girl, and then the girl that lives on the
23 lane up the hill, the boy that lives right next door, and the
24 other kid lives in the yellow house.

25 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] kid.

1 DET. LORONA: So after, after, the accident occurred, what
2 did you look at the truck that hit -- what did the driver of the
3 truck do? Do you know?

4 [REDACTED] I don't know. I didn't see who it was.
5 [REDACTED] Well, I don't --
6 [REDACTED] The said it was a girl.
7 [REDACTED] I guess she was the one that was stopped like
8 right here --

9 [REDACTED] I was too worried about --
10 [REDACTED] -- from what everybody said, because everybody's
11 like, well, is she still there? I'm like I don't know. The lady
12 on 9-1-1 was asking me, okay, what's going on, you know, what's
13 where?

14 DET. LORONA: Nobody checked on her that you know of or --

15 [REDACTED] People in their cars were getting out.
16 [REDACTED] I was so worried about the boys.
17 [REDACTED] There was so much commotion.

18 DET. LORONA: Okay. So someone probably did. You just don't
19 know who.

20 [REDACTED] Exactly.
21 [REDACTED] Can I have a minute?

22 DET. LORONA: Yep. So how many, so how many cars pulled up
23 after the accident?

24 [REDACTED] Like cars or like police cars or --

25 DET. LORONA: Yeah, just regular cars. After the accident

1 occurred, how many showed up? How many stopped that you know of?

2 [REDACTED] There was probably three or four. It could have
3 been more, but I mean it was dark and there was just -- I was
4 trying to find all the rest of the kids. I, I -- I mean that was
5 my first thing. That was my first instinct. Okay. I need to
6 find all these kids, find out where's -- who's where, you know,
7 brothers and sisters. So I literally like was grouping them and
8 telling them stay right here. Hold your sister, your brother. I
9 said stay here, I have to know who -- who's accounted for, who's
10 not. I mean --

11 DET. LORONA: [REDACTED] she's your daughter?

12 [REDACTED] Yes.

13 DET. LORONA: Okay.

14 [REDACTED]: But I got all the rest of the kids together and
15 sent them all home.

16 DET. LORONA: Okay.

17 [REDACTED]: And then the parents started coming down. I
18 mean it was a mess. And to top it all off, my husband is in
19 surgery.

20 DET. LORONA: That's right. You've got to go get him, don't
21 you.

22 [REDACTED] It's not my day.

23 DET. LORONA: Okay. I think that's all I have for you. If
24 you have any questions, you have --

25 [REDACTED]: I have a card.

1 DET. LORONA: And call if you remember anything, if anything
2 jumps out at you.

3 [REDACTED] It's just --

4 DET. LORONA: It's pretty cut and dry. Unfortunately --

5 [REDACTED] I mean all I seen was just truck, park, kids.

6 DET. LORONA: What side of the road is that? That would be
7 on the east or west side of the road?

8 [REDACTED] What side she was on?

9 DET. LORONA: What side do you guys stand on? It should be
10 the side you guys stand on.

11 [REDACTED] We stand -- she's going south. She was headed
12 towards Rochester. So she was on the same side of the road that
13 we were on.

14 DET. LORONA: Yeah. What side is that? She's headed south.

15 [REDACTED]: Yeah, she was heading towards Rochester. So
16 it's north, south -- so we would have been on what? The west
17 side. Because if it was north, south, east --

18 DET. LORONA: Yeah.

19 [REDACTED]: It would have been on the west side. Yeah,
20 because it's never -- I always think never (indiscernible). So I
21 moved on the west side.

22 DET. LORONA: Okay.

23 [REDACTED] So the kids literally have to cross the highway
24 both ways and get on the bus.

25 DET. LORONA: Okay. Do you have any questions, Andrea?

1 [REDACTED] (No audible response.)

2 DET. LORONA: No. Okay. Can you think of anything else?
3 Pretty much what your mom's telling me?

4 Okay. If you have anything else, remember anything else, let
5 your mom know and she can give us a call, okay.

6 [REDACTED] I just don't know how long -- I saw the truck
7 coming, and I didn't have time to say anything.

8 DET. LORONA: Well, you did pull that one person off the
9 road, right. So you did what you could.

10 [REDACTED] And I checked the boys' pulses. Only one still
11 had a heart beat and then it stopped.

12 DET. LORONA: So --

13 [REDACTED] (Indiscernible).

14 DET. LORONA: -- none of this is your fault.

15 MS. KEGLEY: There was nothing we could do.

16 [REDACTED]: I should have been the first one going, mom.

17 DET. LORONA: But for some reason you wasn't. So that's what
18 you have to focus on, okay.

19 [REDACTED] I don't want to ride the bus tomorrow morning.
20 Just take me to school.

21 [REDACTED] I told them you're not riding the bus, until
22 that bus pulls in the park.

23 [REDACTED] I want to talk to Ms. Diotes (ph.) tomorrow. I
24 don't even want on the road.

25 DET. LORONA: This is yours. So is it like -- the trailer

1 park's over here.

2 [REDACTED] The trailer park's on this side.

3 [REDACTED] Yeah, This is --

4 DET. LORONA: Well, if he pulled in, he could come around
5 like that and come out the other side.

6 [REDACTED]: Oh, yes, there's three different ways, and then
7 like --

8 DET. LORONA: Something a bus can easily get around.

9 [REDACTED]: Oh, yeah. This would be -- this would be the
10 road that's between our house and then this is the other side of
11 the park. This road here goes all the way down and around and
12 comes back out here, and then if you go this way, it comes out
13 here. And then there's a dirt road on the backside that you can
14 also go.

15 DET. LORONA: They should probably make those changes.

16 [REDACTED] Well, we been after them for the last four
17 years, and the excuse the school gives us is you have to have
18 three or more IEPs. She has two. [REDACTED] kids have their own.

19 DET. LORONA: What's an IEP?

20 [REDACTED] Individualized education plan through the state.

21 DET. LORONA: To do a bus route thing?

22 [REDACTED]: To have the bus pull in, you have to have so
23 many more because [REDACTED] called, I've called, and now she's
24 lost three of her kids.

25 DET. LORONA: What's an individual --

1 [REDACTED] It's a plan through the state, like with her,
2 she gets like every other math problem and then she has a speech
3 -- she stutters. So it's --

4 [REDACTED]: Ms. Sweet (ph.) hasn't been doing that. She's
5 been making me do all my work.

6 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] have them, [REDACTED] kids have
7 them. She has them.

8 [REDACTED] I'm going out.

9 [REDACTED] She has them. There's no reason that that bus
10 cannot pull in there.

11 DET. LORONA: That's weird.

12 [REDACTED] And they're like, oh, you have to have that and
13 it's a state thing.

14 DET. LORONA: That's a dumb reason.

15 [REDACTED] But the little girl on the end gets picked up
16 every day. The bus pulls right in, pulls right out.

17 DET. LORONA: That's a dumb reason. What's that got to do
18 with anything?

19 [REDACTED] Exactly.

20 DET. LORONA: That doesn't have to do with anything.

21 [REDACTED] Yeah.

22 DET. LORONA: Okay.

23 [REDACTED] The school's not real happy.

