



FACTUAL REPORT ATTACHMENT

GOODYEAR, AZ

Transcript of NTSB interviews with bicyclists

HWY23FH008

(368 pages)

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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CYCLISTS FATALLY STRUCK BY PICKUP
TRUCK NEAR THE COTTON LANE BRIDGE
IN GOODYEAR, ARIZONA ON
FEBRUARY 25, 2023

Accident No.: HWY23FH008

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Interview of: CHARLES ETHAN BOCH

via telephone

Monday,
March 20, 2023

APPEARANCES:

JOHN HUMM, Survival Factors Group Chairman
National Transportation Safety Board

I N D E X

ITEM

PAGE

Interview of Charles Ethan Boch:

By Mr. Humm

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I N T E R V I E W

1
2 MR. HUMM: Today is March 20th, 2023. I'm conducting an
3 interview today over the phone with Charles Ethan Boch; he goes by
4 his middle name Ethan. This is in reference to NTSB case number
5 HWY23FH008, the bicycle accident in Goodyear, Arizona. My name is
6 John Humm, H-u-m-m. I'm with the NTSB and I am the Survival
7 Factors Group Chairman. With me today on the phone I have Ethan
8 Boch.

9 Mr. Boch, if you could please say and spell your name for the
10 transcriptionist.

11 MR. BOCH: Okay. It's Charles, C-h-a-r-l-e-s, middle name
12 Ethan, E-t-h-a-n, last name Boch, B-o-c-h.

13 MR. HUMM: Thank you. And then, Ethan, as we discussed prior
14 to going on record, if you could just give your consent that it's
15 okay for me to record this?

16 MR. BOCH: Yes, that's fine.

17 MR. HUMM: All right. Thank you very much. Ethan, can you
18 give me your contact email, so I know where to send the
19 transcription?

20 MR. BOCH: Contact email is [REDACTED],

21 [REDACTED].

22 MR. HUMM: Great.

23 MR. BOCH: Oh, I forgot. [REDACTED]

24 MR. HUMM: Oh, [REDACTED].

25 MR. BOCH: [REDACTED]

1 MR. HUMM: Great. All right, thank you.

2 INTERVIEW OF CHARLES ETHAN BOCH

3 BY MR. HUMM:

4 Q. All right. So, again, thanks, Ethan, for agreeing to this
5 interview. If we could just start, maybe talk a little bit about
6 where you live and maybe how you came to Arizona, that would be
7 great.

8 A. Okay. That's easy. I was born here, so I've just been here
9 my whole life. And lived in Phoenix and from Phoenix, I guess,
10 and I've been here 54 years.

11 Q. Okay, great. So you live in Phoenix now or do you live in
12 Goodyear?

13 A. Oh, I actually live in Scottsdale.

14 Q. Oh, okay.

15 A. -- which is a suburb in this area, we just call everything
16 Phoenix, unless we're getting specific about the city. But, yes,
17 I live in Scottsdale.

18 Q. Oh, great, okay. And then do you have family that lives with
19 you in the area?

20 A. Yes, I've got a wife, I've got a grown-up daughter and son
21 that live in the Phoenix area. And then I've got two parents that
22 live in Goodyear.

23 Q. And then what keeps you busy during the day? Are you working
24 now?

25 A. Yes, I'm a field sales representative for an industrial

1 distribution company.

2 Q. Great. Okay, thanks. So what I'd like to talk a little bit
3 now is maybe about your bicycle riding history. So about how long
4 would you say you've been riding your bike, you know, whether it's
5 been just kind of casual or more serious, just kind of that level,
6 you know. Maybe how many miles a week?

7 A. Like serious cyclist, probably 15 years.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. And -- any -- and I've gone up and down in those 15 years
10 from, you know, from riding 300 miles a week to riding, you know,
11 60 miles a week.

12 Q. Okay, great.

13 A. Right now, I'm closer to the 60 miles a week.

14 Q. Understood. And then what kind of bike do you have or what
15 kind of bike were you riding that day?

16 A. What I was riding that day is a 2019 Trek Madone.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. It'd an SL6, it's a newer style bike.

19 Q. And was that impounded by the police?

20 A. Yes, it was.

21 Q. Okay. Have you gotten that back?

22 A. I have not yet.

23 Q. Oh, okay. Okay.

24 A. So I know that it has some damage, but I haven't gotten a
25 good look at it.

1 Q. Okay, thanks. So how long have you been riding with the West
2 Valley Cycle Club?

3 A. Probably 13 years.

4 Q. All right. And when you -- you know, when I say -- I bring
5 up that cycle club, you know, tell me in your mind, like, what
6 first comes to your mind when I mention that or what's a really
7 good memory that you have of that club?

8 A. There's so many, I can't even begin. But I just know -- I
9 can just tell you that probably finest group of people I've been
10 associated with in my life, as far as a community of people that,
11 you know, do things together and work out together, and do things
12 outside of cycling. Most everybody's met each other through the
13 cycling, but we all do things outside of it as well.

14 Q. And would you say you're a fairly regular rider of the -- on
15 the Saturday rides?

16 A. Yes, I do. Every time I can so, you know, almost every week.

17 Q. And which group do you typically ride with?

18 A. I typically ride in the B -- what we call the B group.

19 Q. Yes, okay. Great, thanks. Yes, so let's talk a little bit
20 now more about that day. You know, how did it start for you as
21 far as the morning and, you know, getting over to the meet-up and
22 things -- and that kind of --

23 A. Kind of like usual where I -- I live a little bit far away
24 now. I used to live right by there, but now I live kind of far
25 away, so I have to drive there for about half an hour in the

1 morning. So I drove out there, you know, got my bike ready, got
2 my bike shoes on. I actually forgot -- since I get ready and then
3 I have to leave, and I got to be there at a certain time, I forgot
4 my Garmin, which is a measuring device for cycling. And I also
5 forgot my cycling gloves, so I was riding with my work gloves --
6 put on thin work gloves that day.

7 But, yes, we meet up at Santini's Cycling Shop (ph.) now
8 because of the -- just the growth in that area of town has pushed
9 it to where -- we're just trying to find a place that we can all
10 meet, have a bathroom available. That's just how it starts out.

11 Q. Yes. Okay. And then as you -- from the best of your
12 recollection, can you, you know, describe the ride, you know, the
13 moment prior to -- when you were riding on the bridge. And then,
14 you know, kind of -- when you first thought, oh man, something's
15 going wrong here, and then kind of transition to the accident.

16 A. Yes, so it just started out like any ride, you know, where we
17 -- we all start out together as a group, just as a -- because we
18 got on kind of a rural road where there's not a lot of traffic or
19 anything on it. And we ride 17 to 19 miles an hour as a warm-up.
20 And that lasts about 20 minutes or so, so we can angle through an
21 industrial area by a baseball park, and then head out to what
22 would be Cotton Lane, which is the main lane that goes towards the
23 subdivision that we mostly ride in during that part of our ride.

24 So I'd say probably 20 minutes into that, we took a left onto
25 Cotton Lane. There's a what used to be a highway, which is MC85.

1 It has railroad tracks and a light, so you usually always get
2 stopped there. And then once that light turns green, then we head
3 on to Cotton Lane towards the Estrella community.

4 And that's where it stretches out into the different groups,
5 where you're A group kind of takes off a little harder and gets
6 ahead of everybody. And then there'll usually be some -- a
7 smaller group in between there, people that are a little faster
8 than the B group, but not fast enough to stay in the A group. And
9 then there'll be like the main B group, which is what I was in.
10 And as we head out on that road, it's a two-lane highway or two-
11 lane road with a bicycle lane. And after we head out from that
12 light, we're -- I think we were going probably in the 22 to 25
13 mile an hour range on the bikes.

14 And it's a good -- from that intersection to where the bridge
15 starts is somewhere between a quarter and a half a mile, I guess.
16 And then once we hit the bridge, I was the -- would be the lead
17 cyclist at that point, so I'm in the very front. And the group --
18 I'm estimating it at 20, because I had so many people I had
19 counted after the accident.

20 So it's a group of 20 of us, I'm the lead cyclist. We're
21 mostly two by two in the bike lane, but also kind of stretching a
22 little bit into the lane of traffic. But there's two lanes of
23 traffic, plus a bicycle lane, a concrete barrier that's on the
24 right-hand side of the bicycle lane, and then there's a center
25 section of the bridge, which is just wide open. There's no

1 barriers, no curbs, anything. It's probably 25 feet wide, and
2 then there's two lanes coming the other direction with a bike lane
3 and a barrier as well. So it's a very, very wide bridge.

4 And the road's kind of circling -- not circling, but sort of
5 meanders to the left as you're coming from the MC85 towards the
6 bridge. But then once it gets probably 100 yards from the bridge,
7 it straightens out and the bridge is just perfectly straight all
8 the way across it, so it gets a little uphill after the bridge.
9 And maybe 1/3 of the way across the bridge -- and like I said we
10 were going 20, 25 miles an hour, which is a medium tight level --
11 we're riding along and since I was the first person, I can't
12 really see what's happening behind me other than I know pretty
13 much who's directly behind me, which is a fellow named Mark and a
14 fellow named Steve.

15 And so then, right at that point as we're going along, I just
16 heard a noise that I described to another friend of mine who was
17 involved in a similar incident that it's a noise you'll never
18 forget but you've never heard before, which is a crashing sound
19 that's not like a bike crash. Because I've been cycling long
20 enough and I race that I've heard bike crashes where, you know,
21 six or even 10 people get tangled up and fall down and it's a
22 particular sound. But this was a completely different sound than
23 that. Just, you know, like a boom and a crunching sound, and then
24 you could hear the bicycle tires popping, which almost sound like
25 a, you know, a small caliber gunshot. It was just a pop, pop,

1 pop, pop, and then you could hear -- I can hear crunching sounds,
2 and you're just -- you're riding along, and your brain can't
3 process what's happening because there's sounds that you've never
4 heard before.

5 And then before I could even think about it, all of a sudden
6 the people behind me and people -- there's people to the side of
7 me that weren't there before -- just pushing me basically off of
8 my bike. And, you know, all I can think of was just try not to
9 crash, try not to crash, because at this point I still don't know
10 that there's a pickup truck that's running over everybody. I
11 mean, I just heard all the crashing and the banging sounds, and I
12 can't process it in my head.

13 But then I was able to -- I didn't get hit by the truck. I
14 just got pushed into it by, I'm guessing, two or three other
15 cyclists, because it was just kind of in a big mass. And then I,
16 you know, teetered, went down pretty hard on my left side. And I
17 -- as far as I know I didn't get knocked unconscious, but I had
18 concussion symptoms. Probably still a little bit now, so I know I
19 must have whacked my head pretty hard on the ground and scraped up
20 the whole left side of my body.

21 Then immediately after I went down, I got back up again
22 because I didn't -- I still was barely processing the fact that as
23 we were getting crashed on, the pickup truck went by. And as I
24 got up and looked, I could see that he had -- there was a cyclist
25 kind of a little away from everybody else was that basically as I

1 was going down, I could see the truck going over her.

2 And then this is -- and this whole period from when the --
3 when they first hit until I got up, it was probably 200 yards or
4 200 meters in distance. And then the -- there's -- since I was
5 the first cyclist, there was actually people crashed in front of
6 me, which is the weirdest thing. You know, when you're getting up
7 and you're crashed, you don't change your positions from the
8 thing, so I knew something was up and I could see the truck, and I
9 saw her come off under the truck. And then the truck stopped
10 another probably 50 to 200 -- somewhere between 50 and 200 feet --
11 or not feet, but like meters -- away. Feet's too small.

12 And I got up, saw all the people -- you know, just saw -- got
13 up and looked around and then there's just broken bikes
14 everywhere, almost unrecognizable as bikes. Some, between 12 and
15 15 fellow cyclists are just lying on the ground, and I'm trying
16 -- I'm -- you know you're in the situation. Okay, I don't -- I
17 see that we get hit by a pickup truck and I see my friend, saw her
18 laying on the ground, and then nobody got up. And then you go,
19 how am I the only person that's able to stand up after this.

20 And then as I looked around I could see there was another
21 cyclist who was ahead of us and heard the crash and turned around
22 and came back, and his name's Leo DeMarco (ph.). And so he was
23 the first person that I saw and we went immediately to Karen, who
24 was the one that was run around by the -- you know, completely run
25 over by the truck. We went over and checked vitals on her, and

1 there -- we got -- there were zero vitals. She was -- no
2 breathing, no pulse, and we had probably, you know, like I said 12
3 to 15 seriously injured people. And so we just -- just two of us
4 at that moment said there's nothing we can do here.

5 At that point, the driver from the truck had gotten out of
6 the truck and was walking towards us. I walked towards him -- and
7 I'm sure it's going to come out in some, you know, court or
8 investigation, that I basically just screamed at him, you know,
9 kind of just like what the [REDACTED] did you do, what did you do. And
10 then at that point, he turned around and went back to the truck.
11 So I kind of took a quick picture of the document, truck side, get
12 a license plate because I didn't know if the truck was disabled or
13 if he was staying or leaving.

14 So I got the quick license plate picture, turned back around,
15 started checking in on the other, you know, we just went one by
16 one on the people that were laying on the ground to see if they
17 were, you know, breathing and alive and needing anything. And
18 there were just so many that you can't do anything. And at this
19 point, a couple of other people that had been -- I think maybe one
20 or two other people that were riding, you know, the other way who
21 we usually meet or had been in that kind of small group that was
22 in between, had come back. And then I realized that Mark and
23 Steve were also -- and so we were just -- all of us were just
24 checking people's vitals and seeing what we can do to make it more
25 comfortable for them.

1 Also I forgot to mention that immediately after I got up and
2 looked and saw how many people had -- were on the ground and
3 weren't getting up, I did call 9-1-1. And I just basically called
4 9-1-1 and I just said a truck ran over 20 cyclists. There's 12 to
5 15 people on the ground with serious injuries, we need -- this is
6 a small town, we need every single emergency vehicle that you have
7 available. And then they passed me to, like, a fire department
8 person and I just said the same things that we got 12 to 15
9 cyclists hit by a truck on the ground, various -- badly injured
10 and we need every single emergency vehicle that you have
11 available. And that was, like, after -- you know, took a picture
12 of the guy, we're checking people. And within about two to three
13 minutes, the first police arrived on the scene.

14 The first policeman came and was doing chest compressions on
15 Karen, and then a couple of other policemen arrived and then some
16 people that were in traffic, they were heading the other
17 direction, had gotten out of their cars and were assisting. And I
18 think I helped Miguel Cerda (ph.), Cheryl Herzog (ph.). I'm
19 trying to think, there was, like, four of them, they're all
20 together. Janice Lotzkar and -- I think they were all together,
21 variously injured. Clay -- I don't -- the names -- a gentleman
22 named Clay who was there. He was -- he seemed to be pretty
23 seriously injured.

24 We didn't -- tried not to move anybody, and told everybody to
25 sit still, you know. Of course, they didn't want to because

1 they're still in shock, not realizing they're injured. And it
2 turns out, four out of five of those people, had them going in the
3 hospital with a lot of broken bones. And then we then -- once we
4 were sure that they were all breathing, every emergency personnel
5 started to arrive, then we went on and started checking other
6 people.

7 And then I ended up staying with a fellow named Mike Smith
8 for -- until the -- all the emergency people and the police were
9 there. And then at that point, I called Mike Smith's wife to tell
10 her he was in an accident, and was sending him to a hospital but I
11 didn't know which one. So I stayed with him until the emergency
12 personnel got there. And then the police kind of grabbed myself
13 -- and myself, Mark Walgast (ph.) and Steve Rohn (ph.) and then a
14 fellow named Bob, who was visiting from Minnesota, and kind of
15 cordoned us off and stuck us in an ambulance, because three out of
16 four of us were bleeding and injured in certain ways, but not
17 seriously or not needing -- as far as we thought -- not needing
18 any kind of medical attention.

19 And then we just sort of sat in the ambulance for -- what
20 seemed like forever was probably only about 30 to 40 minutes --
21 before the police finally, you know -- at one point where they
22 could ask, you know, pull us out one at a time and get a statement
23 from us. And that's about it with the whole accident.

24 Q. What was your overall impression of the EMS response?

25 A. It was very good. I imagine that, other than myself, other

1 people are called and I think by the time they got there, several
2 calls saying that there's this, you know -- so many people on the
3 ground. They didn't mess around with sending one person out to
4 see how many they needed. They just -- they got -- it seemed like
5 there was people from 3 or 4 different jurisdictions on the scene
6 very quickly, which was impressive.

7 Q. Yes, I've interviewed the IC of the fire rescue and, yes,
8 they did a really good job. My opinion of getting out there just
9 the overall command structure.

10 A. Yes, and I was amazed with it because I've never been in a
11 type of mass casualty situation like that. One of the thoughts
12 that was going through my head was let's see what my friends that
13 were, you know, over in Iraq and Afghanistan had to deal with, and
14 they had to get up and do it again the next day. Just the
15 enormity of the situation. But, no, I was amazed at how well they
16 -- and how much procedures they had for dealing with this, because
17 they immediately had triage cards. And they were just going
18 around and doing super quick triage assessments on everybody and
19 then assigning them a number.

20 Q. Right.

21 A. And that way as the other emergency personnel arrived, they'd
22 be, like, okay, we got number 1, 2, 3 down, and then we got 4, 5,
23 and it goes -- it was pretty impressive.

24 Q. Yes, agreed. What type of injuries did you have or did you
25 sustain?

1 A. So initially, I thought that all I had was, you know, scrapes
2 and bruises. So on my left side I have probably -- so initially I
3 just got up and I had abrasions on my left side, like on my --
4 mostly on my -- I had a big, huge one on my calf and on my left,
5 like, on the hip area and then on my arm, my hand. So basically
6 all the way up my left side I had abrasions and scrapes, and I had
7 a couple of cuts on my fingers that were pretty deep even though I
8 was wearing, like, work gloves and it still ripped through my work
9 gloves and cut my hand pretty deep in two spots. Unless you were
10 like those Kevlar kind of thin cut-proof gloves.

11 Also I -- and that's all I thought I had at the time. But
12 then, you know, it turns out after the next couple of days that I
13 had whacked my head pretty hard and I had a concussion. And then
14 went to the doctor the next week and I have -- the bottom rib on
15 my right side, I have a fracture. And then I also have, like,
16 soft tissue damage on my right torso and hips. I think that's
17 about all.

18 Q. And what hospital did you receive treatment at?

19 A. I didn't go to any hospital. I didn't take any treatment at
20 the scene.

21 Q. Yes.

22 A. I just -- my parents live near there and my wife drove out
23 from Scottsdale, and we just went to my parents' house, and put
24 some bandages. I've been in a number of bike crashes and so I
25 just saw the assessment and said oh, all I've got is this.

1 Q. Yes.

2 A. I didn't know about any other stuff until later on. But I
3 didn't go to the hospital nor did I think I needed to; leave that
4 for the other people.

5 Q. So this -- I'm sorry -- so this -- the concussion and rib
6 fracture that was diagnosed at your physician?

7 A. Yes, that --

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. -- was later during the next week.

10 Q. And do you know how did he diagnose the concussion? Did they
11 do a CT scan at all?

12 A. No --

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. -- no, just questioning symptoms diagnosis. And then the rib
15 was -- I had X-rayed.

16 Q. Got it, okay. And then as far as equipment, were you wearing
17 a helmet?

18 A. Yes, I was wearing a helmet. That's about the only safety
19 equipment -- helmet and then just, you know, your Lycra clothing.

20 Q. Yes. I looked at everybody's bike, but I just wanted to
21 double-check. You didn't happen to have, like, a rearward facing
22 camera?

23 A. No. There's a guy that rides with a rear-facing camera almost
24 all the time. Unfortunately, he was at a mountain biking race
25 that day.

1 Q. Okay, and then everything you're saying kind of lines up with
2 -- as far as formation-wise, how everybody -- so like you were in
3 front, and then Mark and Steve were behind you.

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. I kind of know you're focused on the road, and you don't
6 really know what's going on behind you. And that kind of matches
7 up with what other people have, you know, kind of told me. Again,
8 it's hard to remember, not necessarily super critical, but it's
9 good for us to know.

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. And then in that group of -- I think you said four or five.
12 It was Miguel, Cheryl, Janice, Clay and then was there a fifth
13 that you remember?

14 A. I'm trying to think and I'm not -- Mark might have been in
15 that group.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. But he -- like I said, he was -- he got up and wasn't
18 seriously injured either.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. Just the three of us that were in the front, me, Mark and
21 Steve, were the ones that, you know, we just fell down, hit the
22 ground and that was the only thing that hurt us.

23 Q. Yes.

24 A. It seems like almost everybody else must have gotten some,
25 you know, hit by a truck because the injury's just inconsistent

1 with bike crashes.

2 Q. Yes, exactly. I just talked to -- I don't know if you know
3 him, but you probably don't -- there was a guy from Ohio, George.
4 He actually was the tail end of the group.

5 A. Oh, okay.

6 Q. And he was right behind the first person that got hit. So he
7 actually didn't -- thankfully, he didn't sustain any injuries. He
8 didn't actually fall down at all.

9 A. That might be the guy I'm thinking whose name is Bob.

10 Q. No, I think there was another guy named Bob and I think that
11 his brother-in-law is the other gentleman that passed away.

12 A. What gets me in this thing is that -- and a lot of us is --
13 that's the widest, most open, straightest piece of road that we
14 ride on in any of our things. And I actually think I saw you out
15 there on the bridge maybe Monday or Tuesday with the Maricopa
16 County person taking pictures and measurements and such.

17 Q. Yes, we got out there -- I got out there Monday.

18 A. Okay, yes, I was trying to remember because I went out there
19 just to go back and look at it.

20 Q. Yes --

21 A. It wasn't a good idea.

22 Q. Yes, I understand. I'm sorry. You know, it's weird we drove
23 that route, you know, from MC85 all the way up to the roundabout
24 and then back.

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Yes, if you had told me that there was going to be an
2 accident on that road, I would have picked, like, if you're
3 heading south just after the bridge, it narrows down to, like --
4 there's no bike line, it's just a shoulder.

5 A. Right.

6 Q. You know, or there's like a curb. I'm sorry, there's no --

7 A. Yes, there's not even -- yes, there's a shoulder on one side
8 and nothing on the or the northbound side.

9 Q. Exactly and both of us were like -- if you had told me
10 there's an accident, that's where I would have picked, not you
11 know, that bridge is -- it's wide open. You've got like a median
12 that's about 42 feet wide. Yes, I know.

13 A. Yes, and it's amazing because anybody on -- all the people
14 that normally ride that ride that weren't there, when they heard
15 about it immediately thought the same thing that you thought.

16 Q. Yes.

17 A. That it was in the narrow part. And we're, like, no, it's in
18 the widest part. And it's not only the widest part. There's the
19 widest part of the whole entire 65-mile ride.

20 Q. Right.

21 A. So that's -- it's crazy.

22 Q. Yes. Well, I'm really sorry.

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. I don't have any really -- other questions. You've given me
25 a lot of good information. Is there anything else that I haven't

1 asked you or touched on that you think is relevant or sticks out
2 in your mind like, oh, I remember this detail and he didn't really
3 touch on it at all.

4 A. No, other than -- your aspect of investigating is just to see
5 what they can do to not have those happening in the future, I
6 guess.

7 Q. You know, that's always our goal. I don't know that -- I
8 wouldn't be that strong, but I would say, you know, minimize the
9 risk, you know. I'd love to say you know, it's never going
10 never going to happen again, but, you know the accident and see
11 what caused it and see if there's any type safety recommendations
12 that might help prevent, or lower the risk of this happening in
13 the, future. I think that's about the best that we can do. So
14 I'm going to stop the recordings. If you could just give me a
15 second.

16 MR. HUMM: So I'm going to stop it now. So this concludes my
17 interview with Ethan. The time by my watch is 12:08 Central
18 daylight time.

19 (Whereupon, at 12:08 p.m., the interview was concluded.)
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the
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IN THE MATTER OF: CYCLISTS FATALLY STRUCK BY PICKUP TRUCK
NEAR THE COTTON LANE BRIDGE IN
GOODYEAR, ARIZONA ON FEBRUARY 25, 2023
Interview of Charles Ethan Boch

ACCIDENT NO.: HWY23FH008

PLACE: via telephone

DATE: March 20, 2023

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.



Maria Socorro R. Abellar
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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CYCLISTS FATALLY STRUCK BY PICKUP

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TRUCK NEAR THE COTTON LANE BRIDGE

*

Accident No.: HWY23FH008

IN GOODYEAR, ARIZONA ON

*

FEBRUARY 25, 2023

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Interview of: GEORGE BRENNOCK

via telephone

Monday,
March 20, 2023

APPEARANCES:

JOHN HUMM, Survival Factors Group Chairman
National Transportation Safety Board

I N D E X

ITEM

PAGE

Interview of George Brennock:

By Mr. Humm

5

I N T E R V I E W

(9:07 a.m.)

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2
3 MR. HUMM: Today is March 20th, 2023. I am conducting an
4 interview with George Brennock over the phone. This is in
5 reference to NTSB case number HWY23FH008. The bicycle accident in
6 Goodyear, Arizona. The time by my watch is 9:07 Central daylight
7 time. My name is John Humm, H-u-m-m. I'm with the NTSB and I am
8 the Survival Factors Group Chairman.

9 Okay, good morning, George. If you could please say and
10 spell your name for the transcriptionist.

11 MR. BRENNOCK: Yes, my name is George Brennock. It's -- the
12 last -- spelling of the last name is B, as in Boy, r-e-n-n-o-c-k.

13 MR. HUMM: Okay, thank you. And, George, as we discussed, if
14 you could please give consent that it's okay for me to record
15 this?

16 MR. BRENNOCK: Absolutely.

17 MR. HUMM: Thanks a lot. Real quick, George, could you
18 please give me your email address so that I can send you the
19 transcription.

20 MR. BRENNOCK: It's [REDACTED]

21 MR. HUMM: Okay.

22 MR. BRENNOCK: [REDACTED].

23 MR. HUMM: Perfect. Okay, thanks. So, again, thanks for
24 agreeing to talk to us.

25 INTERVIEW OF GEORGE BRENNOCK

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1 BY MR. HUMM:

2 Q. You know, real briefly, let's talk about where you live now
3 and maybe how you came to be in Goodyear.

4 A. I live in a suburb of Cincinnati. It's a community -- a
5 little town called Loveland, Ohio. It's kind of a biking mecca.
6 We live on a bike trail that connects to another bike trail, that
7 connects to another bike trail, and you can almost pretty much
8 bike from Cincinnati to Cleveland with about 40 of those miles
9 that are off the -- that would be on road. And as each year goes
10 by, that number decreases. But live in Loveland, and I am an avid
11 cyclist and runner. Last year, I biked over 6,300 miles and all
12 except one of the main COVID years, recently started going out to
13 California to spend a month in the wintertime so that I could have
14 better weather to exercise and cut the winter short by a month.

15 So I've been spending about a month in an area called
16 Carpinteria, which is about 10 miles south of Santa Barbara, 10,
17 15 miles north of Ventura. And I was out there for the month of
18 February. And as you may be aware, there's been some pretty
19 horrific rains and mudslides and different things going on in
20 California. And my family is not available to be there for the
21 full month, but I got two adult boys and a wife. And at that
22 point around the 18th of February, everybody had come and gone,
23 and I was in the area the remainder of the time, essentially by
24 myself. I had made friends there, and actually I have another
25 couple friend that were out there that also live in our community.

1 The weather was getting ready to turn pretty nasty. This
2 was, I want to say -- let's see, that would have been on the 23rd
3 of February. On that Thursday, I was able to see that there was
4 going to be over 3 inches of rain to come on the 24th and pretty
5 lousy temperatures the following day. And at that point not being
6 (indiscernible) down by anything in particular, I wanted -- you
7 know, I go out west to be able to utilize good weather and
8 exercise. And I started looking around to see if I could hop in
9 the car and escape the weather.

10 So, you know, I looked at places like San Diego, San
11 Francisco, Las Vegas and weather wasn't really much better there.
12 And so I looked at Phoenix, which was going to be about a 7, 7 1/2
13 car hour ride. I started thinking about the fact that spring
14 training was getting ready to start and I thought, you know what,
15 it looks like some good weather there. Let me go, get a couple of
16 good days of biking in, catch the first two days of spring
17 training, including catching the Cincinnati Reds play, and headed
18 that particular direction.

19 When I got there on Friday -- I run a 26.2-mile marathon in
20 all 50 states and done some research on some best places to bike
21 there. I had found this West Valley Cycling Group and that they
22 had a ride set up for Saturday and Sunday, but this was Friday.
23 And several years before when I ran a marathon out there, I had
24 done so in Buckeye, Arizona and it was an area that was described
25 the course for the marathon was a great place to go biking. So I

1 traveled to that particular area of the parkway, with very little
2 traffic and road along the shoulder on Friday. Got a small ride
3 in. It was 20 miles from my standards. Unfortunately, I was also
4 trying to get to a 1 baseball game.

5 So the next day came, and I was going to meet this group and
6 research them online. They advertised somewhere between 100 and
7 150 cyclists come out usually for their Saturday ride. And I was
8 a little intimidated by the pace. They talked about three
9 different pace groups, and I was concerned that I would be able to
10 keep up with the slowest one, but the truth of the matter is, is
11 that when you're riding in groups, you know, in your drafting you
12 just naturally, without putting forth a ton of effort, seem to go
13 significantly faster.

14 So the ride started out at 7:30. The place was about less
15 than a mile from where the hotel that I had stayed at and knew
16 nobody. I got there a little early, struck up a couple of
17 conversations with some people, and I was interested in riding
18 with the C group and the ride was supposed to be you'd have an
19 opportunity later in the ride to decide whether you're going to do
20 40 miles or 60 miles. And, you know, if I was up to it, things
21 were going well, I would have done the 60.

22 But I was trying to find out where the C group started from,
23 and so I talked to an individual. He told me that the reality of
24 the matter is, is that everybody starts out together, and maybe
25 15, 20 miles down the road when they make their first stop is

1 where people kind of branch off into different groups.

2 So we started out at 7:30. It was pretty cold, it was below
3 -- it was probably in the 40's and I was wearing a very bright,
4 long-sleeved yellow jersey, a heavyweight jersey with a -- what is
5 the terminology that I want to use -- some smart fabric
6 underlining on top. And we started out and, you know, you're --
7 you know, it's extremely quiet, you know, 7:30 in the morning.
8 And, you know, we ended up passing the ballpark in Goodyear, which
9 I had stopped by to take a look at when I had run the marathon in
10 Buckeye several years before. But, you know, here we were, it
11 seemed like 3, 4 miles in, you know, we're passing the ballpark
12 and, you know, I'm planning to be there later that particular day.

13 And -- then made some turns and, you know, we're, you know --
14 everybody's, you know, single file pretty much. At some point --
15 at first, you know, we probably were two abreast starting out and
16 then, you know, as things moved along, you know, we got into a
17 single file lane. I was traveling with a side view mirror on the
18 bike. I had rented a bike for the month out of Santa Barbara,
19 California and transported it with me when I went to Phoenix. And
20 I bought a mirror that attached to the left handlebar, which gave
21 me the ability two, you know, see behind and to the side of me.

22 So we -- like I said, I knew we were moving at a pretty good
23 pace. Somehow, through a lot of the conversation that I read or
24 had read that I was riding with the B group, and so, you know, I
25 was able to, when the accident occurred, I didn't necessarily stop

1 my watch, but I had the ability to later know when it stopped and
2 realized I was traveling at 18 miles an hour. And we were on a
3 bridge, and it was a really interesting bridge. It was a low
4 bridge to the ground; I guess we were going over the Gila River.
5 But, you know, as it turned out, you know, I found that out. We
6 were also pretty much really kind of getting to the outskirts of
7 town and things were, you know, becoming, you know, becoming much,
8 you know, more rural.

9 So, you know, we're really all in this bike lane going over
10 this bridge. The bridge was unique in the sense that, you know,
11 it didn't have any steel structure to, you know, support itself.
12 It was low to the ground, it had two lanes in each direction,
13 along with a bike lane in each direction. And the thing that was
14 unique about this bridge to me was that it had this massive median
15 in between the directions of the traffic that probably looked like
16 the width of, you know, two additional lanes but, you know, they
17 were not traffic lanes.

18 So as it turns out, I must have been -- the way it, you know,
19 the way I've read -- I must have been either the last or second to
20 last person that was in this B group, that things were starting to
21 spread out. I was in the bike lane, and I was drafting off of the
22 gentleman in front of me, who, you know, once again I knew nobody.
23 I later found out, you know, his name because he was the person
24 that I stayed with and tended to and tried to do everything I
25 could to make comfortable until the paramedics arrived.

1 So I'm not looking. Like I said, I'm not looking in my side
2 view mirror. You know, I'm making the assumption that if I'm in a
3 bike lane, then I'm safe. It's a quiet Saturday morning, it's
4 just before 8:00 at this particular time. We're getting into a
5 rural, you know, we're getting further out of town into a more
6 rural area. And all of a sudden I am dumbfounded how close
7 -- and I mean really, really close -- a truck passes me. And, you
8 know, I told you I biked over 6300 miles last year, the year
9 before I did I did 5400, the year before that I did 6000. I've
10 been biking for, you know, a few decades. You know, my mileage is
11 probably increasing as I get older, but I'm also accustomed to
12 motorists that, you know, tend to want to scare cyclists from time
13 to time. And, you know, be, you know, a bunch of dicks.

14 Q. Right.

15 A. So I just -- as I was saying, my God, I mean as that person
16 came, you know, I -- I've never -- a lot of experience in riding
17 in groups, I've never been comfortable to be wheel to wheel, but
18 I'm pretty doggone close to the person in front of me. And
19 certainly enough to, you know, gain the benefit of, you know,
20 being in a wind tunnel. So this truck just continued to move from
21 left to right and hit the individual in front of me. I would have
22 to assume, you know, what he did is he grazed him, which knocked
23 him into the person in front of him.

24 But this accident probably went on for about a quarter of a
25 mile, and what happened is that the truck continued moving from

1 left to right. So, you know, the bike lane is narrow as it is.
2 What made matters even worse is that there was a jersey wall, and
3 so there was no escaping. You know, you could have looked in your
4 rearview mirror and saw what was coming and there would have been
5 nowhere to go. He, you know, like I said must have grazed Ken Fox
6 (ph.), who was the individual in front of me, who I did not know
7 until after the fact and maybe the next person. But at this point
8 now he's getting further into the bike lane and he's like
9 literally running people over.

10 He eventually, once again, because of the width of the bike
11 lane wasn't that great, ended up -- the pickup truck ended up
12 hitting the jersey wall. And I guess from what I was told by A
13 riders, who ended up hearing the life squads, who turned around
14 and came back, you know, they -- that was informed that the pickup
15 truck was, you know, heavily damaged in the front end for hitting
16 -- you know, after hitting the jersey wall. (Indiscernible)
17 across those two lanes and resting in this median between the two
18 directions of the traffic on the bridge that like I said was
19 probably the length of, you know, two additional lanes but, you
20 know, not marked. It was just a wide-open concrete area.

21 It was just a -- an ungodly -- I was the last individual that
22 got by without being hit, and it was just an ungodly thing to
23 witness and see it unfold. And I -- like I said, even though it
24 was light traffic, you know, very quickly even with light traffic,
25 you know, there started to be some cars that, you know, quickly

1 stopped, saw what had happened, you know, tried to administer aid.
2 I just quickly went to the gentleman in front of me, Ken, and I
3 knew -- you know, Ken was pretty convinced that he broke his arm.
4 He was laying on the ground, you know, probably in an opposite
5 direction so he couldn't see, you know, forward the quarter mile
6 of the destruction.

7 And, you know, I just, you know, felt this need, you know --
8 at this point, somehow, either cyclists that had turned around,
9 motorists, everybody who had been injured, you know, had somebody
10 with them. I stayed with Ken, who was the closest person to me
11 and, you know, I have to -- you know, I have to assume that Ken
12 was probably the least injured of everybody.

13 And, you know, my initial reaction was like it was a
14 deliberate act because there -- you know, I guess in my world it's
15 like if you hit something where you know that you hit something,
16 you're going to have some type of a reaction. And there was no
17 reaction. I mean, at this -- it was a continuation of left to
18 right until he hit the jersey wall. And then the vehicle, like I
19 said, I -- from what I was told, just became inoperable and rested
20 in between the two directions of the bridge.

21 Q. Okay. Well, can you tell me if you recall, did you hear the
22 engine of the truck? Do you remember that, could you hear it,
23 like, accelerating or did it sound like the engine was on to you?

24 A. You know, I literally ended up, you know, having plans back
25 in California the following day, ended up leaving town that day.

1 I've read all kinds of accounts of other people who talked about
2 the revving of the engine of this truck, and I will have to tell
3 you that I never heard it. I never heard that. Like I said, I
4 was the last person that got passed in that B group unscathed, or
5 at least I believe so. As it turned out, I met another guy who
6 must have been behind me, who was probably out in front of the C
7 group, but not close enough to me, you know, to be wheel to wheel
8 or within -- you know, to take advantage of the tunnel. And --
9 but I did hear people's accounts of that, but I honestly never
10 heard it.

11 Q. Okay. So when did you first know, would you say, that
12 something was wrong? Was it when that truck passed you? Is that
13 when you kind of said, oh, something's not right here?

14 A. Well, you know, like I said, I mean, I'm not wheel to wheel,
15 but almost and, you know, I was just dumbfounded how close to the
16 -- he actually had come to me. So, you know, for him to literally
17 get the next person, I mean, at that point it was instantaneous
18 and then, you know, you're talking about the next, you know, 10
19 seconds where, you know, you're seeing, you know, bicycles split
20 in half and, you know, people essentially run over. And it was
21 just an ungodly situation.

22 And I got to tell you, I'm not really good at stuff like
23 that. I obviously wanted to do everything I could, offer aid and
24 I, you know, I've told Ken and I think I've told other people that
25 if, you know, I would have, you know, been lending aid to

1 somebody, you know, 3 or 4 or 5 cyclists further up the road, I
2 would have passed out. I wouldn't have been able to deal with it.

3 So, you know, Ken I knew. In consideration of what I had
4 witnessed, that even though he felt he had just a broken arm, and
5 as it turned out, you know, I found out that he had a lot,
6 obviously, a lot more stuff and, you know, broken ribs and just a
7 laundry list of stuff. But I knew even though he was unlucky to
8 get hit, he was lucky to be alive and because I knew things were
9 much worse further down the road.

10 But I never -- really never got -- you know, never really got
11 further down the road, you know, where the emergency personnel
12 ended up beginning to show up. It was treated as a triage-type
13 situation and Ken got immediately put a tag on his body, that he
14 was -- with minor injuries. And he was clearly, you know, the
15 last person to, you know, really be tended to. It probably took
16 about half an hour before he was taken away in an ambulance.

17 Q. Great, thank you. So how did you come to -- like did you
18 have any injuries and how did you stop? Did you fall, did you --

19 A. No, I had zero injuries. I -- like I said, I do have a lot
20 of experience in group rides, but it's really, you know -- I'm a
21 little over, I don't know, two months or a month and a half of
22 turning 64. I really never been comfortable in literally being on
23 somebody's wheels. I've always kept a little bit of separation at
24 that separation allowed me to stop without hitting them and
25 getting tripped up myself.

1 Q. Okay. And then as far as you could observe from the people
2 that you saw in this group, would you say -- how would you
3 characterize the usage of helmets?

4 A. I would venture to say everybody wore a helmet.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. Yes. I mean, I -- I'm just a real, you know, not that I had
7 any influence over anybody because there wasn't an individual that
8 I knew at all. But, you know, I organized some rides myself with
9 some groups of friends, and I've had a couple of friends just kind
10 of have a single, you know, a single accident while out on my
11 rides where, you know, you kind of go off the path and, you know,
12 trying to get back onto the path real quick and, you know, go down
13 or another one hit my wheel and lose control.

