



HUMAN PERFORMANCE FACTORS ATTACHMENT

Witness Interview Transcription

Coral Gables, FL

HWY21FH011

(15 pages)

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

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FATAL TESLA MODEL S CRASH *

IN CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA, * Accident No.: HWY22FH011

ON SEPTEMBER 13, 2021 *

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Interview of: Daniel Curtis Jones
Acquaintance of victim

Miami, Florida

Monday,
September 20, 2021

APPEARANCES:

KENNETH BRAGG, Senior Investigator
Office of Highway Safety
National Transportation Safety Board

I N D E X

ITEM

PAGE

Interview of Daniel Curtis Jones:

By Mr. Bragg

4

I N T E R V I E W

(1:46 p.m.)

1
2
3 MR. BRAGG: Today is Monday, September 20, 2021. It's 1:46
4 p.m., and we are at the FIU Campus Police Office in Miami,
5 Florida.

6 My name is Kenny Bragg. I'm an investigator with the Office
7 of Highway Safety with the National Transportation Safety Board.

8 This interview is in regards to a motor vehicle collision,
9 which took place in Coral Gables, Florida, on September 13, 2021.

INTERVIEW OF DANIEL CURTIS JONES

BY MR. BRAGG:

11
12 Q. And, sir, will you please say and spell your first, middle,
13 and last name.

14 A. Yes. My name is Daniel Curtis Jones. It's spelled
15 D-a-n-i-e-l, Curtis, C-u-r-t-i-s, Jones, J-o-n-e-s.

16 Q. And where do you attend school?

17 A. I attend school at Florida International University.

18 Q. Okay. And do you know Nicholas Garcia?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. And how do you know him?

21 A. He's a good friend of mine. I met him my freshman
22 orientation here at Florida International.

23 Q. And to your knowledge was Mr. Garcia involved in a motor
24 vehicle crash?

25 A. Yes, sir.

1 Q. Tell me a little bit about the last time you spoke with him,
2 and your earlier contact with him on Monday.

3 A. So I was with him. He had just gotten out of class around
4 1:15, I think he said. Had been in classes (indiscernible) was
5 texting me. We normally got lunch. So I texted him. I was,
6 like, hey, are we doing lunch today? And he said, yeah, we'll go
7 out to lunch. So then I started sending him a couple locations,
8 and we decided to go to Shake Shack in Coral Gables next to the
9 University of Miami. And so I went, and he said he was going to
10 go get his car, so he went and got his car, and picked me up from
11 my dorm because I got out of class before him. And then from
12 there, we drove to Shake Shack and had Shake Shack. And he also
13 was texting a couple of his friends while we were at Shake Shack
14 that they were getting out of class at University of Miami. So we
15 went and saw them since we -- he hadn't seen them in awhile and --

16 Q. Do you know those friends?

17 A. Yeah. Her name is Cathy, and then the other one's name is
18 John. I'm not sure what their last names are though.

19 Q. Okay. And I'm sorry. Go ahead.

20 A. And so then we went and saw them, and spent some time on the
21 campus there, and then we dropped them off at their car so they
22 could go home because they had homework and stuff like that. And
23 then I had him take me back to FIU as I had homework to do as
24 well. So we drove around for awhile, and then I told him that I
25 needed to get back, and start my homework. And on the way back,

1 he was making calls to the University because he actually had lost
2 his scholarship he found out, and he was -- he found out finally
3 that there's no way to get it back, and he was pretty upset about
4 it. But I pretty much told him, like, it's going to be all right.
5 Like there's no reason to be that upset. It's just a minor bump
6 in the road. That he would have to take out some loans probably,
7 but there's no reason to be upset. He also talked to his sister
8 on the way to FIU as well on the phone, and I was in the car with
9 her, everything for that. And then he dropped me off, and I told
10 him pretty much, like, (indiscernible) have a good one. Like,
11 there's no reason to be upset. At the end of the day, it's just a
12 minor setback, and there's nothing to worry about.

13 And then so he drove home, and he had told me that he's going
14 to go hang out with Jasmine, and they were going to either go out
15 to get something to eat or just spend time at his house. So
16 that's -- he dropped me off, and that's the last time I saw him.

17 Q. About what time did you -- what time did he pick you up?

18 A. He picked me up around 1:30, 2 o'clock-ish, and then dropped
19 me off around 5:30-ish, 5:30, 5:30 to 5:45-ish.

20 Q. And so you said when you, when you were with him, he already
21 knew that he lost his scholarship?

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. When did he find out that he lost his scholarship?