24 (Whereupon, at 10:08 a.m., the interview was concluded.)
25

CERTIFICATE

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

IN THE MATTER OF: PICKUP TRUCK AND SCHOOL BUS CRASH
 ROCHESTER, INDIANA
 OCTOBER 30, 2018
 Interview of [REDACTED] and
 [REDACTED]

ACCIDENT NO.: HWY19MH003

PLACE: Rochester, Indiana

DATE: October 30, 2018

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

[REDACTED]

Kathryn A. Mirfin
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of: *

*

PICKUP TRUCK AND SCHOOL BUS CRASH *

ROCHESTER, INDIANA * Accident No.: DCA19MH003

OCTOBER 30, 2018 *

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* * * * *

Interview of: [REDACTED]

Fulton County Sheriff's Office
Rochester, IndianaTuesday,
October 30, 2018

APPEARANCES:

MICHELLE JUMPER, Detective
Indiana State Police

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>I N D E X</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Interview of [REDACTED]		
By Detective Jumper		4

I N T E R V I E W

(12:09 p.m.)

1 DET. JUMPER: Okay. Sorry. I called you right back.

2 [REDACTED] Oh, you're fine.

3 DET. JUMPER: Right after I talked to you. Well, I got to
4 thinking, you know, I better just -- I didn't know if -- probably
5 just sit down for a few minutes. Let me see what time it is.
6 It's 12:09. I took a lot of notes this morning.

INTERVIEW OF [REDACTED]

9 BY DET. JUMPER:

10 Q. Do you work anywhere?

11 A. I just got a job at UPS.

12 Q. Did you? Oh, that's a good job. I didn't know if you were
13 supposed to be at work right now, or --

14 A. Oh, no.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. I don't start until next week.

17 Q. Okay. What is your full name?

18 A. [REDACTED]

19 Q. [REDACTED] And I know some of that stuff you
20 already told me, but I'm going to do it on your own piece of paper
21 here, because I was just making notes when we were on the phone.

22 What's your address?

23 A. [REDACTED] --

24 Q. Uh-huh.

1 A. -- [REDACTED]
2 Q. [REDACTED] What's your birthday?
3 A. [REDACTED]
4 Q. So, you are 17.
5 A. That's my twin sister out there.
6 Q. Oh, okay. She wasn't with you. You were driving your
7 brother --
8 A. Uh-huh.
9 Q. -- to school. Is that what you said?
10 A. Yeah.
11 Q. Okay. So, where -- let's see, you're just north of Miser's
12 trailer park. A couple miles, maybe. Something like that.
13 A. It's about two miles.
14 Q. So, that means you were headed towards Rochester.
15 A. Uh-huh.
16 Q. At what time did you think it was?
17 A. I left and then -- it was around 7:10 when everything
18 happened.
19 Q. 7:10 a.m., towards Rochester. Do you -- are you guys still
20 in school?
21 A. No.
22 Q. No? Okay.
23 A. But my little brother is.
24 Q. Taking -- and what's his name?
25 A. [REDACTED]

1 Q. [REDACTED] What's his last name?
2 A. [REDACTED]
3 Q. Okay. Taking [REDACTED] who is 15 -- right?
4 A. Uh-huh.
5 Q. To school. And he has to be at Rochester school -- Rochester
6 High School --
7 A. Middle.
8 Q. Oh, Rochester Middle School.
9 A. Yeah. He's kind of got held back.
10 Q. Okay. Well, that happens. So, what time is he supposed to
11 be at school?
12 A. Usually like 7:30.
13 Q. 7:30-ish, to get there.
14 A. Yeah.
15 Q. And so, is that just -- do you that every day? That's really
16 nice of you.
17 A. Yeah, Monday through Friday.
18 Q. Wow. So, you don't make him ride the bus. You take him to
19 school.
20 A. No. Well, because I didn't know like if there was any buses
21 that come out there to come get my little brother.
22 Q. Uh-huh.
23 A. So, I just --
24 Q. For Rochester. I see.
25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. I know Tippe Valley does, but not --

3 Q. Well, I know down in Miami County they'll have like a -- you
4 could drive -- like if you live in Peru, you go out to like the
5 fairgrounds. That's as far south as the buses come. So you can
6 go out there and meet them and they'll get on the bus there and go
7 the rest of the way.

8 A. Uh-huh.

9 Q. And they probably -- they may do that. But that's nice of
10 you to take him to school. So, UPS. So, at 7:10 a.m. you're
11 going towards Rochester. Is it dark out, or daylight or --

12 A. It's a little dark.

13 Q. It's still dark. And you're southbound, which is headed
14 towards Rochester, on State Road 25. And what's the first thing
15 you remember? You -- were you following people? I know you
16 mentioned on the phone you were following someone. Or --

17 A. I wasn't following anybody. I just know that this truck --
18 because I dropped my mom off in Etna Green at her work.

19 Q. Uh-huh.

20 A. And I -- this truck has been in front of me since Etna Green.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. And I'm driving and I seen the bus through, like, the trees
23 and stuff.

24 Q. Were you coming around a curve?

25 A. Yeah, it's like -- not really a sharp curve, but a curve.

1 Q. Uh-huh.

2 A. And --

3 Q. Are you to the trailer park yet?

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. Okay. You're behind the same vehicle. Do you remember, was
6 it a light colored or dark colored vehicle?

7 A. It was like -- it was, it was dark. But it looked greenish
8 silverish.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. The bus was completely stopped.

11 Q. And you're saying -- okay.

12 A. It was completely stopped. And I started stopping, and the
13 truck kept going. And I seen the little kids crossing.

14 Q. Okay. So --

15 A. This is so bad.

16 Q. It's okay. It's a silverish greenish car. And you, you
17 think -- are you pretty sure you were behind it that whole time,
18 from Etna Green -- where is Etna Green? Is that far away, or is
19 that close?

20 A. It's by Mentone.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. It's Etna Green and then Mentone.

23 Q. Okay. And --

24 A. There was no other cars behind me.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. But the truck was in front of me.

2 Q. And when you say truck, what do you mean? Do you remember if
3 it -- what kind of truck? Was it a -- definitely wasn't a car.
4 Could it --

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. -- have been a van, an SUV or a pickup truck?

7 A. Yeah. It looked like a pickup truck. Like I seen the
8 wheels. It was -- I mean, the rims and everything were black,
9 that I remember. And

10 Q. Is it, is it one of those where -- I mean, like normally you
11 don't have any reason to worry about what the vehicle is in front
12 of you. You just didn't --

13 A. I mean, like --

14 Q. -- you're just trying to go from memory?

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. I don't know. It just happened so fast.

18 Q. Uh-huh.

19 A. I was like there's a bus, and you don't see the stop sign.
20 Why didn't you stop.

21 Q. Okay. You could see the stop sign -- stop arm.

22 A. Yeah. I, I seen --

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. -- the bus was stopped way before. And then I seen the kids
25 crossing. And that's when the --

1 Q. Okay. Red lights, yellow lights, what lights? What did you
2 see?

3 A. I said -- I seen red lights.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. And then I seen the yellow lights, I think at the top of the
6 bus.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. And then on -- the flashing light on the top of the bus --

9 Q. Uh-huh.

10 A. -- because that's usually --

11 Q. And how long do you think -- so, you come around probably --
12 I'm just guessing, kind of a curve of where it comes into sight.
13 How long far that point to the time that the crash happened do you
14 think that those lights were on?