14 And I, you know, the first individual, his helmet broke in
15 three and I have no doubt that he would not be with us or he would
16 have had serious brain damage not wearing a helmet. So I -- it
17 just spooks me out when I see -- and sometimes I'll come across
18 people on the bike path where I live and I know them to be bright,
19 intelligent people. And, you know, you can be the most cautious
20 individual going, but unfortunately there are so many things that
21 can come about on a bike path that are out of your control where
22 you can immediately, you know, be in trouble. And it just boggles
23 my mind that anybody would bike without a helmet.

24 I don't think -- these are -- these were -- you know, this is
25 a pretty significant group of cyclists. And, you know, I can't

1 imagine anybody wasn't wearing one.

2 Q. Yes, sir. So I've asked this to everybody and I'm just
3 curious. Did you have a rearward facing camera? I know that it's
4 not -- not a lot of people have them, but it's starting to become
5 more prevalent. You know, they're kind of built in with the rear
6 flashers. I am checking to see if anybody would have that kind of
7 equipment.

8 A. Yes, I do not. You know, I don't -- you know, as time goes
9 on, you know, you -- I'm not a quick person to technology. My 27-
10 year-old son just bought me a fancy bike computer for, you know,
11 for the holidays. But, you know, the other thing, too, is there
12 are times, you know, when I'm traveling, you know out to
13 California. You know, you -- it's a different bike and you don't
14 have all your set-up, but, you know, I try to, you know, go and be
15 as safe as I can. And I venture to say, as I move forward on with
16 the adding more safety, but I do not have that kind of technology.

17 Q. No, it's all right. I just wanted to check because if
18 somebody had that, that would really that would help us out.
19 But, you know, it's worth asking. You know, I only have a few --
20 a couple of more questions. Do you happen to know the name of the
21 person you said that was behind you that was -- you know, kind of
22 advanced C group?

23 A. I do not.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. He, you know, he struck me as somebody who, you know, might

1 be a couple of years older than me and -- no, I mean, it was --
2 you know, look, there are times when I ride where, you know, we'll
3 go into unfamiliar areas or might temporarily get lost and, you
4 know, have to utilize our phone for directions. And I was a
5 little scared of what was going to transpire. I knew, obviously,
6 I knew the bike ride was over, but really didn't know where I was
7 at and was concerned about how I was going to get back.

8 I ended up striking up a conversation with a young man who
9 was tending to a gentleman one or two further beyond Ken. And,
10 you know, I quickly, you know, quickly said hey, listen, don't
11 leave. I, you know, if you've got to ride back, I don't, you
12 know, I don't know how to get back. And, you know, he went on to
13 tell me that he was visiting from Michigan. And he didn't know
14 where he was at either.

15 We were offered -- when all's said and done, you know, we
16 were offered some transportation. But I think a group of four of
17 us went -- rode back. It was probably just shy of 7 miles into
18 the accident. We took a little different route, you know,
19 probably went to a few additional neighborhoods on the way back
20 and, you know, probably made the ride a little over 7 miles on the
21 way back and it was obviously at a slower pace. But it was
22 therapeutic in the sense that, you know, I don't know how I would
23 have reacted to get back on the bike, you know, a day later if I
24 didn't have that opportunity to, you know, ride those 7 miles
25 afterwards.

1 Q. Absolutely. So, sorry, so this guy that was behind you, was
2 he -- did he -- was he from Michigan or was that somebody else?

3 A. No, the gentleman from Michigan was a couple -- further
4 down along the accident. He was an interesting guy. It turned
5 out that he works for Ford in the Detroit area, and I believe that
6 they have some cars that are transported out to the Phoenix area
7 that they test over the wintertime. And so they're literally
8 allowed to fill these cars that are going to be tested with
9 personal belongings.

10 And so he had his bike in, you know, transported in one of
11 the cars and another colleague had a bike. The colleague was
12 older than this gentleman and the way the young gentleman told the
13 story to me was that him and this guy, you know, did some biking
14 or, you know, do some biking when they were out there, but the
15 other gentleman was not big into group rides, but this young
16 engineer talked him into riding that morning.

17 And I believe that he -- the person beyond Ken, if he wasn't,
18 it was the person after that, the third person injured.

19 Q. Um-hum, okay.

20 A. But, yes, it wasn't until -- it really wasn't until probably
21 15 or 20 minutes later that (indiscernible) found out in some
22 conversations with some people that would come by, that there was
23 somebody behind me. But my sense was that they weren't really on
24 my wheel.

25 Q. Got you.

1 A. But they had separated themselves from the C group to the B
2 group.

3 Q. Okay, thank you. So what kind of bike were you riding and
4 then did the police impound that or were you able to keep that?

5 A. Yes, no, because it wasn't involved in the accident -- and
6 that was kind of interesting. You know, I had rented a bike from
7 a company in Santa Barbara called Bikes to Go, and it was a Trek.
8 I believe it's -- the name of the bike starts with a D. It was
9 probably a couple of years old, but it was a real high-end bike.
10 And at that particular point, through the month, I had already
11 ridden that bike for 600 miles before that accident -- before the
12 accident occurred. But once again, the fact that I was in -- it
13 was not the fault of the accident. The thing that became
14 interesting was that when the police arrived, I guess on the other
15 side of this jersey wall of the bridge, was an area for some
16 pedestrian traffic, which was kind of weird. I mean, like I said,
17 we were out seemingly in the middle of nowhere. And somebody, I
18 think a policeman came and just lifted my bike, wanted to separate
19 it from those that were damaged and put it on the other side of
20 the jersey wall.

21 And, you know, like I said I was concerned about getting back
22 after, you know, everybody was transported and after we, you know
23 -- and answered all the questions. And they ended up moving four
24 of us into the middle of this bridge to, you know, finish out, you
25 know, some additional questions and, you know, some people, you

1 know, got into a vehicle to stay warm. And they -- all these
2 three other individuals were, you know wheeling and holding onto
3 their bike. And they wouldn't let me get my bike. Eventually
4 they did.

5 And so like I said when that group of people -- and as it
6 turned out, the start of the ride is at a jersey -- bike jersey
7 company. And the individual who opens up the garage door before
8 the rides so the people can, you know, put some air in their tire
9 or use their bathroom or get a cup of coffee beforehand, he was
10 one of the four people that rode back in my particular group. He
11 was the one who knew the way.

12 Q. Got you. I think that was Josh. Okay, thanks.

13 A. Yes

14 as a matter of fact, I think that was.

15 QQ. I've kind of been able to piece together names of people as
16 we, you know, the more I talk to. Actually I had -- I met him --
17 I haven't interviewed him and I'm not if I will. But, yes, he's a
18 nice guy.

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. That's -- you know, really that's kind of all I have to ask
21 you. You've been a great help. Is there any other -- anything
22 else that stands out in your mind that, you know, that I didn't
23 ask or, you know, you think is relevant to the accident or the
24 response or anything like that?

25 A. No, I mean, you know, it just -- you know, it's just really

1 never been in a, you know, triage type of situation. And, you
2 know, obviously I understood that everybody needed, you know, more
3 attention than Ken did. And, you know, Ken would -- you know, Ken
4 would get cold, I would take a jersey off. I took my jersey off
5 and tried to cover him up. It took a while for enough -- it took
6 a while for enough emergency vehicles to arrive that actually had
7 blankets. So, you know, then, you know, that helped.

8 And -- but, I mean, it was, you know, remarkable in the sense
9 of, you know, the number of injuries and to see, you know,
10 emergency response, you know, going into action and do what they
11 do. But, you know -- look, you know, like I said, I know a little
12 over a week ago, the group rode for the first time and had a
13 memorial ride, you know. I'm able to see that through Facebook.
14 I'm an interesting person because I don't -- I may have made a
15 post in regards. Before that in my lifetime I've only made one
16 post on Facebook. And so really not comfortable with the format,
17 but, you know, obviously very interested and concerned about how
18 things transpire and especially with the driver.

19 And, you know, I was interviewed by one of the detectives
20 that was working on the case maybe a week after the fact. But --
21 and I know, you know, I've, you know, had gotten a phone call in
22 the middle of the night. And even though they didn't get to talk
23 to me, then I got, you know, mail sent to me, you know, that the
24 individual's out on bond. And, you know, really, you know -- I
25 know through life every now and it's interesting when you happen

1 to have -- you may happen to have some insight on a particular
2 situation or story.

3 And you read media accounts and, you know, you can kind of
4 shake your head and you it's like, yes, that's not right, you
5 know. But, you know, I know that they, you know, I know that he
6 made the claims that his steering locked up on him and I know that
7 it was reported like a day later, and that was disputed, that it
8 wasn't true. And, you know, I don't even know where the case, you
9 know -- and I know that Maricopa County sent it back to Goodyear.

10 You know, I know that he -- it was his birthday the night
11 before. He admitted to, you know, smoking marijuana the night
12 before. And I guess it just amazes me that I would have to
13 imagine bloodwork and toxicology would be available at this
14 particular point. And I really don't know any more about the
15 case, you know. Just beginning to wonder whether, you know, his
16 blood was clean and whether the guy literally fell asleep. I
17 don't know the answers.

18 Q. Yes, I think they're -- they are still working to determine
19 all that.

20 A. You know, like I said, to me, you know, I think if you hit
21 something you're going to react in the opposite direction. But
22 there was no reaction, you know, and there were no -- there was no
23 braking. The only thing that stopped that truck was the
24 continuation of going from left to right, hitting the jersey wall
25 and then becoming disabled. So, you know, it's -- but, yes,

1 that's it. I hope I was able to help.

2 Q. Yes, very much. I'll stop the recording and then just hang
3 on for a second, I'll just run through some of the details

4 MR. HUMM: So the time by my watch is 9:51 and this concludes
5 my interview with George. Thank you.

6 (Whereupon, at 9:51 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: CYCLISTS FATALLY STRUCK BY PICKUP TRUCK
NEAR THE COTTON LANE BRIDGE IN
GOODYEAR, ARIZONA ON FEBRUARY 25, 2023
Interview of George Brennock

ACCIDENT NO.: HWY23FH008

PLACE: via telephone

DATE: March 20, 2023

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.



Maria Socorro R. Abellar
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of: *

CYCLISTS FATALLY STRUCK BY PICKUP *

TRUCK NEAR THE COTTON LANE BRIDGE *

IN GOODYEAR, ARIZONA ON *

FEBRUARY 25, 2023 *

* * * * *

Accident No.: HWY23FH008

Interview of: ALFRED GONZALES
Cyclist

Via telephone

Monday,
May 8, 2023

APPEARANCES:

JOHN HUMM, Survival Factors Group Chairman
National Transportation Safety Board

I N D E X

ITEM

PAGE

Interview of ALFRED GONZALES:

By Mr. Humm

4

I N T E R V I E W

1
2 Today is May 3rd, 2023. I am interviewing Alfred Gonzales in
3 regards to the bicycle accident in Goodyear, Arizona, that is NTSB
4 Case No. HWY23FH008 on February 25th, 2023.

5 This is a phone interview, and my name is John Humm, H-u-m-m, with
6 the NTSB, and I am the Survival Factors Group Chairman.

7 So thanks again, Al, for agreeing to this interview. I
8 really appreciate your time. If you could just say and spell your
9 name for the transcriptionist.

10 MR. GONZALES: Sure. My name is Alfred, A-l-f-r-e-d, middle
11 initial [sic] John, J-o-h-n, last name Gonzales, G-o-n-z-a-l-e-s.

12 MR. HUMM: Thank you very much, sir. And then as we
13 discussed before the recording, if you could just give your
14 consent that it's okay for me to record this interview?

15 MR. GONZALES: I consent to being recorded during the
16 interview.

17 MR. HUMM: Thank you, sir. I appreciate it.

INTERVIEW OF ALFRED GONZALES

19 BY MR. HUMM:

20 Q. Again, Al, thank you for doing this interview. I know you
21 sustained some pretty serious injuries that we'll talk about
22 later. And I know this might be difficult to talk about. So
23 anything that you don't feel like you want to discuss or if you
24 need some time at any point in the interview, just please let me
25 know.

1 A. I will. Thank you.

2 Q. Thank you. So, first of all, if you could just maybe give a
3 little bit of background on yourself. Where you live right now,
4 and maybe how you came to be in Arizona or Goodyear that day.

5 A. Okay. I'm a native of Arizona. I live in Surprise, Arizona
6 right now. I lived in Tucson for -- up to my senior year in high
7 school. I joined the service. I spent almost 30 years in the Air
8 Force. I retired, and went to live in Surprise. Right now I'm
9 working at the Community College. How I came to be in Goodyear on
10 that day is that I cycle as a hobby, been cycling for about 12
11 years, maybe a little bit longer, and I joined the West Valley
12 Cycling Group as part of my hobby to have some connection with
13 other cyclists. And I ride on -- I used to ride there on their
14 Saturday ride probably every Saturday except for maybe 10 or 12
15 occasions where I would not ride with them over the course of the
16 year, but for the most part, I ride with them. That's how I ended
17 up in Goodyear on that day.

18 Q. Okay. Thank you. And then do you have any family that lives
19 in the area?

20 A. I do not. I have two sons that live down in Tucson. I have
21 a sister and brother that live in Tucson. I've got some
22 grandchildren that live up here in the Phoenix area, and some
23 nieces but in terms of -- I live alone, at this time divorced.
24 And so that's it.

25 Q. Okay. Thanks. And then did you say you worked for the

1 Community College right now?

2 A. Yes, I'm the director of facilities at Glendale Community
3 College in Glendale, Arizona.

4 Q. Oh, great. Thank you. Okay. And how long would you say
5 you've been riding with the West Valley Cycle Club?

6 A. Shortly after I started picking up cycling as a hobby. I'm
7 going to say -- I said about 12 years. Probably between 12 and 15
8 years I've been riding. I rode for about a year before I joined
9 the group. Once I found out about it, then I made contact with
10 one of their key members, and they invited me out and so I've been
11 riding with them ever since.

12 Q. Thank you. And, when you think about the West Valley Cycle
13 Club, what comes to mind first? What's a really good memory of
14 the group that kind of comes to your mind that sticks out when you
15 think about that club?

16 A. I think they're very supportive of cycling as a sport, as a
17 recreational sport as well as a competition sport. They're very
18 friendly, very group orientated in that they kind of watch out for
19 each other. They've always been very accommodating to me.
20 They're inclusive in that all riders are welcome whether they're
21 elite athletes or just getting started. So there's a lot of
22 mixture in terms of skill groups and experience. And, so I think
23 what draws me to them is that they're willingness to help other
24 cyclists get better if that's what they want to do, and if not,
25 and all they want to do is do some recreational riding, they're

1 supportive of that as well. They -- just like they promote the
2 sport as an outlet to others.

3 Q. Okay. Thank you. So can you tell me what kind of bike you
4 had on the day of the ride? And then is that still impounded with
5 the police if they did impound it?

6 A. Yes, I had a -- it's a 2018 Specialized S-Works Tarmac, and
7 that was -- that's kind of a high end bike. The retail at the
8 time that I purchased it was about \$9500. And so I don't have it
9 right now. I don't know what condition it's in. I've not seen
10 it, and they told me that it would probably be held in the
11 evidence room until after this thing is sorted out in the courts.
12 So that might be, you know, a couple years from now from the way
13 things look. So I don't have a bike at this point. I don't have
14 that bike. I have other bikes that I've purchased and have access
15 to, but that particular bike, I don't know what condition it's in.

16 Q. Okay. Yeah, well, that's a real loss. I'm sorry to hear
17 that. Okay. So, now let's talk a little bit about the day of.
18 Maybe talk a little bit, if you can remember back to that morning,
19 how, you know, what your morning was like and how you -- I know it
20 starts at the Santini Bike Shop for almost everybody. So if you
21 want to talk a little bit about that morning and how you came to
22 the shop and how things went that morning.

23 A. Yeah. I was going to ride with my girlfriend, but she was
24 going to join us later in the route. So I went to Santini, met up
25 with the regular group. It was a large group of us that

1 particular day. We rolled out at the time, I think it was at
2 7:30. I -- yeah, it was at 7:30 that we rolled out away from
3 Santini. And it was typical in terms of traffic and the weather
4 was nice that morning. We were hitting the same route we always
5 do, and as the -- as we get past the Highway 85, the group starts
6 breaking up with the faster riders taking the lead and then those
7 that are similar skill end up grouping together. I was in the
8 back. I haven't been riding as well as I'd like, but -- so I was
9 in the last group of the -- what they call the B riders. And that
10 was the group that got hit.

11 Q. Okay. So, from MC-85, yeah, I recall -- right. I kind of
12 know that it splits up and then you were in the B group and maybe
13 more towards the back. Do you remember at all maybe who was in
14 front of you or maybe who you were trailing?

15 A. I know some of them. Some of them are new riders or people
16 that I haven't met. West Valley Cycle as a group I think has like
17 1,000 members. And so it's kind of hard to meet everybody and get
18 to know them by name. But on that particular day, I remember
19 being with some people that I've ridden with before several times.
20 I can't remember, I can't remember all their last names, but there
21 was -- Artie was with me. Mike Reyor Mike Smith, Melissa, the
22 young that got killed. Oh what's -- Serta, Miguez Serta (ph.) was
23 there. Steve, Mark Wollgast, several others. Her name escapes me
24 right now, but -- Herzog is her last name. Cheryl Herzog.

25 Q. Cheryl, okay. Yeah.

1 A. Yes. And there was others in that group. I think in the
2 group that I was in had about 20 riders in at the time, but those
3 are -- I remember about half their names of that group, about half
4 of them.

5 Q. Sure.

6 A. Claywell (ph.), Claywall (ph.) was in there.

7 Q. So as you're approaching the bridge -- the South Cotton Lane
8 Bridge, do you recall -- when did you first realize that, you
9 know, something was wrong or there was some type of or sense of
10 impending danger or that something bad was going to happen?

11 A. No, not at all. We were riding. We had just gotten into the
12 bridge and the road really widens up in there because it gives you
13 -- not only do you have the four lanes, two going in each
14 direction, but you have a real wide medium in the middle. And so
15 we were, we were pretty well lined up in the bike up in the bike
16 lane. And I took a quick look back and didn't see anything that
17 was brought to my attention. And so I was just trying to get
18 comfortable in the position I was in, in the line. And then the
19 next thing I know is I'm laying on the ground hurting really bad.
20 And I was facing north, and in front of me was one other cyclist
21 who was trying to get up, but pretty well gave up on trying to get
22 up and just laid down.

23 And then I felt all the pain that I was in. I was trying to
24 get up and couldn't. I just, I just couldn't get up. I was
25 having a hard time breathing and, thinking, oh, my God, oh, my

1 God. I know I was moaning pretty loudly, and then there was a guy
2 that started talking to me. I found out later his name was Bill,
3 and I've never met him before. He was a visitor. As it turns
4 out, he was a visitor to the group. He was down from Minnesota
5 for a week or 2 for some get away from the Minnesota weather.
6 And, so he told me just hang on, hang on. So I was trying to
7 gather my bearings of what happened, what happened. I had no idea
8 what happened. All I know was that I was in significant pain.
9 And he said, they're almost here. They're almost here. The
10 ambulance is coming.

11 And, then I started hearing sirens. And I could hear
12 activity south of me, but I couldn't see anything because I was
13 facing north. And, I couldn't move to see what else was going on
14 around me. And then the next thing I know is the ambulance crew
15 pulled up and dropped -- put down their little bag of tools and
16 stuff that they, that they evaluate patients with. I call it
17 their toolbox because I'm in the maintenance side, and that's
18 what, that's what we carry around is things that will help us
19 determine what the problem is and fix it if possible.

20 But then, right in front of my nose, they put down a tag that
21 said immediate. It was a red tag. And shortly after that they
22 came in and started tending to me. They put me on one of those
23 straight boards that they use to lift patients with onto the
24 gurney. And then they put me in the ambulance and closed the
25 doors and off I -- off we went. They took me to Good Samaritan

1 Hospital. I never saw anything that was going on south of me.
2 And so it was only after I had a chance to talk to some people
3 that I found out what had happened, and to the extent that it had
4 happened. But during that whole time that I was laying there, I
5 never saw anything other than the one cyclist that I could see in
6 front of me.

7 Q. Yeah, I apologize. That's quite an ordeal. I know it's
8 probably difficult to think back on. Do you remember at all just
9 prior to being hit maybe who was right in front of you? I'm just
10 -- I'm trying to place you within, you know, I'm doing the best I
11 can to try and recreate or, you know, get the best account I can
12 of the order, people were in. I don't know -- I probably will
13 never be able to figure this out precisely and, you know, in the
14 end it may not be super important because, you know, we all know
15 what you got hit by, but it might, it might help us understand the
16 accident a little bit better. So anything that you can remember,
17 if you can remember the person in front of you, or when you
18 glanced back, if you recall seeing anybody behind you, that
19 would, that would help, whatever you can remember.

20 A. Yeah, and that's why I look back. I wanted to see, if there
21 was somebody behind me, then I want to know where they are in
22 proximity to my position, in the same way that I want to know
23 who's in front of me. So I know, you know, how they ride
24 especially if they're new to me and I haven't ridden with them
25 before. Everybody's got their own little idiosyncrasies of how

1 they ride, how they move within the line, if they're passing or if
2 they're dropping back.

3 But my understanding was that, from what I saw, there were
4 two riders behind me, and so I think I was the third one from
5 behind. When I talked to the guy who tended to me, he ended up
6 being the last guy on the line. He said that the vehicle had just
7 barely missed him, and then clipped the guy that I was looking at
8 when I, when I was hit, and then there was me, and then there were
9 others. And, I don't know exactly who was directly in front of
10 me. And so again, you know, I was just looking at the back of
11 them at that point, and there's a mixture of riders that I knew
12 with those that I didn't know. So by name, I couldn't tell you
13 which one it was. I think -- but I do believe I was the third one
14 from the back.

15 Q. Okay. So do you know if you were hit directly by the truck
16 or like do you recall that at all? Do you recall anything of
17 going down on the ground? Were you struck by the truck or do you
18 -- you know, or maybe did you contact the biker that got hit that
19 was right in front of you?

20 A. If I look at the evidence that I have available to me, and
21 that would just be my jersey and the wounds on my body, I have
22 some very specific lines that may very well be permanent on my
23 left side, and they're not consistent with road rash. A road rash
24 is kind of random and, you know, it goes in a long streak. In my
25 case, I have lines that go up and down and they go diagonally

1 across my back. And I believe I was hit on my right -- I'm sorry,
2 on my left side by the vehicle itself.

3 And then on my right shoulder of my jersey, I have, I have
4 things that look like tire tracks, but they're really not. What
5 it is, is my jersey skidding across a Jersey barrier as I was
6 bounding off of it. And, that's where I sustained some rotator
7 cuff injuries.

8 Now, I believe that -- I further believe that I was hit on
9 the left side because that's where my lung was punctured by my
10 rib. And so it had to have been pretty good force in order for
11 that to happen. And again just looking at the -- at how my jersey
12 was torn, my (indiscernible) was torn and the scoofs off of the
13 Jersey barrier and off the ground, that -- I believe that I was
14 hit on the left side, pushed into the Jersey barrier on the right
15 side of my riding position and then rolled around on the ground
16 for a while consistent with the road rash that I had across my
17 body, the majority of it on my back and sides, and then on my
18 knees.

19 Q. Okay. Thank you. If you don't mind, can you -- whatever
20 you're comfortable with, can you talk a little bit about the
21 injuries you sustained that day?

22 A. Yeah, I had 15 broken ribs. I had both scapulas broken. I
23 had both clavicles broken. I had laceration on my right elbow. I
24 had a fractured lumbar disk. I had those other little bones that
25 come off the spine, I had microfractures on that. I had -- like I

1 said, I had a punctured lung. I had a variety of road rash
2 throughout my body. I had eight wounds that were -- that had to
3 have a daily treatment. The road rash was not among that count.
4 These were wounds like in my -- I had like five around my knee
5 area, five individual wounds on one knee, and then I had another
6 two or three on the other one. And so these were all -- I had a
7 wound on my nose and my forehead. The doctor said that there was
8 -- I had a contusion on my head but it was between my scalp and
9 the skull, not necessarily beyond the skull. And, I think that's
10 it.

11 Q. Wow.

12 A. But no lower body fractures. Everything was above my waist.

13 Q. Okay. So nothing to your pelvis?

14 A. No, sir.

15 Q. Okay. Do you know -- did they ever diagnose you with a
16 concussion at all?

17 A. No, I lost consciousness because again I know that I woke up,
18 right. So you had to be knocked out to wake up because I don't
19 remember tumbling. I don't remember any of that. They did say I
20 had a contusion but not a concussion. And so I'm not sure what
21 the difference is. You know, I know that I was knocked out. I
22 did lose consciousness. So I assumed there then maybe there was a
23 concussion, but none of this was life threatening. I think the
24 only thing that was life threatening was the puncture in my lung.

25 Q. Yeah, that's a significant amount of rib fractures you

1 sustained as well as both broken clavicles and your scapula. Yes,
2 that definitely is a threat to life there. So I'm thankful they
3 got you red tagged and got you the care you needed.

4 What was your impression -- I know you didn't -- weren't able
5 to look around, but what was your -- from what you can recall, and
6 I realize you were in a pretty injured state, -- do you have any
7 recollection of the response from the fire department?

8 A. Well, it seemed like forever, which we weren't in a -- the
9 neighborhood wasn't right there. It was a couple of miles, and
10 I'm not sure where in this area where the fire department is
11 located. I don't think I've ever passed a fire station. So I
12 don't know where they were coming from, but it seemed like it took
13 a long time at the time. Because I remember thinking that -- I
14 was in so much pain I remember thinking that I just maybe -- I
15 just want to die now, you know, because everything hurt so bad.
16 And, so the guy said, no, no, no, you've got to stay with me, stay
17 with me, they're coming, they're coming. They're getting close,
18 you know.

19 And so as it turned out later, I guess that was the advice
20 that they were given by the first responding police officer is
21 those that were walking wounded, those that were either not
22 affected at all or able to help others, is to find somebody who
23 they needed to talk to, to make sure that they stayed awake. So,
24 that's what he was doing. He was doing what he had been asked to
25 do.

1 But it seemed like it took a long time, but I'm sure it just
2 seemed like it in my mind because there was so much pain going on.
3 And then they sent me to Good Samaritan Hospital which in downtown
4 Phoenix. I asked the medic guy, you know, where are we going
5 because I know there's hospitals closer and it shouldn't have
6 taken that long to get to one. He said that they had sent them to
7 Good Samaritan Hospital which is in downtown Phoenix, and I guess
8 that was about a 20 minute trip. It just seemed like a long time
9 before I got to a medical facility.

10 Q. Okay. So can you talk a little bit -- are you out of the
11 hospital now and how is your recovery going?

12 A. Yeah, I spent a few days -- they took the me to trauma care
13 unit which is kind of like the first triage where they clear
14 patients and determine what treatments they needed and whether or
15 not it's needed immediately. And it was at that stop, that they
16 had a doctor insert that tube into my lung to start draining it.
17 And then there was a couple of CT scans for other injuries, and
18 then they moved me over to the intensive care unit which I was
19 there for maybe 2 days. And then once I was able to pass their
20 criteria, then I was moved over into what they call the
21 progressive care unit. And then I was there for about 5 or 6 days
22 until I was -- until I passed their criteria for being able to
23 moved to the rehab center.

24 And the rehab center, I was there for 8 days. They told me
25 typically it takes 2 to 3 weeks to get out of there considering

1 the number of fractures I had but I was able to get out of there
2 in a week. So overall I felt that my return or my exit out of the
3 rehab was largely due to the fact that I, you know, I do ride a
4 lot. So I'm not, I'm not unfit. I'm physically fit for the most
5 part. So I think that helped in my recovery. And, being strong
6 enough to pass their tests for being able to leave and then live
7 with care. I had to have someone care for me at my home. And so
8 my girlfriend opted to stay with me and help me with my recovery.

9 Q. Okay. Yeah, that's amazing that you were able to recover so
10 well given the extent of your injuries. That's really -- yeah,
11 that speaks a lot to your overall, you know, generally being in
12 good shape because I look at this list of injuries and, they're
13 very severe.

14 A. Yeah, I was listening to the doctor who was puncturing my rib
15 tissue in order to get into my lung, and she was telling them,
16 yeah, he's 71 years old but he's no 71 year old that we've
17 crossed, you know. He's a very strong 71 year old. So I guess
18 they needed to know that, that I wasn't frail, wasn't, you know,
19 again I do weight lifting at home and I do my cycling out on the
20 open road. So, that I did and I still think that had a lot to do
21 with my recovery and speed that I was able to recover.

22 Q. Absolutely. You definitely do not fall into the frail
23 category. So I really appreciate you, you know, recounting all
24 that. I know it's not something that you necessarily want to
25 relive.

1 A. No.

2 Q. So in your --

3 A. Go ahead. I'm sorry.

4 Q. No, no. In your -- as you look at like the West Valley Cycle
5 Club, how would you characterize the helmet usage and, you know,
6 maybe the use of reflectors and flashers among the group that
7 rides?

8 A. Well, helmets are mandatory. So it's 100 percent wear. I
9 think I've only seen one or two occasions where somebody tried to
10 jump in without wearing a helmet, and they were sent away. They
11 were asked -- hey, you guys can follow but you can't ride within
12 the group. And so those -- that safety issue is never in
13 question. The use of lights, flashing lights and especially tail
14 lights, I would say probably, even though it might be daylight
15 which is when we take off, the use of flashers is probably about
16 -- I'm going to say about 70 percent of us still use them even
17 though it's daylight riding, just to draw attention to the driver
18 that there's a rider ahead and the more flashers you see, the more
19 riders there is.

20 They're safety conscious in that they call out road hazards,
21 you know, any road debris to get other cyclists to navigate around
22 the debris or at least be aware of low branches or anything like
23 that. So safety is one of our main concerns, and it's briefed out
24 front, hey, if you're going to lead the group, then you have to be
25 able to point these hazards out and not one, just the guy behind

1 you, but shout it out so everybody can hear. And if you're in a
2 big group, then relay it, you know, keep shouting it out until the
3 last person in the group hears it and has time to navigate around
4 it.

5 Q. Yeah. That's kind of consistent with pretty much everybody
6 that I've interviewed. So, I don't have any other -- let me just
7 look real quick. I don't have any other specific questions to ask
8 you, but is there anything, you know, either that I haven't
9 covered in the interview that you want to talk about or something
10 that stands out in your mind from that day, whatever it is.
11 Whether it's the accident, the response or really anything about
12 your experience that you'd like to discuss.

13 A. I think the only thing that I want to make note of is the
14 PTSD. It was very hard to talk about that the first few weeks
15 with the doctors and people who were charged with my care. I
16 think the first time I felt comfortable talking about it was when
17 I ran into a doctor who was a fellow cyclist, and he understood it
18 because he had, he had also been involved in an accident. And, so
19 -- and this was out of state. And so when, when I started talking
20 to him, he started sharing his story which made it easier to talk
21 to somebody who had been there was well.

22 But even now, when conducting this interview, it still comes
23 back and, man, it was that bad you know, and I think of my friends
24 who are still trying to get out of bed on their own, stand up
25 under their own power and things like that. And so again I'm very

1 grateful and I'm blessed that I didn't have any lower body
2 injuries that might have prevented me from being able to get up
3 and walk.

4 I still have some swelling that happens. There's still some
5 discomfort now, and I'm not in great pain, but things aren't the
6 same. You know, I can't lay on my back flat like I used to. I
7 can't do my weight lifting. Even very low weights, you know, 5,
8 10 pounds, I can't even do that without pain on some of my
9 ligaments. And so there's still a lot of mending to happen, as
10 well as the mental side. I'm just kind of curious how it'll be
11 when I start being able to visit personally with some of those
12 folks that were seriously injured in this accident. I've seen
13 some of them, of those that were there, but not necessarily
14 seriously injured. So I think there's almost a brotherhood among
15 those of us that were seriously injured and how we respond to each
16 other as well as whether or not we even to return to cycling.

17 Q. Yes, sir. I can definitely understand that. Some of the
18 people I've talked to have kind of indicated that, yeah, that they
19 don't know if they can get back to cycling which I understand but
20 is also, you know, it's just another loss, you know, in addition
21 to obviously the physical discomforts that you're going through
22 and issues but, you know, it's just -- there's this group of, you
23 know, this comradery of this group that, you know, you did -- from
24 what I gather from talking to people, it was more than just about
25 the physical aspect of, yeah, getting in a good workout. That --

1 certainly there is that aspect to it, but there's also the
2 friendships and everything else that you made through that and see
3 them every day or every week like that. That's also a real loss
4 which I'm sorry you have to go through.

5 Is there anything -- any other challenges that's hard for you
6 to do right now with your injuries?

7 A. Well, I'm still mending, and so I don't know whether or not
8 there's going to be something I won't be able to do at all just
9 because, you know, of maybe my body didn't mend well as it did or
10 some things that just no longer have the strength that they used
11 to. And again, you know, I'm not, I'm not a young man, but I
12 could do a whole lot of the young man things. And so I'm afraid,
13 and it really scares me that that has been taken away from me. So
14 I've got some other challenges ahead of me in trying to resume
15 what I consider my normal life prior to this accident.

16 I'm real leery about other drivers now and how much attention
17 they're paying to other things that are going on in front of them.
18 You know, we all passed laws about texting and driving but people
19 text and drive all the time. If it's not that, they're taking a
20 bite out of their sandwich or talking on the phone. They're not
21 fully engaged in driving, and so we see this -- we see more and
22 more of this. I'm not sure we'll ever get back to the basics of
23 just driving and being careful, you know, watching out for your
24 neighbor and watching out instead of everything that's going on.
25 If it's not road rage, it's running over somebody.

1 Q. Yeah. I agree with that. Okay. Well, I think I'm -- again,
2 you've answered really in great detail all the questions that I
3 have. Is there anything else that you'd like to add at all?

4 A. No, I appreciate you taking the time to get our side of it,
5 and hope we've given you a complete picture of what happened that
6 morning.

7 Q. Yes, sir, you have. I appreciate it.

8 MR. HUMM: So I'll go ahead and stop the recording, and then
9 if you could just hold on the line for a second, and I'll just run
10 through a couple of other things.

11 MR. GONZALES: Okay.

12 MR. HUMM: Thank you. So the time by my watch is 12:46 p.m.,
13 and this concludes our interview.

14 (Whereupon, at 12:46 p.m., the interview was concluded.)
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CERTIFICATE

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NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

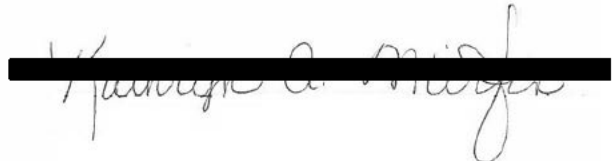
IN THE MATTER OF: CYCLISTS FATALLY STRUCK BY PICKUP
TRUCK NEAR THE COTTON LANE BRIDGE
IN GOODYEAR, ARIZONA ON
FEBRUARY 25, 2023
Interview of Alfred Gonzales

ACCIDENT NO.: HWY23FH008

PLACE: Via telephone

DATE: May 8, 2023

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:

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CYCLISTS FATALLY STRUCK BY PICKUP
TRUCK NEAR THE COTTON LANE BRIDGE
IN GOODYEAR, ARIZONA ON
FEBRUARY 25, 2023

Accident No.: HWY23FH008

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Interview of: ARTHUR GRIJALVA, Victim

via telephone

Wednesday,
September 6, 2023

APPEARANCES:

JOHN HUMM, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board
Survival Factors Group Chairman

I N D E X

ITEM

PAGE

Interview of Arthur Grijalva:

By Mr. Humm

4

I N T E R V I E W

(1:34 p.m.)

1 MR. HUMM: Today is September 6, 2023. I am interviewing
2 Arthur Grijalva who is a victim from the bicycle crash in
3 Goodyear, Arizona on February 25, 2023. This is in reference to
4 NTSB Case No. HWY23FH008. The time by my watch is 1:35 --
5 1:34 p.m. My name is John Humm, H U M M, and I work for the NTSB
6 as a Survival Factors Chairman. Good afternoon, Arthur, or good
7 morning, for where you are. Thanks for agreeing to this
8 interview.
9

INTERVIEW OF ARTHUR GRIJALVA

BY MR. HUMM:

10 Q. Can you please say and spell your first and last name for the
11 transcriptionist?

12 A. Sure. First name's Arthur, last name Grijalva. That's
13 G R I J as in Jack, A L V as in Victor, A.

14 Q. Thank you. And then as we discussed briefly before I started
15 the recording, could I get your verbal consent that it's okay for
16 me to record this interview?

17 A. I give my permission to record this conversation.

18 Q. All right. Thank you, sir. I appreciate it.

19 A. You're welcome.

20 Q. So is it all right if I call you Art? Is that all right?

21 A. That's fine.

22 Q. Okay.

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. Art, why don't we start -- you know, let's start kind of
3 globally. Maybe tell me a little bit about yourself in terms of
4 where you live, maybe what your occupation is or what currently
5 you're doing, and then maybe how you came to be in Goodyear,
6 Arizona.

7 A. Sure. So I've been in the payments industry for many decades.
8 Currently I'm a product owner for a project that designs a system
9 to load Android APKs into the new generation of credit card
10 terminals that are out there using Android operating system, so
11 we're just developing and designing how to get that application
12 and software into those terminals. I was born in San Diego, but I
13 came to Phoenix when I was five years old, so basically I'm a
14 native of Phoenix, Arizona. And I grew up here, went to school.
15 Most of my family's here, so about -- was about 27, 28 I started
16 getting into cycling, and have been involved with it since. I
17 even got into racing for a while until my son was born, so I was
18 about 36 then. I'm 66 now, so it's been a long time.

19 And my other hobbies are I've been a local musician as well.
20 Like maybe just last couple decades doing Brazilian jazz ensemble,
21 Bossa nova music. So really my time is spent either riding --
22 well, it was, riding a couple of times during the week, every
23 Friday or Saturday or Sunday, and then rehearsing to play music in
24 various gigs around town. I have a life partner named Valerie.
25 We've been together 26 years and we met through bike racing, so

1 she's -- she understands all the things about biking and dangers
2 and risks and stuff like that. And she was very instrumental in
3 taking care of me while I was recuperating from the accident.

4 Q. Thank you. Okay. That's a very interesting history. So you
5 kind of answered maybe some of my question here as far as your
6 experience biking. It sounds like you were a professional rider
7 for maybe about nine years or so and then you stopped that when
8 your son was born. But after your son was born, you know, our --
9 well, let's say this, within like the last five years what would
10 you say your level of activity as far as riding was?

11 A. Four times a week. Three, four, five times a week, just some
12 quick spins in the morning, more -- yeah, it wasn't like racing
13 takes a lot of like time, right, hours and hours of training, so
14 when my son was born, that all went away because, you know, he
15 came first, but for the last two, you know, 30 years, I mean I
16 still rode, but it wasn't, you know, either with groups or by my
17 -- typically during the week I would be by myself before work, and
18 then on weekends it would always be a group ride with friends or
19 groups that I was affiliated with.

20 Yeah, so it was kind of like your lifestyle, right, so it
21 kind of dictates your lifestyle, and so you don't drink too much,
22 you don't smoke, you don't eat too much, and you just try to stay
23 healthy so you can keep up with everyone on the weekend, so -- so
24 it's a, you know, it's a passion. I've always loved it, even if I
25 was tired or maybe went to play poker or a concert a night before,

1 I get two, three hours of sleep and I'd still be out there riding,
2 so -- yeah. Definitely a passion.

3 Q. Thanks. And then so do you know or do you remember the bike
4 make and model that you were riding that day?

5 A. Yeah, it was a carbon fiber racing bike. The builder was
6 Tommaso.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. You know, I had -- over the years -- you know, it was pretty
9 old. I mean, it was over 10 years old, but, you know, I'd been
10 updating parts and wheels and eventually you try different saddles
11 because you always find that eventually your anatomy changes and
12 so you're in search of the perfect saddle, so -- but, yeah, just
13 kept it up-to-date and, yeah, it was a good bike.

14 Q. Was there a model to that or was it kind of a Frankenstein
15 that you built -- you know, you kind of built on your own?