24 A. It was -- so he called them on the way to Shake Shack just to
25 start the inquiry about whether or not he could re-redeem it. It

1 was through Florida Bright Futures. And then so he then called
2 back on the way back to FIU, and that's when they told him that he
3 was short on credits, and that he wouldn't be able to get it back.

4 Q. And about what time did that conversation take place?

5 A. Around 4:30-ish. I'm not 100 percent sure. I can't
6 remember. Sometime between when we left the University of Miami
7 and got to FIU.

8 Q. And he was talking on his phone?

9 A. Yeah. Over the car --

10 Q. He was using --

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. He was using his cell phone?

13 A. Yeah. He used the voice control and everything.

14 Q. Okay. Did he have more than one cell phone do you know?

15 A. Huh-uh, just one phone.

16 Q. Just one phone. Do you know what his cell phone number is?

17 A. Not off the top of my head.

18 Q. Do you have it in your phone?

19 A. Yeah. His phone number is [REDACTED].

20 Q. Okay. When he talked to the University, who initiated the
21 call? Did he call them?

22 A. Yeah. He had called them, and inquired about it because he
23 had talked to them earlier, and they said that they would look
24 into it.

25 Q. Do you know who he spoke to?

- 1 A. I'm not sure. Someone in the office of financial aid.
- 2 Q. Okay. And how long did that phone call last?
- 3 A. Two separate phone calls. So the first one probably around
4 like 10 minutes maybe, if that. I mean, not that long.
- 5 Q. Okay.
- 6 A. It was pretty short. It was just he's on hold for awhile,
7 and then he just asked if they could look into it, and check, and
8 because they were going to talk to the Department of Education in
9 Florida because they're the ones who roll out the money for the
10 scholarship. And then the second one was around probably five
11 minutes as well. Just short. And he had talked to her, and when
12 she said he couldn't get it back, he just was checking to make
13 sure if there's anything he could do at all.
- 14 Q. And so he called her back the second time then?
- 15 A. Yeah. Second time on the way back to FIU. So the first time
16 was on the way to Shake Shack, and the second time was on the way
17 back to FIU.
- 18 Q. And during this time when you guys went to Shake Shack you
19 were in the car with him?
- 20 A. Um-hmm.
- 21 Q. Driving in his car?
- 22 A. Um-hmm.
- 23 Q. Where did you sit?
- 24 A. What did he say?
- 25 Q. Where did you sit?

- 1 A. Oh, where did I sit?
- 2 Q. Yeah.
- 3 A. Oh, I sat in the passenger seat.
- 4 Q. Passenger seat?
- 5 A. Yeah.
- 6 Q. Who was in the back seat?
- 7 A. No one. It was just him and I.
- 8 Q. Okay.
- 9 A. Yeah.
- 10 Q. How about Cathy and John? You said he took them back to the
11 University?
- 12 A. Yeah. So we were walking around the University, and we first
13 met up with Cathy. We had picked her up from -- because she had a
14 class away from the University. It was one of the buildings
15 that's away from campus.
- 16 Q. Okay.
- 17 A. So instead of her riding the bus back to campus, we had gone
18 and picked her up, and brought her back to the campus, and then
19 went and waited for John outside of his classroom, and then -- so
20 we got them, and we walked around for awhile, and then they both
21 needed to go home. So we went and drove to the parking lot where
22 John was parked, and dropped him off so he could take Cathy home,
23 and then he could go home as well to do homework.
- 24 Q. And what was his -- what was the conversation like? Was he
25 upset? Was he screaming? Was it just a calm --

1 A. I mean, at the time he -- when we were with them, he didn't
2 know that he completely lost it yet. So he was pretty calm, just
3 normal conversation. And then on his way back to FIU, he was
4 upset, but he -- I calmed him down by telling him, like, it's
5 going to be all right.

6 Q. How upset did he get?

7 A. Not that upset. I mean, he was upset, but not to the point
8 that like he was losing it. He was just kind of like --

9 Q. Was he crying? Did he cry?

10 A. Huh-uh.

11 Q. Didn't cry. No outward displays of emotion?

12 A. Huh-uh. No. Just kind of like he was mostly just upset, and
13 kind of -- I'm trying to think of word to describe. He wasn't
14 extremely upset. Just kind of like crap this happened like. But
15 I tried to explain to him it would be okay and that it's going to
16 be okay. That helped a lot. You could tell that it calmed him
17 down. And he also got -- discussed it with his sister.