15 A. It was on -- like, the bus was completely --

16 Q. Uh-huh.

17 A. I seen the lights around -- before I even came around the
18 turn.

19 Q. You could see lights. Okay.

20 A. And then I stopped. And then there's the truck. And I'm
21 thinking in my mind like hold on, stop, there's -- you know,
22 there's kids crossing.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. And then that's when I see one of the kids --

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. -- one of the kids in the middle of the road.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. And one of them in the road -- grass. I sat for 30 minutes
4 and I put on my flashers. I didn't know what to do.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. I didn't, I didn't have my phone on me.

7 Q. Uh-huh.

8 A. So, I turned around and went home. And then I, I told my
9 brother -- I said I can't drive you to school, [REDACTED]

10 Q. Okay. Okay.

11 A. That's when my sister -- my twin sister [REDACTED] took him.

12 Q. Did you -- was it light enough to be able to see, or were
13 there headlights that made it to where you could see the kid in
14 the road? Is that headlights that made --

15 A. The flashing and --

16 Q. You could --

17 A. -- because of the, the bus.

18 Q. Okay. And then the child in the grass. Was that all because
19 of those lights too?

20 A. Yeah. Because the -- like, that's when the police started to
21 arrive. And then that's when I hear -- before I left, I rolled,
22 rolled down my window and I heard, I think, the mom screaming.

23 Q. Okay. And how many kids do you think you saw there? Could
24 you --

25 A. Four. About four or five.

1 Q. When you were driving, and you're thinking why isn't that
2 person slowing down, you said you could see the kids walking
3 across.

4 A. Yeah, I seen the kids walking because the truck's headlights
5 were pointing at them.

6 Q. Their headlights showed on them to where you could see them.
7 How many do you think you saw? Was it a group? Was it just a
8 couple kids? Did it seem like a group of kids?

9 A. I -- to be honest, it looked like three or four.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. Three or four.

12 Q. How far away do you think you were at that point?

13 A. There was like one driveway and there's another driveway
14 where it happened. But I was at the first driveway.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. And then there was the bus right there. I mean, like here's
17 the bus.

18 Q. Uh-huh.

19 A. And then I'm right -- like right here.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. Where the second driveway is.

22 Q. How fast do you think you were going when you were coming
23 into that area?

24 A. I was going 35. And I know this truck in front of me was
25 going about 50 or 55 miles an hour.

1 Q. Now, when you guys were coming before you ever got to the --
2 where you saw lights -- you guys were just cruising along and
3 there's no one in the way, nothing going on, how fast do you think
4 you guys were going then? Well, how far back were you from that
5 vehicle?

6 A. I was about a car length.

7 Q. Before you ever saw the bus?

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. So, one car length. Okay. So, how fast do you think you
10 guys were going when you were like that?

11 A. I was about going 40, 45.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. I don't know. I had a gut feeling this morning.

14 Q. Now, and I'm -- you know you're not in any trouble. And I'm
15 not trying to say -- question you. On the phone, you had
16 mentioned 55. And I --

17 A. Right. Like --

18 Q. -- know the speed limit is like probably 55 through there.

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. I believe. So, do you think you guys were cruising along
21 down 25 -- you go through Talma. I know you probably slowed down
22 for that. Do you remember anything happening there? Do you
23 remember any vehicles pulling out in front of you, any vehicles
24 slowing you down there? Any vehicles doing anything in Talma?

25 A. Uh-uh.

1 Q. Nothing comes to mind? That vehicle was already in front of
2 you. And --

3 A. Yeah. That vehicle has already been in front of me since
4 Etna Green.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. Because I called my mom, and I started freaking out. I was
7 like mom, like --

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. I can't get, I can't get her mom screaming out of my head.

10 Q. Okay. So, before you see the bus lights and you're following
11 that car one car length behind, how fast would you guess that you
12 guys were going? That you were going, and they might have been
13 going the same.

14 A. I probably -- I'm probably going to guess around 45.

15 Q. Okay. I'll just put around 45. So, you start coming around
16 that curve or you get to where you start seeing bus lights. How
17 fast do you think -- do you start slowing down --

18 A. Oh, yeah.

19 Q. -- because you realize --

20 A. I start slowing down way --

21 Q. -- you're going to have to stop --

22 A. -- before. Like, when I seen the bus I slowed down
23 approximately to like 30, 35.

24 Q. Okay. So, you're slowing down but you --

25 A. And he's still speeding up.

1 Q. -- notice -- okay.

2 A. Or, the girl --

3 Q. You say this -- like -- it's --

4 A. -- which --

5 Q. -- it's a female.

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. It is a female. So, you start slowing down. You sense that
8 they're not slowing down with you. They're just maintaining that
9 same speed.

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. Okay. Let me see our notes from on the phone. I just want
12 to try to ask you the same things. One car length, going around
13 the corner, saw a bus stop, red lights, stop arm, saw kids
14 crossing. Saw -- okay. Do you remember that car hitting their
15 brakes?

16 A. No, I was too busy looking at the kids.

17 Q. Okay. So you're locked in on the kids and the fact that the
18 vehicle in front of you is just not slowing down. And you -- on
19 the phone, you even said I started freaking out. That's when you
20 started -- you realized that the -- something bad might happen.

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. Don't remember brakes or anything. Do you remember what that
23 vehicle did after the crash?

24 A. Uh-uh.

25 Q. You don't remember that?

- 1 A. I was too busy looking at --
- 2 Q. Where did you go?
- 3 A. I turned around on that driveway where I was stopped, and I
- 4 backed up.
- 5 Q. Uh-huh.
- 6 A. And I went home.
- 7 Q. Okay. You stayed there for a little bit.
- 8 A. Yeah. I put my flashers on, to let everybody know. Even
- 9 when I was driving down the road.
- 10 Q. Uh-huh. Sure. Okay. And you didn't have a phone, so you
- 11 couldn't call.
- 12 A. I left my phone at the house. So, it was like maybe --
- 13 Q. Okay. Okay. Okay. How long do you think you were there, if
- 14 you had to guess? It's hard to guess time when something like
- 15 that happens, but --
- 16 A. I got home around 8:01.
- 17 Q. Okay.
- 18 A. Because I stayed there -- I was guessing for 30 minutes. But
- 19 I don't know if it was that long.
- 20 Q. Uh-huh.
- 21 A. There was completely nobody behind me, and then all cars
- 22 started building up.
- 23 Q. Uh-huh.
- 24 A. And then that's when I decided to turn around.
- 25 Q. Okay.

1 A. I thought -- I don't know.

2 Q. Is there anything else you can think of?

3 A. No. But I can see the mom on her knees.

4 Q. This is going to be hard. And I never rule out counseling.
5 I always suggest people to go to counseling after something like
6 this.

7 A. I've been through counseling my whole life.

8 Q. So, do you have a counselor right now? You've got someone
9 that you'll be able to talk to?

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. Okay. Because that's stuff that's hard to get out of your,
12 out of your head. So, the vehicle in front of you headlights lit
13 up the kids. And you could see the bus arm. You said that you
14 were -- you think -- when you started slowing down, you were at
15 the first driveway of the trailer park. Okay. You knew what it
16 was -- when you saw that, you had no problem --

17 A. I started freaking out immediately, because like he wasn't
18 slowing down. And I saw the kids crossing, and then I was like
19 oh, no, you're not -- please don't hit them.