16 A. The frame had a name called Graviato (ph.).

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. Which in Italian means -- I forgot, but, yeah, it was kind of
19 a stencil there on the down tubes, and --

20 Q. Yeah. Unfortunately there wasn't much left of that bike,
21 bicycle.

22 A. No, it's definitely in pieces, so --

23 Q. Yeah.

24 A. I did see a picture of it and, yeah, it was in multiple
25 pieces.

1 Q. Yeah, I'm sorry about that. We were able to go out and
2 inspect the bicycles, and I think that was probably the most
3 damaged bike that I recall. Yeah, so sorry about that. Okay. So
4 let's talk a little bit about the West Valley Cycle Club. I know,
5 you know, I've talked to a number of people about it, but I really
6 want to hear from you. When you first hear, you know, that name,
7 what do you think of or what's a good memory from that cycling
8 club that, you know, kind of sticks with you?

9 A. So prior to West Valley, I was a member of the Bullshipter's
10 Club (ph.), but they weren't very good at recruiting, and they,
11 you know, as everything, everyone got old and so there'd be maybe
12 two or three riders on a Saturday ride, and I'd heard about West
13 Valley, so I went there one weekend, and I saw like 80, 90 riders,
14 and I was like, holy moly, this is fantastic, group riding, and
15 huge group, and so I just started coming every weekend, and
16 eventually you start talking to people. You see the same people
17 every week, and, you know, you develop friendships and stuff, and
18 I came to be friends with three or four very, you know, we always
19 rode together, and had coffee afterwards, and, you know, Saturday
20 was like -- you try to hang on as much as -- as long as you can,
21 and then you go have coffee afterwards.

22 And then Sunday was a recovery ride, and we just kind of
23 talked all during the ride and have coffee twice. But when I was
24 in the hospital, I had so many members come visit me. Some I
25 didn't really know that well, and -- but they were there, and, you

1 know, it was just so touching and I felt really lucky to be part
2 of that group because they were just so supportive and they were
3 there, and, yeah, just kind of proud to be part of that bike
4 group.

5 Q. Okay. Thanks. How long -- when would you say you first
6 started riding with them? About how many years would you say?

7 A. Probably three years ago I started. Three, maybe four.

8 Q. Okay. Great. And, you know, having had that experience with
9 the cycle club, how would you characterize their safety practices
10 both in terms of helmet usage, you know, just general their safety
11 practices? How would you characterize it?

12 A. Sure. So at various times they would precede the ride with
13 an announcement, you know, maybe we have to change the route today
14 because there's construction here, or they would advise, you know,
15 somebody noticed that there was stuff on the road so be careful,
16 and then when the invariable bike crash between cycles happen, and
17 it always will, you know, there's always the reminder of, you
18 know, stay aware, don't overlap wheels, point out things in the
19 road, so, you know, every few months they would bring those kind
20 of things up, just, you know, make sure everybody was aware, and a
21 lot of those riders are mature, so they're well versed in bike
22 signals and alerting to things in the road, pointing them out,
23 saying, you know, coming on your left if they're passing you.
24 They know how to ride a pace line. Mainly, you know, just out for
25 a good time and comradery and -- but, you know, still group, you

1 know, there's safety in numbers so you always feel very safe and
2 protected when you're riding with a big group, and, no, most of
3 the riders are very good and very -- I respect a lot of the riders
4 there.

5 Q. Of course. Thank you. And your bike, did it have a rearward
6 facing flasher at all, like an LED or light on the back?

7 A. Yeah, and I would say like 98 percent of the riders in West
8 Valley have those lights, and a lot of them will have front lights
9 as well. But, yeah, I mean, I'm pretty sure almost everyone has
10 the rear red flashing lights.

11 Q. Yes. And you weren't happen -- you didn't happen to have a
12 rearward facing camera at all, did you?

13 A. No, cameras aren't that prevalent yet. It seems like a good
14 idea having a front and back camera, but that hasn't really taken
15 off in a lot of the riding communities, but some do, and, yeah,
16 that would have been nice to know or would have been a nice
17 feature to have been present during that morning.

18 Q. Certainly, yes. Yeah, I -- no one has -- no one that I have
19 interviewed has had that, but it's worth asking.

20 A. Right.

21 Q. All right. So let's talk a little bit about the day of the
22 crash. Any, you know, how you got -- I assume you met at the bike
23 shop, but I don't know because some people went from their house
24 and would cut the route short or something like that, so maybe
25 talk about, you know, where you started the ride from and maybe

1 how you got to -- what you remember from that morning before the
2 ride.

3 A. Right. So I live in Peoria which is about 15 miles from the
4 start. A lot of the West Valley people live in Goodyear or
5 Litchfield Park so they just ride over because it's convenient, so
6 my -- I mean, there are a very few times that I would ride over if
7 I was training for like a double century or something I would
8 practice on rides like that, but typically I drive in the morning.
9 It takes me about -- I leave like an hour before the start. Takes
10 me about 20 minutes and 10 minutes to take my bike off the rack,
11 put my shoes on, helmet and get, you know, set up to ride. We
12 meet at a place called -- well, it's the Santini Cycling Shop
13 which is their clothing sponsor for West Valley, and that's just
14 about a quarter mile south of the I-10 freeway on -- is it
15 Bullard? Yeah.

16 So we've been starting there for about a year-and-a-half, and
17 then, yeah, so everyone kind of congregates in the back there and
18 the bike shop -- I mean, the clothing shop is open for bathrooms.
19 They had -- they provide snacks and drinks and stuff like that for
20 everybody, so everyone meets there, and that's where the rides
21 commence from. Typically in February it would be 7:30, and then
22 it's earlier, of course, in the summertime because of the heat.
23 And the route is essentially the same every week other than as I
24 noted earlier if there were the construction on streets going on,
25 then they would adapt the route accordingly, but the goal is to

1 get up to Estrella and then from there regroup and then go out to
2 Laredo and then back to the shop, but essentially it's the same
3 route every week, so every once -- you know, there's nothing that
4 would -- you know, you're so used to the route that you just feel
5 safe and -- because it's familiar.

6 Q. Okay. Great. Thanks. And then so going to the -- maybe the
7 start of the ride or from what you remember, do you remember maybe
8 the start of the ride and then getting to the bridge at all, or,
9 you know, maybe let's talk a little bit about that.

10 A. So I actually have no recollection of that morning. I do not
11 remember waking up. I don't remember putting my bike on my car,
12 driving to the start, getting ready, riding with the group in the
13 beginning. My first recollection is later that evening of
14 February 25 in the ER. I assumed it was night because my partner,
15 Valerie, was actually in California when it happened, and she was
16 there, so I go, wow, had to drive eight hours to get here, so that
17 -- really, I have no recollection of anything that happened that
18 morning.

19 Q. Certainly.

20 A. I mean, I've seen videos and I've talked to people. There've
21 been a couple of get togethers with riders that I know well and
22 talk about it, and there's assumptions, of course, go head first,
23 and, you know, I have no recollection.

24 Q. Understood. Do you know the -- what helmet you were using at
25 all?

1 A. Yes, it was an Oakley.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. Actually -- I actually have it. There was a bag given to me
4 that had -- all I had -- they gave me my arm wires and helmet and
5 one shoe which had a bunch of blood on it, so -- but the helmet
6 was, yeah, it's kind of scraped up. It's not indented or
7 anything, but I did have a severe head injury. I had a subdural
8 hematoma with a arachnoid hemorrhage. I think it was an 8
9 millimeter sublime which was a brain bleed I think is what they
10 call it. Now I did wake up -- when I did wake up, I did go into a
11 seizure, so hopefully that helmet helped limit that or, you know,
12 the severity of that injury.

13 Q. Do you know if that particular model, did it have the MIPS
14 protection at all? Do you know that --

15 A. It was MIPS, yeah.

16 Q. Okay. Great. Thank you. I'm trying to -- you know, it's --
17 one of the things I'd like to characterize and document is the
18 head injuries and, you know, obviously you had probably the most
19 substantial I think brain injury of all the victims.

20 A. Yeah, that's what I hear.

21 Q. Sorry. So you remember waking up in the hospital that night.
22 Do you know the extent of all your injuries or can you maybe give
23 a brief summary of them?

24 A. So from the top going down, yeah, the subdural hemorrhage
25 with the arachnoid hemorrhage, double vision was a factor. I had

1 that for several months. It's diminished greatly so it's pretty
2 much gone away. As far as my neck and spine, I had a C-5
3 fracture, 3 vertebra in the T section. I don't know if it was 1
4 through 3 or in there, and then lower lumbar was 11 to 14, and a
5 collapsed lung, bruised pancreas, other organs I think. All my
6 ribs except maybe three were broken on the right side. Dislocated
7 hip with the femur having to be reset into the socket, fractured
8 ulnar on my left arm, fractured clavicle on my right shoulder. I
9 don't know how they describe the cut on my shin, right leg, but it
10 had a huge hole that needed a wound vac on it for several months
11 before it would close, and right now it's just kind of a big divot
12 in my -- right above my ankle on my right foot, and then my ankle
13 was shattered completely which was put together with pins and
14 plate, and as is my -- still my ongoing therapy reason. That and
15 my clavicle, but my ankle's always swollen, so I wear compression
16 socks most of the time. And the plate in my left arm aggravates
17 my elbow so it looks like bursitis, but it doesn't hurt, so my
18 elbow's always puffy.

19 And then when I was at this -- after being let out of the
20 hospital I went to a skilled nursing facility and in April I
21 developed a hemothorax so I had to be emergency -- they called
22 911, and paramedics came and took me to Banner Hospital and they -
23 - well, they stuck a chest tube in me and 2 liters of blood was
24 evacuated out of my chest cavity, and a couple days later I had
25 surgery to remove the blood clots and cauterize the bleed that was

1 causing blood to go into my chest. So I was there for 10 days,
2 and then I went back to the skilled nursing facility for a week or
3 two and then I came home and then started home PT and that was in
4 May.

5 Q. Wow. As far as you know, you didn't have any injuries to
6 your pelvis, though, correct? I mean, I know your -- you had
7 right hip dislocation which I guess could be kind of considered
8 pelvis, but as far as you know there were no fractures?

9 A. In the pelvis? No.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. No.

12 Q. That's quite the extensive injury list, and I'm really sorry
13 you had to go through that. How is your recovery going?

14 A. Pretty good. Physical therapy's been, you know -- I had home
15 PT at first for a month, and then I went to external PT, and now
16 I'm going there three times a week, and they would just work on,
17 you know, my neck, my back, you know, exercise and -- well, mainly
18 just stretches at first and now I'm doing kind of strength things
19 for my arms and back and neck, and felt that a lot. Maybe a lot
20 of massaging of my ankle and my right clavicle. And that helps
21 out a lot. And just doing the -- trying to do more daily stuff
22 like yard work and I did -- so I made a bet with myself because
23 one of the spine surgeon teams they were asking me so, you know,
24 what's your goal, and I said, well, you know, get back on the bike
25 as soon as possible, and one of the team members said, well,

1 that'll be a year, and I just remember that comment, so I said at
2 six months I'm going to ride my bike, and so I got a new bike and
3 at six months I went for a 10 mile ride.

4 Q. Wow.

5 A. And I did take a two hour nap after that, but, yeah. So I --
6 right now probably once a week because, you know, I'm back at
7 work, too, part-time. I don't -- I only have enough energy for
8 everything, so --

9 Q. Understood.

10 A. But, yeah, I'm back to driving and I'm just amazed at how
11 much strength you lose when you're bedridden for three months and
12 you can't move your arms or leg and how much strength you just
13 lose and muscle mass and I couldn't even open up a Gatorade.

14 Q. That's difficult.

15 A. Yeah. And my primary care provider, the DO, you know, he's
16 well aware of the impact and the injuries that I have and he said,
17 you know if you don't practice stretching and exercise you're
18 going to have arthritis really bad as you get older, and the
19 saying is motion is lotion for your body, so -- I mean, you know,
20 I think cycling is like one of the best exercises besides walking
21 which I think is underrated, but, yeah, I won't have any problems,
22 you know -- once I get my strength back to a reasonable state,
23 yeah, I'll -- I certainly won't be sedentary.

24 Q. Well, that's quite the recovery. Wow. I'm just going
25 through my notes here real quick. Yeah, I mean, I know it's hard

1 because you don't remember a lot of details and maybe that's in
2 certain respects that might be for the best, but is there anything
3 at all that maybe I haven't brought up or that you want to talk
4 about as related to this crash or anything at all that's on your
5 mind about it?

6 A. I really can't think of anything. We've been riding that
7 same bridge for years and it's a pretty wide shoulder on the
8 right. I mean, I don't know if it's specially a bike lane, but,
9 you know, there's a nice stripe on there, and there's at least
10 three, four feet of space there, you know, for our group to, you
11 know, double pace line, you know. And, again, most, you know,
12 like I said most of us were mature riders, so you don't have
13 people like, you know, when they pass they don't like veer out in
14 the middle of a lane to get around, they just kind of wait until
15 there's an opening or they kind of say, hey, coming on your left
16 or something, so, you know, how it happened, that's all
17 speculation. Nobody knows. There were, you know, all we can go
18 by is micuracle (ph.) evidence like, you know, no brake or tire
19 skis from breaking or no one remembered hearing anything, and, you
20 know, until the moment of impact, so, yeah, I don't -- I have
21 nothing to say or can, you know, relate to you about what happened
22 other than the after effects.

23 Q. Understood. Well, yeah, thank you so much for agreeing to
24 talk with us. This helps our investigation just getting anything
25 that you remember helps us out, you know, the details about your

1 helmet, about your bike, that helps us out, and just your story
2 and everything you went through I think it's important for us to
3 get that down and put that in our report. So unless you have
4 anything else, I'll go ahead and stop the tape if that's okay.

5 A. Sure, sir.

6 Q. Okay.

7 MR. HUMM: So this is going to conclude the interview,
8 Arthur. The time by my watch is 2:06.

9 (Whereupon, at 2:06 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

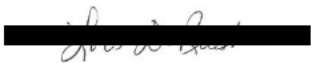
IN THE MATTER OF: CYCLISTS FATALLY STRUCK BY PICKUP TRUCK
NEAR THE COTTON LANE BRIDGE IN
GOODYEAR, ARIZONA ON FEBRUARY 25, 2023
Interview of Arthur Grijalva

ACCIDENT NO.: HWY23FH008

PLACE: via telephone

DATE: September 6, 2023

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.



Lois D. Rush
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

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CYCLISTS FATALLY STRUCK BY PICKUP *

TRUCK NEAR THE COTTON LANE BRIDGE * Accident No.: HWY23FH008

IN GOODYEAR, ARIZONA ON *

FEBRUARY 25, 2023 *

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Interview of: CHAD HATFIELD, Cyclist



Wednesday,
March 1, 2023

APPEARANCES:

JOHN HUMM, Survival Factors Group Chairman
National Transportation Safety Board

I N D E X

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I N T E R V I E W

(11:09 a.m. MST)

1
2
3 MR. HUMM: Today is March 1st, 2023. The time by my watch is
4 11:09 a.m.

5 I'm doing an interview of Chad Hatfield at [REDACTED]
6 [REDACTED] in Goodyear, Arizona, and this in reference to NTSB Case
7 Number HWY23FH008.

8 My name is John Humm. I'm with the NTSB, and I'm the
9 survival factors group chairman.

10 Okay. So, Chad, just first of all, thanks for meeting with
11 me. If you could just say and spell your name just for the
12 transcriptionist?

13 MR. HATFIELD: Sure. It's Chad, C-h-a-d, my last name is
14 Hatfield, H-a-t-f-i-e-l-d.

15 MR. HUMM: Okay. Thank you. And, Chad, as we discussed
16 before we started this, if you would just confirm that it's okay
17 for me to record this?

18 MR. HATFIELD: Yes.

19 MR. HUMM: Thank you. I appreciate it. Chad, so could you
20 give - an email that I can use so that I can send a transcript.

21 MR. HATFIELD: Sure. It's [REDACTED].

22 MR. HUMM: Perfect. Thank you. And as I said, you'll be
23 given a transcript of this through email probably in about 3 weeks
24 or so.

25 INNTERVIEW OF CHAD HATFIELD

1 BY MR. HUMM:

2 Q. So if we could just start, you know, maybe tell me a little
3 bit about yourself. Do you live in Goodyear full time?

4 A. Yes, I do live here.

5 Q. Okay. And are you originally from Arizona?

6 A. No, I was born in Texas, moved to California for a little bit
7 and grew up in Seattle, Washington, actually in Bellevue,
8 Washington is where I grew up.

9 Q. Oh, nice.

10 A. I lived there for most of my life. I moved down to Phoenix
11 or to Arizona in 2004.

12 Q. Okay. And what brought you down here?

13 A. The sun.

14 Q. Excellent. I can appreciate that.

15 A. I got tired of doom and gloom.

16 Q. Yeah, I can understand that. Do you have family in the area?

17 A. I do have my mother.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. She lives 30 minutes away.

20 Q. Oh, excellent. Nice. All right. And are you employed down
21 here?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. What do you do for an occupation?

24 A. I do customer service.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. I work for myself.

2 Q. Okay. Great. All right. So how -- about how long have you
3 been riding bikes? Like do you do road bikes, mountain bikes?

4 A. I road bikes a lot as a kid, as a teenager. Stopped riding.
5 Started riding again in my early 30s.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. Crashed a bike, broke my arm, quit riding. In 2008, I
8 decided I wanted to change my life as I was overweight and out of
9 shape, started to ride, did that a little bit. Stopped, started
10 -- or sorry, 2018 it was. Then I started again in 2020, and then
11 last year, I got serious. As the year went on, I got more and
12 more serious. I was doing 4 miles at a time, then it was 6, then
13 it was 8, and it got to be more, and I just got very addicted to
14 riding. So now I ride 30 to 50 miles at a time.

15 Q. And do you do strictly road bike?

16 A. Road bike only.

17 Q. Okay. Excellent. So tell me about the bicycle club. How,
18 you know, how long have you been riding with them?

19 A. I started riding with them in October. I found them on
20 Facebook. I was actually going to do the Tour de Tucson event
21 with a whole bunch, you know, a bunch of other people. And
22 someone said, you might want to ride with a group before you
23 actually go do a race.

24 Q. Um-hum.

25 A. So that's what I did. I went and met them, and I rode with

1 them three times before I went and did the Tucson event, and I've
2 been riding with them ever since.

3 Q. And you said that was back in November?

4 A. October last year.

5 Q. Okay. So tell me a great memory or what do you think of when
6 you think of this bike club? You know, like give me a good memory
7 or what stands out in your mind probably most about it.

8 A. Just the amazing amount of support from everybody, the
9 encouragement, you know. I've questioned myself, you know, I
10 can't do this elevation. A good example is I decided I wanted to
11 do Tour of Palm Springs here last month.

12 Q. Oh, nice.

13 A. And some people -- unfortunately Karen was one of them and
14 Janice, they were doing the 100 mile and they tried to get me to
15 do the 100 mile, and I said, you know, I've never done that kind
16 of elevation. There's just no way I can do it. I'm going to try
17 to do the 56 because it's 2400 feet of elevation. I've never done
18 that much elevation in a day, and there was one stretch that was
19 going to be 1200 feet. And he said I know you can do it. I know
20 you can do it. And I, you know, should do the 100, and I'm like,
21 no, no, no. And I stopped at the 56, and they just encouraged me
22 that they knew that I could do that elevation because I've never
23 done that before. The highest elevation I've ever done was 391
24 feet at one time. So going 391 to over 1200 for me was a big
25 jump, and it was just so great that when I got done, they were so

1 happy that I was able to finish and able to do that much
2 elevation. So it was a great memory, you know, and great support
3 to know that even when I don't think I can do it, they're saying,
4 yes, you can.

5 Q. That's great.

6 A. And almost everybody's like that in the group you know. Same
7 memories like the first time I was able to stay the whole route
8 with the B group, you know. I got dropped from -- I don't know,
9 three, four times, you know, and then I was able to stay with them
10 and then, you know, David came up and he was riding with me and he
11 goes, hey, you're able to stay with us. That's great. I knew you
12 could do it from the time I met you, you know. So it's just that
13 encouragement to keep riding.

14 Q. So a lot of friends from there now?

15 A. Definitely, definitely, you know, a lot of the riders, you
16 know, I ride with 3 or 4 days of the week you know. Some of them
17 I just see on Saturdays, because they have to do whatever they
18 have to do. They're traveling or whatever. So, you know, I
19 definitely made some friendships.

20 Q. Yeah, yeah, for sure. And so were you a regular participant
21 would you say of -- for the Saturday rides?

22 A. Yes, yes.

23 Q. And you were typically now in that B group?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. I was riding with the B group on Saturday, yes.

2 Q. Okay. So, what would you say about -- how would you
3 characterize the helmet use for the people in the group?

4 A. Everybody wears a helmet.

5 Q. Everyone.

6 A. I've never seen anybody without a helmet.

7 Q. Excellent. Okay. And, what about rear lights, rear
8 reflectors, things like that?

9 A. Everybody has reflectors.

10 Q. Yeah, I think most -- almost all the bikes I saw had like the
11 neon light up --

12 A. Yeah, I have my LED on flashing on my bike.

13 Q. I'm sorry. Which was your bike?

14 A. Mine is a 2021 Trek Emonda SLR etap 7, matte black.

15 Q. How damaged was your bike? Do you remember?

16 A. My seat post was broke at the frame and everything behind the
17 seat post, you know, the middle, it was bent 3 or 4 inches.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. So it was laying on the side, and it was bent up. So it's
20 destroyed, I'm sure.

21 Q. So when you guys go out riding, how do you kind of -- how do
22 you line yourself, you know? When you're -- you know, what kind
23 of formation would you say that you -- the group takes overall?
24 Are people kind of spread out width-wise across the lanes? Are
25 they single file?

1 A. Everybody's, you know, like the road that we were on, there's
2 -- it's not a marked bike lane but it's wide like a bike lane. So
3 we were all in that you know, to the best of my recollection. You
4 know, because I was second wheel. So I couldn't see anybody
5 behind me.

6 Q. Sure.

7 A. So I can't tell you, was every single person in that area, I
8 don't know.

9 Q. Yeah, yeah, no. I'm just talking about generally when you
10 guys ride.

11 A. Oh, generally, yeah. We're, we're riding, you know, right
12 there as close to the right-hand side as possible. We're not
13 covering the entire road or anything like that. You know,
14 generally if there's anybody off to the side, it's because they're
15 either trying to fall back or they're trying to get up and pull.

16 Q. So would you say largely single file?

17 A. Largely single file.

18 Q. Okay. Yeah, I'm just trying to characterize the riding
19 pattern. So now, let's talk a little bit about the day, the day
20 of the crash or the accident.

21 A. Okay.

22 Q. You know, how did you start your day? If you need to take a
23 break --

24 A. No, it's okay.

25 Q. -- that's fine.

1 A. It's just back.

2 Q. Understood.

3 A. Actually I had rode -- well, the night before, or the day
4 before, I was working on my elevation. That's what I've been
5 working on this month.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. And I did 1600 feet of elevation, and I wanted to try to do
8 2,000 on Saturday. And, so I actually drove down to South
9 Mountain because there's an area called San Juan where it's
10 blocked to all cars but it's paved. And you can go up and down it
11 three times, and it's 2700 feet of elevation. So that's what I
12 went down to do. Saturday morning, I drove to South Mountain. I
13 got down there about 6:35, something like that, and found out that
14 the park was closed for a cancer event, a cancer walk. They
15 wouldn't allow anybody in. So, I was committed to riding. So I
16 said, okay, I should be able to make it back to Santini and ride
17 with the group. So I drove back and parked my car and went to go
18 ride with the group.

19 Q. So this wasn't your original -- like when you woke up that
20 day, you weren't planning on --

21 A. I was not going to ride with the group because I wanted to
22 work on elevation and because when -- going through my elevation,
23 I'm not as far as everybody else.

24 Q. Yeah.

25 A. So I was like, I'm just going to go work on it myself and not

1 have to drag anybody behind. So that was my intention.

2 Q. Gotcha.

3 A. So I wasn't even going to be with the group, but because the
4 park was closed, I didn't want to do Verrado again, and the route
5 that we go on, we have to go over a road called West Star and it's
6 a pretty hard climb up and the backside's even worse. And I said,
7 I'm going to go ride with this group. If I get dropped, which my
8 legs are sore, I probably will, I'll just suffer through it and
9 ride by myself. I'm a big boy, you know kind of in my head.

10 Q. Um-hum. Yeah. Right.

11 A. So that was my intention because I knew if I went back over
12 the backside of West Star, I was going to get dropped for sure.

13 Q. Yeah.

14 A. You know, I knew I was going to be completely dropped for
15 sure. So that was my intention.

16 Q. And how long is the route? How many miles is it?

17 A. It depends on which one you want to do. If you do from the
18 Santini Shop and back, it's about 40 miles.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. If you do a full route, it's 62.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. Because my car was at Santini, I was going to do the 44.

23 Q. Nice. Understood. So you said everybody wears a helmet
24 generally. Is it cycling gear?

25 A. Yeah, everybody has cycling gear.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. Sometimes layers of cycling gear depending on how cold it is.

3 Q. Sure, and most probably clip ons.

4 A. Oh, yeah. Everybody's clip ons.

5 Q. Yeah. Do you know, do you know anybody that might -- because
6 I didn't see any on any of the bikes that I saw, but with a rear
7 facing camera at all because they sell those integrated units?

8 A. I don't know anybody that has a camera.

9 Q. All right.

10 A. Front or rear.

11 Q. Okay. Thanks. All right. So you were going on this ride.
12 You're, you know, you're going down --

13 A. Just normal. We're just taking off. We go down out of
14 Santini. We go down Bullard, and we work our way down onto
15 Commerce. We're going to take a left onto Cotton Lane. We're at
16 the light. I was kind of towards the back of the group. I looked
17 back. There was about four or five people behind me. When we
18 turned left, and the light turned green on Cotton, turned left,
19 kind of sped up. That's what I always do. We were crossing
20 Buckeye and Cotton Lane intersection, and at the time, I was third
21 wheel. And, as we went across, Mark -- there was a gap between
22 first wheel and Mark. So I said to myself, I'll pull second wheel
23 and pull Mark up the hill because Mark's pulled me and helped me
24 tremendously. And he was the first time I ever did a 62 mile
25 ride, he encouraged me. He stayed with me. Everybody else was

1 gone. So I was like I'll just go ahead and pull him up the hill.

2 So as we started to go across the bridge, I'm second wheel or
3 6 inches away from the guy in front of me, and there's a higher --
4 there's kind of rise in the bridge and it goes down a little bit.
5 I kicked in gear, and I pedaled two or three times and then
6 something just -- I went like this in the air. And I don't
7 remember anything other than being hit from behind and going up
8 and then I came to a rest sitting on the ground. I was still in
9 the bike lane. I was facing across the street. So the barrier
10 was behind me.

11 And the next thing I remember is hearing some sound, and I
12 look over to my right, and there's a vehicle that was going in the
13 same direction we were. And I can't tell you if he was in the
14 bike lane 100 percent or if he was bike lane and the road. I
15 can't tell for certain, but it swerved real sharply to the left
16 and came to a stop in the second lane. So closest to the median,
17 and it came to a stop. And then I looked around, and just saw
18 bikes and people laying everywhere. So that's just thinking what
19 happened.

20 Q. Yeah. So the first, the first thing that you knew, like you
21 realized something was wrong, was just being hit from behind?

22 A. Yeah, I got hit so hard right in my back.

23 Q. Yeah.

24 A. And I went -- I can't tell you other than the evidence. My
25 bike was 5 feet behind me.

1 Q. Um-hum.

2 A. And I was in front of my bike in the bike lane. My gel packs
3 were completely exploded. I felt something wet. So I put my hand
4 behind on my jersey wondering what it was, saw that it was clear.
5 So I knew it wasn't blood.

6 Q. Right.

7 A. The right side of my back was absolutely killing me. At some
8 point, I ended up grabbing my phone. That's where I keep my
9 phone. Well, I had a hematoma on my lower right backside.

10 Q. Yeah.

11 A. So apparently I went over, landed on my back, and I landed on
12 my cell phone. How my cell phone's not destroyed, I have no idea.
13 I'm not a very light guy.

14 Q. Yeah. Wow.

15 A. So I -- and my head hurt really bad right here, and I saw my
16 sunglasses and they were shattered. And I had a pretty bad bump,
17 and I was bleeding next to my right eye.

18 Q. Yeah.

19 A. And my arm hurt extremely bad at the time and my shoulder
20 hurt really bad, the shoulder pain right there. I have a metal
21 plate in my left arm. Where the plate basically ends in my arm, I
22 have a tremendous amount of pain right there.

23 Q. So you had a metal plate before or they --

24 A. Correct.

25 Q. Oh, you did.

1 A. I crashed my mountain bike when I was 30 something years old.

2 Q. Gotcha.

3 A. I broke my left forearm and destroyed my wrist.

4 Q. Got it. Okay. Now, do you have any way of knowing what hit
5 you from behind?

6 A. I didn't know. I had no idea until in the ambulance they
7 said you were hit by a semi truck.

8 Q. Okay. They said you were hit by a truck and not by like
9 another -- a bunch of other bikes or anything. So you were
10 actually impacted by the vehicle.

11 A. That's what they said, that we were hit by a semi truck but I
12 was like, it looked like a white SUV because it was a distance
13 away, and I couldn't see great. My -- I was still trying to
14 comprehend where I was at.

15 Q. Yeah.

16 A. I found out later, it was a white truck.

17 Q. Yeah.

18 A. But I saw white, and I thought it was a SUV but I was telling
19 you, like it swerved and went over in the left -- second left lane
20 next to the median and came to a stop.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. So I had no idea of what hit me, but I knew whatever hit me,
23 hit me hard because my back was killing me.

24 Q. Right. So you were hit from behind. You launched in the air
25 and landed down on the ground, and you were facing towards the

1 median. What do you remember after that?

2 A. Just looking around. I saw Cheryl (ph.) laying in the
3 street. She wasn't moving. She was laying full lengthwise. My
4 bike was 5 feet behind me.

5 Q. Um-hum.

6 A. And then against the barrier about 12, 15 feet maybe, Mike
7 Rayer (ph.) was laying against the barrier. There was another
8 gentleman that was right next to him. He was laying face down,
9 but I don't know who that was. I have no idea. Mike's bike was
10 right there, but the wheel was sticking up in the air, and I could
11 see other things and people, but I couldn't make anything out
12 because they were too far away. And the bike was obstructing my
13 view. I don't know long I was sitting there before any medics. I
14 know it was a little bit -- I know was time for sure. Leo, I
15 remember seeing Leo come down. He put his bike against the
16 barrier, and he was walking around trying to check on people. He
17 was in the first B group.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. Because normally it's A and then B, but Saturday, there was a
20 group of B that took off, and the group I was in, we were just
21 being a little I guess lazy talking. We weren't going that fast.

22 Q. Um-hum.

23 A. You know, we just -- there was a separation. They were at
24 least 100 feet in front of us. So there was two B groups
25 basically. And Leo came down and he saw me and saw me sitting

1 there. And he walked by and kept going and then Josh came down as
2 well. He turned around as well from the B group, and he came
3 around and started checking. And then Mark, who was with the
4 group, I saw him walking, and I couldn't believe that he was the
5 only person walking from my group. And he was walking around
6 trying to check. And then I remember him laying with Cheryl,
7 trying to keep her warm, but they were going around trying to see
8 who was responding, who was not. There was a gentleman in front
9 who was the first wheel guy. He was breathing extremely hard, but
10 he was non-responsive.

11 Q. I'm just getting this down.

12 A. No problem. But I remember seeing another guy that was even
13 farther, like over 20 feet away, and he was on the ground.

14 Q. In front of you or --

15 A. In front of me.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. But he -- the guy that was first wheel was 5 feet in front of
18 me. I don't know who that guy was. I don't know how he got
19 there, but he was over 20 feet farther up the road. And they took
20 him away first. I remember that, and I remember seeing a guy
21 walking back towards us, and he was wearing a gray sweatshirt and
22 somebody said, are you involved in the accident? He said, yes, I
23 was in the accident. They said go back to your truck and stand
24 there and don't move. So I guess -- he had dark hair. So I guess
25 it was the driver.

1 And I remember a woman who was looking around and somebody
2 asked her as well, are you in the accident? She says, no, I was
3 not in the accident. I'm seeing if I can do anything to help, and
4 they said you need to leave the scene immediately. We can't have
5 it touched or tampered with, and she left. And then I remember a
6 guy come by, and he threw down a -- some kind of plaque in front
7 of me and it said mild with green writing on it, like probably my
8 condition because I was sitting up. And, they were helping the
9 guy 20 feet away. They helped the gentleman in front of me, that
10 was like 5 feet.

11 And then I remember looking back to left, back to see if Mike
12 was moving, and he had moved a little bit but then I remember
13 seeing behind Mike, there was a blanket and it was -- because they
14 had started to pass out blankets to us, and there was a blanket,
15 and it was covering over the entire body. And I found out later,
16 that was Karen Malisa, but I didn't know that at the time who was,
17 who was there if you know what I mean.

18 Q. Um-hum.

19 A. I just -- I couldn't see. It was too far away and Mike's
20 bike was obstructing my view.

21 Q. Do you know -- I realize you were more toward the front. Do
22 you know where you were relative to Karen at the time of the
23 accident?

24 A. I really don't know. I -- based on when I was sitting there,
25 I had Cheryl, Mike, another guy and then Karen.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. So four or five people back.

3 Q. Okay. That's --

4 A. But I don't really know.

5 Q. Yeah. I understand. You're riding and you're kind of facing
6 forward.

7 A. Yeah, I never looked back. When I passed Mark I never looked
8 back to see where anybody was. I was focusing on riding because
9 we were getting ready to go up the first hill.

10 Q. Sure. Yeah, yeah, right.

11 A. So -- it's not a huge hill, but it's still a hill.

12 Q. Oh, yeah.

13 A. I mean I think you saw if you've been there.

14 Q. I have been.

15 A. So I was just focusing on the wheel in front of me.

16 Q. Yeah, that's the thing about riding. It's like the hill
17 doesn't look bad when you're -- nothing looks that bad when you're
18 driving it, but when you bike it, you're always like, or at least
19 I am, I'm always like, wow, I didn't realize it was this, you
20 know, even this minor hill --

21 A. Right.

22 Q. -- that seemed so easy, I didn't realize it had this grade.

23 A. There's a running joke with the bigger guys in the group,
24 gravity is real.

25 Q. Yeah, that's for sure. Now, did you know, did you know David

1 at all?

2 A. I did not know David.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. So actually the morning of the event, or the morning of the
5 ride. I shouldn't say it's an event, but the regular ride, a
6 gentleman came up to me and he says, I'm brand new. I've never
7 done this before. Will you -- can you help me? I said, sure. So
8 I did the same thing that happened to me. How fast do you ride
9 when you're by yourself? He said I ride around 18 miles an hour.
10 I said, great. You're going to be in the B group then. And he
11 goes, what are the different groups? So I told him A, B, C. I
12 told him the speeds that they typically ride. And he goes what
13 kind of rider are you? I said, I'm a B rider. I said but you're
14 going to want to go over and talk to Janice and Karen because
15 they're consistent B riders. So if you want to stay in the group,
16 you want to ride with them. And he goes, well, what about you?
17 And I said my legs are really tire. I've been doing elevation. I
18 don't know if I'm going to be able to stay with him. He goes,
19 what happens? I go, I just go slower, I get dropped. And that's
20 it.

21 Q. Um-hum.

22 A. And then he never went over and talked to them. He just
23 stayed right by me, and when we were riding, he was behind me. So
24 when I was at Commerce and Cotton, I looked back. I saw Mike. I
25 saw this gentleman. And it was his first ride. So we went on the

1 ride and, you know, did our thing, and that afternoon while my mom
2 was down trying to get my car and there was people there, they
3 said, hey, you know, Chad -- does Chad know that people died, I
4 guess, and she said, no, he doesn't know anything. So when they
5 called, they told me about Karen and they told me that the
6 gentleman's first ride ever, he passed away. I thought it was the
7 gentleman that I met.

8 Q. Um-hum.

9 A. I did not find out until yesterday that it's not the same
10 person, that the person that I actually met was asking about me
11 and wanted to know if I was okay. So I tried to get in touch with
12 them but their cell phone's not working. It goes to voicemail.
13 But I thought it was the original gentleman, David, who or David
14 that passed away. I thought it was him.

15 Q. Yeah, yeah.

16 A. But it's not. There was two people who had never ridden
17 before in the group.

18 Q. Okay. Well, thanks. That helps. So, you kind of told me a
19 little bit before, but could you just go through maybe your
20 injuries from this?

21 A. Of course, road rash. I have road rash on my left knee and
22 my leg. I have a few on my hands. I have one on my inside right
23 elbow. My shoulder, I don't have full rotation, movement. My
24 left hand, they have me in a soft cast right now. I was told it's
25 not broke, but that I needed to see a hand specialist because I do

1 have some pain in my wrist area. I have a hematoma on my lower
2 right back, and then I have some pretty bad road rash on my left
3 butt cheek that's in locations that I can't bandage.

4 Q. Um-hum.

5 A. So they're raw right now.

6 Q. Yeah.

7 A. So sitting, laying down, any of that kind of stuff is
8 bothersome.

9 Q. Okay. Anything with your head at all?

10 A. I hit my right -- I don't know if this is really my temple,
11 but next to my right eye.

12 Q. Um-hum.

13 A. I hit it. It was pretty swollen. It's gone down quite a
14 bit. I have a little bit on my face, but other than that. Of
15 course, stiffness, but no actual physical injury in my neck or my
16 head.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. They did MRIs, CAT scans. They filled my blood with iodine
19 to check for any broken vessels.

20 Q. Okay. So, I don't have a lot of other questions. Do you
21 have anything else that stands out in your day or anything,
22 anything notable, anything notable about the driver of the truck
23 that you -- I mean I know that you were kind of in a daze.

24 A. Correct.

25 Q. I understand that.

1 A. I just --

2 Q. Anything that sticks out in your mind?

3 A. Just what he was wearing and his dark hair, and they're
4 telling him to go back to his truck. That -- but I never got like
5 -- I never -- I can't tell you his face.

6 Q. Yeah, yeah.

7 A. When I saw his face on the internet, I couldn't tell you that
8 was the person.

9 Q. Was it the police telling him to go back or was it just -- or
10 you don't know?

11 A. I don't know. I don't know if it was the police or if it was
12 fire, but it was somebody in a uniform.

13 Q. Okay. So it was somebody, I'll say official.

14 A. Yeah, somebody official was asking. So -- and I don't know
15 long that was, but I heard that Goodyear only has one ambulance,
16 and they had -- the firefighters were there but they were waiting
17 for the rest of the ambulances subcontracted to come. So I don't
18 know if it was a firefighter. I don't know if it was a police
19 officer. I don't know how much time transpired.

20 Q. Sure. Yeah, understood.

21 A. I have a, I have a problem the time. I can't tell you if I
22 sat on the ground for 5 minutes or I sat on the ground for an
23 hour.

24 Q. Right.

25 A. I really don't know.

1 Q. Yeah. No, that's, that's common when --

2 A. When I found out it was 3 o'clock because they transported me
3 to one hospital, examined me. Then they transported me to another
4 hospital because that's where the trauma team's at. I found out
5 there that it was 3:02 in the afternoon. I said that's the clock,
6 that's the time? And they said, yeah, it's 3. And I said it
7 feels like 10.

8 Q. Do you know what the -- where was the second hospital that
9 you were ultimately treated at? Do you know?

10 A. Banner Thunderbird. I didn't know that much time had
11 transpired. I didn't even know I was taken to Estrella to be
12 honest. It didn't feel like the ambulance ride was that long to
13 go to Estrella. I thought I was at Abrazo.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. So I didn't realize that we had gone that far.

16 Q. Okay. So do you remember anything from the EMS response,
17 like anything that, you know, like I know it's hard to assess when
18 you're hurt, but what's your overall opinion of it?