18 Q. Have you ever known him to use drugs or alcohol?

19 A. Huh-uh.

20 Q. No. Was he using drugs or alcohol that day?

21 A. Huh-uh.

22 Q. No.

23 A. I know in the past he's drank a little bit, but nothing --
24 not while driving or anything like that. He was very -- someone
25 against DUIs and stuff like that. And we've even talked about it

1 because there's kids on the University, of course, drive
2 unfortunately under the influence. He's someone who is very,
3 like, that's horrible, like, you can affect the lives of other
4 people. Someone -- he was pretty strict on that.

5 Q. Have you ever seen him drunk?

6 A. Um-hmm.

7 Q. You have?

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. But, yeah.

11 Q. So when you rode with him from -- to and from the Shake
12 Shack, what was his driving like? Was it normal?

13 A. Um-hmm, normal.

14 Q. Have you -- did you know him to be a person who routinely
15 drives real fast?

16 A. Not really. He was a pretty careful driver. He was pretty
17 cautious. Just normal, normal driver for the most part.

18 Q. And so at some point he dropped you off at Shake -- I mean at
19 FIU, correct?

20 A. Um-hmm.

21 Q. Were you the last one to drop off?

22 A. Yeah. Last one to drop me off, and then he was in the car by
23 himself, and he told me he was going to go home, and then hang out
24 with Jasmine later on.

25 Q. Okay. And how does he know Jasmine?

1 A. They're just friends. They went to school together. And I
2 briefly knew her since she was a mutual friend, but I hadn't known
3 her very long, but he had known her I think since middle school.

4 Q. What's Jasmine's last name?

5 A. I have no idea.

6 Q. Is she the other passenger in the car? Is that --

7 A. Yeah, she was the passenger in the car.

8 Q. All right. Is there anything else you can -- you think would
9 be relevant to help us understand how this happened?

10 A. Trying to think. The only thing I can think is that kind of
11 bothered me later, earlier in the week he had tried to return the
12 car to Tesla. He had met -- he had gone to the office, and he --
13 it was mostly due to a defective handle. He thought it was
14 defective because it was pushed in, like there's a big gap
15 between compared to the other handles because they're pushed in.
16 The handles are in, like inside the door, if that makes sense.

17 Q. Yeah.

18 A. And so it was pushed in quite a ways, and it seemed defective
19 because it wouldn't open sometimes. And he had brought it there,
20 and was going to see if they could fix it, and they said they
21 couldn't fix it. He wanted to return the car because they used to
22 have a seven-day policy, and they were -- he was very upset
23 because of the fact that they wouldn't help him out with that.
24 And but that's the only thing I can think is --

25 Q. How long did he have the car?

1 A. He it since that Thursday. So about -- I can't remember what
2 Thursday that was. He got it on a Thursday. That's all I can
3 remember.

4 Q. This is the Thursday before the crash then right?

5 A. I think so, yeah.

6 Q. Okay. Was it brand new?

7 A. Um-hmm.

8 Q. And who bought it for him?

9 A. So he bought it, and, however, I think the title was under
10 his mom, but he had paid for it, and he was paying payments on it
11 because he got a part-time job, and had saved up a lot of money,
12 and was investing. So he took out a lot of his investment money
13 for the down payment, and so he's paying for it himself.

14 MR. BRAGG: Okay. Thank you. That was very, that was very
15 helpful. The time is 1:57. We'll go ahead and conclude the
16 interview.

17 (Whereupon, at 1:57 p.m., the interview was concluded.)
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

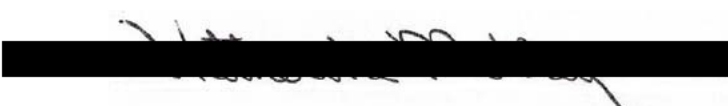
IN THE MATTER OF: FATAL TESLA MODEL S CRASH
IN CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA
ON SEPTEMBER 13, 2021
Interview of Daniel Curtis Jones

ACCIDENT NO.: HWY22FH011

PLACE: Miami, Florida

DATE: September 20, 2021

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


Katherine Motley
Transcriber