20 Q. You identified that as a bus, though.

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. You didn't have any problem knowing that's a bus stopped
23 there.

24 A. I, I knew it was a bus automatically, because, I mean, I've
25 rode a bus my whole life. And --

1 Q. Uh-huh.

2 A. -- it was a complete stop sign, with two lights flashing and
3 then another --

4 Q. Uh-huh.

5 A. -- light up on top flashing, and then the stick coming out.

6 Q. What do you mean the stick came out? That yellow thing.

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. Oh, it had one of those? You -- could you see that?

9 A. Well, I mean, I couldn't see that but -- until I got up --

10 Q. Uh-huh.

11 A. -- and --

12 Q. Uh-huh. Okay. You saw it later, then.

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. Okay. I'm trying to try and -- you never saw the driver of
15 what you're calling the truck.

16 A. Uh-huh. I -- from behind, when I was behind her.

17 Q. Uh-huh.

18 A. If -- you know, if it is a girl. I, I seen a ponytail -- a
19 bun. That's what -- I was kind of debating -- you know, like men
20 these days have buns now. So --

21 Q. Uh-huh.

22 A. -- like --

23 Q. Like it could have been a guy.

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. Yeah. Did she do any other driving that stood out to you

1 that whole time? How long it that that goes by, that you think
2 she's -- like what time frame is that? You know, is it ten
3 minutes? Is it 20 minutes?

4 A. I don't know. She was just normal driving.

5 Q. How long does it take you to get to mom's work and back to
6 your place?

7 A. Oh, it takes about 15 minutes.

8 Q. Oh, so that's only 15 -- okay, I wasn't sure.

9 A. Yeah, from Etna Green to my mom's house, that's 15 --

10 Q. That's a 15 minute drive. So, so, you went up there and
11 dropped her off and then you were going to Rochester. So, you
12 didn't stop -- did you stop back at the house? Or did your
13 brother --

14 A. Oh, my brother --

15 Q. -- ride with you?

16 A. -- was already in the car.

17 Q. He already was. Okay. So, anything that stands out about
18 her driving? I mean, you know, sometimes in the dark you --

19 A. She would slow down and then keep -- and then speed up --

20 Q. Uh-huh.

21 A. -- again and then slow down and speed up.

22 Q. Okay. That was one thing you noticed. Then what about like
23 -- you know, you didn't -- you either saw it or you didn't, but,
24 you know, I'm out there at dark -- you can see people's phones lit
25 up or their GPS lit up, or you can see them moving them around and

1 messing with them. Did you notice anything like that? And
2 sometimes it's the passengers too, and you can't tell.

3 A. Right.

4 Q. But nothing like that happened? She didn't -- wasn't driving
5 erratically? Just speeding up and slowing down.

6 A. Yeah. I didn't -- I wasn't really paying attention to her,
7 you know.

8 Q. Sure.

9 A. Like, it -- but, like my, my driving safety is more important
10 than --

11 Q. Sure.

12 A. -- the person or -- behind me or in front of me. And --

13 Q. So she didn't do anything that caught your attention,
14 basically.

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. Nothing out of the ordinary that -- okay.

17 A. It just -- why didn't she slow down.

18 Q. Well --

19 A. This would have never happened.

20 Q. That's why I was asking you if you could see clearly that it
21 was a bus and --

22 A. Yeah, because I, I just -- I remember. It just happened so
23 fast. Like, the truck just went forward and then --

24 Q. And your definition of a truck, is that like a pickup truck
25 with a bed or --

1 A. Yeah, a pickup truck.

2 Q. -- you mean -- can that be an SUV? Can that be a --

3 A. Yeah, it's a pickup truck.

4 Q. You're thinking it had a bed, like a pickup truck bed? Or do
5 you not know for sure?

6 A. I, I -- my brother has a truck. Yeah, it's a pickup truck.
7 It looked raggedy to me.

8 Q. It did?

9 A. At first. But I don't know. It was -- it's hard to explain.

10 Q. Okay. Well, if you're not sure, you know --

11 A. Like, I mean, I could draw you a picture.

12 Q. Of what?

13 A. What the trucks look like.

14 Q. Will you also draw me a picture of what the road was like
15 where you were stopped? You know -- you should know the area
16 fairly well, I think --

17 A. Uh-huh.

18 Q. -- because of living right there.

19 A. Yeah, I know that.

20 Q. I'll just give you this. Draw the road, and where everybody
21 was at. And then you can draw a picture of that truck, if you
22 can.

23 A. Okay.

24 Q. It's sometimes easier just to draw.

25 A. Okay. Like -- this was like the gravel and everything.

1 That's --

2 Q. Uh-huh.

3 A. -- where I was parked. Me. I mean, because there was like a
4 trailer right here. And then there's another -- like, this is all
5 the grass.

6 Q. Uh-huh.

7 A. And there's like a fence, I'm pretty sure. And there's
8 another gravel. And this is where the bus is.

9 Q. Draw State Road 25 on there for me.

10 A. Okay.

11 Q. Just make a big spot of State Road 25. And that will help
12 me.

13 A. And that's 25. Okay. I almost forgot how to -- I made it D.
14 And then --

15 Q. That's okay.

16 A. -- here was the bus. It was like -- okay, I'll just like
17 kind of back up a little bit.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. It was like right here. I don't know how to draw really
20 good, but -- I know I can think of that truck right now.

21 Q. It's okay. So, that's the bus.

22 A. Yeah. That's the bus. And it had its stop sign out.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. I don't know how to draw a stop sign.

25 Q. That's okay.

1 A. You know, that's a stop sign.

2 Q. Uh-huh.

3 A. And then its flashing lights were up on the top.

4 Q. Uh-huh.

5 A. And then -- this was the stick.

6 Q. Oh, okay.

7 A. And the doors were open.

8 Q. Uh-huh. Where do you remember that car stopping? You

9 remember -- or the truck -- what you're calling the truck. Where

10 did it stop? Do you remember? And if you don't remember you

11 don't have to worry about it. I just --

12 A. Let me think. I'm pretty sure it stopped in this gravel.

13 Q. Like here? Or --

14 A. Right up -- it's like right over here where --

15 Q. The edge of the road gravel?

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. Like, right over here.

19 Q. Okay. And the --

20 A. It's like grass or like a gravel or --

21 Q. Pull off, or something?

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. I don't think -- I'm pretty sure it's -- and that's when I

25 was right here. And then -- yeah, because that -- there was --

1 Q. Are these the driveways?

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. Two driveways? Okay.

4 A. You want me to put that?

5 Q. No, that's okay. As long as I know what it is.

6 A. Okay.

7 Q. So, draw me a picture of what you thought -- and I know
8 you're following it. So, you're behind this vehicle. So, it's
9 hard sometimes to -- but -- if you don't know, then don't --

10 A. And it had like -- it was all black, the wheels.

11 Q. Uh-huh.

12 A. Even the rims.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. The front. It wasn't that big of a truck. It looked like a
15 2000 --

16 Q. It's okay if you don't remember.

17 A. I don't know what kind of truck it was.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. Well, Chevy. No --

20 Q. It's okay.

21 A. It was like a 2007, 2008 --

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. -- truck.