19 A. They basically came over. They said, okay, can you get up,
20 and I said I don't know. So they tried to pick me up. My foot
21 wouldn't stick to the ground because I was wearing my, you know,
22 my pedal clips. And my ankle wobbled. So I thought my ankle was
23 broke. So they ended up picking me up. They put me in an
24 ambulance or put me on a stretcher, and I got a little dizzy. So
25 they immediately look my helmet off and they put me in a C brace,

1 but I don't know if my helmet was off outside that ambulance or
2 inside the ambulance. They asked me basic questions. Do you know
3 your name? Do you know where you're at? You know, that kind of
4 stuff, your phone number, just some basic information from me and
5 then just started doing their job, sticking probes on me and, you
6 know, trying to check my vitals, I'm sure is what they were doing.

7 Q. Yeah.

8 A. And then I heard them talking on the radio saying they were
9 bringing me in with their technical, you know, language, that I
10 don't know what it means.

11 Q. Okay. Well, thank you.

12 A. Yeah, name, address -- or no, they told me name and my age.

13 Q. Right.

14 A. They probably said vitals, too, what my vitals are, I don't
15 know. I did have a heart rate monitor that I ride with and it was
16 still on me. They did take it off. Thankfully they didn't
17 destroy it. At some point if I ever get my bike back, then I'll
18 get my computer back and maybe recover the data off of it.

19 Q. Right. Yeah, I mean what kind of computer was it? Was it a
20 Garmin?

21 A. A Garmin.

22 Q. Yeah. I saw most of the bikes had -- I would say the
23 majority of them had like a white Garmin or like a black colored
24 Garmin.

25 A. Yeah, they're usually Garmins or Wahoos --

1 Q. Yeah.

2 A. -- is what most people ride with.

3 Q. Yeah.

4 A. At least that I've seen in the group.

5 Q. Thank you very much. Do you have anything else? Any
6 questions at all?

7 A. No, I can't really think of any.

8 MR. HUMM: Okay. All right. I'm going to stop the record
9 now. It is 11:42 by my watch.

10 Whereupon, 11:42 a.m. MST, 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: CYCLISTS FATALLY STRUCK BY PICKUP
TRUCK NEAR THE COTTON LAND BRIDGE
IN GOODYEAR, ARIZONA ON
FEBRUARY 25, 2023
Interview of Chad Hatfield

ACCIDENT NO.: HWY23FH008

PLACE: Goodyear, Arizona

DATE: March 1, 2023

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

* * * * *

Investigation of: *

*

CYCLISTS FATALLY STRUCK BY PICKUP *

TRUCK NEAR THE COTTON LANE BRIDGE * Accident No.: HWY23FH008

IN GOODYEAR, ARIZONA ON *

FEBRUARY 25, 2023 *

*

* * * * *

Interview of: DAVID HERZOG, Founder
West Valley Cycle

1188 Dysart Road
Goodyear, Arizona

Thursday,
March 2, 2023

APPEARANCES:

JOHN HUMM, Survival Factors Group Chairman
National Transportation Safety Board

I N D E X

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I N T E R V I E W

1
2 MR. HUMM: Today is March 2nd, 2023. This is an interview of
3 Dave Herzog, at 1188 Dysart Road in Goodyear, Arizona. This
4 interview is in reference to NTSB Case Number HWY23FH008.

5 My name is John Humm, H-u-m-m. I'm with the National
6 Transportation Safety Board, and I am the survival factors group
7 chairman.

8 Okay. Dave, first of all, just for the record, if you could
9 just say your name and spell it?

10 MR. HERZOG: Yeah. David Herzog, H-e-r-z-o-g.

11 MR. HUMM: And then, Dave, we discussed this before but if
12 you could just give verbal consent that it's okay for me to record
13 this?

14 MR. HERZOG: Absolutely.

15 MR. HUMM: Thank you.

16 MR. HERZOG: I consent.

17 MR. HUMM: Okay. Great.

INNTERVIEW OF DAVID HERZOG

18
19 BY MR. HUMM:

20 Q. So tell me a little bit about your family.

21 A. Yeah. We've lived here for 25 years. We moved here from
22 Southern California, my wife and I and at that two young boys.
23 The boys now are 30, 30-year-old Steven's married and had our
24 first -- their first baby a month ago. So we're grandparents.
25 And my youngest is -- he works for Jet Propulsion Labs as an

1 engineer. He's 26. On satellites in Pasadena. And Cheryl, my
2 wife, is a yoga instructor and we kind of split our time between
3 here and Flagstaff. My parents live here. My parents are
4 divorced. My mom and step dad are here in Goodyear. My dad is at
5 a care facility in Richfield Park, and so there's just a lot of --
6 they're -- everyone gets along well, and a lot of family time and
7 love living here in Goodyear.

8 Q. Okay. So, you said you've lived here about 25 years?

9 A. 25 years.

10 Q. Where did you live before?

11 A. Well, I grew up in Los Angeles on the beach area and then
12 school in San Diego. Cheryl and I actually worked for the same
13 company, got married in Irvine, moved out here, and I worked for
14 the same company for 25 years, a global executive for them,
15 traveled the world, and eventually retired 3 years ago when they
16 sold the company.

17 Q. Great. So you're retired. So what kind of keeps you busy
18 here in the day?

19 A. Well, I'm pretty active. I do a lot of skiing with the
20 family, backcountry. I'm taking my youngest backcountry skiing up
21 to a remote hut in near Kelly Ride. A lot of cycling. I compete.
22 I've won like state championships in the past, but mainly race
23 mountain bike endurance, some of the toughest races, you know,
24 multi 100 plus miles, 1500 feet of climbing, but also do a lot of
25 road riding, and I started West Valley Cycle 20 -- this is our

1 21st year. Back then just to -- we learned you can't just ride
2 your mountain bike and get strong. So road riding is how you can
3 improve your fitness. So I started back then for that for that
4 purpose and over the years it's grown to what it is today.

5 Q. Have you ever done adventure racing?

6 A. You know, we're actually doing our first, the White Rim
7 Trail. It's a 100 mile trail, and there's no support whatsoever.
8 So we're buying some packs for our mountain bike, and we're going
9 to do this unsupported in April, but we're now thinking -- like we
10 want to ride from here to our house in Flagstaff via trail. So
11 we're trying to figure out a pathway and somehow maybe bring
12 hammocks to sleep in between trees somewhere along the way.

13 Q. Um-hum.

14 A. So we're eventually going to maybe try some of that stuff.

15 Q. Okay. So, how long have you been bike riding?

16 A. Probably -- I think I did my first century when I was still
17 in college. So '86-ish and, you know, once I graduated college, I
18 just did mountain biking and even came out here and raced mountain
19 biking for 10 years, short distances. And then eventually got
20 into the road riding. And I'm one of the few riders that maybe
21 only does 5,000 miles a year. We have some -- there's a -- our
22 dermatologist doctor, she averages 15,000 miles a year. My wife,
23 Cheryl, who has probably gotten into cycling the last 7 years, she
24 did 7,000 last year. So it's a lot of miles with friends on the
25 road.

1 Q. So what's your role -- what would you say your role is in --

2 A. Well, I'm the -- I would say I'm definitely the founder of
3 West Valley Cycle, and when I started it, there's a lot of clubs
4 out there that tends to be an attitude. Some friends that with
5 West Valley Cycle have away, and they're just like we're can't
6 connect with any group. They're just so nichey. So, when I
7 started this, and it started to grow and it was before Facebook,
8 really all I could do was email communications every week about
9 the rides and recapping. But I realized soon, within 4 or 5
10 years, I needed some core values. And to get the mindsets of
11 these people right, so this thing can be welcoming to, you know,
12 everyone and nurturing for everyone, so basic core values, the
13 first one was welcoming all new riders.

14 And Goodyear is growing substantially. So there are people
15 coming here all the time, and they hear about the ride, and they
16 contact me. Can I come? Is there fees, no fees? I pretty much
17 pay for everything to make this thing work. And they show up and
18 they're surrounded. I mean, Karen, who passed away, she was like
19 one of our ambassadors. When someone showed up, she just was
20 available very vocal lady and she just embraced them and they -- I
21 get emails afterwards, like this is just amazing. I can't believe
22 I've made so many friends in the first day. So that was one.

23 And just really convincing the stronger, more educated
24 riders, to really just get out of your own element and give back
25 to the group. We have a private Facebook page that has roughly

1 2500 members on it, and new riders, you know, how do I ride? What
2 do I use for nutrition in the heat? And now, people have showed
3 up 30 responses, and people willing to, you know, share nutrition
4 with them as an example. So getting the stronger riders to really
5 commit to helping. We do clinics for people new to group riding,
6 so they can learn now. What is safety? How do you point out
7 objects? You know, how you don't overlap wheels, all those kind
8 of things.

9 Instilling those values really then made it grow and, you
10 know, that's where it is -- why it is today. In the summertime,
11 we'll get sometimes 100 riders to show up, and we can talk a
12 little bit more about how I set up for safety but basically, you
13 know, that's when I decided we need three different groups. We
14 can all be neutral and super slow at the start, and then at a
15 certain point, we can split up into those three smaller groups,
16 just for safety reasons and also there's just that level of
17 different skill sets. You don't want a C rider riding with an A
18 rider.

19 Q. Right. Yeah, I'll be honest like, I always wonder, you know,
20 I think that's one of the hurdles I see to taking up road biking
21 is riding in a -- like riding in a group like that. It just looks
22 like -- it looks pretty intimidating honestly to like somebody
23 that wants to get into.

24 A. It is, and -- but through -- but there's some YouTube. I
25 mean pretty much tell everyone new you have to go through some of

1 these YouTube courses and communicate. And I, you know, monthly
2 put out -- we do a lot of communication about the group rides and
3 everything, but I put out pretty strong verbiage, you know.
4 Here's what I'm seeing, and here's what I need everyone to start
5 focusing on. Just reminders, constant reminders. And it's really
6 gotten to where, you know, they're super safe and when we talk
7 about -- there's been incidents maybe a pedestrian said they came
8 by so fast and they startled me. We now are just like over the
9 top on the other side, especially the B group. If we pass
10 pedestrians or slower cyclists, we announce we're coming by and
11 it's like, hello, have a great day. I mean just overwhelm them
12 with love and kindness has kind of been our attitude.

13 When we come to a stop sign, and there's multiple traffic,
14 don't just let one car go and have everyone proceed. Let three or
15 four cars go and just wave to them. Just do the overly polite
16 thing to do, and that's kind of been instilled in the group which
17 is helpful for just public relations.

18 Q. Sure.

19 A. And we sponsor a road sign in Cotton and just clean it up
20 and, you know, our sign was up there. We're very active in
21 charity events, getting people out of just their bike element and
22 participate in community service has been another part of the
23 group.

24 Q. So this question, you probably already answered, but I'm
25 going to ask it anyway. Tell me a good memory or what sticks out

1 first and foremost in your mind when you think of this club.

2 A. Well, without a doubt, I've told everyone, this is -- it's
3 always been my pride and joy. I'm on the board for -- I'm
4 chairman of the board of a pretty good sized charity, and I was
5 telling the board, it dawned on me and anytime we're talking off
6 the record at the charity, I tend to gravitate to this group
7 because it's so important to me, and I get the benefit of
8 receiving so many emails of, you know, a rider that's lost 50
9 pounds once he started riding with the group. And there's been at
10 least three marriages that have formed through the group. And, I
11 don't know if I can point out just one particular thing, but it's
12 the accumulation of all those kind of things and the close knit.

13 And, you know, we lost one of our riders to cancer, and -- a
14 couple years ago, and the outreach, you know, for the husband and
15 the family. You know, we actually have her name on the inside of
16 our jersey. Most jerseys have all their logos with sponsors and
17 stuff on the back. The back of our jerseys just says powered by
18 camaraderie. And, so I think it's just -- probably my proudest
19 moment is just really the adoption of what I envisioned is
20 happening and it's been demonstrated extensively in the last, you
21 know, 6 days.

22 Q. Yeah. Great. So can you tell me a little bit of the history
23 of the club?

24 A. Well, it's just -- it's been -- pretty much if you map out
25 the growth of it, it's just continuous hiker (ph.), high line

1 going to the ride. It's just over time and more people moving to
2 the state and it just -- and frankly, a lot of people live out
3 here on the West Valley, in this group, but 20-ish percent of the
4 riders that come for especially the Saturday ride, which is the
5 main ride, they drive from sometimes 30, 40 miles away, you know,
6 get here for a 7:30 start time at, you know, so they get in about
7 5, 6 in the morning and even earlier in the summertime for the
8 camaraderie, you know, it's a 63 mile loop for the full loop.
9 Some people cut it short, and our roads are just safer than what
10 you would get in Scottsdale Ahwuatukee (ph.), Mesa. Less stop
11 signs. Easier to get out into some of the farmland, and like I
12 really spend a ton of time figuring out what's the perfect course
13 because an A group will go farther faster than the B group and the
14 C group. So basically it's the same route but I make the A group
15 go, you know, a mile and a half farther and then the C group's
16 going a mile and a half shorter. So shortcuts. So that we can all
17 converge at our first rest stop up in Estrella Mountain, Elliott
18 Market, around the same time, get water, use the restroom, and
19 then venture to the next site, again a little bit different
20 distances. We stop in Verrado at Bashas'. They bring us water
21 out, and it's over the years that the markets are very cooperative
22 in supporting us, and then we eventually ride home.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. And I guess one other thing, Saturday is the main ride.
25 Sunday is a smaller ride, the recovery (ph.) ride, but I've

1 encouraged others to have weekday rides. It's just -- we find it
2 safer in a group especially, you know, a smaller group. As long
3 as you follow the rules, you're just -- Cheryl, in one of her
4 interviews, we're like a bus but unfortunately without all the
5 steel around us, and we try to follow the rules, stay to the
6 right, but drivers should think of us more as a bus, that I'm not
7 going to run through that bus or come close to that bus. I'm
8 going to wait until it's safe to go around. But my wife has a
9 ride on Wednesdays called a happy ride, super slow space, no one
10 gets dropped. There's a 502 ride that goes every Tuesdays and
11 Thursdays. There's a chain train ride. There's all these other
12 pretty consistent rides during the week that that many people do
13 their best to also attend rather than ride by themselves.

14 Q. Thanks. How about the -- so you touched on it a little bit
15 but maybe talk a little bit about the safety philosophy that
16 you've kind of tried to adopt.

17 A. Yeah. I mean early on, we had some reports from, especially
18 if you get up in Estrella and police reached out to me and said,
19 hey, you guys were, you know, hogging the whole road. Someone saw
20 you guys go through a stop sign. I said, okay. Or, you're not
21 riding in the bike lane. So, actually at that time, the sheriff
22 who lived across the street from me, and I said, can you set up an
23 audience and let's just -- let me set up meetings and I can just
24 explain our scenario and you can guide me on what you want to see
25 us being doing. And we had those meetings going on and it was

1 enlightening to them. Some of them didn't even know some of the
2 bike rules but they never fathomed that, you know, the bike lane
3 tends to be where all the debris, especially with all the
4 construction going on here sits, and so we worked then -- well,
5 let's work with the city and get them to get -- if you see
6 something, there's actually an app I didn't know about where you
7 can report it, pot holes and stuff like that. So those kind of
8 communications I think is just beneficial for any bike group to
9 work with city and police to form that relationship to better
10 understand each other, and that was pretty evident.

11 But from just a personal perspective, I just -- at least once
12 a month I mark on my calendar, and I do a pretty extensive --
13 because there's so many new riders, you know, we follow the rules
14 of the road. We stop at all stoplights, you know, at stop signs.
15 We have to stop as well, but sometimes in the farmland where
16 there's no one for miles, as long as the first person stops, you
17 know, and you look both ways, you can say, proceeding, and then we
18 can go through. But I -- just to reiterate the importance of
19 safety, I just put out monthly -- just post on the Facebook page.
20 We used to do it via email, and I just reemphasize. And if I hear
21 something, I let them be known, you know, this kind of situation,
22 we have to avoid and here's what I -- whether it's true or not,
23 here's what I heard. You know, we've got to do a better job at
24 that, convincing the group to take the high road and don't just
25 say, well, it was the driver's fault. No, it's our responsibility

1 to go beyond the call of duty because we're the most vulnerable,
2 and that's been adopted in the group.

3 Q. Excellent. Okay. So you talked about this, too, about how
4 you planned a route, but maybe could you talk a little bit more
5 about that, specifically the route, that most popular ride on
6 Saturday?

7 A. Yes, the Saturday route, you know, we start at the Santini
8 Shop where he opens it up early so people can use the restroom and
9 there's -- if you've forgotten nutrition or anything else, you can
10 grab that. I focus, obviously try and avoid lights. Lights, you
11 know, sometimes can split up the group.

12 Q. Right.

13 A. But fortunately to get out to Estrella Mountain, there's that
14 Bullard Road. It's got a -- it's double lane and a bike lane. On
15 a Saturday morning, there's really hardly any traffic. So -- and
16 obviously the roads have grown so much here. So there's little
17 tweaks here and there, but as it states today, I can't believe
18 really how safe the route is. So we work our way up, focusing on
19 bike lanes, trying to avoid traffic lights. Once we get up there,
20 we stay kind of away from the residential area and that Estrella
21 Parkway goes -- it dead ends pretty far. So you have 7 miles of
22 really just maybe two stop signs. We do a loop there, and
23 eventually like I said, Estrella Market, and then we just work our
24 way to Rainbow which has mainly farmlands, and then there's three
25 different streets that can take you back north where we go to

1 Verrado and I just make the C group take the first cut, B group a
2 mile farther, and then the A group goes further.

3 And going up into Verrado again, double lanes, bike lane, we
4 kind of all merge together again and stop at the market. So it's
5 kind of managing the three different groups, different distances
6 and just picking roads that are, you know, less traffic. There's
7 so much construction going on Indian School, so we temporarily --
8 I get plenty of people say, I'll go investigate, you know, how do
9 we get around that so we're not going through construction zones,
10 and we'll just do a quick alternate and I'll announce it so people
11 know. On Estrella, you can document the course so new riders can
12 just click on it, and it'll show up on their Garmin device, and
13 show them where all the turns are.

14 Q. Yeah.

15 A. That's what we do.

16 Q. That's nice. So when you guys are riding in a group, what
17 type of formation would you -- I mean I know it depends on the
18 split and how people are spread out but generally what would you
19 say?

20 A. If there's a -- legally, we are allowed to ride two abreast.
21 And if there's no shoulder or there's no bike lane or it's the
22 road, there's a couple sections where it's just -- there isn't any
23 bike lane yet, we encourage the front liners, say single file and
24 shout it out, and everyone kind of falls back. And we put -- I
25 really emphasize to that front rider. I mean that front rider,

1 you're not riding for yourself. You're responsible for the guy at
2 the very end, and it's been a hard concept to get through to
3 everyone. So it's -- if you see debris, because we have had some,
4 you know, he points it, but by the eighth rider, they don't see
5 it.

6 Q. Right.

7 A. And they run into it and get a flat tire. So it's --
8 communicating vocally is key, but a front rider, it's -- when
9 you're a second rider and a third rider, you're -- they have
10 someone in front, it's a 30 percent benefit in draft, and so that
11 person when they're tired, there's a signal. I'm going to move
12 off and you looks to be safe, and he comes out, and then floats to
13 the back. So that's probably sometimes says, oh, look, they're
14 taking up the whole road. Again, we're trying to stay as far
15 right but the appearance can say, wow, they're actually half the
16 road because this person's trying to move to the back.

17 But -- and it's -- I mean there's some places where you can
18 probably see in the Tour de France where there's a continuous
19 rotation. If you have a smaller group of guys that really know
20 each other, you're just taking a pull and coming back, and it's
21 just a continuous rotations like a team time trial. And it's
22 amazing how that can propel and save your energy especially if
23 there's crosswinds and stuff.

24 But all those different things, it's just educating people on
25 how to do it. You never overlap a wheel, you know, it just -- it

1 takes a while to teach those things, but we have a system now that
2 really gets people up to speed fast.

3 Q. That's great. So, from your perspective, what are your
4 safety concerns both maybe in this area, you know, but that you've
5 seen and talked to other riders across the country?

6 A. Yeah. Well, as we think about where this accident occurred
7 and if there's any -- I mean there's a bridge with a massive bike
8 lane, you know, two other lanes, a center. So it's -- with all
9 the construction, I think my biggest concern is really at the
10 Pigeon Hole construction, that they're anxious to get to their
11 site. They've got big rigs. They've got trailers, and everyone's
12 driving too fast. I mean in Arizona, if you go on I-10, back to
13 the airport, it's 80 miles an hour, and probably at a baseline,
14 you know, we need more signage. Just -- like up Cotton, it's a
15 drag race with some cars. So I think managing speed in certain
16 areas for people driving is certainly one avenue that needs to be
17 pursued. You know, like I said, we report pot holes and stuff.
18 Arizona, in the heat, you get a lot of damage to roads, making
19 sure the city is taking care of those. Usually I get on the app,
20 and I say, someone crashed because they went through this 3 foot
21 pot hole that's in the middle of the bike lane, and they'll get
22 out right away and fix it. But it falls on us to notify them.

23 In Europe, you do see a lot of signage just, you know, bike
24 priority lanes and just signage, you know. There was a death a
25 few years back, a Rob Dollar in South Mountain. Someone ran into

1 him head on going up the mountain, and his father has been a huge
2 advocate for bike safety and bike -- changes in bike laws. And,
3 you know, they started a 3 foot jersey and signage on some areas
4 that, you know, I forget the exact wording on it, but basically
5 reminders for drivers to give space to bike riders.

6 And I was proud that the mayor and the chief were very strong
7 advocates for bike rides in their last press conference. And we
8 really didn't get much of that in the early days. We were -- even
9 some police, you know, 10, 15 years ago, you're a nuisance. You
10 just need to go off the road. But at least I'm seeing more
11 positive signs that cycling is a way of life for many people and
12 we need to respect and we need to protect.

13 Q. Yeah. What about has the city been pretty receptive about
14 expanding bike lanes? I mean not the width but I mean like --

15 A. Yeah, I -- you know, it just dawned on me, if you get on the
16 Strava app, you can see where -- it records anyone that's on
17 Strava and it records them, and it does a spot mapping, a heat
18 map.

19 Q. Yeah.

20 A. And you can -- obviously with our group, you know, that same
21 route, that a big, big blue line, but it would be really good from
22 a safety perspective to use those as reference points when they're
23 -- and I've seen some big double lane wide improved roads, and
24 it's very popular road, and there's no bike lane. And, if you --
25 so that heat map is just like, oh, my gosh, if they just would

1 have seen this, maybe shrink that sidewalk a little, you know, the
2 area in between with all the trees and brush and make a bike lane.
3 So I don't see bike lanes keeping up right now with the popularity
4 of cyclists out there on the road.

5 Q. Okay. I know you've touched on this already but how are you
6 guys -- you've answered it in a number of different ways, but
7 maybe you can -- there's something I didn't cover, but how are you
8 addressing these safety concerns? You know you have these
9 concerns. How are you guys trying to address them in a way you
10 can?

11 A. Like -- well, overall, I think I've probably -- because we
12 had some level of complacency because things have been so good for
13 the last 3 or 4 years, not a single incident. So I kind of backed
14 off on reaching out to the city. And I think I'm going to put
15 forth, you know, a core inner group that can really help bridge
16 those connections so that we have a say. You know, a subset of
17 our group is the West Valley Trail Alliance, and we work with the
18 counties on all the trails, and we do maintenance on them. And we
19 help them design and tell them where they can make new trails and
20 that's working extremely well especially with us just showing up
21 with 50 guys that are willing to clean up trails especially if a
22 horse comes through.

23 Q. Right.

24 A. You know, we really do need something like that at advocacy
25 group to work with cities on the road, and we have never -- we

1 haven't developed like -- as well as we've done for the Trail
2 Alliance.

3 Q. Nice.

4 A. But it's, you know, the things I've already said about
5 reporting, we need to do a better job of taking the lead on
6 communicating and reporting, but it's -- it is kind of a gap in my
7 mind about really how do you move the needle to convince drivers
8 that Cheryl in one of her interviews, you know, wait at a stop
9 sign, a stoplight for 3 minutes, you just wait. You don't try to
10 go for it. Yet, behind a group, we're going up Cotton into
11 Estrella, where there is no bike lane, once you pass that bridge,
12 you get the horn, you get the drive close bys and there's people
13 go ballistic for 3 or 4 seconds, how do you change that mindset?
14 I don't know. I think it's consistent messaging. That's what --
15 really where my mind is, how we move forward to get the word out
16 more than, you know, a life is more valuable that, you know,
17 racing by to get to your next stoplight where you'll wait for 3
18 minutes.

19 Q. Understood. All right. I just want to talk -- touch briefly
20 on the day of the accident and the accident. I know you weren't
21 there, but can you tell me, you know, what you know about it? You
22 know, what you -- what happened to you on that day?

23 A. Yeah, I was on my way -- I mean I'm the leader of the B
24 group. It's my pride and joy. I just -- I get out there and pull
25 for much longer than I should just because I just, I just want to

1 not control it. I want to make sure it stays single file and very
2 vocal, and I was in this pickleball tournament, on my way to it,
3 and my wife was on the ride.

4 And, I was driving. He called me and he said, you know, pull
5 over, David. He said there was an accident. I'm like okay, you
6 know, I'm sure it's a flat tire. It's bad. And Mark, who was
7 next to Cheryl, FaceTimed me when I got to Life Time, ready to go
8 to the tournament, and he just showed me the carnage. So I
9 immediately just jammed over to, as close as I could get, and I
10 had to run pretty much about a mile with a bunch of blankets and
11 stuff, and then, you know, saw my wife about to go into the
12 ambulance and just -- I mean there was broken bikes everywhere.
13 So that's, you know, how I saw it. I could see the body bag which
14 I was told was Karen and, you know, there's just a bunch of tears
15 and stuff at that point, but you just -- my mindset is just
16 focusing on others and trying to help them. I stayed for a little
17 bit, but I had to get back to the hospital for Cheryl.

18 But that's, you know, that's pretty much my whole, you know,
19 experience on that particular. And then I just got to work the
20 next day on what we need to do. And the cool thing is, this
21 cycling community from a state level is just -- I mean within
22 hours I received every -- notes and, you know, there's a cross and
23 ghost bike up there now, and a bike club that I didn't even know
24 existed in Couple Creek, where one of our riders is still in the
25 hospital, was a community, private gated community, and they went

1 and put that out there. But they're all just stepping up. It's a
2 pretty -- at times like this, everyone does their own thing. All
3 these different groups but this group has pulled together more so
4 than I've ever seen.

5 So cycling is here to stay, and road riding, a lot of people
6 just can't mountain bike, don't have the technical skills, but
7 they will continue to road ride. We've got to take it to the next
8 level on roads.

9 Q. Yeah. Great. Is there anybody that you think I should
10 contact or talk to that may have some information about the --
11 I've emailed the people that I've talked to already but do you
12 think like, oh, I really think to get a good picture of what
13 happened or a good description of what happened, you need to talk
14 to this person?

15 A. When did you talk to Mark?

16 Q. Yesterday.

17 A. Okay. So he probably was able to -- I mean things -- when
18 you go through trauma, I think it takes a few days for things to
19 come back to you. So, Mark, and I talked to him last night. He
20 probably gave you a good indication about -- because Mark and I
21 went back there the next day, but it's like it finally started
22 coming to him yesterday. So certainly Mark was probably one of
23 the only riders that crashed and was able to -- he has bruises,
24 but not, you know, need medical attention. And so he saw more
25 than like my wife who doesn't remember anything.

1 Q. Right.

2 A. Just flying through the air. So I really don't know if there
3 is anyone else. I mean did you talk to Paul Theisen?

4 Q. I have not.

5 A. Yeah, I can give you his number. He would be -- he was ahead
6 of the group and turned around and came back. But he would be --

7 Q. Oh, yeah.

8 A. -- probably the best.

9 Q. I have his number. Actually -- sorry. I'm just going
10 through. Steve gave that to me.

11 A. Steve gave you Paul's?

12 Q. Yeah, he gave me his number.

13 A. And he's, you know, he's a former colonel of the Air Force.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. So he's just very meticulous, and he's been going to the
16 press conferences and, you know, researching the police reports,
17 but the fact that he was the person that turned around and was
18 probably first onsite viewing it from forward coming back I
19 guarantee he could offer some insight.

20 Q. I will try. The other person I'm going to try and talk to is
21 the brother-in-law of the man that died. So he's --

22 A. Robert, yeah.

23 Q. Yeah. He's back.

24 A. I'm in communication with Robert.

25 Q. He's back in Minnesota right now. So.

1 A. And he was on the ride as well.

2 Q. Right.

3 A. But, you know, further back.

4 Q. Right. I'm hoping he can give me -- we'll see what he can --

5 A. I highly recommend PT. We call him PT.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. And he's actually coming down for a lunch with one of our
8 other friends who's visiting today.

9 Q. Oh.

10 A. So today might be a good day to connect with him.

11 Q. I will try and give him a call.

12 A. Wait until about noon.

13 Q. Yeah. I have an interview with Fire Chief later. So.

14 That's all I really have. Is there anything else that you want to
15 -- anything else that sticks out in your mind that you want to say
16 or that you think I've missed?

17 A. No, I think I would just reemphasize, there's -- we don't
18 really have a plan on how to move forward, and I hope we can take
19 this tragic to really, you know, work with an agency like you,
20 work with the city, to really -- what do we do to improve so this,
21 you know, hopefully never happens again? Our roads, like I said,
22 the cycling is -- I may have told you, on that Strava app, I can
23 track miles and, not everyone still lives here that are on the
24 group Strava page, but most do, and we -- just our group that are
25 active riders here, 600 of us, 1.3 million miles last year.

1 Q. That's amazing.

2 A. I mean so -- and 90 percent of that's on the road. So you're
3 not going to stop it. So how do we evolve to ensure, you know,
4 there are bike lanes. And I guess one thing I'll just say, so
5 there was up in Flagstaff, there was a death of a rider on a
6 street called Butler. And the city, without really doing a lot of
7 research, in that one section because there was a bike lane, but
8 it was -- it's very trafficky, they put concrete barriers in the
9 bike -- between the bike lane and the road and these poles coming
10 up, and it was like, now a street sweeper can't clean it.

11 Q. Right.

12 A. So no one uses it because it's where all the garbage is, and
13 there's no way to clean it and so people are now actually riding
14 out on the road to get through that point. So we've got to not
15 make mistakes like that. And, that's why you need collaboration
16 and the fire department, the city. I mean here to participate in
17 improving any way, shape or form. So if you do talk to the
18 firefighters or anybody, I mean we'll help in any way and we'll
19 sit on committees and help make recommendations. I'm just -- I'm
20 going to be pushing out to help but if -- keep us in mind
21 if you want to -- the city, if you want our help, we're here.
22 We'll jump at a heartbeat. That's my final message.

23 Q. Thanks.

24 A. Okay. My pleasure.

25 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

CERTIFICATE

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

IN THE MATTER OF: CYCLISTS FATALLY STRUCK BY PICKUP
TRUCK NEAR THE COTTON LAND BRIDGE
IN GOODYEAR, ARIZONA ON
FEBRUARY 25, 2023
Interview of David Herzog

ACCIDENT NO.: HWY23FH008

PLACE: Goodyear, Arizona

DATE: March 2, 2023

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:

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CYCLISTS FATALLY STRUCK BY PICKUP
TRUCK NEAR THE COTTON LANE BRIDGE
IN GOODYEAR, ARIZONA ON
FEBRUARY 25, 2023

Accident No.: HWY23FH008

* * * * *

Interview of: ROBERT HINTSALA, Cyclist

via telephone

Wednesday,
March 22, 2023

APPEARANCES:

JOHN HUMM, Survival Factors Group Chairman
National Transportation Safety Board

I N D E X

ITEM

PAGE

Interview of Robert Hintsala:

By Mr. Humm

4

I N T E R V I E W

(1:42 p.m.)

1
2
3 MR. HUMM: Today is March 22, 2023. I am conducting a phone
4 interview with Robert Hintsala and this is in reference to NTSB
5 case number HWY23FH008, the bicycle accident in Goodyear, Arizona,
6 on February 25th. My name is John Humm, H-u-m-m, with the NTSB
7 and I am the Survival Factors Group Chairman. First of all, thank
8 you, Robert, for agreeing to do this interview, I know it's a very
9 difficult time for your family, so we appreciate it. Really
10 quick, if you could say and spell your first and last name,
11 please, for the transcriptionist.

12 MR. HINTSALA: Okay. Robert Hintsala, H-i-n-t-s-a-l-a.

13 MR. HUMM: All right.

14 MR. HINTSALA: First, Robert, R-o-b-e-r-t.

15 MR. HUMM: Thank you. And Robert, if you could, please -- I
16 know we discussed this before I started the recording, but if you
17 could give your verbal consent that it's okay for me to record
18 this.

19 MR. HINTSALA: I agree to be recorded.

20 MR. HUMM: All right, thank you, sir.

21 MR. HINTSALA: You're welcome.

INTERVIEW OF ROBERT HINTSALA

22
23 BY MR. HUMM:

24 Q. So again, thank you for agreeing to this. I'm going to start
25 off with some -- just some basic background information on you, so

1 if you could just tell me where you live right now and maybe how
2 you came to Arizona or how you traveled to Arizona or why you
3 traveled to Arizona.

4 A. Okay. My wife and I currently live in Proctor, Minnesota,
5 which is right outside of Duluth, Minnesota, and this past -- this
6 last spring, May 27th, I retired from the United States Postal
7 Service as a letter carrier, so we, my wife and I and her brother,
8 David Kero and his wife, Liz, we rented a house for -- in
9 Chandler, Arizona, we were going to spend 2 months there.

10 So on February 7th, my wife and I started driving down to --
11 excuse me, February 9th we started driving to Chandler and we took
12 4 days staying in a couple of different places, you know, stayed a
13 night in Kansas City, a night in Dalhart, Texas, two nights in New
14 Mexico, and we got to Chandler on February 13th, is when we got to
15 that house and we were going to spend 2 months there trying the
16 life of snowbirds for the first time and I guess we had 2 weeks
17 where we went out for bike rides daily or hikes or we did
18 something every day with Dave and Liz, and Dave is the one who
19 passed away in this accident.

20 I guess that's -- that's how we got down there, I guess. We
21 were all retired, so we were going to spend a couple months
22 together in Chandler, just -- just enjoying some warmer weather
23 and seeing what it's like to be snowbirds.

24 Q. Yes, sir, thank you. So how long would you say that you've
25 been bike riding or doing that for a hobby and what would you say

1 your -- what would you say your activity level is with biking?

2 A. Oh, okay. I guess the last 10 years we've done quite a bit,
3 mostly mountain biking. The road biking we've done has been more
4 on like paved bike trails at -- for extended rides, you know, and
5 quite honestly, it's -- we've done a lot more mountain biking the
6 last 10 years that we've done. We've gone to -- we've been able
7 to go do that in multiple places, Arkansas, Colorado, Arizona,
8 Michigan, Wisconsin, at home here in Minnesota, so we've done a
9 lot of that, you know, more so mountain biking than road biking
10 and road biking, it's been maybe 50, 60 miles a summer doing that,
11 whereas mountain biking, it's considerably more.

12 Q. Okay, thank you. And what type of bike do you have or were
13 you riding that day?

14 A. I have a Scott Speedster bike, it's probably, oh, I don't
15 know, 8 years old, 10 years old, it's a little bit older of a
16 bike, like it's -- it's a Scott bike, so it was pretty good. I
17 think it was -- what would it be, like a 24-speed bike, I believe.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. I guess that -- for that bike, I guess.

20 Q. Did the police impound that one or do you have that?

21 A. No, it's locked up in custody right now for evidence, I guess
22 it is. The police have it.

23 Q. Okay. All right. And was it damaged at all?

24 A. No.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. No, it wasn't.

2 Q. Yeah.

3 A. When we get to that point, I'll tell the whole story, but --

4 Q. Sure. Sure, sure. No, I just -- I went to inspect all the
5 bicycles, so I think I know the one you're talking about.

6 A. Okay.

7 Q. I just wanted to touch on how did you first hear about the
8 West Valley Cycle club?

9 A. Somehow Dave found out about it, he looked that up before we
10 left and the previous weekend, let's see, so that would've been
11 like the 18th of February, Dave went on a ride with that group,
12 but my wife and I, we went to -- we drove out to Hemet, California
13 that day for a few days, I got relatives out there and we went to
14 go visit. So I didn't ride with him on that particular day, we
15 were out of that area and so a different area, so -- but Dave
16 found out about it, so --

17 Q. Oh, okay. All right. So he rode, he actually did this
18 Saturday ride the week before?

19 A. Yeah, he did. Yeah, he did it the weekend before and Dave is
20 -- he's always had -- well, I couldn't imagine, I don't imagine
21 how many miles of bike riding he did every summer, hundreds of
22 miles of doing this kind of stuff.

23 Q. Got you. Do you recall his bike at all? Do you know what
24 kind of bike he had?

25 A. It was a Specialized.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. I think it was like a red and white bike and I saw the
3 remains of it on the side of the road and there wasn't much left
4 to that bike.

5 Q. Okay. Okay, so if you could talk a little bit, you know, if
6 we could go back to that actual day, maybe you can walk me
7 through, you know, kind of the morning, when you woke up to when
8 you actually got to the Santini Cycling apparel shop.

9 A. Okay, okay. Yeah, we got up -- got up early, between 5:00
10 and 5:30 we got up, had a little bit of something to eat, made
11 some coffee, then we got on the road and it's about -- from
12 Chandler to that Santini's, it was a 45-, 50-minute car ride to
13 get there.

14 So we had -- we had a ways to go, so we got up early and we
15 left, left at about maybe around 6:00-ish, a little before, we
16 wanted to be at that Santini's before 7 o'clock. I think, if I
17 remember, they started riding at 7:00 or shortly thereafter. I
18 guess I don't remember the exact time we started riding. So we
19 got -- we got in the car and we drove out there, it took a good 45
20 minutes, 50 minutes to get there and on the way there, we were
21 discussing about a couple other events we were going to be doing,
22 that it was time that we had to start preparing for those two,
23 there was a NASCAR race there a couple weeks ago that we were
24 going to attend, so we were thinking about getting tickets to do
25 that. We were just talking about stuff we were going to be doing

1 still and laying the remaining time that we had there.

2 We got to Santini's, got the bikes out, you know, we got --
3 got them all set for the ride and then -- and then before we knew
4 it, it was time to go, it was -- you know, really, for me, it felt
5 like there was about 10 people there and then I looked up and
6 there was -- it looked like there were 70 bikes there ready to go,
7 so we just -- everybody took off and we just started riding.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. Yeah. Okay.

10 Q. So when you say "we," do you mean the person in the car with
11 you, that was Dave or was anybody else with you?

12 A. No, it was just me and Dave in the car.

13 Q. Okay, all right, got it. I just want to be clear on that.

14 Okay, so -- and you didn't -- did you know anybody in this group
15 at all?

16 A. The only person I knew there was Dave. I didn't know anybody.

17 Q. All right. And did Dave seem to know other people, like did
18 it seem like he knew a couple people from the previous week?

19 A. No, he knew a couple guys from the previous week and Dave
20 could meet a guy one time and he's one of those guys who you meet
21 him once and you'll remember him forever. So he knew a couple and
22 he talked to a few guys from the previous week, that he saw. So
23 he was comfortable. Yeah, he knew -- he may not have remembered
24 their names, but he remembered the faces and he talked with them
25 and -- you know.

1 Q. Got you. And from what you could observe -- you know, I
2 realize you're doing a lot of different things to get your bike
3 ready, but from what you could observe of the other people in this
4 group, what would you -- how would you characterize the helmet
5 usage of the people in the group?

6 A. Can you explain that?

7 Q. So did it seem like a lot of people were wearing helmets, you
8 know, bike helmets?

9 A. Oh, yeah. Yeah, everybody -- from what I saw, everybody had
10 a helmet on, everybody had, you know, like the bicycle shorts and,
11 you know, a lot of -- you know, all the safety gear anyway,
12 gloves, some had kneepads on, you know, there were bright colored
13 shirts and flashing red lights under the seats of the bikes. So
14 there was a lot of -- a lot of that kind of stuff. I didn't see
15 anybody without a helmet or biking in jeans or anything like that,
16 it's people who do a lot of biking and, you know, they look like
17 the people you see biking with the different kind of bikers using
18 everything else.