24 Q. And it was a lighter color, you said? Like a --

25 A. It was like a silver --

1 Q. -- silver -- green or silver --
2 A. -- green --
3 Q. Okay.
4 A. It was in the dark.
5 Q. Yeah. That's fine.
6 A. That was the back of the truck. And yeah, it had a bed.
7 Q. Okay.
8 A. And the wheels were black, I know that.
9 Q. That's funny, you remember the wheels.
10 A. I like, I like wheels.
11 Q. Uh-huh.
12 A. My brother is always about trucks.
13 Q. Uh-huh. Okay.
14 A. And just --
15 Q. And you can just write what color you thought it was. That
16 will work. Is there anything else you can think of? Is your
17 brother --
18 A. I mean, if you guys like do talk to the parents I want, I
19 want you to tell them that I -- I'm sorry.
20 Q. Okay.
21 A. And I'm praying for them.
22 Q. You think your brother is doing okay.
23 A. He was crying.
24 Q. Yeah. It must be pretty scary. Does he have a counselor?
25 No.

1 A. He usually talks to my mom about everything.
2 Q. Okay. And where is your mom at right now?
3 A. Work.
4 Q. Where does she work?
5 A. Winona.
6 Q. Winona?
7 A. She -- semi company.
8 Q. Yeah? Okay. Is that somewhere here? That's up at Etna
9 Green.
10 A. Uh-huh.
11 Q. That's why you went up there.
12 A. Uh-huh. Winona.
13 Q. Okay. I appreciate you coming in, and bringing him back in
14 too. We'll let you guys go so you can get back to him, make sure
15 he's okay.
16 A. Okay.
17 Q. I'm just going to put your name on there. I know that you're
18 the drawer, because you're my best drawer today.
19 A. I tried.
20 Q. I have some other drawings, and they aren't as good. Yeah.
21 So, okay. Let me let you get back out with your sister. You said
22 she's your twin.
23 A. Twin.
24 Q. Oh, my goodness.
25 A. I don't like having a twin.

1 Q. You don't?

2 A. No. She takes all my clothes.

3 Q. Oh. Well, yeah. I guess so. That would be some of it.

4 A. Would you have an extra card, that I could get?

5 Q. I have an extra card. Yes. If your mom has any questions,
6 she can call. That's my card.

7 A. Okay.

8 DET. JUMPER: I'm almost out already today. I've got one
9 more person to talk to, and he'll probably get that one. So --
10 all right. Thank you --

11 [REDACTED] Thank you.

12 DET. JUMPER: -- for coming in. And hopefully -- maybe your
13 brother will already be done, or something. We can check out
14 there.

15 (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: PICKUP TRUCK AND SCHOOL BUS CRASH
 ROCHESTER, INDIANA
 OCTOBER 30, 2018
 Interview of [REDACTED]

ACCIDENT NO.: HWY19MH003

PLACE: Rochester, Indiana

DATE: October 30, 2019

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]

Jane W. Gilliam
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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PICKUP TRUCK AND SCHOOL BUS CRASH

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ROCHESTER, INDIANA

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OCTOBER 30, 2018

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* Accident No.: DCA19MH003

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Interview of:

Fulton County Sheriff's Office
Rochester, IndianaTuesday,
October 30, 2018

APPEARANCES:

MIKE LORONA, Detective
Indiana State Police

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>I N D E X</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Interview of [REDACTED]		
By Det. Lorona		4

I N T E R V I E W

(12:09 p.m.)

DET. LORONA: I'm Detective Lorona. How you doing today?

[REDACTED] Good. How are you?

DET. LORONA: Oh, could be better under the circumstances.

INTERVIEW OF [REDACTED]

BY DET. LORONA:

Q. What's your name?

A. [REDACTED]

Q. [REDACTED]

A. Yes, sir.

Q. What's your address?

A. [REDACTED]

Q. You have a phone number?

A. Yeah. [REDACTED]

Q. And that's -- is that your cell?

A. Yeah. That's mine.

Q. And what's your date of birth?

A. [REDACTED]

Q. Makes you 15?

A. Yes.

Q. I understand that you witnessed what happened today?

A. Yeah.

Q. Where were you at when -- where were you at?

A. I was behind the truck.

1 Q. You was behind the --

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. -- behind the box truck? So, behind the bus?

4 A. No, I was -- all right. Sorry. I'll be more -- in front of
5 the bus, but, like, where you have to stop -- you know, we had to
6 stop when -- because that sign that the kids go; I was behind that
7 truck.

8 Q. So you was behind the truck that was behind the bus?

9 A. We were -- sorry. I, I'm not that good at explaining things
10 when I'm under pressure.

11 Q. So there was a bus --

12 A. All right. I was in front of the bus, but on the other side
13 when it happened.

14 Q. So you was behind the car that hit the kids?

15 A. Um-hum. I'm sorry. I'm not that good at explaining at the
16 moment.

17 Q. So you was behind the vehicle that struck the kids. That
18 means you were on the southbound into town. Okay. And were you
19 driving or were you just a passenger?

20 A. I was a passenger.

21 Q. Who was driving?

22 A. My sister.

23 Q. Where were you guys headed to?

24 A. School.

25 Q. What's your sister's name?

1 A. [REDACTED]

2 Q. So what did you see?

3 A. Well, I wasn't really paying attention until, like, in the
4 last second, and all I saw was, like, the last bit of it, just
5 where it went, and I thought -- I was, like, wait, what's taking
6 so long? Because after I saw everything, I didn't know there was
7 kids, because of how dark it was and how early in the morning it
8 was. So, and it went to the side, and I was, like, what, it was
9 taking so long, really. And then I heard screaming.

10 Q. So what do you mean what was taking so long? What --

11 A. It -- because the bus stopped. It didn't go anywhere. And
12 the truck, or car went and struck, and it went to the side and,
13 like, stopped. And all I heard was screaming and I just saw a
14 body.

15 Q. So, you saw the vehicle pull off to the side?

16 A. Um-hum.

17 Q. So, you didn't see the vehicle actually hit anybody?

18 A. I seen it go past. Like, I didn't --

19 Q. You saw it go past the bus?

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. When you were going down the road, did you see the bus stop?
22 Did you know that it was a bus down road?

23 A. I did see it. I didn't hear; I saw the lights of the bus
24 when it was coming. And then I was there when it opened the sign.
25 And then the truck just went -- I was not there for that bit.

1 Q. So, you saw the lights on the bus, and then you saw the sign
2 come out?

3 A. Um-hum.

4 Q. And you did see the kids in the roadway or anything?

5 A. No. I didn't see that.

6 Q. Who else was in the -- just you and your sister in the
7 vehicle?

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. You said you have video or something?

10 A. I did have the aftermath.

11 Q. Just the aftermath?

12 A. Yeah, I didn't get it, turn it in, because, excuse in case I
13 get late to school or something like that. I just had -- that's
14 where they were, like, you know --

15 Q. Is that it?

16 A. Because the body was right there. And the truck is right
17 there.

18 Q. Is that all you have? Is that the only thing?

19 A. Yeah. I think it's, well, that's all that's (indiscernible).

20 Q. So, that's it?

21 A. I had a longer video of my mom, like, it was more of this,
22 though. Because my mom was, like, what?

23 Q. Hold on one second. Let me see if (indiscernible). Might
24 not be anything. I'll be right back. Okay?

25 A. All right.

1 (Whereupon, Det. Lorona exits and then returns.)