19 Q. Sure. Okay, thanks. And then I've been asking everybody
20 this question and I didn't see it on your bike, but just in case,
21 did you -- so in addition to these flashers, some of these
22 companies now are selling these rearward-facing cameras, so was
23 your bike at all equipped with this, with a rear-facing camera?

24 A. No, it was not.

25 Q. All right, thanks. So now if you could, you know, walk me

1 through the -- you know, so you're starting the ride, I know the
2 first part's generally kind of this easy kind of spin-up that
3 you're, you know, kind of getting your legs under you. If you
4 could talk about, that initial kind of ride portion and then
5 actually to where you guys started to get on the bridge and kind
6 of what you observed from that.

7 A. Okay. Yeah, it started off, the whole group, and I'm not
8 sure of the exact number of bikers, but 60, 70, there was quite a
9 few, and I could be way off on those numbers, but there was quite
10 a few bikers and on the way there, Dave was telling me how this
11 was good, though, that we're going to start off as one big group
12 and it will be -- so everybody kind of went the same pace, the
13 same speed for the first little bit, couple miles or so, and then
14 as we -- as we got into it more, more miles put behind us, then
15 the group started, would start to separate and it separated into a
16 few different groups of a group that's going to do, you know --
17 you know, one group sets the pace and goes really fast and then
18 there's a middle group, but we were in that last group, so we --
19 and I don't remember the names of the streets, I'm sorry about
20 this, but -- so we're pedaling down one street and then we -- and
21 I don't know how far we went, it wasn't -- I don't know how --
22 distance, I don't know how far we went, but we made a left turn
23 onto another road and I think it was that street with the bridge
24 and at this point, it's really starting to separate.

25 Once you made this left turn, then people -- the first couple

1 of groups took off and, you know, they went at a different pace
2 and we were going in this back group and I was usually towards the
3 back of the group. He said -- a guy named George, who said -- I
4 believe it was George who was at the very back, I was right in
5 front of George. I know there was one guy behind me.

6 And at this point I'm maybe a couple bike lengths behind the
7 guy in front of me. You know, one thing Dave told me was that,
8 usually in groups like this, you want to try to stay a couple of
9 feet off the rear of the tire of the guy in front of you, but you
10 know, at this point, this point of the ride, I'm really not that
11 comfortable doing this, doing this ride, it just didn't feel good
12 to me. You know, even a couple minutes before the accident, I was
13 thinking to myself I never -- I never want to do this kind of ride
14 again, it just didn't feel good to me. So I was concentrating on
15 the highway, staying on the white line or inside of the white
16 line, making sure that I never crossed the white line to get into
17 the lane of traffic. So I was watching that line. Then, you
18 know, every, what is it, 30, 40 feet there was a little reflector
19 in the middle of the white line, so I was trying to stay to the
20 right side of that, watching those reflectors go by.

21 Now we get to this bridge and I glanced at my watch and we
22 were averaging about 17 miles an hour and I remember even coasting
23 up to the hill of the bridge a little bit and then I thought I
24 better pedal, so I started pedaling again and I'm still inside the
25 -- a little bit inside of that white line on the shoulder and in

1 the corner of my eye, this white truck comes by me and my first
2 thought was oh, he was -- man, he's close to me, he was probably
3 an arm's reach away from me, 4 feet, maybe, between 3 and 4 feet
4 away from me he passed me and my thought was oh, man, he's close.

5 Then he started drifting in and there's that one guy and I
6 don't know anybody's names, one guy a bike length or two in front
7 of me and I think he was the first one, he probably was, but to be
8 honest, it's -- I don't remember if he was or not, but he probably
9 was. Then when I saw that, you know, there's shock, you're
10 thinking this can't be real, so I just started saying no, no, no,
11 out loud to myself and then the truck -- I've been told by a
12 different inspector that he hit the -- he hit the cement barrier
13 on the side and veered back towards the lane of traffic, but he
14 never -- he never went back completely into his lane of traffic.
15 The passenger side tires, both stayed within a foot or two inside
16 that white line and then he advanced on the main cluster of bikes
17 and he just went right through them, I could hear tires popping,
18 bikes exploding. I'm sorry.

19 Q. Yeah.

20 A. I'll finish it, I just need a minute.

21 MR. HUMM: No, take your time.

22 (Pause.)

23 MR. HINTSALA: Okay, so he went through all those people and
24 I could hear, you know, little, little screams. Like I said, I
25 could hear the bikes exploding and tires popping and I saw what --

1 you know, maybe my mind was just playing tricks on me, but it
2 looked like one guy got thrown off of his bike and he flew up in
3 the air, it looked like he did, you know, a head over heels in the
4 air about 8 to 10 feet high.

5 I did not see any brake lights on the truck, it looked like
6 he didn't tap his brakes at all, not even tapping them, he just
7 plowed right through them. And then at this point I stopped my
8 bike, unclipped my feet, I remember doing that and then I jumped
9 off my bike and I started running up the street, calling for Dave
10 and on my way up there, I saw a guy who was up against the cement
11 barrier on the -- barrier on the side of the bridge, it looked
12 like he was trying to stand up, so I stopped by him and told him
13 don't stand up, just lay down, you know, and asked him how he was
14 feeling. I asked him how, you know -- you know, he said his side
15 hurt, he had a hard time breathing, so I stayed by this guy and I
16 saw somebody walking around and I'm not sure who it was and I
17 asked -- I called out to him, he had a phone, can you call 911 and
18 he had his phone out and he was getting ready to call there, so
19 that guy called 911. So I was trying to help this one guy, keep
20 him calm, saying somebody's calling 911, you know, just talking to
21 him.

22 And then it didn't take long, EMS got there, police officers
23 got there and they started to get there and then a couple EMS guys
24 walked by with tags and they put one of those red immediate tags
25 for attention on this one guy. And then when they got there with

1 -- they were getting him oxygen and they got there with that, I
2 got up and I left, I left this guy, I think his name was Al. I
3 don't know what his last name is. That's what I was told by
4 another guy.

5 Anyway, then I went to find Dave and I found Dave, he was
6 being worked on by two paramedics and I knelt down by him and said
7 I'm here, Dave, I'm not hurt, you know, how are you doing and he
8 -- he said his chest hurt up here and he motioned with his left
9 hand to like his right -- the right side of his chest, up by the
10 collarbone area. And at this point the paramedics are asking him
11 questions. When I was there, they asked him his name and his
12 birth date and he was able to comprehend all that, he could give
13 the doctors or the medics his information. So he was -- he was
14 conscious, he had his -- he was able to answer questions and know
15 what he was talking about, but I didn't see a lot of blood or
16 anything, he had some scrapes, road rash type of scrapes. His
17 helmet was still securely on him. Then the medics had to cut his
18 jersey off, so they cut off his shirt, they cut the side of his
19 pants a little bit and then they kind of rolled him over to see
20 whatever they -- whatever they were doing.

21 I noticed that he was -- he had bruising, it looked like he
22 got -- you know, he had bruising and some scrapes along the side
23 of his body and his back and legs, but nothing that looked --
24 there was nothing that was, you know, heavy bleeding, nothing
25 sticking out where it shouldn't be. Then they put him on a gurney

1 and they brought him into an ambulance, you know, I was able to
2 walk up to the ambulance with him and hold his hand as he was
3 going into the ambulance. The paramedic said I couldn't go with
4 him, which was understandable.

5 So I told Dave that I'll call Liz, his wife, I'll call Liz
6 and let her know where they're taking you, what's going on and
7 then we'll -- you know, at this point, him dying wasn't -- I
8 didn't think that was a possibility, really, because he didn't
9 look that bad. So I said, you know, we'll -- I'll call Liz and
10 then we'll get together, you know, we'll meet up at the hospital
11 and then he drove off. So I called Liz and told her that there's
12 been a bad accident and Dave got hurt, he's in an ambulance, he
13 was able to speak, give his name and his birth date and they're
14 taking him to Abrazo, I guess it was Abrazo West hospital, and as
15 I turned around, there was a police officer there and I don't
16 remember his name, he was a real nice guy, I ended up talking to
17 him a couple different times. I just gave him my phone and said
18 can you give this lady directions on how to get to the hospital,
19 that's her husband driving off in that car.

20 So he did that and then it was -- then there was this period
21 of time where we didn't know what we were supposed to do, there
22 was, like I said, there was three other guys who were walking
23 around. Somebody had showed up, I guess it was Steve Rowan's
24 (ph.) wife came up and gave -- she had a bunch of beach towels
25 that we were able to, you know, wrap up and to stay warm. And

1 after they put the -- after Dave went off, then they started to
2 look at the crash site and I saw the lady who was -- she was in
3 the middle of the road, she got drug, drug by the truck, I don't
4 know how far, but they had the -- she was deceased, so they had
5 her covered up on the middle of the highway there.

6 The truck was up the road a ways from her and I never got
7 close to that truck, I never -- I didn't see who was in it or
8 anything. I had no intention or no desire to go up there to see
9 it or to get a look at the person, that never crossed my mind and
10 I really had no interest in seeing this guy, anyway. But, okay,
11 we were standing around the bridge, that's when I kind of looked
12 around and I saw all the different -- the damage that was caused.
13 I went to my -- I guess I backed up a ways and I had already got
14 my phone because I called Liz. Then I went over, I found Dave's
15 bike, you know, he had -- he drove him and I out there, so I was
16 hoping to be able to find his truck key in his bike bag, but it
17 wasn't -- he didn't put it in his bike bag, he had it in his
18 pocket or someplace because I never found the key to his truck.

19 So then at this point, that's when I noticed how many small,
20 you know, three-quarter inches of chunks of bicycle lying all
21 over. I think, at this point, just about all of the people who
22 were hurt were removed from the site, there might've been a couple
23 left. What else, what else? Okay, then after a little bit, once
24 all the adrenaline wore off, it was a cooler morning there and
25 then I started to feel chilled, so the -- somebody directed the

1 four of us to an ambulance that was left there and they said we
2 could sit in there and they'll turn their heat on and we could
3 stay warm in there, so that's what we did.

4 I think we were in there for a half hour, 45 minutes, if not
5 longer and that's when, one at a time, the police officer
6 inspectors would come up and they would take us out one at a time
7 and we would give our -- what we saw and what we -- you know, we
8 all gave some kind of a statement right there. And after a while,
9 at some point I got a couple of texts from my wife saying that
10 they made it to the hospital and at this point, they said Dave
11 needed a liter of blood, but he's doing okay and they're going to
12 be doing a -- they need to give him a scan, he's going to be
13 getting some kind of a scan pretty soon. So once again I go oh,
14 okay, we may not be doing a lot of bike riding or hiking in the
15 upcoming days, but maybe just sitting around recouping and doing
16 whatever, you know, and dying was -- him dying was still far from
17 my mind, I didn't think that was going to happen. And then
18 eventually, the ambulance had to leave, but there was a police bus
19 there that they moved us to that and we were sitting on that maybe
20 15 minutes and then they said okay, we were -- they didn't need us
21 at the site anymore, whatever, they were done questioning us and
22 they were ready for -- they didn't -- they didn't need us to be up
23 there anymore, so we were ready, free to go in the bus.

24 There was a place down the road a little bit where -- like a
25 family waiting area where they brought us to and I knew another of

1 my brother-in-laws was going to be there waiting to bring me to
2 the hospital to meet up with my wife and Liz and Dave and the rest
3 of the family that was there.

4 And when the bus pulled up there, I saw that my brother-in-
5 law was taking a phone call and he was walking away from the group
6 of people that was waiting and when I saw him walking away on his
7 phone, I thought oh, this can't be good. So then I got off the
8 bus, he saw me and he waved me over and when I got over to him, he
9 told me that Dave had just died at the hospital. When he went in
10 for his scan, his heart just stopped and there was nothing that
11 they could do. So then at this point I got some information from
12 a couple -- from these other guys, phone numbers and whatnot, to
13 make contact with a couple of these guys who have been able to
14 stay in touch for some of the -- for information regarding
15 different aspects of everything. Then Pete, Pete, that was my
16 other brother, that's the one who picked me up, Pete Kero, Dave's
17 -- Dave's brother, him and his wife were going to be out there for
18 a week to show us different places to go, places to hike or just
19 to bike, because they had spent time out there in the past.

20 Okay, so Pete and I went to the hospital and that's where we
21 were able to get reunited with my wife and Dave's wife and at this
22 point, Dave's wife wasn't doing too good, she was in shock and
23 passing out a couple times and they hadn't seen Dave at all yet.
24 When they got there, he was still alive, but then he passed away
25 and they hadn't seen -- they hadn't seen his body yet, even, he

1 was -- they were in the hallway back in the ER and Dave's body was
2 in the room right next to us.

3 So once Liz was ready, we all went in the room and saw and
4 then we were with Dave for -- in that room for maybe -- I don't
5 know if it was a half hour, but we were in there for a while,
6 until Liz was ready to -- ready to go. And then we went back to
7 the -- the house that we rented and we had to start figuring out
8 how to -- how to get home, the funeral was going to be in
9 Michigan, how to get to Michigan, how to get, you know, Liz and my
10 wife to Michigan. Liz and Dave had their dog there, I was going
11 to drive home, bring their dog with me. Liz and Val flew home.
12 Actually, I have -- I had a cousin who was in Havasu City, Arizona
13 and he said he would drive to Phoenix and ride home with me so I
14 wouldn't be alone in the car for 2 days of driving. So he rode
15 home with me, but we had to figure out how to get a truck key to
16 get their truck, my driver's license was in there. Just closing
17 up that house, giving up our rental on it. What else?

18 And we just -- the accident was on the 25th, I started
19 driving home Monday the 27th and then I got home. Two nights on
20 the road. So whatever date that would be. Maybe the 30th we got
21 home, unpacked the car from the Arizona stuff, threw a bunch of
22 stuff in there to go to a funeral in Michigan and drove to
23 Michigan. Val and Liz jumped on an airplane Tuesday morning and
24 got to Marquette, Michigan Tuesday evening.

25 And then there was all this stuff involved, Dave's body

1 needed an autopsy, so that was performed on Monday. Then his --
2 whatever the transport involved in bringing a body back home,
3 eventually was on a flight to Minneapolis and a funeral home from
4 Michigamme, Michigan drove out to Minneapolis, picked up the body
5 and brought him back on a Friday and the funeral was on a Sunday,
6 March 6th. Oh, I guess what else would you like to know right
7 now?

8 MR. HUMM: No, that was very -- you did a great job of, you
9 know, kind of telling me what you saw and everything you
10 experienced and again, just my condolences to you and the family,
11 I know this is just a real tragedy, I'm very sorry for your loss.

12 MR. HINTSALA: Yeah, thank you. Yeah, it's still --
13 sometimes it feels like we're still in shock.

14 MR. HUMM: Absolutely. Yes, sir.

15 MR. HINTSALA: Yeah. Still don't understand or, you know,
16 sometimes it just still doesn't feel real.

17 MR. HUMM: I'll bet. Yes, sir. Yeah, it's -- you know, you
18 went down there for, you know, a vacation and to, kind of check
19 out this snowbird life and obviously, it's just a tragedy. So I
20 can definitely understand the shock and the -- you know, and just
21 seeing it firsthand, I know that's -- that's not something that
22 most people have to experience, but it's something that I know,
23 unfortunately, you'll never forget and it's just very difficult.
24 It's difficult to talk about, it's difficult to think in your
25 mind, but I'm sure it's always there, you know.

1 And you know, I wish I could give you some kind of assurances
2 that this would give you closure, but you know, the best that I
3 think we can offer at NTSB is to look into this as far as the
4 safety perspective and try and minimize, the risk of this
5 happening again. I can't say that, anything that we do can
6 prevent this kind of thing from happening again, but if we can
7 minimize, you know, try and find out some of the key issues as to
8 why this happened and make some recommendations, that's kind of
9 the way that we approach it. You know, it's just that I've seen
10 it, I wasn't there, obviously, but I spent the week there, I saw
11 the scene, I've seen all the bicycles, I've talked to the people,
12 I've talked to the fire department and the police, so I feel, you
13 know, I have pretty good knowledge of it. But yeah, I can only
14 imagine what -- this must be really difficult for you.

15 MR. HINTSALA: Yeah. Yeah, I found out after talking to a
16 different inspector how they found parts of five different shirts
17 or jersey fabric on the body side of the truck, so I knew -- well,
18 it happened so fast, I didn't notice people being drug underneath
19 it, but when everything stopped, I knew one lady got drug quite a
20 distance underneath it. You know, I'm sure -- I'm sure people
21 were run over. Obviously, if there's parts of five different
22 jerseys on the bottom side of a truck. We had just --

23 BY MR. HUMM:

24 Q. Well, I appreciate you taking the time, I don't -- I don't
25 know, necessarily, if there's, any other questions I have or

1 anything that I need you to -- you know, you've given me a great
2 account, I don't really want you to have to go back and relive
3 that, I know it's very difficult, but is there anything in your
4 mind about the accident that stands out, that maybe I didn't ask
5 or touch on or any other detail that you think might be relevant
6 to this?

7 A. Yeah. You know, when he went by me, you know how it sounds
8 when a car goes by you and they're kind of accelerating and then
9 when they're -- the car goes by you, you know -- I've noticed this
10 throughout my career as a letter carrier that, you know, when a
11 car is just coasting by, there's not really that much noise.
12 Okay. So when he went by me, it seemed -- it didn't seem a noise,
13 but it had just been so fast. You know, I guess I didn't notice
14 him hitting the wall. My eyes were probably on -- you know, in
15 disbelief really. Yeah, then it did -- you could hear a little
16 acceleration, you know, he didn't try to go from -- I have no idea
17 how fast this guy was going, he didn't try to go from 30 to 60,
18 but he obviously did not touch his brakes.

19 It didn't look like he really -- if you hit that many people,
20 I would -- I would have to imagine that would be (indiscernible)
21 naturally slow down, especially if there's someone underneath you,
22 but it didn't really seem like that, either. You know, it didn't
23 seem like the vehicle struggled to get through everybody, that it
24 -- once he started going through the people, it didn't -- it
25 didn't look like the vehicle was struggling to make it through

1 everybody. I don't know the best way to put that.

2 Q. No, I understand. Your phone, the phone broke up just as you
3 said -- so when he passed you, did it seem -- like could you hear
4 the engine, like did you hear it run or did it seem like it was
5 coasting?

6 A. To me, what I picture in my mind here is that there wasn't
7 any accelerating as he went by me, it sounded like he was coasting
8 as he got by me and then once he got all the way past me, then it
9 sounded like he started to accelerate.

10 Q. Got you. And so I apologize for going back and asking you to
11 imagine in your mind, but after he hit the wall and was kind of
12 maybe redirected towards the traffic lane, because that's
13 generally what these barriers are designed to do, they're kind of
14 supposed to nudge you back into the lane.

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. I think that's what happened, but did you notice any type of
17 steering on his -- on the truck's part at all? Like any type of,
18 you know, lateral, significant left-right movement of the truck or
19 did it kind of stay along a straight line or, you know, what was
20 -- can you remember or do you remember observing anything like
21 that?

22 A. Yeah, to me, once he -- his -- the two right-side tires, it
23 pretty much stayed a straight line inside of the white line, so he
24 never -- once he hit the wall, he was pushed over by -- you know,
25 like you say, just natural, but then he never went all the way

1 back into the lane, the traffic lane. He stayed inside the
2 shoulder and he was able to keep a straight line in the shoulder
3 when he went through everybody.

4 Q. Okay. I'm sorry, the last thing I'll ask, did he -- on his
5 way to striking the barrier, did he hit somebody, did he hit a
6 bicyclist before he contacted the barrier, do you remember, or did
7 he hit the barrier first and then --

8 A. He would've hit somebody first and then --

9 Q. Okay. Okay.

10 A. Yeah, he would've hit that first guy, the first guy who got
11 hit.

12 Q. Got you.

13 A. He would've hit first and then he hit the barrier.

14 MR. HUMM: That is some good information because you're the
15 first person that's been able to kind of verify that for me, so
16 thank you. Again, I don't have any other questions right now, so
17 I'm going to end the recording unless you have something else that
18 you think you'd like to add or anything else.

19 MR. HINTSALA: Let's see. No, I think -- no, I guess right
20 now I can't think of anything else, I believe I told you
21 everything that I recall from it.

22 MR. HUMM: Yes, sir, thank you. Okay, I'll stop the
23 recording now and if you could hang on just a second, I just want
24 to go over a couple of things. So we'll stop the recording now,
25 it is 2:33 Central Daylight Time by my watch. Thank you.

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7

(Whereupon, at 2:33 p.m., the interview concluded.)

CERTIFICATE

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

IN THE MATTER OF: CYCLISTS FATALLY STRUCK BY PICKUP TRUCK
NEAR THE COTTON LANE BRIDGE IN
GOODYEAR, ARIZONA ON FEBRUARY 25, 2023
Interview of Robert Hintsala

ACCIDENT NO.: HWY23FH008

PLACE: via telephone

DATE: March 22, 2023

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.




David A. Martini
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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CYCLISTS FATALLY STRUCK BY PICKUP
TRUCK NEAR THE COTTON LANE BRIDGE
IN GOODYEAR, ARIZONA ON
FEBRUARY 25, 2023

Accident No.: HWY23FH008

* * * * *

Interview of: JANICE LOTZKAR

via telephone

Saturday,
March 18, 2023

APPEARANCES:

JOHN HUMM, Survival Factors Group Chairman
National Transportation Safety Board

I N D E X

ITEM

PAGE

Interview of Janice Lotzkar:

By Mr. Humm

4

I N T E R V I E W

(2:50 p.m.)

1
2
3 MR. HUMM: Today is March 18th, 2023. It is 2:50 p.m. by my
4 watch, Central daylight time. Today I'm interviewing Janice
5 Lotzkar in reference to NTSB case number HWY23FH008, which is the
6 bicycle accident in Goodyear, Arizona. My name is John Humm, H-u-
7 m-m, with the NTSB and I am the Survival Factors Group Chairman.

8 So, Janice, thank you again for agreeing to interview with
9 the NTSB. If you could just please say and spell your name.

10 MS. LOTZKAR: My whole name is Janice, middle name Beverley,
11 B-e-v-e-r-l-e-y, Lotzkar, L-o-t-z-k-a-r.

12 MR. HUMM: Thank you.

13 MS. LOTZKAR: First name J-a-n-i-c-e.

14 MR. HUMM: Thank you. And, Janice, as we discussed just
15 before this recording, if you could just give your verbal consent
16 that it's okay for me to record this.

17 MS. LOTZKAR: I fully consent to this recording.

18 MR. HUMM: All right. Thank you very much.

INTERVIEW OF JANICE LOTZKAR

19
20 BY MR. HUMM:

21 Q. So, Janice, we'll start with a little bit of history, maybe
22 you could talk about, where you're from and how you came to
23 Arizona, any kind of background like that would be great.

24 A. Sure. I was born and raised in Vancouver, British Columbia,
25 Canada. This is my home, and every winter I go down to Goodyear,

1 Arizona to -- from November to April to spend my winters. I go
2 there as a snowbird, and my body after several hip replacements,
3 things like that, just requires the sunshine and nicer weather.
4 And then also at the same time, because of that, I took up cycling
5 and that's something that I enjoy down there every winter as we're
6 not able to do that here in Vancouver.

7 Q. Great. And then, what is your occupation?

8 A. I'm retired.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. I've been retired for quite a few years and have been going
11 down to Arizona for over 12 years every winter, so this is
12 something that I -- by my calendar, every November I head on down
13 to Goodyear.

14 Q. Excellent. Well, that sounds a great -- like a great way to
15 spend your retirement.

16 A. Well, it is, I've worked hard for it, so absolutely. It's a
17 lovely place to be in the winter.

18 Q. Great. Okay. So how long had you been bike riding would you
19 say?

20 A. About -- I had osteoarthritis in my left hip -- in both my
21 hips. So 12 years ago I had my first surgery. I have always been
22 a skier, have always -- we've had a place -- second home in
23 Whistler, which is a ski resort here locally in Vancouver. And
24 then once I had my hip replacement, my orthopedic surgeon says
25 now, no more skiing, but there's two things you can do. You can

1 either swim or cycle, and I didn't even own a bike at that time.
2 So then we had to make a decision to where am I going to go --
3 where are we going to go, because we can't stay at Whistler. We
4 sold our place at Whistler.

5 And then had a sales list in California, looked at Arizona,
6 and just found a beautiful community in Goodyear, and that was the
7 place that we decided to go. That was my first bike that I bought
8 from the Trek shop in the west valley and at that point then
9 joined as a group -- West Valley Cycling Group. And so that's
10 been about 10 years of every winter joining up with a fabulous
11 group, going out for four, five times a week cycling. So -- and
12 it's much more just a cycling group. It's a family, it's a
13 friendship, which for somebody from Canada coming down every year,
14 you've got lovely people to associate with day in and day out.

15 Q. And so do you have family that comes down with you to
16 Goodyear?

17 A. No, we were -- my husband and I, we built -- we were -- after
18 selling our place at Whistler, we had built something on the golf
19 course at another location in Estrella. Actually up the Estrella
20 mountains where we were actually heading that day, that Saturday
21 morning. And then he passed away from prostate cancer, so then I
22 sold this. And then I have been renting in Pebble Creek, which is
23 a community, a gated community. So I've been renting for several
24 years there in a lovely little home, and I go down. I've got a
25 couple of beautiful little dogs. We go down and then I have

1 friends and family always come down and drop in. But I go down by
2 myself.

3 Q. Okay, great. And then -- so I'd like to talk a little bit
4 about the West Valley Cycling Club. So how long have you been
5 involved with them?

6 A. About 10 years. I started off brand new, first bike. I'll
7 never forget the first couple of rides. They have a Wednesday
8 happy ride and -- very social Wednesday ride. I have never been
9 on a bike and I got dropped all the time. But they -- if it
10 wasn't for them coming back and getting me and keeping me with the
11 group, I would have probably quit cycling. So they're very close,
12 they really are lovely to be with and a good, good group of
13 cyclists, very safe, they're very good cyclists.

14 And then also very welcoming for newer cyclists, because it's
15 such a big recreational sport to get in these days, particularly
16 after COVID. A lot of people got bikes and -- but -- and also the
17 west valley is a very nice place. The newer area -- newer up and
18 coming area is a residential, so the streets are all good, they're
19 all wide, bike lanes. So very safe.

20 Q. Oh, that's great. What is your best memory of this group or
21 what, you know, when you hear somebody ask you about the group or
22 it comes to your mind, what do you think of or a brief memory?

23 A. Well, like I just said, as a brand new rider -- as lots of
24 new riders -- I would have quit if there wasn't care and
25 compassion for other people. This is an all-inclusive group. We

1 ride in various different groups based on skill level, but we
2 stick together and we have a very good -- just a good respect for
3 the person that you're riding in front of, behind or for two by
4 two. And a respect for each other that -- especially when you're
5 riding, it's something that will always be first and foremost,
6 always safety is first and foremost. And these guys calling out
7 things you know on the road and singling is -- I also have a
8 cycling group here in Vancouver that I ride with in the summer.
9 So very similar, very caring, compassionate. It's a family.

10 And so it's not just cycling. We'll go for coffee, we'll go
11 for lunch, you know, we'll stop at food trucks. So it's more than
12 just cycling. It's -- there is a lot of social aspect to it. So
13 -- and that for me is also very much important in why I became a
14 cyclist, because I wasn't one beforehand. It was only through
15 spinning classes after I was told that I wasn't able to ski
16 anymore that after a few years that I met cyclists from a cycling
17 group, telling me that they did on a ride.

18 So it's just not all about riding. It's about -- also the
19 beauty of the area, enjoying the area, the surrounding, and the
20 people that you're with. I mean, it's a social environment also.
21 Like I said coffee, the lunches, and some other things. And then
22 West Valley Cycle also does fundraising for -- actually today,
23 they're doing the Tour de Cure, this morning's ride. So there's
24 some fundraising. Christmas we pulled together in -- for homeless
25 living in the area, we put together little gift bags for them. So

1 it's not just cycling, it's more -- we all kind of think alike in
2 that we like to give back to the community as well. And so we're
3 very like-minded.

4 Q. That's great. Do you know the make and model of your
5 bicycle?

6 A. I do, it's an Argon 18.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. It's a 15th anniversary Gallium Pro. Beautiful bike that I
9 just recently got after I had the Trek bike that I bought I
10 mentioned to you. My first bike was a Trek bike that was stolen
11 and then in the COVID era where bikes were pretty hard to get a
12 bike, I got this lovely -- it was such a special bike, an Argon 18
13 Gallium Pro. It was a 15th anniversary edition so it was quite
14 special.

15 Q. How much damage was there to that one?

16 A. Well, if I recall, it was broken in a zillion pieces. I only
17 looked at it for a second because I was just so heartbroken. I
18 didn't want to concentrate on it, but it was broken. Yes, it was
19 broken beyond repair. It's a black one with sort of silver and
20 some red markings along the -- you'll see Argon 18; you can't miss
21 it. And I believe I'm -- I think the only one that would have
22 that bike because it's a Canadian bike. It's out of Montreal. In
23 the group I think I'm the only one that had it -- that model --
24 that brand, I think.

25 Q. Your -- also yours was the only one that had your name on the

1 bike computer, so that's how I knew it was yours.

2 A. Exactly. I made a point -- when I saw -- when I talked to
3 one of the officers, I can't remember which officer, I said
4 because I've got a couple of biking friends and we bought our --
5 we bought this one at the same time and we're trying to program it
6 all. And so rather than mixing them up, I had to -- we had to put
7 our names on the bottom. So, yes it's just heartbreaking, the
8 bike, it's --

9 Q. I'm sorry, yes, I'm sorry.

10 A. No, there's a lot of worse things that, obviously, was this
11 accident.

12 Q. Yes.

13 A. But it's just -- yes, bikes become our little -- they're our
14 little babies, so like they're -- we trust them with everything.

15 Q. Yes.

16 A. Because you can only imagine going down a steep hill that
17 you're trusting your life in that. Right?

18 Q. Yes, I understand. I used to -- when I was grad school, I
19 used to work in a bike store selling bikes, so I kind
20 of understand the culture.

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. All right. And then would you say, you know, as far as the
23 group, were you mainly an A group rider, a B group rider?

24 A. No, we were all a B group.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. We're a B group. That was our B group that was there. Some
2 of those guys would sometimes ride with the A group. There's a
3 few of them that would, but for the most part, that was my group
4 that I would ride with, yes.

5 Q. Okay, great. So if you could, you know, tell me a little bit
6 about that morning and how you got to, participate in the ride
7 that, you know, that morning.

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Tell me a little bit about that.

10 A. Yes. Well, this is our ride, our Saturday morning ride that
11 we do every Saturday, it's the same route. It was -- I'm
12 kilometers so for me it was 100K. I guess that's 60 miles. For
13 the whole loop, we would have done a couple of loops through
14 Estrella and then Verrado. So I dropped my dogs off early in the
15 morning to my fellow that I leave them with. I have two dogs and
16 -- because anything over four or five, six hours I don't like them
17 having to be left at home.

18 And I arrived 7:00 or 7:30 at Santini (ph.) bike shop. I
19 always meet Karen at the corner there down on Pebble Creek, and we
20 ride together to Santini's. I meet her at 7:15 and then we ride
21 to Santini. Got to Santini and actually I just was told by a
22 couple of people later, because I totally forgot, I took three
23 photos of us before we left, which I don't normally do. I have
24 three photos of myself, Karen and the other people that were a
25 part of our big group. And then we head off at 7:30 exactly,

1 everybody rolls out. We have leadership there that says okay,
2 7:30, let's roll.

3 The first little bit is usually getting out, just spinning
4 our legs and social. Generally, the whole big group, A, B, and C,
5 we'll keep together so it's not a big rush, not a big, fast
6 sprint, just to warm up the legs and chat. And then we got to the
7 85 -- the MC85 and stopped, and then the light had changed and we
8 would continue to go and then -- on Cotton Lane.

9 And then we -- the Cotton Lane bridge was coming up, which is
10 probably the most safest piece of real estate that we ride on the
11 entire time. Brand new bridge, two wide-open lanes on one side,
12 with the other on the other side with a divider in the middle and
13 a bike lane. It's huge. No blocking of any vanches (ph.), of any
14 -- like it's flat and -- before we stood a head up and curve up a
15 narrow into a little bit of climbing before we get up to Estrella,
16 up to the roundabout. And that's all I remember. I don't
17 remember anything else.

18 Q. Okay. So you don't remember any of the --

19 A. I don't remember the accident. I remember coming to
20 but I don't remember anything.

21 Q. So can you maybe tell me a little bit about the first thing
22 that you remember?

23 A. Yes, I was really, really -- I was in shock. So I was so
24 wide awake. I actually got up, I stood up and there was a police
25 officer and they -- hovering beside me, but I stood up because I

1 saw so much chaos. And I didn't see chaos individually. I saw it
2 just as a group. I saw water bottles thrown over to the left
3 across lanes. It just seemed -- and I saw my bike and it just
4 seemed very -- for me, I've had a couple of injuries before in
5 bikes -- with a bike accident, and I tend to always get up and see
6 how I am. You know, I tend to stand up and see, sort of ruffle my
7 body a little bit and see if I'm okay, see how the bike is.

8 So I immediately stood up. And then one of our guys from our
9 A group that had come back from where we were supposed to meet --
10 they obviously didn't see our group at all -- came back and Leo
11 (ph.), he yelled at me Janice, sit down, sit down. So then I just
12 listened to him, and I sat down, and then I had the police officer
13 -- I was totally bloody. They were -- they had blankets, got a
14 blanket for me. And taking off my gloves, I kind of felt that I
15 had yes, a broken bone in my -- a couple of my fingers. So then I
16 kind of grasped that it was a little bit more serious, not knowing
17 what kind of -- my legs were all bloody, my face was bloody.

18 And then they were very reassuring, they were amazing, and
19 kept me warm and took my helmet off, and got my shoes off. And
20 that's all I really remember. That's all I really remember. And
21 then, obviously, into the ambulance.

22 Q. Okay. When you say they were amazing, are you talking about
23 the EMS or are you talking about --

24 A. Oh, the police officer and the one fellow, my fireman. He
25 was such a nice guy. He says remember this face. I'm going to

1 make sure that you get in the ambulance and that you get to a
2 hospital. I will see you at the hospital. So I remembered him
3 when we got into -- I got into the ambulance. He has his face
4 right at the door. He says remember me and then shut the door,
5 and then he was there at the hospital. So they were very
6 reassuring, they were very calming.

7 Q. Good.

8 A. And then also I did see like a couple of people, like Mark
9 Walgast (ph.). He was with our ride, so he was up and around; he
10 was involved in it. And then there was Leo and Peachy (ph.), a
11 couple of our riders helping, and Steve. A couple of people just
12 checking and making sure everybody was okay. But that's really
13 about it for my riders that I remember.

14 Q. Sure, understood. So the first thing you remember was just
15 waking up in the street, standing up and looking --

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. -- around. Okay.

18 A. Oh, no. I was on my -- I was sitting down.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. I woke sitting down.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. And then all of a sudden, I was just wide awake, shocked --
23 it was a shock within being replaced. And I was very alert. I
24 guess I don't know what that is, just the glare, I don't know what
25 that means, but I just stood up because I -- there was just so

1 many people, so many -- or so many people around, I just wanted to
2 see if I -- if anybody needed help or if I could do anything, but
3 then obviously told to sit down.

4 Q. Yes. So can you tell me -- so you went to the hospital. Do
5 you know what -- did they tell you like when your -- what your
6 injuries were or how was that --

7 A. I was -- during the day on the Saturday, in for tests for
8 MRI, x-rays, CT scans, and then -- so that was all day because I
9 know there was quite a few people. I don't remember exactly how
10 many people, but there was a quite a few people that went to
11 Abrazo, the trauma care hospital, so they were busy.

12 But I then talked to the surgeons, my hand surgeon and the --
13 my orthopedic surgeon who went through the injuries, and that they
14 decided to do the operation the next day -- surgery the next day
15 because they both wanted to do the surgery at the same time. So
16 the hand surgeon and the orthopedic surgeon decided to do it at
17 the same time. And -- so I did get a list of all, you know, what
18 I had for injuries.

19 Q. Okay. You went to -- did you go Abrazo West or did you go to
20 Spanner (ph.) --

21 A. I did.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. No, I went to Abrazo.

24 Q. Yes, I was trying to get the patient transport records on
25 people and I haven't been able to get those yet.

- 1 A. Yes -- no, I went there.
- 2 Q. Okay. And then -- so you had, what, you had a broken hand or
3 broken wrist or --
- 4 A. Well, no, I've got a broken finger on my left hand.
- 5 Q. Okay.
- 6 A. And then I've got a broken finger -- the ring fingers on both
7 hands.
- 8 Q. Okay.
- 9 A. And then I've got a break also in my hand on my right hand.
10 So I've got several pins in place.
- 11 Q. Okay.
- 12 A. I have broken ribs.
- 13 Q. Okay.
- 14 A. I have spinal fractures. Don't tell me -- don't ask me the
15 numbers.
- 16 Q. Um-hum.
- 17 A. You can get that from the medical records. I don't remember.
18 She did tell me them. And the biggest thing is I have a broken
19 pelvis.
- 20 Q. Oh.
- 21 A. And I have an exterior fixation device on right now.
- 22 Q. Okay. So --
- 23 A. So -- holding in the pelvis, so that everything is in
24 alignment. So that's got a -- an exterior fixation device from
25 one side of my pelvis to the other side just holding it secure.

1 Q. Wow, okay. I didn't realize --

2 A. And then great, great, great many scrapes, road rash on my
3 legs and my face.

4 Q. Okay. And then that -- so that's why I'm talking to --
5 you're in a hospital right now, I assume, is because you're --

6 A. I'm in Vancouver General Hospital, so I was flown into my --
7 this is my city that I live in, Vancouver. So this is the major
8 hospital here.

9 Q. Understood. So they treated you at Abrazo West and then how
10 long before you --

11 A. I had surgery on Sunday and then I was there for a week. I
12 had insurance, so I called my insurance company, my travel
13 insurance. I also called my where I get my car insurance, because
14 there was a kind of concern that perhaps I don't -- I don't know
15 the situation, but I just was worried that what if he didn't have
16 insurance. So it was an automobile accident, but for me I needed
17 to also call my [REDACTED]
18 here, just to let them know and I have case numbers for both.

19 Q. Okay. No, that's great. Do you -- did you have any type of
20 head injury at all besides --

21 A. No, no concussion. I did have a neck brace. The fireman and
22 the ambulance were the -- I had to put on when I was going -- just
23 before I got into the ambulance, but everything checked out okay.

24 Q. So I only have a couple of other questions. I believe you
25 said you were wearing a helmet. Did you have a rearward facing

1 camera on your bike by chance?

2 A. I do not.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. Yes, that's usually in your light. That's a Garmin, I think
5 a Garmin light that they -- it beeps if you have a car nearby or
6 something. I don't have that. I have a light, I had a flashing
7 light.

8 Q. Yes. Like I said, I didn't see that on a bike,

9 A. Right, yes.

10 Q. And, obviously, I know you don't have a lot of memory of --
11 do you remember at all, like, where you were in the formation?

12 A. We were in the middle -- I was in the middle of the pack.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. I was in the middle of the pack.

15 Q. All right, great.

16 A. Yes, have you talked to Clay (ph.)?

17 Q. Clay? No, I've talked to Steven (ph.), Chad (ph.), Mark
18 (ph.) and PT (ph.), and I have -- I'm trying to get a hold of -- I
19 got an interview set up with Ethan, I have one with Nicholas
20 Taylor (ph.) and then I have one for -- you may not know him --
21 but it's Robert Gonzala (ph.). His brother-in-law is the other
22 gentleman that died.

23 A. Right, right, right. Yes, I know there's Clay as well. He
24 just is -- he was in Abrazo, and he just came out of ICU a couple
25 of days ago. What I was told -- he was right behind me. I don't

1 remember our -- I just know I was in the middle. I'm always
2 usually in the middle.

3 Q. Okay. No, that helps. Yes, I haven't tried anybody, because
4 -- I'll be honest, I didn't get a -- I didn't have a good account
5 of the injuries to you. I didn't realize you had a fractured
6 pelvis, because all the report in the police said is that you were
7 wrapped in bandages, so I really wasn't sure the exact --

8 A. Right.

9 Q. I'm trying to hold off interviewing people that are -- I'm
10 sorry, I didn't realize you were being treated at the hospital. I
11 was trying to hold off on contacting people while they're in the
12 hospital, because I know they're trying to recover and I didn't --

13 A. Oh, that's okay. Yes, but I'm going to be in the hospital
14 for a while, so otherwise you're not going to talk to me, right?
15 So I've got a long ways to go here, but -- and like I said, the
16 weekends are usually better here. So, yes, I've got -- yes, my
17 main thing was that I had two -- I have the hand surgeon and my
18 orthopedic surgeon in the same surgery. And -- which was a long
19 time, I think -- I believe it was five hours, though.

20 Q. All right. I don't have any more specific questions. Is
21 there anything else that you wanted to add that you think is
22 relevant or anything that I may have missed that you wanted to
23 discuss about this?

24 A. No, I know -- I know the police investigation is ongoing. Is
25 there -- at some point, is there -- I know for me personally, the

1 injuries that I've suffered, and obviously more importantly,
2 losing a very good friend in Karen, which nobody should have to be
3 in that situation, and also the other -- my other club mates -- is
4 there -- at the end of this whole thing, do you know, is there
5 going to be some sort of reenactment as to how this happened?

6 What the speed is, how he -- the car came in or what happened?

7 Q. Yes, that -- so the police are doing the reconstruction of
8 it. I haven't seen their final report yet. I know they have a
9 decent estimate of the speed, just from some of the skid marks.

10 A. Right.

11 Q. But, you know, as far as the actual trajectory of the car, I
12 haven't seen that report yet. They're kind of working that up,
13 and hopefully --

14 A. Does that usually come in -- I've never been in, like,
15 something like this, so obviously -- is that something that
16 usually would come, though?

17 Q. I'm sorry, you mean, would they usually do -- usually --

18 A. Well Would we have some sort of reenactment that we
19 would see what actually sort of happened?

20 Q. Not like a staged one. What we'll do is they look at the --

21 A. No, no, no, no, not staged.

22 Q. Oh, sorry.

23 A. No, no. Like just something visual, yes -- no.

24 Q. I mean, they look at the evidence and they'll try and figure
25 out where the truck was, because there was some pretty good

1 evidence on the scene from the contact with the barrier. So at
2 some point, the driver departed the lane that he said he was
3 driving in and made contact with that barrier on the right-hand
4 side.

5 A. Yes, I haven't seen anything. I've tried --
6 to stay away from --

7 Q. No, I completely understand. But that -- so what I'm saying
8 is the police have generally a pretty good idea of the path and
9 the speed.

10 A. Yes, okay.

11 Q. Figuring out why things happened is still something that's
12 under investigation.

13 A. Right, right, okay.

14 Q. Yes.

15 A. Okay, okay.

16 Q. As far as NTSB, our report process is pretty lengthy. It's
17 just we have a lot of review, so it generally takes us about a
18 year to issue a final report. So the details of that will be
19 eventually on our website, and then there's always a public docket
20 where, you know, we share our analysis.

21 A. Okay. And if you ever need anything else, please feel free
22 to reach out and if I can be of any further help. Yes, I just --
23 I don't remember it at that point I came to.

24 Q. No, thank you.

25 A. And I think for me I think that's probably the best for me, I

1 think.

2 Q. Yes, I agree. I'm going to stop the recording now and then
3 I'll say goodbye to you.

4 A. Okay, thank you.

5 MR. HUMM: I'm going to stop the recording. The time by my
6 watch is 3:23.

7 (Whereupon, at 3:23 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: CYCLISTS FATALLY STRUCK BY PICKUP TRUCK
NEAR THE COTTON LANE BRIDGE IN
GOODYEAR, ARIZONA ON FEBRUARY 25, 2023
Interview of Janice Lotzkar

ACCIDENT NO.: HWY23FH008

PLACE: via telephone

DATE: March 18, 2023

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.

Maria Socorro R. Abellar
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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CYCLISTS FATALLY STRUCK BY PICKUP
TRUCK NEAR THE COTTON LANE BRIDGE
IN GOODYEAR, ARIZONA ON
FEBRUARY 25, 2023

Accident No.: HWY23FH008

* * * * *

Interview of: STEVEN RHONE, Cyclist



Wednesday,
March 1, 2023

APPEARANCES:

JOHN HUMM, Survival Factors Group Chairman
National Transportation Safety Board

I N D E X

ITEM

PAGE

Interview of Steven Rhone:

By Mr. Humm

4

I N T E R V I E W

(9:30 a.m.)

1
2
3 MR. HUMM: Today is March 1st, 2023. It is 9:30 by my
4 watch. Today I am interviewing Steven Rhone at [REDACTED]
5 [REDACTED] in Goodyear, Arizona, and this is in reference to
6 NTSB case HWY23FH008. This is John Humm of the NTSB and I'm the
7 survival factors group chairman.

8 So with me I have Steven Rhone.

9 Steven, if you could just say and spell your name?

10 MR. RHONE: Steven Rhone, S-t-e-v-e-n R-h-o-n-e.

11 MR. HUMM: Thank you. And then Steven, I know we talked
12 about this, but could just give a verbal consent that you're okay
13 to record this?

14 MR. RHONE: Yes, I agree.

15 MR. HUMM: Thank you. And then just some basic contact info.
16 Do you have an email address?

17 MR. RHONE: Sure. It's [REDACTED].

18 MR. HUMM: Perfect. So as I said, I'll email you the
19 transcript to that address.

INTERVIEW OF STEVEN RHONE

20
21 BY MR. HUMM:

22 Q. So could you just tell me a little bit about maybe your
23 family, your occupation and how you came to live in Arizona?

24 A. I'm married, been married 35 years. I've been a resident of
25 Arizona for little bit over 20 years now. Originally born and

1 raised in Oakland, California. I worked in northern California
2 for those -- for -- in the electrical industry as an electrician,
3 a project engineer and project manager for nearly 20 years before
4 I transferred here to Arizona. Worked with AT&T for another 21
5 years as an operations network manager. And retired in 2022 --
6 2021.

7

8 Q. So can you tell me a little bit about the cycling group that
9 you're a part of and the name of it?

10 A. Sure. West Valley Cycling Group was created -- started with
11 a couple of guys that enjoyed cycling and they decided to put
12 together a group, or have a group available to where riders with
13 the same intent, the same desire to go out and just have a good
14 time, ride safety as a group, they put together West Valley Cycle.
15 Dave Herzog is one of the originators and he still cycles with us
16 today. And it's just a group of individuals that reside all over
17 the Phoenix Valley; not just in Goodyear or, you know, Avondale or
18 Buckeye. They come from all over the valley to ride with the
19 group on our rides on the weekends.

20 We have two West Valley rides on the weekends. One Saturday,
21 one Sunday. The Saturday ride is the longer of the two, usually
22 60 miles. It's usually three groups of riders based on your
23 proficiency as a rider. If you're an advanced rider or a racer we
24 have an A group, a little bit faster than the rest of the groups.
25 We have a B group, more of the, you know, intermediate, advanced

1 rider. And we have a C group for beginners and people just
2 wanting to learn how to ride on the road with a group of people
3 safely.

4 Q. Yes.

5 A. And so we do those two groups on Saturdays and Sundays.
6 During the week, Monday through Friday, there are also rides that
7 are not officially West Valley rides, but they are rides that are
8 organized by the West Valley riders. Monday through Friday there
9 is route, various sizes, usually in the morning, that rides some
10 or partial or all of the route that we do on the weekend. So 7
11 days a week there's a ride here in this part of the Valley with
12 parts of the West Valley injected into it.

13 Q. Okay, great. So if you can, give me a good memory of when
14 you think about that club, give me a good memory. What stands out
15 most in your mind?

16 A. Oh, what stands out most in my mind is the comradery, the
17 friendship, the laughter. So when people who don't know the
18 group, they just think this is a -- guys get together that go out
19 and ride. No, it's all walks of life. Male, female. All
20 religions. All political aspects. So, you know, we sit down and
21 we have a, good conversations. We laugh, we cry together. We do
22 a fair amount of activities outside of cycling. We eat together,
23 we vacation together, we party together. We are a tight knit
24 community here and we welcome everybody. Like I said, it's just
25 not people from the immediate area. We're close to Luke Air Force

1 Base which is, you know, 20 miles away. And that is a F-35
2 training facility for countries that purchase the F-35 from the
3 USA. So we get an influx of all nationalities of people coming
4 into the community. A fair amount of those cyclists come from
5 Luke Air Force Base from different countries.

6 So they ride with us. And they're here for 3, 4, 5 years
7 doing their training stint, so it's not uncommon to have Italian
8 or German or any other nationality here, you know, in our group,
9 you know, for 5 years and then they go away -- go back home. But
10 they're still part of our group. If you look at our Facebook page
11 there is a -- 2,500 members on that Facebook page. West Valley.
12 And like I said, we don't have 2,500 people riding with us, but
13 those are just the people that have been in touch with us or
14 touched us or ridden with us or inquired about us or the 20 plus
15 years we've been in existence.

16 Q. Yeah, I imagine that, you know, I didn't realize that about
17 the training. If you're getting people from Europe, I mean,
18 cycling's just so huge over there. They must come to you like a
19 magnet.

20 A. Yeah. It's not uncommon that we have, like I said, people
21 that, you know, are just like -- just here for on vacation or
22 spring training or whatever, passing through on business and they
23 know about the rides and they know about the community and they're
24 like, okay, can I bring a bike? We even get people who will get
25 on Facebook and say I'm coming into town for business, I don't

1 have a bike. Is there one I can use or rent? And we will find
2 him a ride -- a helmet, a bike and whatever they need to ride with
3 us.

4 Q. That sounds like a great setup.

5 A. It is. It's a really, really close knit family of cyclists.

6 Q. So how long have you been, riding -- I assume that you mostly
7 use a, road bikes

8 A. No, we have -- we do mountain bikes rides, organized rides
9 and road bike rides. Whatever somebody wants to do, there's an
10 activity for them on a bike. If -- you know, some people aren't
11 comfortable riding on the road, naturally, so there's a group of
12 people that will ride the mountain trails. We have many of them
13 around in this area.

14 Q. And so how long have you been riding a bike?

15 A. Gosh, I've been riding a bike since my late teens, early 20s.

16 Q. Okay. And do you do both; road and mountain?

17 A. I do both road and mountain, yes. As a matter of fact, I
18 raced mountain bikes as a younger person and I had a serious
19 industrial accident which impacted my back and couldn't take that
20 pounding. And then I switched to road, so that's how I started
21 road riding and that was, gosh, that was in the 80s.

22 Q. Okay. Excellent. And so what road bike do you ride?

23 A. I ride a Cervelo S5.

24 Q. Okay. And is that one of the bikes that was impounded by the
25 police?

- 1 A. Yes. The police still have that bike, yes.
- 2 Q. Okay. Was it largely -- because there were two of them.
- 3 A. It was largely -- it was probably one of the two that were
4 intact.
- 5 Q. Oh, so it was intact.
- 6 A. Yes.
- 7 Q. It had a blown front tire. It had a --
- 8 A. -- handlebar I think had some issues and shifter. That was
9 basically it, I think.
- 10 Q. Yeah. Your front tire was shredded.
- 11 A. Yeah.
- 12 Q. I think -- oh yeah, both the tires rotated freely.
- 13 A. The bike was pretty in one piece compared to the rest of
14 them.
- 15 Q. Yeah, the other Cervelo that was the yellow one that was --
- 16 A. That was Mike Rayer's (ph.) bike, yes.
- 17 Q. Oh.
- 18 A. Yeah, I know exactly whose bike that was.
- 19 Q. Okay. Yeah, actually I tried to reach out to him but --
20 okay, thanks.
- 21 Let me just write down --
- 22 A. So I knew pretty much, or were familiar with most of the
23 bikes and who was riding what.
- 24 Q. Oh, great.
- 25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. So let's just talk a little bit about the day of the ride.

2 A. Okay. A. It's an early morning ride. It was a 7:30 start.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. We actually start at -- it was a local clothing bike
5 manufacturer here, Santini Clothing.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. And they have an outlet store in buck -- in Goodyear on
8 Bullard Avenue. And that's our starting point on Saturday and
9 Sunday. They open up the shop. They serve coffee and donuts or
10 whatever. And we go and we meet and we leave from there and we
11 end there, the (indiscernible).

12 So it start -- it was a 7:30 start. Overcast morning, rain
13 was forecasted for later in the day. Start temperatures were low
14 40s, and we started on time. We have individuals in the group
15 that are like, 7:30, let's go. So literally, then someone said,
16 it's 7:30, let's go, time to roll. And we left the shop at 7:30
17 in the morning. And our route is to go up Bullard all the way to
18 Cotton Lane. Cotton Lane we make a righthand turn and start
19 heading up into the Estrella community here.

20 Q. Okay. And when you say 7:30 start, does everybody start
21 together or does --

22 A. Yes. We start together.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. We break together. There's two breaks along the route so we
25 wait for all the groups to break together. And you -- of course

1 we don't end together but at least we break together and we start
2 together.

3 Q. Okay. And so which group were you --

4 A. I'm B group.

5 Q. You're B -- oh, okay. Yes.

6 A. The A group, like I said, is -- I'm going to say it's younger
7 riders, faster. We have some teams that -- from all over the
8 valley that like to train with our route so they'll come out as a
9 team, you know. So the A group is not usually the largest group,
10 but it's the fastest group. And so the B group, like I said, is
11 more of the intermediate to advanced riders, and we kind of stay
12 together the whole route.

13 Q. Okay. So when you're -- when the group is riding together,
14 would you say -- like, how do you -- because there are some --
15 I've kind of driven that route a little bit, just chiefly over the
16 bridge and then up to the roundabout and back a few times. You
17 know, there are areas where there's shoulder and then there's no
18 shoulder -- well, I'll call it shoulder but I think it's -- some
19 of it might be -- I don't know. Actually, I don't think that was
20 classified as a bike lane over the bridge to get to there.
21 There's a sign that says bike lane end, but you know what I mean,
22 the shoulder.

23 A. Right. Mm-hmm, yes.

24 Q. So how do you guys group yourselves as far as when you're
25 riding?

1 A. So for that stretch of route over the bridge, we consider
2 that far right area a bike lane.

3 Q. Mm-hmm.

4 A. So we're either side by side because it's wide enough for two
5 bikes or we're single file.

6 Q. Okay. So you're -- largely it's two by two.

7 A. Yes, two by two. Yes.

8 Q. Oh, okay. That's good to know.

9 A. It's very rarely that you'll see riders three abreast or four
10 abreast. I mean, rare. Very rare. I mean, sometimes there may
11 be a piece of debris in the road then we have to avoid it and
12 might have to fan out. But usually we're side by side
13 (indiscernible) max.

14 Q. Oh, great. And then as far as like, reflectors and lights
15 and things that people typically wear --

16 A. So for this group, West Valley, we have two requirements. We
17 don't allow any violence or yelling or screaming or anything, and
18 you must have a helmet.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. So like, helmet is mandatory. I would say 80 percent of the
21 riders have a lighting system on the bike with the rear LED
22 flashing. And I would -- almost 100 percent of the riders in that
23 B group that day had that red flasher on the back.

24 Q. Yeah.

25 A. I -- you saw my bike. It was partly still on there -- on the

1 -- the backseat.

2 Q. I think yours might be gone.

3 A. Gone?

4 Q. Yeah.

5 A. Okay, yeah. Yeah, we all have the flashing LED on the back
6 to alert, you know, anybody coming up from behind us, you know,
7 we're riding.

8 Q. Do you know, does anybody have like, a rear camera at all?
9 Because I've seen those online. I don't know how popular they are
10 right now.

11 A. I would say if it was a regular West Valley rider, no. I
12 couldn't really see footage (ph.) of any of the rides, but on that
13 particular day we had I'm going to say at least five individuals
14 that it was either their first ride or their second ride because
15 they were not from the area. They were just here -- I think two
16 individuals were here on business and I know at least two were
17 here on vacation. And they had their own bikes so I don't know if
18 they're normally, have that type of camera system on their bike.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. But it's not common for West Valley to -- I've seen them out
21 there occasionally, but it's not a regular occurrence that I see
22 that.

23 Q. Yeah, when I was younger in grad school I used to sell -- I
24 worked at a bike store and I sold bikes and they didn't, obviously
25 didn't have that technology.

1 A. Right.

2 Q. Okay. So on the day of the accident, can you tell me, like,
3 when did you -- where were you riding just relative to the group?

4 A. On the day of the accident, like I said, we start off as one
5 large group heading out. By the time we get to Cotton Lane and
6 make that right turn, that's where we start to fan out a little
7 bit. The A group kind of takes off and goes up the hill and then
8 the B group kind of just -- kind of settles into their pace.
9 Heading from the starting point to Cotton Lane, I would say I was
10 -- of the 25, 30 riders that were in that group at that time, I
11 was probably in the -- towards the rear. And then I noticed
12 because of the individuals that were severely injured, I remember
13 talking to them in front of me and listening to their
14 conversations. So I know they were in front of me.

15 At some point when we turned onto Cotton Lane I ended up
16 ahead of those individuals because I know they were behind me when
17 the accident occurred. So when the accident -- so when we were
18 struck, I was probably first, second or third from the front of
19 the B group, in the lead of the B group.

20 Q. Okay. And can you tell me, you know, in as much detail as
21 you feel comfortable, when did you first know something was wrong?

22 A. I knew something was occurring behind me when I heard, when I
23 first heard the sound of a crashing bike. These new carbon fiber
24 bikes, when they crash they make a unique, almost a mini explosion
25 sound with the carbon fiber breaking and snapping. I heard that.

1 But the unusual part of that one occurrence was that I heard the
2 noise but it kept getting louder and louder and louder. And then
3 the next thing I know in the next instant, I was on the ground.
4 So then I -- when I got up from the ground I realized what had
5 happened. I was hearing the carbon fiber and the, you know, and
6 the other noises was because the truck was still hitting bikes as
7 he was rolling up the road. So that's why it was getting louder
8 and getting closer to me, the noise. And it wasn't stopping. It
9 wasn't just (clapping sound) you know, a bike accident between two
10 bikes going down. It was constant, (clapping sound) you know, the
11 noise.

12 And so I hit the ground (clapping sound). I was not hit by
13 the truck. I was hit by debris and bodies that were being shoved
14 into me from behind and the side. I remember going down and
15 glancing up and seeing parts of grills and bumpers and bikes and
16 wheels and bodies tumbling and the truck going by. So that's what
17 I remember. And then I visually followed the truck until he
18 stopped, he eventually stopped. But in my recollection, and I
19 could be wrong because things are happening so, so fast, when the
20 truck went past me, to me in my mind, I thought, he's not
21 stopping. To me it was almost like he was still accelerating. So
22 -- and from where he made the initial impact to where he actually
23 physically stopped was a great distance. And it wasn't like he
24 was on his brakes or anything. I didn't see brake lights until he
25 physically stopped towards the bottom of the -- towards the end of

1 the bridge.

2 Q. Oh, that's great, thank you. I mean, that's a great
3 observation. Okay. And so you fell onto your right side? Left
4 side?

5 A. I fell onto my left side. I have some road rash on my
6 shoulder, my arm and my leg, but it was nothing that needed
7 medical attention on the site.

8 Q. Yeah.

9 A. I was still able to get up and check on everybody. I was
10 probably the first 911 call. That's the first thing I did was
11 grab my phone.

12 Q. Great.

13 A. After I looked around and saw, you know, what had happened I
14 knew we needed help fast. So I grabbed my phone and dialed 911
15 and talked to the operator and told her we need, you know,
16 paramedics and first responders asap, today, right now. And she
17 wanted to know what happened. I said, we have 20 -- I knew it was
18 at least 20 bicycles that had been hit. And she asked me to repeat
19 myself. I says, I have 20, 2-0, bicycles that have been hit by a
20 truck, so.

21 Q. It's amazing you didn't break your clavicle or anything, you
22 know, that's the typical --

23 A. Yeah, it's -- yeah, typically, I've never had a broken
24 shoulder and I've, like, I've cycled a long time. And I'm one of
25 the lucky ones who have not broken a shoulder. I don't know if

1 it's because I know how to roll when I'm going down or anything,
2 but I just got a little road rash on top of the shoulder and arm
3 and leg, and that's it. So I was very, very lucky.

4 Q. Okay. So you got up, you looked around, you called 911.

5 A. Called 911. Then I went to physically every person that was
6 down basically to see their condition. There was -- they were so
7 -- acting on adrenaline, those riders they were down, so they were
8 trying to stand up. You know, trying --

9 Q. Sure.

10 A. So my job -- at this point, unless you were a medical expert,
11 there wasn't much you could do for support for the critically
12 injured. Just had, they just had to wait until they -- the
13 professional help got there. So trying to, you know, make sure
14 people were alert, keep them calm. Tell them don't move, help's
15 coming. I could hear the firetrucks. I think the first firetruck
16 was from the Estella fire station at the top of the hill. I think
17 they got there really fast. I'd say within 4 minutes I think they
18 were rolling up on the scene.

19 A few bystanders that were behind the group had stopped, kind
20 of blocked traffic from coming forward. I would say three or four
21 people got out, wanted to know if they could help with any medical
22 assistance or anything like, what they could do. I could see they
23 were calling 911 as well. We went -- I went through and checked
24 on people. There were some that were unfortunately probably
25 already deceased when we got to them. And then there were some

1 that were alert. There were some that were breathing but not
2 responding. And then there just some, they were just dazed and
3 didn't know what had happened. And so I was just trying to
4 comfort who I could.

5 Q. Okay. And then so the -- what did you observe as far as the
6 EMS response?

7 A. EMS response was, to me, was fantastic. Like I said, 4
8 minutes I believe, if -- 4 to 5 minutes they were on site, at
9 least the first paramedics, and then they went through and kind of
10 did a survey as to who was most critically injured and they tended
11 to them first.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. And then they started rolling up one by one. I mean, I think
14 we had 10 or 11 ambulances, at least 4, 5 or 6 firetrucks, 20
15 police department cars where there from the Sheriff's department,
16 Glendale police, Buckeye police, Goodyear police. So yeah, we had
17 a large presence of first responders.

18 Q. Okay. And so after that, do you -- I mean, everybody left
19 and then you were able to -- how did you end up getting home?

20 A. After that -- so when I went down my first call was to 911.

21 Q. Yeah.

22 A. The second call was to my wife, so. We're relatively close
23 to the accident scene and so the conversation was brief. I said,
24 there's been an accident at -- I first said, I'm okay, I don't --
25 because I knew the word was going to be getting out soon. I'm

1 okay. There's been an accident on Cotton Lane bridge. And she
2 says, do you want me to come down there? I says, if you can,
3 yeah, that would be great. That was it. It was a 10 second
4 conversation with my wife. She came down and like I said, if
5 you're not a medical professional, there wasn't much you can do.
6 She's not.

7 But she did notice that the riders that were there were
8 starting to get cold and the full allotment of EMS wasn't on site
9 yet so there were -- wasn't really enough blankets to go around.
10 So she says, I'm gonna go home and get more blankets. So she came
11 home, on her way home she says, I don't have that many blankets.
12 She said, what we do have are large pool towels, beach towels, so
13 she grabbed a handful of those, I think 8 or 10 of them, and
14 brought those down and passed those out to whoever looked like
15 they were cold or shivering or needed a towel or just to stay
16 warm, so. And that was one of the questions that the lead
17 detective asked. She talked to him yesterday and she was like, I
18 brought down towels and she -- he said well, I saw the pictures of
19 people in towels and I figured -- but we couldn't find any towels
20 with the debris or accident. And she goes, no, I -- we brought
21 them from home after people -- when people were saying we're done
22 with them, here's your towels back. And so most of them handed
23 them to me since they knew it was my wife.

24 Q. Actually, let's -- do you have anything else that, you know,
25 anything else that stands out in your mind or anything --

1 A. You know, of that morning, a lot of things, you know, the key
2 memories are the noise of the impact of the riders behind me.
3 That noise I'll never forget. I mean, just the sound of the
4 equipment exploding behind me and visually seeing the truck go by;
5 I think those are the two memories I'll have forever. And of
6 course my friends that are still fighting for their lives and the
7 one that lost her life, so yeah.

8 Q. Okay. So you knew --

9 A. I knew Karen well, yes.

10 Q. You knew her pretty well?

11 A. We've been riding together about two years.

12 Q. Oh, I'm sorry.

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. And your -- and how many friends are in the hospital?

15 A. I believe there are still maybe 10. I think -- I visited all
16 of them yesterday.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. So there's two or three at Good Samaritan downtown Phoenix,
19 there's one in Thunderbird (indiscernible) Phoenix, and the rest
20 are at Abrazo here in Goodyear. And I think -- I believe three or
21 four already have been released and are at home recovering.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. But the rest are still there.

24 Q. Anything else? Like, do you remember at all, I mean I know
25 it was chaotic. Did you see at all what the driver did after?

1 A. So, yes. The driver stopped such a far distance away from
2 the impact area. I mean, the -- not even close. I'm talking, if
3 I can remember, 60 yards, 70 yards down the road is where he
4 physically actually stopped. And I'm not sure he would have
5 stopped. Because his vehicle was in such a condition, I think he
6 had to stop. It -- I mean, he couldn't see because of the hood
7 and the front end was (clapping noise) totally crushed, pushed
8 into the motor. At least the grill and the hood part of it. The
9 bumper left intact.

10 When the driver physically stopped and we were -- him getting
11 out of his truck, walking around the front of the truck, and he
12 had a cell phone in his hand. I didn't see him physically making
13 a call, I assume he did. I don't know who he called, whether it
14 was first response -- first responders or anybody else, I don't
15 know, but he stayed at the truck where he was parked. I never saw
16 him come up to the accident scene to one, check on anybody or try
17 to render help or anything or ask, you know, if he need -- can you
18 help or anything? I never even had contact with him. That's how
19 far away he was.

20 Q. Well --

21 A. And there's another point, so --

22 Q. Yeah, yeah. Please do.

23 A. Of course, he was down at the truck, the driver. A few
24 minutes later, I don't know, 5 minutes, 10 minutes later I look at
25 the truck again. Now there's two individuals at the truck in the

1 same attire. The driver had a, you know, a hoodie on, a
2 sweatshirt or a sweater with a hoodie and construction pants. And
3 I could see in the back of the truck there was construction
4 materials. I assumed he was coming up to do a job. But I never
5 really, you know, went into the cab to see who was inside.

6 And -- but then like I said, later, a few minutes later
7 there's now two individuals standing at the truck, both in the
8 same attire; hoodies, construction pants. I personally assumed
9 that there were two people in the truck. A passenger and a
10 driver. I made the same statement to the police detective that I
11 believe there was two. Because their initial statement to the
12 press was there was only one occupant in the truck. And so
13 possibly, but there wasn't a vehicle that was behind his truck
14 that came through the crash site after the crash.

15 Q. Yeah.

16 A. And I don't believe anybody's walking down from Estrella
17 Parkway to the scene. So I told the police, and I wasn't trying
18 to be funny or anything, and I said, unless he walked up from the
19 river, a dry bed river or he was dropped off, that's the only
20 reason he would get there if he wasn't inside the truck.

21 Q. Mm-hmm.

22 A. So to me, I still believe that there was two individuals in
23 the cab, unless the police can piece together another scenario
24 where another individual ended up at the truck without going
25 through the accident site or driving downhill, so.

1 Q. Yeah.

2 A. And there wasn't another vehicle there to say, you know, he
3 drove up or he maybe was ahead of them or whatever.

4 Q. Hmm.

5 A. So there was just the truck instead of one person that I saw
6 walking, you know, around after the accident, there was two.

7 Q. Okay. That's good to know.

8 A. And there are -- so in the B group, who we were riding, like
9 I said, there was the main group of 20 that were impacted. Behind
10 the B group were two individuals that may have started out with
11 the B group but kind of lagged behind, maybe couldn't keep up or
12 whatever. They witnessed the impact because they were behind the
13 group, and the truck physically passed them before hitting the
14 bikes.

15 Q. Do you know their names?

16 A. So they -- one individual I do not. The other one is, his
17 first name is Bob, and he is here on vacation from Minnesota. His
18 brother in law was one of the individuals that passed away.

19 Q. Okay. Yeah, I have his, I actually have his name.

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. I was holding off on contacting him because I saw the
22 Minnesota, but --

23 A. Yes. He was -- him and his brother in law who's from
24 Michigan.

25 Q. Right.

1 A. Were here on vacation for a few months. And he had just
2 retired and he says, so we're just trying to see where we want to,
3 you know, end up.

4 Q. Right, okay.

5 A. And he was lagging behind the whole group and the -- him and
6 I talked afterwards and he says, yeah, the truck went passed me
7 really close and I was like, what's he doing? And then he
8 impacted the whole group, you know, from behind. So he was, he is
9 a witness from what happened in front of the -- behind me and I
10 can kind of correlate what happened, you know, after that fact.

11 Q. Okay, thanks. Yeah, I'll reach out to him.

12 A. Yeah. And so there's that 20, there's the two individuals
13 that weren't impacted in the back, and then there was four
14 individuals in the B group that had just broken off and were
15 heading up the hill in front of us.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. So they were, I'm gonna say 100 yards in front of us when the
18 impact happened. They turned around and came back to kind of see
19 what happened and render aid. At least one of those individuals
20 stated to me that he physically saw two people sitting in the
21 truck.

22 Q. Do you know any of those people's names?

23 A. Yes. The four individuals that were hit, one was Leo (ph.).

24 Q. Leonel?

25 A. Leo, was his first name, yeah.

1 Q. Oh, Leo.

2 A. Yeah. I can get you his last name, I don't --

3 Q. Yeah, we can do it --

4 A. Josh (ph.). And Josh works at Santini where we meet on the
5 start point.

6 Q. Oh.

7 A. He's an employee there. Eric (ph.) and the last guy who's --
8 is Paul Theisen, T-h-e-i-s-s-e-n [sic]. And Paul was the one that
9 physically said, I know I saw two individuals in that truck when I
10 came back down the hill.

11 Q. Hmm. Would you have Paul's contact --

12 A. I do have Paul's contact, yes.

13 Q. Okay, great. Thank you. That would really help. Okay.

14 A. And my wife can correlate as well that when she -- so like I
15 said, she made two visits to the site.

16 Q. Yeah.

17 A. At the very onset, she was right behind the first responder.
18 Like I said, 4 minutes away. The firetruck, the first one, got
19 there in 4 minutes. My wife probably got there in 8 minutes, so
20 she was right behind them. She can state that she didn't see two
21 individuals inside the cab, but there was definitely two
22 individuals on the outside of the truck standing, talking. And at
23 one point, her second visit -- now, of course, it was a few
24 minutes later; 10, 15 minutes later when she brought down the
25 towels she said, when she came to the site, when they finally let

1 her through, because of course now the roads are blocked and
2 they're not letting anybody down, but the police said -- they let
3 her through.

4 She says when she parked again by the truck, now a police
5 cruiser, police SUV was parked behind a truck. The driver was
6 inside of the SUV in the back and the passenger -- oh, the other
7 individual was standing now in front of the truck and she believes
8 both were interviewed by police because they were separated now
9 and one was inside the police vehicle and one was standing at the
10 edge of the truck. So the second person that's still -- that the
11 police are still working, I believe, to try to identify and figure
12 out what's going on.

13 MR. HUMM: Okay. Well, I don't have any more questions.

14 MR. RHONE: Okay.

15 MR. HUMM: Thank you so much.

16 MR. RHONE: No, I thank you. I'm available for any other
17 questions and if I can remember anything, I would love to just be
18 able to send you information as far as anything I remember, but
19 I'm -- like I said, I -- of the group that were impacted, there
20 was only three of us that were able to leave, you know, on our
21 own. The rest were ambulanced out, so we would have a pretty good
22 memory. And like I said, I was probably the furthest one up and
23 the least impacted one, so we'll probably have the best visual of
24 what actually happened post-impact.

25 MR. HUMM: Yeah. Well, thank you. Okay, I'm gonna stop the

1 tape now. It is 10:10 by my watch. Thank you.

2 (Whereupon, at 10:10 a.m., the interview was concluded.)

3

4

5

CERTIFICATE

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

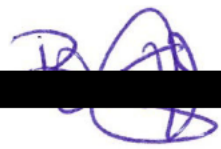
IN THE MATTER OF: CYCLISTS FATALLY STRUCK BY PICKUP TRUCK
NEAR THE COTTON LANE BRIDGE IN
GOODYEAR, ARIZONA ON FEBRUARY 25, 2023
Interview of Steven Rhone

ACCIDENT NO.: HWY23FH008

PLACE: Goodyear, Arizona

DATE: March 1, 2023

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.



Brandy Wainright
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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CYCLISTS FATALLY STRUCK BY PICKUP
TRUCK NEAR THE COTTON LANE BRIDGE
IN GOODYEAR, ARIZONA ON
FEBRUARY 25, 2023

Accident No.: HWY23FH008

* * * * *

Interview of: MICHAEL WALTER SMITH, Cyclist
West Valley Cycle Club

via telephone

Thursday,
August 24, 2023

APPEARANCES:

JOHN HUMM, Survival Factors Group Chair
National Transportation Safety Board

I N D E X

ITEM

PAGE

Interview of Michael Walter Smith:

By Mr. Humm

4

I N T E R V I E W

1
2 MR. HUMM: Today is August 24, 2023. I am interviewing
3 Mike Smith, who is a victim of the Goodyear, Arizona bicycle crash
4 on February 25, 2023. The NTSB case number is HWY23FH008. My
5 name is John Humm, H-U-M-M. I am a survival factors group chair
6 from the NTSB.

7 Thanks again, Mike, for agreeing to this interview. Really
8 appreciate your time. If you could please say and spell your name
9 for the transcriptionist?

10 MR. SMITH: Sure. It's Michael W. Smith, M-I-C-H-A-E-L, W.
11 for Walter, and Smith, S-M-I-T-H.

12 MR. HUMM: Thank you. And as we discussed before we started
13 recording, if you could please give your verbal consent that it's
14 okay for me to record this interview?

15 MR. SMITH: I give -- I gave my consent.

16 MR. HUMM: Thank you. All right. Thanks again, Mike.

INTERVIEW OF MICHAEL WALTER SMITH

17
18 BY MR. HUMM:

19 Q. So, let's start this interview. Maybe, if you could just
20 tell me where you live right now and maybe a little bit about your
21 family and your occupation.

22 A. Okay. I live in Goodyear, Arizona. I moved into an active
23 adult community about two years ago; and prior to that, I lived
24 for about 30 years just about 8 miles away with some horse
25 property. My wife and I had some horses. I am a native Arizonan,

1 born and raised, as a matter of fact, in Goodyear. I was born in
2 Goodyear. And have kind of moved across the city here; and now,
3 I'm back home again. Let's see. What else was the follow-up
4 question?

5 Q. What your occupation is or --

6 A. Yeah. I'm semi-retired. I worked for 35 years for Honeywell
7 as a program manager doing the technical publications for all of
8 our documentation for air equipment. And then, they decided they
9 needed to lighten the load there, and they whacked my department;
10 and so, I retired. And then, my wife, after about six months
11 says, you'd got to get something to do, because you're driving me
12 crazy.

13 So, I went down to the local bike shop and started working
14 down there one day a week, then it was two, and turned into five
15 days a week, just kind of goofing off. You know, I was the big
16 kid in the group. Everybody else was in their 20s, and I was in
17 my 60s, so that was kind of an eye-opener. But really nice group.
18 Very much enjoyed the customer interface selling and repairing
19 bikes. And we did a lot of shop rides, group rides. We were a
20 big supporter on the West Valley of the West Valley Cycle Group
21 and all the cycling in the West Valley, Goodyear, Avondale,
22 Surprise, the whole West Valley. And that's pretty much it.

23 Q. Okay. How long have you been riding ?

24 MR. SMITH: I've been a cyclist for probably 40,
25 45 years, very competitive, competitive cyclist, had a racing

1 license for quite a while. And I used to ride with the crazy kids
2 in the A group; slowly ended up in the B group; and then,
3 obviously, there's a C; and now, there's a D group that rides
4 together. So, the West Valley Group started probably, I don't
5 know, 15 years ago, maybe. I was one of the very first riders in
6 that group. We had, you know, six or 12 -- if we had 12 riders,
7 that was a lot of riders. And now, we have 100 to 150 riders at
8 times on this West Valley Saturday ride, the big ride. And so,
9 yeah, I've been with that West Valley Group for quite a while. A
10 very nice group of guys and gals.

11 BY MR. HUMM:

12 Q. Well, that's great. So, as long as we're talking about the
13 West Valley Cycle Club, why don't you give me -- when you hear
14 that name or you think about the club, what first comes to your
15 mind, or, you know, what's a good memory of that?

16 A. It's just a really -- I don't even know how to put it.
17 They're family. And, you know, I look forward to it. I mean,
18 they have a ride every day. There's the Monday Merry Ride, the
19 Happy Ride on Wednesday, the Fun Friday Ride, there's the Sunday
20 Recovery Ride, there's two Tuesday and Thursday training rides
21 that I don't get involved in. You know, you look forward to
22 going, either meeting at the designated start point or meeting
23 them along the route. It's a standard route that we always take
24 on Saturdays. And so, a lot of people -- as you learned, a lot of
25 people were coming down the hill, they call it. They were coming

1 from Estrella and meeting up with the group; and then, they would
2 turn around and go back, and part of our ride was to go up to
3 Estrella. But yeah, it was just a very fun group.

4 After the accident, I have a stack almost a foot high of
5 cards, and emails, and text messages from customers and all of the
6 West Valley Group. Like I said, we're a huge family, huge family,
7 and it's just, everybody supports everybody. You know, you get a
8 flat, there's a couple of people that'll stop, help you with the
9 flat; and then, you know, you'd all work together to get back to
10 the group. And it just, it was always a really, really enjoyable
11 group.

12 BY MR. HUMM:

13 Q. That's great. Can you tell me what bike you were riding that
14 day?

15 A. Oh, it was a Trek Domane SLR 7. It was a Project One, so it
16 was custom built, or custom -- well, it was custom built. Trek
17 has a program. They call them Project One, which you can go in --
18 I guess, semi-custom. You can pick the parts, and they'll put it
19 together. Whereas, a standard Domane SLR is just kind of, you
20 know, you pick the bike off the webpage, and that's what you get.
21 I was known for having some very bright colors. I love my bike,
22 and I love to show it off. So, yeah, it was a Domane, and, yeah,
23 it's no more.

24 Q. Do you remember what color it was?

25 A. Yeah. It's called, oh, emerald -- not emerald iris. The

1 name escapes me, but it changes color. It was multi-colored,
2 depending on the light. It went from a green into a blue. It was
3 kind of fancy.

4 Q. Do you remember the year at all, of it? Do you know the
5 model?

6 A. It was a '21.

7 Q. Okay. Thank you.

8 A. Yeah, a '21 or a '22. I have to doublecheck. But '21, I
9 think.

10 Q. Okay. That's great. Thanks. All right. So, let's start,
11 you know, go back to the morning of that ride, maybe go through
12 with me, you know, what you did in the morning, and then how you
13 got to the -- I assume you started at the Santini bike shop?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Yeah. Maybe if you just, you know, walk me through that part
16 of your day.

17 A. Sure. Saturday's typically a workday for me. And so, I got
18 up early, did my exercises, had something to eat; and then, I
19 drove to the bicycle store, my bike shop, the Trek West Phoenix
20 store. I have a key, so I would go in, change into my kit, my
21 bicycling outfit. They call it a kit: jersey, shorts, all that
22 good stuff. And grabbed my bike. I stored my race bike there.
23 My other bikes, I have here at the house. So, I grabbed my bike;
24 and then, I rode over to Santini, which was probably just about a
25 mile and a half away from the shop, and kind of caught up with the

1 group there. There's always a group that goes out one hour early,
2 quote, unquote, warm-up ride, but I did not participate in that.
3 So, I rode over; met everybody. You know, we shot the breeze.
4 And then, the bike ride started.