2 BY DET. LORONA:

3 Q. You want to send that -- you said you can't send that video
4 to my phone?

5 A. Like, you have WiFi here?

6 Q. Yeah. It's in here somehow. I'm not sure.

7 A. Because I don't have data.

8 Q. What's that?

9 A. Data. You know what that is?

10 Q. Yeah.

11 A. I don't have that?

12 Q. Oh, you don't have data?

13 A. I had just got certain, recently. But, if I know your phone
14 number, I can send it to you.

15 Q. Yeah. So, I'll give you my phone number. Yeah. I'll give
16 you my phone number. You can just send it, send that to me.

17 A. I think I did have, my mom, I did have a longer one. Because
18 I don't have WiFi, but I can send you that, too.

19 Q. Yep. Just send, I'll be in my car. Just send it to that
20 number. So, did you guys stop and get out and --

21 A. No, I didn't. Because I didn't want to be in the middle of
22 it or anything. I was in shock, so was my sister.

23 Q. Did your sister stop?

24 A. Yeah. My sister stopped.

25 Q. And you just stayed in the truck?

- 1 A. Yeah. Stayed in the car. But, yeah.
- 2 Q. Stayed in the truck. Okay. And your sister got out?
- 3 A. No. She stayed in the car.
- 4 Q. Oh, she stayed in the car also?
- 5 A. Yeah. The reason why I didn't really recognize, you know,
- 6 the noise and everything, because my sister (indiscernible) and
- 7 the windows were rolled up. And then --
- 8 Q. How long did you guys stay there?
- 9 A. 30 minutes to 20.
- 10 Q. So, you guys --
- 11 A. Yeah. Then we turned around.
- 12 Q. Then went home?
- 13 A. Yeah. So my other sister can take me, because my sister was
- 14 under pressure. She didn't want to drive.
- 15 Q. So, when you guys left, you guys went back home, and then
- 16 you, obviously you then went to school, or you didn't go --
- 17 A. I did.
- 18 Q. And they let you out, or --
- 19 A. Yeah, that's (indiscernible).
- 20 Q. Okay. So, you went to school with another sister. When you
- 21 saw that vehicle in front of you, you was able, I mean, you
- 22 recognized the bus, the bus has its lights on, and you saw all
- 23 that, and you just didn't see the kids, though, because --
- 24 A. No, yeah, because so dark.
- 25 Q. Dark. Okay. All right. You didn't see the kids because of

1 the darkness?

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. Anything else you want to add or anything?

4 A. (No response.)

5 Q. All right. That'll be all I have for you. Okay? Appreciate
6 it, you coming in.

7 A. Thank you.

8 Q. Yep.

9 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

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 Interview of [REDACTED]

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to the best of my skill and ability.

[REDACTED]

Karen Coen Brooks
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

PICKUP TRUCK AND SCHOOL BUS CRASH
ROCHESTER, INDIANA
OCTOBER 30, 2018

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* Accident No.: HWY19MH003

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Interview of: HOBERT WHEELER

Fulton County Sheriff's Office
Rochester, Indiana

Tuesday,
October 30, 2018

APPEARANCES:

SGT. JOSH ROZZI
Indiana State Police

I N D E XITEMPAGE

Interview of Hobert Wheeler:

By Sgt. Rozzi

4

P R O C E E D I N G S

(1:44 p.m.)

INTERVIEW OF HOBERT WHEELER

BY SGT. ROZZI:

Q. Before we get going too far, I want to get some of your basic information. Michelle may have already gotten some of this. I'm not sure.

A. I don't think I gave her anything.

Q. Okay. Do you have your driver's license with you?

A. Yes.

(Mr. Wheeler gives driver's license to Sgt. Rozzi.)

BY SGT. ROZZI:

Q. Thank you. Is it pronounced Hobert?

A. Yes. H-o-b --

Q. Hobert M. Wheeler.

A. Yes.

Q. Is the address on here still accurate?

A. Yes, [REDACTED]

Q. And how old are you?

A. 53.

Q. 53, for a couple of more months it looks like.

A. Yeah.

Q. Here you go.

A. (Indiscernible).

Q. Well, let's just kind of go back, you know, to this morning,

1 and just kind of let you go through what you remember and times
2 and stuff like that.

3 A. Okay. The times, I'm not sure of the times. I just left
4 Pack-A-Sack here in Rochester, and I was going to Mentone to
5 Willoughby's to make a delivery, and I was following a school bus
6 that made a few stops to pick up kids. It got down around the
7 trailer park and it stopped. He had his lights on. He put the
8 stop sign out.

9 Q. The (indiscernible) mount thing?

10 A. Yeah. I didn't see no yellow bar, but the stop lever --

11 Q. The stop sign?

12 A. Yeah. The stop sign came out. He had all his lights on.

13 Q. Did you see red lights, yellow lights --

14 A. He had red lights. They was red lights.

15 Q. Red.

16 A. Flashing, you know, bus stop.

17 Q. All right.

18 A. He was stopped and everything. I, I stopped behind the bus.
19 There was kids coming through the fence, coming out to board the
20 bus, and --

21 Q. From which side of the road?

22 A. On the left side. I was heading east, and they was coming --
23 the cross -- across the -- getting ready to board the bus.

24 Q. You say you're heading east. You're out on 25 North, right?

25 A. 25 North.

1 Q. But you're in the northbound lane. I know that little
2 particular area --

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. -- the road --

5 A. I'm thinking like going to Ohio. That's why I said east.

6 Q. Right.

7 A. But, yeah.

8 Q. So you guys were on the northbound lane.

9 A. Yeah, we was in the right lane. The kids was clear on the
10 other side the road.

11 Q. The left side of the road.

12 A. Completely like they're supposed to be. They was coming
13 across to board the -- out of nowhere, this truck was traveling
14 fast, like 60 miles an hour, and I, I just yelled stop.

15 Q. In your vehicle to yourself kind of?

16 A. Yeah. I mean I seen the whole thing. It was -- I couldn't
17 do nothing about it. It was a nightmare. But anyway, I seen, I
18 seen the vehicle hit all the kids. I mean it was traveling fast.
19 When I say 60, that's giving it -- it was traveling very, very
20 fast, and I knew they was, they was dead. Debris went everywhere.
21 The kids flew up in the -- it was awful and I jumped out of, out
22 of my truck, and started yelling help. Someone call 9-1-1. And I
23 had my phone in my hand. So I called 9-1-1. I was probably
24 panicking. I was kind of traumatized. I've got grandkids, but
25 it's something you don't want to see. But I called 9-1-1. I told

1 them kids got hit. We need help.

2 Q. Yeah.

3 A. They asked where I was at, and --

4 Q. Did you know about where you were?

5 A. It's all --

6 Q. Do you travel this road enough to --

7 A. Yeah, I told them, I said, I'm in Rochester -- they told me,
8 they said are you on 25? I said, yes. And so I, I knew the ones
9 was -- it was a hard impact. I mean it was -- so then I went to
10 go to look at the truck to make sure it didn't keep going because
11 I didn't see all the damage. I just seen debris.