5 Q. So, the warm-up group, did they go out an hour early, and
6 then come back to Santini, or did they just start on the route an
7 hour early?

8 A. No, they go out from Santini one hour early, and they have a
9 different route. They'll make a little, well, a one-hour loop,
10 18-, 20-mile loop --

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. -- and then, they come back to the shop. And it's all timed.
13 How it all works out, I don't know. But it comes out just perfect
14 where they hit the shop, and within five minutes, the entire group
15 then goes out for the regular Saturday ride.

16 Q. Oh. Interesting.-

17 A. And it's a different route than the warm-up ride.

18 Q. In all the interviews I've had, nobody's ever spoken about
19 that group, so I was just curious about that. Interesting.

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. Okay. And then, do you remember what kit you were wearing
22 that day?

23 A. I was wearing my shop kit, so the Trek West Phoenix race kit.

24 Q. Okay. And were you wearing a helmet?

25 A. Oh, yes.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. Always, always. I've always worn a helmet.

3 Q. And do you recall any of the specifics of that helmet? Most
4 notably, I'm interested to know if it had any of the MIPS
5 protection at all.

6 A. Oh, most definitely. It was the Trek Specter WaveCel. So,
7 it had the new WaveCel technology in that, plus the MIPS, plus the
8 electronic straps -- or, the electronic buckle, sorry. Or,
9 magnetic buckle, I want to say. But yeah, definitely had the
10 WaveCel technology in there. Are you familiar with the Wave Cel?

11 Q. I'm not, no.

12 A. Oh. You've got to get one. No. I mean, up until this
13 point, everything has just been the standard foam. Some people
14 just recently have started taking the foam and engineering some
15 like crush cells (ph.) into it. But the WaveCel kind of looks
16 like a honeycomb. It's about a half an inch thick, and it's a
17 liner that goes all inside the helmet. And so, it crushes, and
18 deforms, and sheers, and does all that stuff on impact.

19 Q. Nice.

20 A. It's, you know, pretty interesting. One of our guys had one
21 early on and crashed in a mountain bike race. We got it back, and
22 we tore the WaveCel material out of it, and you could see a big
23 indent where he landed on it. Outside, you know, just some
24 scuffmarks on the outer shell of the helmet; but inside, it did
25 its job. And I am extremely anxious to get a hold of my helmet if

1 I can get it back. I would like to see what it looked like,
2 because I took a hell of a hit to my head, too.

3 Q. Oh. Okay. Yeah, I'll be interested to discuss that when we
4 get to the injury part.

5 A. Okay.

6 Q. Very interested in that. Okay. So, you met everybody at
7 Santini after doing a little spin-up ride from your bike store,
8 and you're chatting with people; and then, I imagine you guys
9 rolled out at about the usual time?

10 A. Yep. Oh, yeah, always right at -- well, I don't remember
11 what time it was when we took off at that time of year. We change
12 it a half an hour earlier or a half an hour later, depending on
13 light, you know, on the light. Right now, I think they're still
14 at about 6:00, starting at 6:00, and I couldn't tell you what time
15 we -- I don't have it at the top of my head as to what time we
16 took off. But, I mean, I could certainly look it up on my Strava.

17 But anyway, yeah, we all took off. I don't remember -- it
18 was a fairly large group, 50 plus riders. We're kind of in town a
19 little bit, and we're heading due south, so the first 5 to
20 10 miles is our warm-up ride, our warm-up part of the ride, so we
21 all kind of -- you know, we take up the whole lane. So,
22 everybody's talking to everybody else, you know, chit-chatting,
23 catching up. The pace is all moderated. And we get over to
24 Cotton Lane, and we head south; and when we go over the MC-85,
25 then, it's game on. That's when the ride officially starts.

1 And at that point, the A, B, and the C group, within the
2 course of a mile or 2, kind of break up. People know their
3 capabilities, and so they'll just drop into whatever group they're
4 associated with. And some people are training to -- you know,
5 they want to go from B to C or B to A -- I'm sorry, C to B, or
6 from B to A group, and so they'll try real hard to keep up with
7 the A group. And then, they'll start to slow up or fall off the A
8 group and get sucked up by the B group; and then, that's where
9 they'll ride for the rest of the ride.

10 And the majority of that takes place pretty quick. Everybody
11 pretty much gets into their little group, respective group, and we
12 all do the same route, for the most part. The A group always does
13 the standard route. The B group, depending on how quickly the A
14 group is motoring that day, where we see them, there's a couple
15 places where the ride makes a 180, so we'll see them coming back
16 the other side of the street. And then, from that position on the
17 road, we can determine, do we need to take a little bit longer
18 route, or do we need to take a shorter route, so that we all meet
19 at what they call the market, the gas station in Estrella. And at
20 that point, we buy water and ice, regroup. And then, we take off
21 for the second leg of the ride in Verrado; and then, we do the
22 same thing there. We regroup. And then, from Verrado, they make
23 the final leg back to Santini.

24 Q. Okay, great. That's a great overview. Thanks. You know, I
25 know you were wearing a helmet, and your bike was pretty brightly

1 colored. How would you characterize the helmet usage and clothing
2 of the other riders?

3 A. Individuals without a helmet are few and far between, and
4 they do not come back if they don't have a helmet. Everybody has
5 a helmet. The West Valley Cycle Club is not a club in the sense
6 that we have dues, and we have meetings, and all that; it's just a
7 club in name only. But there is a website, and I think one of the
8 items is, you know, we don't want roadie -- road bikers are
9 notorious for having attitudes. We say, no roadie attitudes, and
10 everybody must wear a helmet. So, 99.9 percent of the time. You
11 will seldom see anybody without a helmet. And if they don't have
12 a helmet, Santini and/or one of the other riders will offer up a
13 helmet. So, I mean, you know, you accidentally leave, and you
14 forget your helmet, somebody will get you a helmet for the ride.

15 As far as dress, everybody, pretty much, they all have the
16 Lycra cycling kits, and depending on the time -- I do remember I
17 had my arm warmers on that morning ride. I'm kind of notorious
18 for not bundling up a lot. So, I think a lot of people had leg
19 warmers on, also. I did not.

20 And then, the other important part, and because I sell
21 bicycles, is that probably -- and it's improved. It's nice to
22 see. But I would say probably 75 percent of the riders have
23 blinking taillights. I'm an advocate for having a blinking
24 headlight, also. But yeah, 75, 80 percent of the riders all have
25 taillights.

1 Q. Okay. Yeah. I noticed that when I inspected the bikes. And
2 last, just on a random chance, you didn't happen to have a
3 rearward-facing camera, did you?

4 A. No. Because I asked that. The police were trying -- you
5 know, where were you in the group, and who did you see? And I
6 said, you know, I have some ideas, but I said, couldn't you take a
7 look at the -- there was a couple people, I think, that -- I know
8 a couple people own those Garmin with the rear-view camera, but I
9 believe the police officer told me that there wasn't anything
10 usable. I think he said somebody had one, but it wasn't usable
11 data.

12 Q. Oh. Okay. Yeah, I haven't interviewed anybody that's had
13 one, but --

14 A. Oh, yeah.

15 Q. -- it's worth asking.

16 A. Yeah, well, and then, some people, they actually, they'll
17 have the actual GoPro kind of cameras, but I don't think anybody
18 had -- I know nobody had that camera going.

19 Q. Okay. Thank you. Okay. So, really, now, I'd just like to
20 hear, you know, maybe what you remember. So, once you guys pass,
21 you know, MC-85, and you're heading south, you've got that stretch
22 where there's the little bend, and then the rise up, you know,
23 maybe just tell me everything that you remember from, you know,
24 maybe MC-85 on.

25 A. Sure. So, we crossed MC-85, and the A group took off like

1 rockets, and the B group -- everybody, at that point, pace was
2 probably, I don't know, 18 to 20 miles an hour. Soon as you cross
3 MC-85, pace is 20 to 25 miles an hour. So, everybody's motoring.
4 A group is probably going 25 to 30, seeing if they can get lucky
5 and drop somebody off the group. They take off. The B group
6 forms up pretty quick. We're tooling down the road. I thought it
7 was a fairly large group. I thought there was like two dozen in
8 the B group at that point.

9 And we kind of went down the road, and as you say, it takes a
10 slight little bend to the left, nice and wide, two lanes. It has
11 a bike lane, if you can call it a bike lane. I think it was not
12 really a bike -- I think it's more of kind of just like a 2-foot-
13 wide kind of little gutter, more than anything. We're tooling
14 along single file or double file; and then, we start to get
15 towards the bridge. The bridge, a very slight rise, you know,
16 straight ahead of you, and it takes me half the ride to get my
17 heart rate up and everything else. And immediately after the
18 bridge, there's two short, steep little hills, and those kind of
19 kick my butt. If I can make it over the top of those with the
20 group, then I have a great ride the rest of the day. You know,
21 I'm fine. But that first little hill kind of takes it out of me.

22 So, as we were approaching the bridge, and as it starts to
23 elevate, we went from pavement to the concrete bridge part. About
24 that point, I start to fall back a little bit and move over to the
25 right-hand lane -- or, to the right-hand -- there's a little bit

1 more of a bike lane. What do I want to say? Probably 3 or
2 4 foot. It's been six months. I don't remember how wide it is.
3 4 foot wide, maybe, of, you know, a 5-foot wide bike lane. And
4 then, that concrete jersey barrier sits there.

5 So, I was starting to fall back, and got over to the right,
6 and I do remember distinctly going to the right, oh, maybe a foot
7 and a half, 2 feet from that concrete jersey barrier, because I
8 was looking for a bike wheel, somebody to draft behind, so that I
9 would have enough energy to get over those two upcoming hills.
10 So, I was to the right of the white line. I was probably pretty
11 much in the middle of that undesignated, but that bike lane.

12 And the reason I know that for sure is because I don't like
13 to be in that area, because there's a lot of debris/garbage. You
14 know, you can get a flat. I mean, there's chunks of wood. All
15 kinds of stuff gets thrown up into that area and doesn't have a
16 place to blow off like on a normal street, because there is that
17 concrete -- I call it, for lack of another term, somebody told me
18 it was called a jersey barrier, that 3-foot-high concrete barrier.
19 So, that traps all the debris right up there against that curb.
20 So, I knew where I was. I didn't want to be there, but it was
21 kind of an added necessity.

22 As I told you previously, 40, 45 years of cycling
23 competitive, you know, you're in the pack, you hear things.
24 Constantly, you're always, always aware of your surroundings and
25 listening. I never heard anything. If there was a wheel touched,

1 you know, two people rubbed wheels in the back, or somebody yelled
2 something in the back, you heard it. That morning, I heard
3 absolutely nothing but the impact when I got hit. And just a
4 flash, I see -- I can't make it out, but I saw -- apparently, it
5 was the truck, and maybe another rider. And at that point, we
6 went flying.

7 I'm about a buck and a half, 150 pounds. So, I think I was
8 fortunate, and I got knocked through the air, I think. I went
9 flying through the air. And the reason I think that is because
10 one of my other cycling buddies said that I ended up hitting him
11 from behind and knocking him off his bike. Whether I was -- and
12 then, in the picture, you can see my bike is probably 50, 60 feet
13 back down the road. Some of the other riders were less fortunate,
14 obviously, and kind of went under the truck or got knocked down by
15 other riders, or by the side of the truck, or a mirror, or
16 whatever.

17 I remember tumbling and hitting the pavement, and that was
18 it. I just kind of laid there. I didn't move. And finally,
19 somebody, Ethan -- his name is Ethan Bach (ph.). He was one of
20 the riders that I think went down. I saw him later. He had a
21 little scrape on his leg, so -- but I think he was very fortunate
22 and just got knocked down. I'm not sure. I haven't talked to him
23 yet. I owe him a very big thanks. But he came over and started
24 talking to me, and I was able to tell him to get my phone out of
25 the back of my jersey and call my wife.

1 Shortly after that, very shortly, the first responders
2 started showing up: police, ambulances. Again, I don't know how
3 long we were on that bridge. Thirty minutes, maybe. It felt like
4 five minutes. I do remember them coming over and trying to get my
5 helmet off. They couldn't figure out the magnetic clip. They
6 ended up cutting the helmet off. Apparently, they did, you know,
7 just a quick triage, knew that I was pretty badly injured. Again,
8 I hadn't moved. Even though they took my helmet off, I hadn't
9 moved. And I did see them drop a tag in front of me that
10 indicated that I was one of the first to go.

11 Then, they tried to get me into -- well, they didn't try.
12 They ended up getting me into a stretcher and got me on the
13 ambulance. I really don't remember the ambulance ride to the
14 trauma center, which, trauma center is probably 1, 2 miles from
15 Santini, a half a mile. It's just on the other side of the
16 freeway from the bike shop, so it was a quick ride. And then, I
17 remember, you know, bits and pieces in the emergency the rest of
18 that day. But that was what I remember of the morning and the
19 ride.

20 Q. Okay. Do you know, when you got hit, do you believe you were
21 hit directly by the truck, or do you think you were hit by another
22 bicyclist?

23 A. I believe I was hit by the truck.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. Yeah. I mean, my injuries were -- it was not a sideswipe. I

1 did not -- I was -- it was a direct hit --

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. -- from my injuries, which we can talk about later, the
4 pelvis, the groin area from the saddle, the indication on the
5 bike. The whole back end of the bike was just folded up. So,
6 yeah, it was a direct hit.

7 Q. And then, do you know, were you run over by the truck?

8 A. You know, I don't know. I don't believe I was. If I was
9 thrown forward or carried forward, and then hit my other rider
10 friend, I don't know. I have a pretty severe leg wound that is
11 yet to be explained. You know, I don't know if it got torn up on
12 that concrete jersey barrier or if it got hit on something from
13 the truck, the hood. I'm sure you saw pictures of the truck, so
14 it was pretty banged up. So, I don't know if something on that
15 truck; or I was on the ground, and the truck ran over my
16 ankle/foot area, because I did have a broken bone right there in
17 the ankle area where that bad wound was.

18 Q. Right. Okay. When you say you flew forward, and you hit one
19 of your friends, do you remember who you hit?

20 A. Mark Wilgast (ph.).

21 Q. Okay. You hit Mark. All right.

22 A. Yep. Or at least that's what he told me.

23 Q. Yeah, yeah.

24 A. He kind of chuckled. He says, Mike, you knocked me off my
25 bike. So, I don't --

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. -- know, you know, again, I don't know if it was just me
3 flying through the air knocking him off the bike; me being carried
4 down the road and knocked over, and, you know, then the guy ran
5 over my leg. I don't know.

6 Q. Yeah.

7 A. But yeah, he said he thought I hit him. And so, I can't
8 swear to it, because I just thought I remembered flying through
9 the air tumbling.

10 Q. Sure. And so, I realize that, you know, it's in a pack, and
11 you're riding, and you're really kind of focused on what's ahead
12 of you. And I know the police asked you this. Do you remember at
13 all maybe who was in front of you or who was in your immediate
14 vicinity?

15 A. Boy, you know, I asked that question a million times. I do
16 not know.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. As I said, when I got hit, you know, I saw just a flash of
19 the truck and a rider beside me, and we were both getting hit.
20 Who it was, I have no idea. Whose wheel I was going to follow at
21 that point, I have no idea. So, I don't know whose wheel I was
22 trying to follow at that point. Yeah. I couldn't tell you.

23 Q. Yeah. No, that's fine. I've done my best to try and piece
24 it together, and I think I have a reasonable estimation. I mean,
25 you know, obviously, you're never going to be able to pinpoint it

1 down 100 percent, but no, that helps.

2 A. I would love to see -- and I've asked the police that after
3 the fact, you know, can you give me an aerial view? You know, if
4 you're picturing looking down on all the cyclists, you know, can
5 you say, Mike was here, you know, Clay was in front of me, and Joe
6 was in front of him, and that kind of a thing, I would love to
7 know that. But nobody has been able to kind of -- and all the
8 other riders, the only one that kind of gave me any indication of
9 where I was or who was around me was Mark.

10 Q. Okay. Yeah, like I said, I have an estimation that I put
11 together, but it's by, you know, it's from compiling together all
12 these different interviews, I've tried to -- some people remember,
13 you know -- people at the front of the formation tended to kind of
14 remember a little bit more about the accident; and then, some
15 people in the very back that weren't struck remember it, too. But
16 a lot of the people that were in the middle that got hit obviously
17 don't remember a lot, which is understandable. Do you remember
18 the color of the tag at all that was dropped in front of you by
19 the MS --

20 A. No.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. No, I don't. I think it was red, but don't quote me.

23 Q. Yeah. It probably was red. That's --

24 A. Yeah, it just, it was something that dropped down, they
25 dropped it down in front of me, and they had cut my -- I had what

1 they call, it's called a road ID. It's a little bracelet.

2 Q. Oh, yeah.

3 A. You know, it gives you a little info on it. Regardless, they
4 asked you the same questions over. And anyway, they cut that off
5 my wrist, and it was laying there when the tag dropped. But, you
6 know, I saw it, I didn't know what it was, and the guy just kind
7 of walked off, so I don't know. But I thought it was a little red
8 tag.

9 Q. Okay. That would make sense, based on your injuries. And
10 so, not to belabor the point, but before we move off of this, I
11 just want to clarify. So, your first indication that something
12 was wrong was that you were hit from behind, essentially?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. Yep.

16 Q. Fair enough.

17 A. No other -- again, you know, I went back to the bridge about
18 a month and a half ago for the first time, and just standing there
19 over on that little sidewalk on the other side of that concrete
20 barrier, those damn cars, they're moving.

21 Q. Yeah.

22 A. And so, could a noise -- could somebody have been hit 10 feet
23 behind me, and then, you know, and carried into me, and then up to
24 the other riders, that's all, it's possible, because it happened
25 so quick. But boy, I never -- nothing -- no audio ever registered

1 until the moment I got hit.

2 Q. Okay. Thanks. So, if you don't mind, could we talk a little
3 bit about the injuries you sustained?

4 A. Sure. Pretty severe facial. I kind of skidded on the left
5 side of my face. My nose, cheeks, everything on the left side was
6 pretty well ground down, especially my nose. I also -- and I wear
7 glasses, and I was wearing glasses at the time, never found those.
8 Something -- I had a pretty big gouge up above my temple, above my
9 ear, above my temple, partially way up above my head there.
10 Again, that's why I want to see what the helmet looked like on
11 that side there. But something -- maybe it was a buckle. I don't
12 know. I don't think there's any buckles up there. But something
13 gouged, took a pretty good chunk of skin and everything out of my
14 head up there.

15 In my back, again, I was hit pretty square on, so my pelvis,
16 as the surgeon told me, was crushed and trashed. They put four,
17 five screws through there, two of which sent from side to side,
18 that pulled everything, pulled the big, the ileac, I don't know
19 what they call that, pulled the big parts of the pelvis back
20 together. The bottom of the pelvis fractured, and broke, and
21 punctured my bladder, that we found out a few days later.
22 Tailbone was broken. My spine, there were some fractures in
23 two places on my spine. And then, pretty good compression of the
24 lower spine joints.

25 Thankfully, right now, it appears -- because I was non-weight

1 bearing for three months, so they didn't do anything with the
2 ankle as far as pinning the bones in there. They didn't do
3 anything to the back. Although the one spine surgeon wanted to do
4 surgery, I think they talked him out of it and said, he's not
5 going to be moving, so, you know, he should be all right.

6 So, let's see. So, we had the spine, we had the pelvis. Six
7 or eight ribs on the left side were broken, a couple of ribs on
8 the right side. Pretty good whack on the ribs. A couple of them
9 have not really healed properly. Instead of going flat, all the
10 bones are overlapped, so I've got a nice little bump on the back.
11 Lots of internal muscular damage, tendons to the groin area, where
12 my saddle, kind of ripped through there between my thighs. Tore
13 up my groin area pretty good. And then, just a ton of road rash.

14 And then, again, don't know how or where, but something took,
15 I would say, a 5- by 5-inch area of skin, and muscle, and whatever
16 else from the upper part -- well, from my shin down towards my
17 ankle. And of that area, probably the 2-inch-diameter hole went
18 right down to the bone, which, well, today, is still -- we're
19 still waiting -- there's a scab on it now, but it has taken
20 forever to heal. And then, you know, all the black and blue.

21 MR. SMITH: Anything -- my wife is here. Anything else? I
22 think that's pretty much it.

23 BY MR. HUMM:

24 Q. Wow.

25 A. A banged-up right ankle, also, on the anklebone there, a nice

1 little scab. And scabs up and down the left-hand side, the right.
2 The buttocks, in the back, there's a bunch of scabs. Because my
3 wife took some pictures of the back of my --

4 (Crosstalk)

5 MR. SMITH: The back was black and blue pretty bad.

6 MR. HUMM: Yeah.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible).

8 MR. SMITH: Yeah. So, I believe that's what happened.

9 BY MR. HUMM:

10 Q. Do you know if you were diagnosed with a concussion at all?

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I don't --

12 MR. SMITH: I don't -- nobody ever said anything. It was an
13 incredible hospital. Abrazo West. It's one of only two trauma
14 centers in Phoenix, I believe.

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible).

16 MR. SMITH: And very fortunate. Hell of a group. I had 12,
17 14 doctors kind of, you know, like on TV, where they make the
18 rounds into the patient every morning kind of a thing. I had a
19 group of 12. Each one of them -- well, maybe six or eight of
20 them, were doctors. The other ones were assistants or whatever,
21 you know, trainees. But they would come in. You know, I had the
22 urologist, I had the kidney doctor, I had a doctor for my big toe,
23 you know, a doctor for each thing. And then, there was the lead
24 doctor, so --

25 But I don't remember them -- well, we talked about a lot of

1 different things, but I don't think they ever talked about a
2 concussion. I can't imagine that I didn't have one, but hey, you
3 never know. Because I took a pretty good whack on my head there,
4 so a lot of drugs that day, and a lot of drugs for the few weeks
5 after that, narcotic drugs, so -- but I definitely don't remember
6 a whole lot of that Saturday, so I don't know if the drugs -- you
7 know, if they asked if I'd had a concussion, I don't know if I
8 responded positive or negative. They didn't do any CT scans of my
9 head or anything like that.

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible).

11 MR. SMITH: Yeah. Although I did have CT scans and MRIs, you
12 know, out the wazoo, but whether or not they did anything in the
13 head area, I don't think they did.

14 MR. HUMM: Okay. Yeah, especially in something like that, a
15 concussion can be difficult to diagnose just with some of the
16 standard symptoms, just because, you know, you're in shock, and
17 then, again, they're applying the drugs, so a lot of those things
18 can affect memory loss and things like that, so --

19 MR. SMITH: Yeah.

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Well, dialysis.

21 MR. SMITH: Yeah. I mean, and there was some -- like I said,
22 first say, Saturday, it was late Saturday night before they
23 finally was able to find me a room in the trauma section there. I
24 was scheduled to have the orthopedic surgeon the next morning,
25 Sunday morning. That didn't happen. Let's see. I think that's

1 when they diagnosed that my kidneys shut down, and so they ended
2 up having to do a transfusion.

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Dialysis.

4 MR. SMITH: Dialysis. They sucked everything out one side,
5 and put it in the other, and filtered it out, and all that good
6 stuff. The following day, the urologist or kidney doctor came in
7 and said the kidneys had kicked back in. Everything was good. I
8 was told I was going to have the surgery that night, the second
9 night, I think.

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Third.

11 MR. SMITH: And then, the -- or, the third night. And then,
12 my stomach was bloated like a watermelon, and they said, hey, you
13 know, before we go, let's just take another MRI, and they did, and
14 that's when they discovered that my bladder had been punctured.
15 So, they said, oh, we're not doing surgery again. So, the
16 orthopedic surgeon got a couple of days' break. She was pretty
17 busy.

18 MR. HUMM: Yeah.

19 MR. SMITH: So, I think it was the third day before they
20 actually did the pelvis.

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes.

22 MR. SMITH: But yeah, they got the bladder under control, put
23 some more tubes in me to drain my stomach, and -- yeah. So, that
24 was the injuries from the crash, and then the follow-up injuries
25 as my body kind of responded in the hospital, with the kidneys and

1 the bladder kind of thing.

2 BY MR. HUMM:

3 Q. Well, that's quite an ordeal.

4 A. Yes, not one I ever want to relive.

5 Q. No, definitely not. How is your recovery going?

6 A. You know, cyclists, I'm an A type personality, so I'm pretty
7 driven. Project manager all my life, there. So, I kind of went
8 at recovery, or I had been going at recovery, pretty hard.
9 Three months was non-weight bearing, so at first, I think it was
10 two and a half, maybe three weeks, in the -- a couple of weeks in
11 trauma, or in the -- yeah, in the trauma center. Then, I got
12 moved upstairs to a non-trauma room, and at that point, they had
13 talked about doing some kind of therapy to help me, you know, turn
14 in the bed. I definitely was not getting out of the bed, but to
15 be able to turn and, you know. And that never happened. And I
16 think I was upstairs for another --

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Three, four, five days.

18 MR. SMITH: -- another four or five days. And I had a
19 therapy person come in and interview me; and then, the next thing
20 I know, they said, we got a hold of your insurance, and we're
21 moving you to rehab. So, I was transported via ambulance to a
22 rehab facility, and I stayed there for two --

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Weeks.

24 MR. SMITH: -- three weeks, two or three weeks there. And at
25 that point, again, non-weight bearing, so it was just a matter of

1 helping me with my upper body, how to make transfers, how to go
2 from the bed to the wheelchair, and eventually get into the
3 therapy area where, you know, we toss balls around and stuff like
4 that. Had me working the wheelchair, throwing dishrags into
5 corners of the place so I could pick things up with a little
6 gripper, and all that good stuff. No kind of therapy for the
7 legs.

8 So, they released me from there fairly quickly, only because
9 they couldn't do anything with the legs. So, I got home, and I
10 think I had probably a week or two at the house before I went
11 to -- no.

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: They came here.

13 MR. SMITH: No. Oh, I had a couple of people come here three
14 or four times, kind of -- compared to the rehab facility, where I
15 had a schedule on my board every night, the next day, I had
16 three one-hour sessions scheduled throughout the day, you know,
17 around breakfast, lunch, and then dinner. It was pretty
18 regimented. I loved it. At home, they had a home nurse come
19 three or four times, and honestly, it was a joke. So, I think, at
20 a three -- well, I don't think. At the three-month mark, I went
21 back to the orthopedic surgeon, and she said, okay, based on the
22 X-rays, I could stand up. So, I kicked the wheelchair out, and I
23 wobbled to my feet, and then I sat back down, but it was great to
24 be able to get up.

25 And then, I went home that day, called up a friend of mine

1 who is a physical therapist, and got on his schedule, and I think
2 I had a week at home just kind of wheeling the wheelchair around
3 in the house and getting used to a walker. And then, I showed up
4 at therapy, and I've been going to therapy twice a day.

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Twice a week.

6 MR. SMITH: Sorry, sorry. Twice a week with him. And got
7 another one more month, I think, with him, at twice a week. I do
8 physical exercises here three times a day. And now, just
9 recently, I started walking, and I do that twice a day. So, I'm
10 up to about a mile, mile and a half; and last week, I started back
11 to work one day a week for four hours. At the end of four hours
12 on my feet, I'm pretty much toast, but we're making progress.

13 But that's where we're at with the recovery. I did see the
14 orthopedic surgeon last week, and she gave me the final green
15 light. She said everything looks like it's healed well. The only
16 restriction I had prior to that was no jumping jacks and no
17 jogging. And I said, are jumping jacks and jogging allowed? And
18 she said, she goes, yeah, you can do it. I said, well, I'm not
19 going to do any of that, but I just wanted -- she said, you have
20 full clearance.

21 Where was I going with that? I don't remember where I was
22 going with that. But anyway -- oh, I did tell her, I said, oh,
23 I'm worn out. I'm tired. She asked what I was doing. She had a
24 copy of a report from my physical therapist. And she kind of
25 chuckled, and she says, you're three to six months ahead of

1 schedule, so I feel pretty good about that. But again, I think
2 all the cyclists that I've talked to after this accident, we got
3 together and had a little breakfast, you know, we're just kind of
4 mentally, we're that way, you know, disciplined and getting back
5 into condition.

6 So, it'll probably be another six months, I'm told, six
7 months to a year and a half -- or, well, one year to a year and a
8 half, so I've got another six months to a year to go to get back
9 to full recovery, maybe. But yeah, just walking and/or standing
10 on my feet for that four hours/five hours takes its toll. I come
11 back -- I've never laid down in my life and taken naps, but I do
12 every day when I come back from therapy. It's quite the ordeal.

13 BY MR. HUMM:

14 Q. I'll bet. So, did you say you're working four to four and a
15 half hours a day now?

16 A. No.

17 Q. Oh.

18 A. Four to four and a half hours one day a week.

19 Q. Yeah, but you're working?

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. Oh.

22 A. Yep.

23 Q. That's great.

24 A. Yep, yep. So, as soon as I can get -- unfortunately, a full
25 shift there is nine hours, so it's going to take me a little while

1 to get to a full shift. Once I'm comfortable with a full day,
2 then we're going to add a second day; and then, maybe a third day.
3 I don't know that we're going to go much further than three days.
4 I was starting to wind down from that five days a week. I had
5 just told the boss that I was going to go to four days a week.
6 So, yeah.

7 Q. Understood.

8 A. Be a while --

9 Q. Yeah.

10 A. -- it'll be a while before I get back to two or three days
11 a week.

12 Q. Yeah. Well, I mean, it's amazing the recovery you've made,
13 so you should feel very good about yourself for everything you've
14 done. I mean, you know better than anybody, but your injuries
15 were so extensive, and the progress you made is amazing.

16 A. Well, I'm just amazed and thankful to the orthopedic surgeon,
17 and the wound care doctor, and the wound care nurses. Because the
18 wound care doctor, I would see once a week to braid (ph.) the
19 wound. And then, I go home, and I had a wound care nurse that
20 came twice a week and changed the dressing. That went on until
21 just last month, until it actually kind of scabbed over.

22 But that's the only lingering visible injury, is just, that
23 scab just will not go away. But it's in a really bad place, a lot
24 of vascular damage in that area, so the blood flow is not the
25 greatest in that area. So, I just saw my primary care last night,

1 and we talked about it. He said that's going to, you know,
2 six months to a year, easily. It may not really ever kind of look
3 like normal skin down there, but, you know, the scab will
4 eventually go away.

5 Q. Well, yeah, thank you so much for taking the time to tell me
6 the story.

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. It's quite an ordeal. Is there anything that, you know, that
9 stands out from that day or any of your experiences that maybe I
10 haven't asked or that you'd like to talk about?

11 A. Just frustration. We all have this frustration, because
12 nothing's really happened. They still haven't pressed charges on
13 the gentleman. Shortly after the accident, a few days after the
14 accident, the county attorney kicked it back to Goodyear for
15 further investigation and more information. I think it's been
16 three weeks or a month now --

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: At least a month.

18 MR. SMITH: -- that the City of Goodyear finally gave him all
19 the information or told him, this is all you're going to get, kind
20 of thing, and here's all the paperwork. But the county attorney
21 still has not done anything with it. So, the gentleman is running
22 around a free man, and it just kind of --

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Not even an ankle bracelet.

24 MR. SMITH: -- it's just kind of extremely upsetting. Would
25 love to know -- you know, we just want some answers, what

1 happened. He claims steerage lockup. They checked the truck out
2 right there on the bridge. Nothing there. No indication that he
3 hit the brakes, didn't hit the horn. You know, it just kind of --
4 well, you know, and they say, well, thankfully, he stopped. Well,
5 you saw the pictures of the truck. The truck was not going down
6 the road much further than where it went, so he didn't have much
7 choice.

8 But it would be nice to know what the hell happened. We have
9 not been told. Unofficially, I was told by the police that just
10 from the toxicology report, they had enough to press charges, but
11 that's all the police would tell me. So, you know, he did admit
12 to smoking marijuana the night before, and I'm sure, where there
13 was marijuana, there was some drinking. It's a terrible accident.
14 I probably would have felt a little bit better had he said, I just
15 passed out, you know. I was up all night partying. I got up
16 really early, or I never really went to bed. I picked up my load
17 of pavers over on the east side of town, and I was driving to a
18 job site that morning, and I just, I woke up running over a bunch
19 of bike riders, and I'm sorry. But, you know, he never said
20 anything like that. So, we really, we all just want some kind of
21 closure.

22 MR. HUMM: Yeah.

23 MR. SMITH: I mean, you know, my lawyer kind of looked at it.
24 She took an accident reconstruction person out there to check the
25 road, make sure, you know, everything looked hunky dory, and I

1 mean, I don't -- did you say you had gone out there and seen it,
2 or you just saw pictures of it?

3 MR. HUMM: No, we were out there the Monday after.

4 MR. SMITH: Okay.

5 MR. HUMM: Like, yeah, the Sunday after.

6 MR. SMITH: Oh, yeah.

7 MR. HUMM: We were there essentially the day after, and we
8 were there for about a week.

9 MR. SMITH: Yeah. I mean, you look at it, and heading pretty
10 much due south, 8 o'clock in the morning, sun's off to your left,
11 a bunch of cyclists with blinking taillights on that slight little
12 rise. You know, he had a straight shot. Not crazy about that
13 jersey barrier, that concrete barrier, there, but I can
14 understand, on the bridge, you kind of need that. You know, if
15 anybody were to -- if that wasn't there, you know, a lot of
16 vehicles could go over the edge, I guess, so I guess you kind of
17 need it. I don't know how you can get around it.

18 As far as the debris, other than cleaning that little cycling
19 area there, the little bike path, maybe, I don't think it's a
20 designated bike path. Maybe it is. But that section of the road,
21 that little part right there, is, for the most part, one of the
22 safest places on the whole damn, route other than maybe some farm
23 area out there in the middle of nowhere. But as far as an inner
24 city road, and I would call that part of connecting Goodyear to
25 Estrella community was one of the wider -- definitely the widest

1 spot on the road. So, road designwise, you know, it couldn't have
2 been better. Anywhere else, you know, we could have got
3 sideswiped or, you know, he tried to go around the group, and
4 another car was coming, and he had to swerve back into us. I
5 could have seen that. But in this area, you know, the two wide
6 lanes, plus the bike lane, plus that whole center divider of the
7 bridge, just more room than anybody could ever ask for.

8 MR. HUMM: Yeah, certainly. If you had told me that there
9 was an accident on Cotton Lane, I think the last place I would
10 have picked was where it happened.

11 MR. SMITH: Yeah, yeah, exactly. Even a little bit further
12 down the road, where it was asphalt, and, you know, there's just
13 that little narrow bike lane, I guess you would call it, you know,
14 striped off, you know, you could probably see it there. But even
15 then, Cotton Lane is a pretty darn wide road from MC-85 all the
16 way to the bridge. And then, it opens up when it hits the bridge.

17 MR. HUMM: Correct.

18 MR. SMITH: So, you know, so --

19 MR. HUMM: Yep. After the bridge, that's actually where it's
20 a little more dicey, in my opinion. It goes down to one lane, and
21 there's a curb, you know --

22 MR. SMITH: Well, yeah, and that's another thing. That curb,
23 that asphalt is, I would say, one layer; and then, there's the
24 concrete curb to the right. That's dangerous.

25 MR. HUMM: Right.

1 MR. SMITH: Because it hasn't -- they need to put that second
2 layer of asphalt on there so the asphalt is level with that curb.
3 But you've got a concrete curb that's an inch and a half high, and
4 that's caught the wheel of many bike riders. And I think a lot of
5 the cars that come up behind us, because the road does get real
6 narrow there, a lot of the bike riders, we all move out away from
7 that curb. And so, we're taking up the whole road, you know, and
8 we're going uphill, so we're going 10 to 15 miles an hour, and
9 cars have been known to pile up behind us and get pissed off. You
10 know, once we get over the back side, we narrow down to one to
11 two rows wide. still kind of keep away from that little concrete
12 curb. But that lip of that concrete goes from that point all the
13 way up to the roundabout.

14 MR. HUMM: Right.

15 MR. SMITH: Yeah, the City of Goodyear needs to finish that
16 damn job, because that is one bad place. But yeah, after you get
17 over the back side of the bridge, yeah, it gets kind of dicey.

18 MR. HUMM: Right, but yeah, the bridge is, obviously, wide
19 open.

20 MR. SMITH: Yeah, yep.

21 MR. HUMM: Well, again, I really want to thank you for your
22 time. Unless there's anything, again, that you think I haven't
23 covered, we can probably end the interview, if you're okay with
24 that.

25 MR. SMITH: Yes, I am. I'm fine --

1 MR. HUMM: Okay.

2 MR. SMITH: -- as long as you got everything you need. I
3 apologize for the delay. I don't know if it was you, but somebody
4 from the NTSB sent a text message to me really early on, and I
5 said I couldn't talk, I needed to send it to my lawyer. And she
6 just called me yesterday. And I'm thinking, have you put this guy
7 off that long?

8 MR. HUMM: Sure.

9 MR. SMITH: But --

10 MR. HUMM: Yeah, we can get to that after. I'll hang on the
11 line. I'll talk to you a little bit about that after I stop the
12 recording, if that's okay.

13 MR. SMITH: You got it.

14 MR. HUMM: Okay. So, we're going to conclude this interview.
15 The time by my watch is 12:50 p.m. Thank you.

16 (Whereupon, at 12:50 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

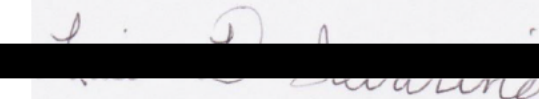
IN THE MATTER OF: CYCLISTS FATALLY STRUCK BY PICKUP TRUCK
NEAR THE COTTON LANE BRIDGE IN
GOODYEAR, ARIZONA ON FEBRUARY 25, 2023
Interview of Michael Smith

ACCIDENT NO.: HWY23FH008

PLACE: via telephone

DATE: August 24, 2023

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.



Lisa D. Sevarino
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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CYCLISTS FATALLY STRUCK BY PICKUP
TRUCK NEAR THE COTTON LANE BRIDGE
IN GOODYEAR, ARIZONA ON
FEBRUARY 25, 2023

Accident No.: HWY23FH008

* * * * *

Interview of: NICHOLAS TAYLOR, Cyclist

via telephone

Thursday,
March 23, 2023

APPEARANCES:

JOHN HUMM, Survival Factors Group Chairman
National Transportation Safety Board

I N D E X

ITEM

PAGE

Interview of Nicholas Taylor:

By Mr. Humm

4

I N T E R V I E W

1
2 MR. HUMM: Today is March 23rd, 2023. I am conducting an
3 interview with Nick Taylor. This is a phone interview in regard
4 to NTSB case number HWY23FH008, the bicycle accident in Goodyear,
5 Arizona, that was on February 25th, 2023. My name is John Humm,
6 H-u-m-m, with the NTSB and I am the Survival Factors Group
7 Chairman. So thank you again, Nick, for agreeing to this
8 interview. If you could please say and spell your name for the
9 transcriptionist?

10 MR. TAYLOR: Yeah, my name is Nicholas Taylor, spelled
11 N-i-c-h-o-l-a-s T-a-y-l-o-r.

12 MR. HUMM: Thank you. And Nick, as we discussed just before
13 going on, before me turning on the recorders, if you could just
14 give your consent that it's okay for me to record this.

15 MR. TAYLOR: Yes, that's okay.

16 MR. HUMM: All right, thank you very much.

INTERVIEW OF NICHOLAS TAYLOR

17
18 BY MR. HUMM:

19 Q. Nick, could you start telling me a little bit about yourself,
20 so maybe your occupation, where you currently live, and maybe how
21 you came to Arizona?

22 A. Yeah. So I am a mechanical engineer, I work for Ford Motor
23 Company doing vehicle dynamics. I live in Royal Oak, Michigan and
24 just down here in the Phoenix area for the winter months to do
25 some testing with our vehicles.

1 Q. Okay, great. Thanks. And then can you tell me, how long
2 have you been riding your bike or, you know, been active cycling,
3 so maybe your experience with it, how serious you are, you know,
4 just kind of along those lines.