12 Q. Um-hum.

13 A. Backpacks and just kids' stuff flying everywhere and the
14 kids. And so I, I started heading towards the truck. I thought
15 it was a guy, the driver of the truck, and a girl gets out of the
16 truck, and she said what did I hit? She didn't even know what she
17 hit. I said you just ran over kids. I said you probably killed
18 some kids. And she looked at me and then she got back in her
19 truck.

20 And then I heard a girl in the ditch moaning and I just went
21 over there and told her, honey, we've got help coming. Help's
22 coming. You're going to be all right. It was just awful, but the
23 girl didn't even know what she hit. So I don't know what she was
24 doing inside her vehicle, but she didn't even realize she passed a
25 bus. She didn't even know that she -- she didn't even know what

1 she hit.

2 Q. When she got out of her truck, were you pretty close to her
3 at that point?

4 A. I was about from here to the door.

5 Q. Was she holding anything or do you remember?

6 A. No, but she just got out and she said what did I hit?

7 Q. She hadn't called 9-1-1 or --

8 A. No, I called 9-1-1.

9 Q. At that time, what you saw, she wasn't on 9-1-1 talking to
10 anybody or anything like that?

11 A. No, she just got out of the truck. She said what did I hit,
12 and then when I told her, when I said -- I didn't tell her. I
13 yelled it. I was, I was kind of -- I was panicking.

14 Q. Yeah.

15 A. I, I --

16 Q. That's totally normal.

17 A. I was scared. I said you just ran over kids. And then I
18 never seen her again. I, I never did see her again.

19 Q. Do you remember what that truck looked like?

20 A. It looked like a Chevy Colorado.

21 Q. Like a midsize truck?

22 A. Yeah, like a S10 but I think it's Colorado. Maybe white,
23 gray, a lighter color.

24 Q. So was it, was it dark out when this happened?

25 A. It was. It was -- yes, it was.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. Yes, it was dark. The sun hadn't came up.

3 Q. Does your straight truck have a camera system in it?

4 A. It don't.

5 Q. It does not.

6 A. It's got locations and --

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. But, no.

9 Q. Can you tell me what time you called 9-1-1 from your phone?

10 A. I probably can. But she did not. She never slowed down.

11 Not like --

12 Q. Never heard squealing brakes or anything?

13 A. No, she didn't stop. The only reason she probably stopped

14 was because the truck was disabled. She didn't know what she hit.

15 She had something inside the truck. She wasn't looking. She had

16 to be.

17 Q. Yeah.

18 A. It's a tragedy that should have never happened. It's -- I

19 wish I would have never seen it. 7:15. And the next --

20 Q. It sounded like, it sounded like --

21 A. I probably was panicking on the phone a -- when I called 9-1-

22 1 because I didn't -- there was nobody out. I was trying to get

23 people up, the parents. They just sent their kids off to school

24 and --

25 Q. Yeah.

1 A. -- but, no, like I said, she didn't -- she asked me, she
2 said, what did I hit? Well, you just ran over kids. And I -- and
3 just for a split second, that was crossing the road, and I could
4 see her lights just -- and the -- I mean there ain't nothing you
5 can do.

6 Q. You were, you were literally stopped behind the bus, waiting.

7 A. I was stopped behind the bus because the kids was getting
8 ready to load on the bus.

9 Q. Now did the bus -- do you know if it turned its lights on as
10 it was slowing down or if it --

11 A. I was following. He had, he had his lights on. The lights
12 was, the lights was -- I mean there ain't no way that she could
13 not see --

14 Q. Right. At times I've been behind a bus on the road as they
15 are pulling up to --

16 A. No, his lights was flashing.

17 Q. -- they'll hit the flashing lights --

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. -- and then when it comes to a stop, the red, you know, the
20 stop sign will go out or the arm, whatever you have.

21 A. Yeah, he had the red, the red stop sign.

22 Q. But the flashing lights --

23 A. And it had flashing lights around it, too.

24 Q. But the orange lights were flashing already, like before the
25 bus stopped?

1 A. Yeah, all the lights was one. Yes, he had -- as he was
2 slowing down, all the lights was on. He had the arm out. It was
3 lit up. The bus, the bus driver did everything he was supposed to
4 do as he was coming up to a stop area. All the lights was one.
5 Q. Same thing he done --
6 A. I didn't see --
7 Q. -- at the first couple of stops that you saw.
8 A. Now I didn't see -- yes, exactly. I didn't see like -- they
9 backed me out of there, and then when I -- I noticed they had that
10 truck, that bus had like a big yellow arm that would block the
11 other -- I never seen that, or I couldn't see around --
12 Q. Yeah.
13 A. -- but it didn't have that.
14 Q. A lot of times --
15 A. But she would have broke that.
16 Q. -- the arm goes out in front of the bus so the kids have to
17 walk out to where the driver of the bus can see them.
18 A. Okay.
19 Q. So it doesn't necessarily go out to the other lane.
20 A. Okay.
21 Q. I mean I --
22 A. So -- okay. So maybe that's why.
23 Q. So the front of the bus --
24 A. Okay. So I couldn't see it.
25 Q. -- the arm would come down here, that way the kids --

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. -- can't walk in front of the bus.

3 A. Exactly. Then that's why I --

4 Q. That might be.

5 A. But then I see the yellow arm -- yeah. That's why I didn't

6 see that, but he had every -- all the lights was on the bus. I

7 don't know what she was doing inside her vehicle. I mean because

8 she never slowed down, and she was -- when I say 60 miles an hour,

9 it could have been faster. I mean she was flying like a bullet.

10 Q. Um-hum.

11 A. And I was shocked. It was just --

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. It was just horrible. I feel bad for the parents.

14 Q. I am going to give you one of my cards. It has my office

15 number on it. I don't know what more you could possibly tell me,

16 but if you, you know, sleep on it tonight and wake up tomorrow and

17 you're thinking about it, you know what, remember this, too, you

18 know, give me a call, you know, let me know.

19 A. All right.

20 Q. It's stuff we can do over the phone. I really appreciate you

21 coming in here.

22 A. All right.

23 Q. We do have some folks with our agency that talk to folks that

24 witness stuff like this. I don't know if --

25 A. I'm fine. I'm fine.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. It's just -- I just feel so bad for the parents. The
3 parents, I mean they probably had breakfast -- yeah, it's -- it
4 should have never happened, but I guess that's life. I don't
5 know.

6 Q. Well, I don't have anything else for you. I appreciate you
7 stopping in here and, you know, taking your time. Thank you very
8 much. If there's anything else I forgot to ask, I've got your
9 contact information, and I'll give you a call.

10 A. All right.

11 Q. Thank you.

12 A. Thank you.

13 (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: PICKUP TRUCK AND SCHOOL BUS CRASH
 ROCHESTER, INDIANA
 OCTOBER 30, 2018
 Interview of Hobert Wheeler

ACCIDENT NO.: HWY19MH003

PLACE: Rochester, Indiana

DATE: October 30, 2018

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



Kathryn A. Mirfin
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

PICKUP TRUCK AND SCHOOL BUS CRASH

ROCHESTER, INDIANA

OCTOBER 30, 2018

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* Accident No.: DCA19MH003

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Interview of: BRITTNEY THOMPSON

Fulton County Sheriff's Office
Rochester, IndianaTuesday,
October 30, 2018

APPEARANCES:

MIKE LORONA, Detective
Indiana State Police

I N D E XITEMPAGE

Interview of Brittney Thompson:

By Detective Lorona

4

I N T E R V I E W

(12:50 p.m.)

1 DET. LORONA: I'm Detective Lorona.

2 MS. THOMPSON: I know.

3 DET. LORONA: I've seen you around. I'm a detective now.

4 Moved up. So, I understand that you knew the driver.

5 MS. THOMPSON: Alyssa.

6 DET. LORONA: Alyssa. You guys are friends.

7 MS. THOMPSON: We go to the same church.

8 DET. LORONA: Same church. Okay.

9

10 BY DET. LORONA:

11 Q. What's the spelling of your first name?

12 A. B-r-i-t-t-n-e-y.

13 Q. n-e-y?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. And your last name?

16 A. Thompson.

17 Q. T-h- --

18 A. o-m-p-s-o-n.

19 Q. Okay. What's your address?

20 A.

21 Q. What's the zip code?

22 A. 46975.

23 Q. Okay. And phone number?

1 A. [REDACTED]
2 Q. And is that a cell?
3 A. Yes.
4 Q. Okay. Just have a chair. Okay. So, I understand that you
5 received a phone call from Alyssa?
6 A. I did.
7 Q. Okay. And so, what, about what time was that?
8 A. Probably was 7:18. Yeah, the 7:18 was the first one.
9 Q. How many times she call you?
10 A. I lost contact with her at 7:24, so I called her back. And
11 then we re-established contact again at 7:35.
12 Q. Okay. So, you was on the phone --
13 A. Yeah. We were on the cell phone --
14 Q. -- from 7:18 to 7:24 and then --
15 A. For approximately 26 minutes total.
16 Q. Okay. And you lost contact?
17 A. Yes. She had an incoming call from her brother around the,
18 after the 11-minute phone call at 7:35.
19 Q. Did she call you back? Or did you call her back?
20 A. She called me initially. I called her back. And then I had
21 spoken to her cousin, and we terminated the call at that time,
22 then she called me back.
23 Q. Okay. So, what time did you call her back?
24 A. The first phone call that she called me was 5 minutes. So, I
25 called her back at 7:24. And then 10 minutes later the phone was

1 disconnected again. And then she called me back at,
2 instantaneously at 7:35.

3 Q. Okay. And how long did you talk to her after that, the 7:35?

4 A. It was 11 minutes. So, roughly 7:46 the call was terminated.

5 Q. What did she say on the initial, very, very first call, the
6 7:18 call?

7 A. When I answered the phone she was screaming for me to call
8 her. Just screaming, and I, honestly, it took me about a minute
9 to, 30 minutes, or 30 seconds to a minute to try to figure out
10 what was going on. And honestly, I don't recall her saying
11 exactly what happened. It took a while for me to put the pieces
12 together. But, I went to dispatch, and I tried to find out where
13 she it, how many people were hurt. And then at that time, she had
14 told me that she had tried to call 91 [sic], but the call did not
15 go through. So, next best thing, I guess, is the 911 dispatcher
16 that you know. So, at that time, I used my husband's cell phone
17 to call 911 just to make sure that they had received the phone,
18 the call from someone. At that time, of course, we realized that
19 we did.

20 Q. Did she tell you what happened?

21 A. She had said that she seen the vehicle in front of her, but
22 she thought it was an oversized load of some sort. And she was,
23 like, waiting to come up on it to see if there was, like, a
24 trailer or something. And she just, that she just kept
25 reiterating that she didn't see the stop sign. So, at that point,

1 I wasn't sure if she had missed a stop sign at an intersection or
2 what. But she just kept saying I seen, you know, like, the
3 yellow, and thought it was an oversized load. I don't even know
4 if she used the word yellow, to be honest with you. But she said
5 she seen something to where she thought that the vehicle was an
6 oversized load, and she was trying to anticipate, like, what they
7 were doing. So, like I said, throughout this whole entire phone
8 conversation, I'm trying to piece together what's exactly
9 happened.

10 Q. So, did she tell you she hit some kids?

11 A. At first she just said that she'd, that she didn't know what
12 happened. And then, as I'm trying to get her calmed down and
13 breathe, because she was hyperventilating, and she was just a
14 mess. And I think at some point it came out that she believes
15 that she hit kids, and she wasn't sure if any of them were hurt,
16 and she was, basically, paralyzed in her seat. I mean, I don't
17 think that, she was having trouble breathing, I was worried about
18 her, as far as, like, her welfare. I know she had her, probably
19 had her kids in the car. But she was just literally paralyzed,
20 answer stunned and hysterical.

21 Q. And did she, her kids were in the car with her?

22 A. Sorry.

23 Q. She didn't have kids in the car?

24 A. She had kids.

25 Q. Oh, so --

1 A. She had her two, she had two -- her two kids in the car, and
2 her brother's, [REDACTED] (ph.).

3 Q. So, she had three people --

4 A. Three juveniles in the car. Yes.

5 Q. Okay. Where was she headed to?

6 A. Her husband has a business in Talma, so, I, she didn't say,
7 we didn't get to that point, but I would assume that she was
8 probably in route to Rochester to take Ace to school, because he's
9 school age.

10 Q. So, she didn't tell you, she just kind of said she didn't
11 know, she had saw something, but she didn't know what it was.

12 A. She said that she didn't realize until she got right up on it
13 what had happened. So, I think that she realized that she had hit
14 kids, like, later on in the conversation, I think it came about
15 that she thinks that she hit kids getting on the school bus, but
16 she didn't realize that it was a school bus, and she didn't
17 realize it until it was too late.

18 Q. So, after you --

19 A. She said she didn't even have time to, like --

20 Q. So, after you lost contact you re-established it, and then
21 you just continued with the conversation?

22 A. Yes. Because she was to the point where she was
23 hyperventilating. I was worried for her welfare. So, I called
24 her back to try to use the dispatcher calming to try to -- and
25 honestly, she just wanted me to pray for her, so, we just spent a

1 lot of time praying for her and the kids and, because at that
2 point, she didn't realize how bad the situation was. And I was,
3 obviously, trying to keep her in the woods of that at that
4 specific second, because of the fact that she had her children in
5 the ar. She was already hysterical. So, I don't know that it
6 would have made a --

7 Q. So, you know her from church?

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. So, you was talking to her, and she was out of it, she didn't
10 know --

11 A. She was kind of going in and out of phases. So, she would go
12 from hysterical to shock --

13 Q. (Indiscernible) and what happened?

14 A. I think she was starting to make the connection what had
15 happened. But I just think it happened so quickly that by the
16 time she seen the kids, she didn't even have time to stop. Yeah.
17 But she just kept reiterating that she didn't mean to, and that
18 she didn't even see the stop sign, or, you know, until it was too
19 late.

20 Q. Okay. All right. Anything else you can add or think of
21 right now?

22 A. No.

23 Q. No? All right.

24 A. All right. Thank you.

25 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

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IN THE MATTER OF: PICKUP TRUCK AND SCHOOL BUS CRASH
 ROCHESTER, INDIANA
 OCTOBER 30, 2018
 Interview of Brittney Thompson

ACCIDENT NO.: HWY19MH003

PLACE: Rochester, Indiana

DATE: October 30, 2019

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.



Karen Coen Brooks
Transcriber