5 A. Yeah. So besides, you know, regular riding a bike as a kid
6 and stuff, I got into cycling a little bit more seriously after I
7 graduated college. So I was a rower in high school and college
8 and then when COVID hit, rowing was kind of out the window, I
9 tried to pick up cycling when I moved to Michigan, so I would say
10 that was probably the summer of 2020 is when I got pretty
11 seriously into it and started riding with groups in the southeast
12 Michigan area starting that year, in 2020, and then, you know,
13 it's gotten more serious. I don't really compete and race very
14 much, I've only done a couple, but I do participate in a decent
15 amount of group rides. I'd say, on average, when the weather's
16 good, three to four times a week.

17 Q. Okay. And how did you get linked up on these Saturday rides
18 or is this the first time -- is this the first time you -- or how
19 many times have you done that Saturday ride through the West
20 Valley Cycle club?

21 A. This was the first time.

22 Q. Oh, okay, so this was the first time. So how did you hear
23 about the club and the ride?

24 A. So one of our suppliers that we work with here, one of the
25 guys we work with, he is actually a cyclist in that group and he

1 and I had been talking about biking and stuff and I had expressed
2 interest in trying to explore new areas and bike around the area
3 and he had mentioned that there's a Saturday group ride that
4 leaves out of Goodyear. So I tagged along and I convinced another
5 one of my coworkers also to tag along, as well, and that was both
6 of our first times.

7 Q. Okay. So your friend and the coworker, or your coworkers
8 both were in the ride on Saturday, that day?

9 A. Correct.

10 Q. Okay. And were they riding with you in that B group?

11 A. Yeah. So I would say there was the defined A group that I
12 would say was maybe five riders maybe a quarter mile in front of
13 the main group.

14 Q. Yeah.

15 A. And then I was in what I would call maybe an A minus/B plus
16 breakaway of maybe five riders and that included one of my friends
17 from work and then my coworker was in the main conglomerate or
18 like the big peloton out of the B group.

19 Q. Okay, got you. Okay, and what was the name of the person in
20 the B group?

21 A. John Oliver.

22 Q. Okay, so I didn't mean to jump into the details quite just
23 yet, but thanks for telling me that. So if you could start, maybe
24 tell me a little bit about that morning and how you came to the
25 Santini cycle shop.

1 A. Yeah, so we're staying up in the Surprise area, they got us
2 up in hotels here, but I loaded up my bike and stuff the night
3 before, knew the ride, I think, was leaving, I think it was like
4 7:00 a.m. I knew there was like a 6:00 a.m. ride, but we decided
5 to attend the 7:00 a.m. ride, so tried to get there a little bit
6 early. I got, you know, the bike prepped, got dressed, and then
7 the group met up at Santini's there and then we rolled out from
8 there, I'd say, a little after 7:00, a few minutes after 7:00.

9 Q. Okay. And then tell me a little bit about that initial part.
10 I know it's generally kind of slow going until you hit maybe MC 85
11 or so but, you know, any details you remember from that.

12 A. Yeah, it was quite tame. I remember it was a cold morning,
13 too, so I think everyone was trying to get warmed up and wake up,
14 of course, so yeah, it was pretty, pretty tame. The A group kind
15 of took off pretty early off the front, but the rest of us kind of
16 stayed in a big group pretty much until we got, I'd say, that left
17 turn onto MC 85, as you start to approach the bridge there and
18 that's, I guess, the first real segment where it starts to get a
19 little bit more competitive. And that's where, when we first
20 turned there, I was back in the main group near John Oliver and
21 then had made some sort of conscious effort, as I saw people start
22 to lead the front of the group, made a conscious effort to
23 basically stride that gap and get up to that lead group.

24 Q. Okay. Okay, so you say you were in -- somewhere in between,
25 kind of, or towards the front of maybe the B or just kind of in a

1 small little breakaway group from the B, in between A and B.

2 A. Correct. Yeah, like a breakaway from the B group.

3 Q. Got you. Okay. Yeah, so why don't you, to the best of your
4 ability, why don't you maybe tell me, everything that you can
5 recall from, approaching the bridge to what you recall from the
6 accident and what happened after.

7 A. Yeah, so -- I'm trying to think. So approaching the bridge,
8 yeah, that's when I made that effort to get up to that breakaway
9 group that was up there, I'd say we were maybe 50 to a hundred
10 yards in front of the main peloton on the B group. And I
11 remember, you know, crossing over the bridge, coming down the --
12 basically, the down slope side, it's not a very steep bridge, as
13 I'm sure you know, but you know, working our way down to the far
14 side and then hearing what sounded like -- like tire squeal and
15 like what -- ABS brakes engaging, basically.

16 I glanced over my shoulder to see that F250 Super Duty with
17 the front end all crumpled up, come to an abrupt stop there in the
18 middle of the bridge. So I stopped. One other rider in that
19 breakaway group stops and this car pulled up, like a black
20 Chrysler 300 pulled up, and they said that -- I was like oh, what
21 happened and they said that that truck hit a group of cyclists and
22 that's when I, you know, did a double take and saw bike parts
23 laying in the road, bodies laying in the road. So quick turned
24 around, rode over there, got off my bike, worked my way kind of
25 through the group, it definitely seemed like there was more severe

1 injuries at the front, towards the front of the group, and then as
2 you worked your way back, kind of fewer and far between.

3 My first thought, of course, was my coworker, where is he, is
4 he okay, so I made my way back through the group to him. He was
5 conscious, on his back, near the -- like the guardrail wall there,
6 that cement wall, but it looked like he had sustained at least
7 some sort of injury, was unable to extend his legs. So I stayed
8 with him for most of the time, I would say, that bystanders
9 started to stop and help and then the police and paramedics
10 eventually showed up.

11 Q. Okay. And what did you observe as far as the EMS response?
12 So is there anything that sticks out in your mind, at all?

13 A. Yeah, so I know they went to Karen right away, I know that
14 was the -- that was kind of the priority for them and they started
15 CPR. Give me one sec.

16 MR. HUMM: Yeah.

17 (Pause.)

18 MR. TAYLOR: Sorry, we're going through the front gate here
19 at work. Yeah, so the police had showed up first, they responded,
20 I believe, from the south of the bridge and yeah, they immediately
21 began compressions on -- I believe her name's Karen, on the bridge
22 and then starting to direct traffic, make sure no one was in
23 harm's way.

24 And then eventually, paramedics started showing up and they
25 did like basically a triage, they started handing out like

1 different colored tickets, like red, yellow, green, basically to
2 triage people's conditions. And John, who I was with, got a green
3 ticket and that's when it kind of started to hit me, the severity
4 of the situation, right, because John was in pretty rough shape
5 and being diagnosed as green, it was like oh, shit, you know,
6 there's people in a lot of trouble here.

7 Q. Right. Okay. And then -- so you stayed with John and then
8 at some point he was -- I imagine he was transported by the EMS in
9 the ambulance?

10 A. Yeah, John was probably the -- I would say the last person
11 injured to get treated just because he was conscious and
12 responsive. So yeah, he was probably the last person to get
13 treated, but yeah, they ended up having to put him on like one of
14 those kind of stabilizing boards and then onto a stretcher.

15 Q. Okay. And do you know how he's doing?

16 A. Yeah, actually. So he's been out here, he was in the ICU
17 for, I want to say 4 or 5 days, he had to have an operation, he
18 had a shattered pelvis, a broken left leg, a broken left elbow, a
19 punctured bladder, and just some general road rash contusion kind
20 of stuff. Yeah, he was in the ICU for -- I think he moved into
21 what I would call a ten-pop (ph.) at the hospital and he was there
22 for a while and then he ended up at a rehab facility for a couple
23 weeks in Phoenix and actually just flew home with his wife
24 yesterday, so he's doing outpatient rehabilitation now.

25 Q. Oh, good. I'm glad he's back home.

1 A. Yeah, so it's kind of weird to get, you know, brutally
2 injured in a -- far away from home, right, another state on the
3 other side of the country, so his wife was out here for a couple
4 weeks and the company's been really, really supportive of them.
5 They were able to get her a car and set her up with an apartment
6 and stuff while she's out here helping him.

7 Q. Oh, great. That's good news, okay, I'm glad to hear that.
8 You didn't happen to have like, a rearward-facing camera
9 integrated with like a flasher or anything like that, did you?

10 A. No, but I think I'm going to get one after the incident.

11 Q. I've been kind of canvassing everybody to see if they had
12 anything. And so your bike was not -- obviously not impounded by
13 the police because you didn't have any damage to it, is that
14 correct?

15 A. Correct. Yeah, they let me -- at the end, they let me ride
16 away with it after they'd gotten my information. I believe they
17 still have John's bike, though.

18 Q. Okay. Do you know what kind of bike he was riding at all,
19 off the top --

20 A. A Litespeed, it's like gray or silver with like black
21 handlebars.

22 Q. Yeah, I know which one that is, okay.

23 A. Yeah, it's in pretty good shape, I believe, I think just one
24 of the hoods on the handlebars is scuffed up.

25 Q. Okay, thank you, that helps. Let's see. And then how would

1 you characterize the helmet usage across people on this ride?

2 A. Very safe, everyone had helmets on, bright colored helmets,
3 bright colored clothes, shoes, lights on their bikes, bright
4 colored bikes. Like my bike is a bright baby blue, I have white
5 shoes, white helmet. John has bright fluorescent orange shoes, a
6 bright yellow helmet, so -- and everyone had lights on their
7 bikes, everyone had their helmets on. It was definitely a very
8 safe -- and I'll be honest, in Michigan, sometimes the group rides
9 can get a little -- not sketchy, but you know, people do some
10 things they probably shouldn't be doing, but this was a very safe,
11 very well-run group ride.

12 Q. Okay. And what would you -- how would you say the -- where
13 would you say the people were riding in relation to the lanes of
14 travel and the shoulder or bike lane area?

15 A. I would say it was mostly two or three abreast and in the --
16 what I would call the shoulder, kind of bike lane area into that
17 first right-hand lane.

18 Q. Okay, great. Okay. And did you observe anything from the
19 driver at all? When you rode back, did you -- were you able to
20 take note of him at all, or that driver or is there anything
21 that stands --

22 A. Yeah, all I saw -- I'll be honest, I didn't pay too much
23 attention to the driver, I was more concerned with the cyclists,
24 but a shorter person, a man, with like a gray hoodie and like a --
25 maybe like a bright fluorescent orange undershirt.

1 Q. Is there anything, anything else that stands out in your mind
2 from that day that I haven't asked or something that stands out in
3 your mind that you think oh, this just kind of sticks out in my
4 head that was important?

5 A. One thing is like -- so John's -- he has like a wallet phone
6 holder thing that he puts in the, you know, back pocket of his
7 jersey with his stuff in it and it was in the center back pocket
8 and they found it in the bottom of the wash next to the accident
9 site. So I guess for me, you know, I'm, of course, trying to
10 piece together what had occurred, where was John relative to
11 everybody else, but seeing where -- where that ended up, but also
12 him not being, I guess, extremely injured and his bike being in
13 pretty good shape, I'm trying to figure out how that ended up
14 coming out of the pocket of his jersey and flying over the wall
15 and the railing.

16 Q. Oh, okay. Yeah, I saw a -- I actually saw a picture of that,
17 yeah, where they located it. Okay.

18 A. Yeah. So that was one thing, and then I guess I went and
19 visited the scene a couple times just for some closure and I
20 noticed there's like almost a light post at the beginning of the
21 bridge with like a camera on it. I'm sure you guys were already
22 all over that, but I don't know if that points at the wash or if
23 that points at the bridge.

24 Q. Yeah, I know the police were looking into that but yeah, I'm
25 not -- I haven't received any word of what they found from that.

1 A. Yeah, that's just something that had caught my eye, as well.

2 MR. HUMM: Yeah, I'm not sure, as I remember, I don't know
3 that the cameras have the ability to record yet or that they can
4 save that information, I'm not sure. Maybe. It might be for a
5 shorter length of time, but I'm not positive on it, so that's one
6 of the things we're following up on. Yeah, I guess I don't have
7 any, really any other questions. You know, I really appreciate
8 your time. So if you don't have anything else, I'll stop the
9 recordings, if that's okay.

10 MR. TAYLOR: Yeah, that's fine.

11 MR. HUMM: Okay, this concludes my interview with Nick
12 Taylor.

13 (Whereupon, the interview concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

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

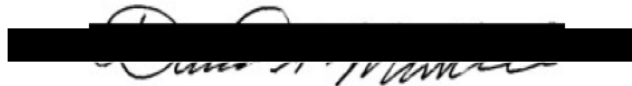
IN THE MATTER OF: CYCLISTS FATALLY STRUCK BY PICKUP TRUCK
NEAR THE COTTON LANE BRIDGE IN
GOODYEAR, ARIZONA ON FEBRUARY 25, 2023
Interview of Nicholas Taylor

ACCIDENT NO.: HWY23FH008

PLACE: via telephone

DATE: March 23, 2023

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.

A black rectangular redaction box covers the signature of David A. Martini. The signature itself is written in cursive and is partially visible above the redaction.

David A. Martini
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

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CYCLISTS FATALLY STRUCK BY PICKUP *

TRUCK NEAR THE COTTON LANE BRIDGE * Accident No.: HWY23FH008

IN GOODYEAR, ARIZONA ON *

FEBRUARY 25, 2023 *

*

* * * * *

Interview of: PAUL THEISEN, Cyclist
Witness

via telephone

Thursday,
March 2, 2023

APPEARANCES:

JOHN HUMM, Survival Factors Group Chairman
National Transportation Safety Board

I N D E X

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I N T E R V I E W

1
2 MR. HUMM: Today is March 2nd, 2023. I'm conducting an
3 interview for NTSB Case HWY23FH008. This is a phone interview.

4 My name is John Humm, H-u-m-m, and I am the survival factors
5 group chairman on this case.

6 Paul, real quick, if you could just state your name, first
7 and last and spell it please.

8 MR. THEISEN: Paul Theisen, T-h-e-i-s-e-n.

9 MR. HUMM: Okay. Thanks. And, Paul, as we discussed before
10 I started recording, if you'd just give your consent that it's
11 okay for me to record this?

12 MR. THEISEN: Absolutely.

13 MR. HUMM: Thank you very much. And then, Paul, could give
14 me an email that I can use to contact you and send you this
15 transcript?

16 MR. THEISEN: Sure. Phonetically, [REDACTED]

17 MR. HUMM: Great. Thank.

INNTERVIEW OF PAUL THEISEN

18
19 BY MR. HUMM:

20 Q. So, Paul, just kind of give me, an overview of where you've
21 lived and where you live right now?

22 A. For the time period that I was with the group or in the last
23 few years, how much do you want?

24 Q. Where you grew up and then kind of how you came to this area.

25 A. Born and raised in Phoenix, went to ASU, went to college,

1 joined the Air Force. Lived in multiple places, came back here in
2 1999, near the Luke Air Force Base, assigned to Luke Air Force
3 Base, active duty, retired or left active duty, joined the
4 Reserves, mostly stayed here in the West Valley, Goodyear and
5 Avondale. A short 3 year stint up in Utah where I was stationed
6 at Hill Air Force Base. I did 31 years, almost 32 years in the
7 Air Force, retired colonel. And, I've been full-time retired for
8 the last year but lived in Goodyear really -- lived in the
9 Goodyear area, lived in this area where I've been riding with this
10 group since 1999, started to ride with the group in 2004 and
11 continued. Well, at least I did until the other day. I think I'm
12 done.

13 Q. Understood. And so, you said you're retired. So what's
14 keeping you busy now during the day?

15 A. Well, I travel 6 months out of the year in a RV. I have land
16 back in Michigan where my family's from. So I -- there's always
17 something to do to prep for a 6 or 7 month trip, and I do, you
18 know, a fair amount of cycling and, you know, just usual tinkering
19 around the house, working on stuff. Kind of a retired lifestyle.

20 Q. Gotcha. Okay. And how long have you been riding bikes? So
21 either mountain bikes, road bikes, you know. Do you do both?
22 What's your split?

23 A. Primarily road bike. I've ridden mountain bikes on and off
24 and really -- I never really stopped riding a bike but as far as
25 seriously riding frequently, three, four times a week, since 2004.

1 Q. Okay. And then how long you been part of the West Valley
2 Cycle Club?

3 A. Since 2004.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. It was a loose -- club, it's not even a word that I would
6 use, but it was just a loose group of guys and we just labeled
7 ourselves West Valley Cycle.

8 Q. Gotcha. And so tell me, you know, when you think of this
9 association, this group, what comes to mind first right away or
10 give me a good memory or, you know, something about?

11 A. It's always friendship. It's always camaraderie. That's
12 what always stands out. Cycling is great. It's fun, but the
13 byproduct is keeping you young, hanging out with people really of
14 like mind and age. I mean we're all right around in between 50
15 and 60, the group of people. Not all of us, of course, because we
16 have new people joining all the time, but there's a core group of
17 us that, you know, we've just kind of hit it off way back then,
18 and have stayed together that long.

19 Q. Understood. Thanks. So if, you know, if we could go to the
20 day of the accident, maybe, you know, tell me about your morning,
21 how you started out the day and how you got to --

22 A. Sure. So typically, you know, a few of us will text each
23 other, hey, are you going to be on the ride tomorrow because, you
24 know, there's always something distracting people. And sometimes
25 based on that answer, you'll deviate from your plan, and in this

1 case, for me, Scott Reading (ph.) who was not there, he's a good
2 friend of mine that I mostly ride with, he had friends in town.
3 So they were going golfing. So I was like, okay. Where I live up
4 in -- did you go to Steve's house or did you talk to him on the
5 phone?

6 Q. I went to Steve's house.

7 A. Okay. So I live very close to Steve. And because of that, I
8 have options because of the routing of the group. So sometimes
9 I'll take that option to buy myself a little time, and that's what
10 I did that morning. Just some -- my granddaughter was at the
11 house, and I was a little behind because I was out of the routine.
12 I thought, well, I'll just ride from my house. And then when I do
13 that, I ride the alternate, the opposite direction towards the
14 group and then join them wherever I find them based on roughly
15 when I leave.

16 So it was kind of a late start, causal morning. Nothing
17 stressful, decent weather. Nothing out of the ordinary, and I
18 just happened to choose a different route which probably was a
19 huge thing in my life.

20 Q. Yeah. When you ride, do you typically ride with the A, B or
21 C group?

22 A. Earlier, when I was younger, I was always an A rider, but
23 now, older, the group of people that I'm kind of always referring
24 to here, that I have been riding with for almost 20 years really,
25 if even that, are B group riders.

1 Q. Gotcha.

2 A. So, you know, we'll start together. We'll hit -- I don't
3 know if you know our route, but we'll be riding south to the
4 mountains and work our way to MC 85 and Cotton, try to pick -- we
5 always try to pick the routes that have the least amount of
6 traffic. But, as we can see, it sometimes doesn't matter. And --
7 yeah. What was the actual question? I'm side tracking myself.

8 Q. No, no problem. I was just asking, you know, which group you
9 took the ride with in the morning.

10 A. Okay. So B group now, and -- yeah. Solid B group, but
11 honestly, me and a few others have splintered off the last year or
12 so because we've been involved in too many goofy -- you know, when
13 new people show up and the group gets too big, sometimes, you
14 know, can clip a will (ph.) or something. So we actually split
15 off. So I'll join them for what I consider to be the safest
16 stretch typically if I'm going to do, you know, that's the start
17 all the way up Cotton. It's very open and safe. It used to be.
18 And then we'll splinter off because it gets kind of -- it gets a
19 little bit faster and, you know, us older dudes are just not so
20 totally into that. We just want the fitness and the camaraderie
21 is easier when there's a smaller group.

22 Q. Yep. Gotcha. Understood. So now as we, you know, move
23 towards when the accident happened, when did you first know that
24 something was wrong?

25 A. So I was coming down Cotton to join, and I know the routine

1 very well. The A group came up the hill. I was probably at this
2 point about a mile and a half, 2 miles from the scene, but I don't
3 think it had happened yet. And I saw the A group, and I said,
4 hey, where's the B group. They're right behind us is what he said
5 to me. And I said, okay, and so I kept on going down and then
6 another guy was coming up, and I know him to be in the B group. I
7 was like, hey, Josh, where's the rest of the B group. He goes
8 they're right behind me. I go, no, they're not. Because you can
9 see if you've driven Cotton from the traffic circle up and
10 straight up towards the bridge, you can see a mile, and then
11 there's a hill and then that's -- after that hill going northbound
12 is where the bridge is. So I said, no, they're not you.

13 And then I joined him just out of routine, and I notice one
14 officer who was certainly the first one on scene blasted out of
15 Walgreen's up here, which is very close to the traffic circle and
16 headed quickly that way. And then I started hearing other sirens
17 and I said, this isn't right, man. I'm going to go back. I don't
18 feel like I can just a normal ride. I've got to see what's
19 happening because I knew I should have seen them by now. So
20 that's when I knew. It was probably just shy of 8 o'clock. I
21 actually have, you know, recorded rides. We all record rides. So
22 that's my timing of when I left my house and when I got to that
23 point where the accident was.

24 Q. Yeah. Gotcha. All right. And so then as you get down to
25 the accident, what did you see?

1 A. As I came over the hill, you could see the response was
2 massive, and I'll just say whether it's part of this or not, the
3 first response, the response to the incident was unbelievably
4 quick and amazing. But when I came over the hill, you could then
5 see the next, I don't know, 4 miles down the road, but at that
6 point, from the hill to the incident's probably a mile and a half
7 at the most. And I rolled up with Josh and there was another guy
8 on my wheel. I can't remember his name. And he went to the right
9 and I went to the left because the left is the southbound lane.
10 It's all closed off at this point. The police were directing
11 traffic, to turn around. They had secured the scene I guess for
12 lack of a better term, and everybody was turning around.

13 But, of course, I was on my bike and these are my friends,
14 and I just thought the quickest way for me to be able to help is
15 to go on the opposite side of the road and ride up the bridge.
16 And then when I came up, I saw the truck that did it, and I saw --
17 and this is where things -- this is probably the most value I
18 have, maybe not to your investigation, but to the police who I
19 have not talked to yet. I'm trying to talk to them. I pulled up
20 right across from the truck and near an ambulance, and I kind of
21 lost my composure. And I saw Karen covered in a blanket right in
22 the middle of the road, a little bit in front of me and behind the
23 ambulance and the truck.

24 And I looked over at the truck because the driver was out
25 front on the phone walking around. You know, just -- my memory of

1 it is he seemed fairly calm for what happened. He was just a few
2 feet in front of the truck kind of walking around on the phone,
3 and there was a guy -- there was another guy in the truck. And
4 I'm only one of a couple of people who saw it, and he was in a
5 hoodie sitting in the truck with his head down, looking at the
6 floor. He never looked at me, but I assumed that was a secure
7 part of the scene, right. I mean there was nothing for me to say
8 or do there. What was I going to do? There would be no point for
9 me to interact with those guys, right.

10 Q. Yeah.

11 A. So, I looked over at that, kind of stopped myself from losing
12 my composure and went a little bit forward. The more I saw Karen,
13 the more I lost my composure again, and I just stopped looking at
14 her and looked to the road, and that's when I took a few pictures
15 and a very short 3 second video and decided because, you know,
16 there were first responders everywhere. I'm estimating that I got
17 to the scene based on my timing probably around -- somewhere
18 between 8 and 12 minutes after the incident, you know, because I
19 actually saw the first officer leave and the distances aren't that
20 far. The speed going down the hill for me are, you know, pretty
21 good if you're determined to get somewhere which I was.

22 So I rolled up, took a few pictures, took a short video and
23 then turned my computer off, because when I pulled out my phone, I
24 saw that it was still running, and that's when it marked my time.
25 And just walked around to try to comfort people and talk to some

1 folks and, you know, just kind of wandering around aimlessly,
2 pretty stunned.

3 Q. Understood. Yeah, the -- actually a part of my
4 investigation, my part of it, is the EMS response. So those
5 details are interesting to me, are relevant to me. I am going to
6 be talking with the fire -- the battalion fire chief today --

7 A. Okay.

8 Q. -- just to kind of get their response.

9 A. You know, I'm going to do something for those guys because
10 their response was amazing. I can't imagine being in that
11 capacity and rolling up on a scene like -- of that magnitude, of
12 that level of carnage. I mean I know they're trained. Just for
13 your information, so I'm a retired colonel. I was a mission
14 support group commander, and I wasn't ever the on scene incident
15 commander but I'm drawing a blank right now in my time, because it
16 was 7 years ago but, you know, just kind of coordinating the
17 response effort for disasters, airplane crashes, what -- you know,
18 any disaster that would happen on the base.

19 Q. Gotcha.

20 A. I never talked to the on scene commander. I'm sure there was
21 one. But I felt like they were doing an outstanding job.

22 Q. Good.

23 A. I never once thought this is going poorly as far as that
24 goes.

25 Q. Yeah. Do you, do you know like how many, how many ambulances

1 you saw? I mean I know it's --

2 A. I have a few pictures no, I mean I wasn't really paying
3 attention to the different players of vehicles but there's got to
4 be somewhere 5 and 10 but, you know, that's just going to be a
5 guess really.

6 Q. Yeah, a lot of lights. I get it.

7 A. Well, and I'm looking at my friends.

8 Q. No, I understand. Have you shared those photos with the
9 police?

10 A. No. The videos, I shared a select few of them because later
11 on, I'm a little concerned about this extra person that nobody
12 seems to have seen or wants to admit that was there.

13 Q. Um-hum.

14 A. So I went to the press conference to hear what they were
15 saying, and there was -- they didn't address the second person. I
16 can't tell you if he was -- I can't tell you if he was in the car
17 when it happened. There's no way for me to know that. I just
18 know that when I got there, he was sitting in the truck, and the
19 driver was out front.

20 Q. Yep. I understand.

21 A. So I was concerned that that wasn't addressed, and I hastily
22 said, hey, I want to know why you guys aren't talking about this.
23 Well, that generated a lot of attention that I wasn't really
24 expecting.

25 Q. Um-hum.

1 A. And it seems to me to this point, that they -- that there's
2 investigative techniques, you know, I don't know. There's reasons
3 they may or may not want to talk about that. I can only assume
4 but I was -- I was and continue to be concerned that individual
5 who was there. And, you know, Steve and his wife, I spent most of
6 my time on the south -- the very south end of the incident.

7 Q. Right.

8 A. Does that help? I don't know.

9 Q. No, it helps.

10 A. That's where, that's where the people were. That's where the
11 truck was. That's where those two people were. That's where
12 Karen's body was. And that's where I rolled up and stopped. I
13 wasn't going to ride into the actual scene. That would not have
14 been smart.

15 Q. Yeah, yeah. Okay.

16 A. And most everybody else was central and north of the
17 incident. The main bulk of the response was all -- came up from
18 the north to the south I think as far as EMS, you know.
19 Ambulances and all that stuff would have come from the north on
20 Cotton going southbound because that's where the bulk of those
21 type of things are. I think there's two firehouses now up in this
22 area and one police station. Maybe it's a substation, but most of
23 the traffic was to the north of the incident as far as response.

24 Q. Okay. All right. Is there anything else that you observed
25 from the driver that is notable to you that he -- that you can

1 recall or the vehicle?

2 A. Well, the vehicle, I can share those pictures with you. I
3 mean I have a head-on picture of it, but you've probably seen
4 that. I didn't notice any damage on the passenger side. It was
5 all in the front, you know, the front and the front right corner,
6 and I have two pictures that get that pretty well.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. And that was one thing I noticed was how did he do so much
9 damage. I don't know. I just don't know. That's what stood out
10 to me.

11 Q. Yeah.

12 A. You know, because later I heard that he had hit the barrier
13 and I thought, well, he must have just barely hit it because I
14 didn't see any damage on the vehicle on that side. Everything was
15 in the front.

16 Q. Right. Okay. I don't have any other questions. You've been
17 really helpful. Is there anything else that you want to --
18 anything else that you think I missed or anything that you wanted
19 to cover from that day?

20 A. No, I don't know if it's standard practice. I guess it is in
21 a crime scene because they're assuming this is a crime scene, but
22 there were people's phones and wallets and personal effects laying
23 on the ground. I guess it would have been nice to be able to get
24 those to them because now they're all struggling to get those, and
25 I tried to do that, and I was directed by the police to leave it

1 alone. And I just thought, well, it's just some guy's wallet.
2 He's going to need that. So I don't know if that's part of the
3 technique but nothing -- I really got nothing else. I can't think
4 of anything else. My biggest concern is why aren't we talking
5 about this other guy that was in the truck because he certainly
6 knows something.

7 Q. Yeah. Okay. All right. I'm going to stop the recording at
8 -- if you could just hold on a sec, while I stop it.

9 A. Okay.

10 (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: CYCLISTS FATALLY STRUCK BY PICKUP
TRUCK NEAR THE COTTON LAND BRIDGE
IN GOODYEAR, ARIZONA ON
FEBRUARY 25, 2023
Interview of Paul Theisen

ACCIDENT NO.: HWY23FH008

PLACE: via telephone

DATE: March 2, 2023

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:

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CYCLISTS FATALLY STRUCK BY PICKUP

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TRUCK NEAR THE COTTON LANE BRIDGE

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Accident No.: HWY23FH008

IN GOODYEAR, ARIZONA ON

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FEBRUARY 25, 2023

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Interview of: EVERETT CLAYTON WELLS, JR., Cyclist/Member
West Valley Cycle Club

via telephone

Thursday,
August 10, 2023

APPEARANCES:

JOHN HUMM, Ph.D., Survival Factors Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

I N D E X

ITEM

PAGE

Interview of Everett Clayton Wells, Jr.:

By Dr. Humm

4

I N T E R V I E W

1
2 DR. HUMM: Today is August 10th, 2023. I am conducting a
3 phone interview with Everett Clay Wells. He is a victim in the
4 bicycle crash in Goodyear, Arizona, on February 25th, 2023, and
5 this is in reference to NTSB case number HWY23FH008. My name is
6 John Humm, H-u-m-m, and I am the survival factors group chair.

7 Thank you, Clay, for agreeing to this interview. If you
8 could please, for the transcriptionist, say and spell your name?

9 MR. WELLS: Sure, John. It's Everett, E-v-e-r-e-t-t,
10 Clayton, C-l-a-y-t-o-n, Wells, W-e-l-l-s, Jr.

11 DR. HUMM: Okay. Thank you. And I'll call you Clay during
12 this interview; is that okay? Is that what you prefer?

13 MR. WELLS: Sure. That's -- yeah, that's my nickname.

14 DR. HUMM: Okay. Thanks. And then, Clay, if you could
15 please give your consent that it's okay for me to record this
16 interview?

17 MR. WELLS: Yes. I give my verbal consent to the NTSB to
18 record this interview.

19 DR. HUMM: Thank you, sir. Again, thanks for agreeing to
20 this interview. This really helps our investigation.

21 INTERVIEW OF EVERETT CLAYTON WELLS, JR.

22 BY DR. HUMM:

23 Q. If you could just, you know, maybe to start let's talk a
24 little bit about where you currently live, maybe your family
25 that's in the area, and what your occupation is.

1 A. I reside in metropolitan Phoenix, Arizona, actually in
2 downtown Phoenix in the historic district. It's just my wife and
3 I are here. We've been living in Arizona for 25 years and I'm
4 presently retired.

5 Q. Oh, excellent. That sounds like a good place to spend your
6 retirement.

7 A. It has its advantages and disadvantages.

8 Q. Of course. Yes, sir. Could you -- do you recall what kind
9 of bike you were riding the day of the accident?

10 A. Sure. I was riding 2019 Trek Madone SL -- I think it was 7.
11 It's either a 7 or 8 model.

12 Q. Okay. Thank you. And then how long have you been riding,
13 you know, like as in how many years you've been riding and maybe
14 just give me an idea of your general mileage per week, just your
15 overall biking experience.

16 A. Sure. I've been riding about 10 to 12 years. I've been
17 riding seriously, oh, the last 5 years, especially the last 3
18 since I retired. My average mileage would be, on a weekly basis,
19 would be right now somewhere -- or was somewhere between 150 and
20 200 miles a week. I had a goal of riding 8,000 miles in the year
21 2023, but of course that's not possible now.

22 Q. Understood. Okay. And so in reference to the West Valley
23 Cycle Club, how long have you been riding with this group, and
24 maybe if you don't mind, tell me what a good memory is from that
25 group or what you think of first when you hear that group name?

1 A. Well, I've been riding with them I think about 5 years. I
2 actually learned of the group from a -- I used to be on a team --
3 from a teammate who road out there occasionally. Before that, I
4 road up in North Scottsdale, but the traffic in North Scottsdale
5 had become so -- increased so much that it just didn't feel safe a
6 lot of the time, so I went out to the West Valley.

7 Very friendly group, all types of riders and very safety
8 conscious, and the roads and streets in the West Valley at the
9 time that I started riding were -- there was hardly any
10 congestion. Most people were -- there was -- there is a, from my
11 experience, a -- the West Valley has a greater percentage of bike
12 lanes on its streets than the rest of metropolitan Phoenix. So it
13 just seemed like an ideal place. And it wasn't too hilly, you
14 know, it was kind of a rolling terrain. So it really fit into the
15 way I like to ride.

16 Q. Great. Understood. And then how would you characterize --
17 you said the West Valley Cycle Club was very safe or safety
18 conscious. Maybe what do you mean by that and how would you
19 characterize their helmet use?

20 A. Well, it's the simple fact that before we would ride, every
21 group ride there was, you know, 30 seconds about safety. We, you
22 know, we -- don't blow -- don't run red lights, don't run through
23 stop lights, call out debris, stay to the right and use the bike
24 lanes when they're there, and call out debris in the road or
25 obstacles.

1 Q. Great. And would you say that helmet use is generally
2 adopted by all the riders?

3 A. It's required. If you didn't have a helmet, you couldn't
4 ride with the group.

5 Q. Sure. And do you remember what helmet you were wearing that
6 day?

7 A. I do. I remember it was a Kash, K-a-s-h. I don't exactly
8 remember the model number or the model name, but it's an Italian
9 brand helmet.

10 Q. Okay. And did you get that recently? And the reason I'm
11 asking, I'm just wondering if it's got the -- that MIPS protection
12 at all. So it's like the --

13 A. That particular brand does not have the MIPS protection, but
14 the helmet was less than 6 months old.

15 Q. Okay. All right. Thanks. And just on the off chance I'll
16 ask this: Did you happen to have a rear-facing camera on your
17 bike?

18 A. I did not.

19 Q. Okay. Yeah, I've asked that to everybody and nobody has one,
20 but it's worth a shot. And then as far as did you have rear
21 flashers on your bike or --

22 A. I did. I had -- it's made by Trek or Bontrager, their top of
23 the line rear light that actually mounted on the seat post of my
24 bicycle; there was a built-in attachment point. And I always ran
25 it flashing.

1 Q. Great. Okay. And then how would you, in general, how would
2 you characterize the riding formation when you guys would go out
3 on these rides? I mean, I know it's a little fluid, you know,
4 just because you're trying to pass or if you're doing some type
5 of, you know, cycling where somebody takes a turn at the front to
6 draft. I understand that. But, in general, how would you
7 characterize that riding pattern, would you say?

8 A. Well, on Saturdays we have a set route. And on that
9 particular day, I think there -- I was told there was about 70
10 riders. And we start out in one big group for about the first 5
11 miles, and once we get to State Route 85 and the interchange with
12 Cotton Lane, once we cross State Route 85 is when the large group
13 breaks into three groups primarily based on ability and speed. So
14 as we proceed north on Cotton Lane, the groups just naturally
15 divide. And on this particular day, I was actually on the front
16 of the B group, just -- I had just trailed off -- the A group was
17 going too fast for me and I wouldn't have been able to hang on for
18 the entire ride.

19 So as we were headed up to the bridge, I was at the front of
20 the group, Steve Rhone was up there as well, and we were going
21 pretty hard and I decided, well, I'm going to drift back to the
22 rear of the group, which is normal for me in certain parts of the
23 ride. Primarily I do that because I am bigger than your normal
24 cyclist and I always had the perception that a motorist would see
25 me quicker than they would see other, some other people in our

1 group.

2 Q. Okay. Thanks.

3 A. Did I answer the question?

4 Q. Yeah. No, that does -- that helps, and we'll get into it a
5 little bit of the details of that. I was -- I guess what I was,
6 what I was asking was would you say you guys are mainly single
7 file, two abreast? Yeah, I'm talking more like width-wise, I
8 guess. How would you --

9 A. Okay. It's usually two abreast, especially when we get out
10 on the main streets like -- or roads like Cotton Lane. It's --
11 like that day when I was -- we were mostly single file, because we
12 were getting it, for lack of a better word. But those of us who
13 wanted to drift back toward the rear, then it becomes more of a
14 two abreast situation.

15 Q. Gotcha.

16 A. We're trying to find our particular place in the line based
17 on that day's effort and speed.

18 Q. Makes sense.

19 A. But I would say typically we always rode two abreast.

20 Q. Okay. Great. Thank you. All right. So let's go to the
21 events of that day. Maybe if you could start, tell me, you know,
22 how your morning started and how you got to the -- I imagine you
23 started at the bike store?

24 A. Yeah. We start at Santini. It's a bike clothing -- he's a
25 national distributor for Santini clothing line out of Italy. But

1 that was our -- that's our normal start point for the Saturday and
2 Sunday rides. It's located just off of I-10 on Willard Avenue.

3 And that morning, it was a little chilly, I remember, because
4 I wore a high-visibility yellow long-sleeved Castelli jersey. And
5 I remember it was a large group, as I previously mentioned.
6 Seventy riders on 1 day is -- on a Saturday is a big group. It's
7 not -- it's usually more 40 or 50.

8 So started out and was talking to a friend in the peloton.
9 And he was talking about how his knee had been hurting, so he
10 actually decided before we got to Cotton Lane that he was going to
11 turn around and go home because his knee hurted so bad, was
12 hurting so bad.

13 I remember once we crossed State Route 85, that -- sometimes
14 I would try to ride with A group to improve my performance, and
15 the A group took off and I was kind of on the back end of it. And
16 I realized the rate of speed, which was somewhere over probably 25
17 miles an hour, was -- I just couldn't hold for the entire ride.
18 So I came back to the B's, and the B's -- the front of the B group
19 was also trying to stay as close to the A group, so they were
20 probably going 23 miles an hour. And I didn't want to be on the
21 front using or expending of lot of energy, so as we started to get
22 to the hill of the bridge or the incline of the bridge, I started
23 drifting back because I wanted to save my energy for the next --
24 there's a small (indiscernible) hill probably half a mile beyond
25 the bridge headed up to Estrella, and I wanted to drift back and

1 draft in the group to save energy.

2 And I remember riding -- you know, kind of backing off and
3 the group passed me. And I remember Janice and Karen passing me.
4 And Karen and -- that was the last of the B group and I was
5 getting ready to slide in behind Karen, and that's the last thing
6 I remember.

7 Q. Understood. Okay. No, that actually helps quite a bit
8 because I have Janet -- Janice, sorry, Janice placed fifth from
9 the front. Do you remember --

10 A. She --

11 Q. Go ahead.

12 A. Go ahead. Go ahead, John. I'm sorry.

13 Q. No, I'm just trying -- sorry, I'm just trying to go through
14 my notes now. Maybe I have that incorrect.

15 A. No, I remember Janice was -- she was putting some effort in
16 and I let Janice and Karen come by me. I had to make the decision
17 was I going to stay with them or get unhooked and really --
18 unhooked from the group or separated from the group, which would
19 require a lot more effort on my part to catch back up. So when
20 they went by me and then I realized, well, this was the caboose of
21 the B group or this particular bunch, I knew I had to, as we say,
22 stay hooked on or remain in contact, which is less -- one less --
23 or a bike length or less.

24 Q. Okay. Yeah, I'm sorry. So I think it was Cheryl that was
25 fifth, now that I recall. But --

1 A. Yeah. Because I remember passing by Cheryl and she was
2 zipping along and I'm going, gee, what's gotten into her this
3 morning?

4 Q. Gotcha.

5 A. There were several -- you know, there were several. Steve
6 Rhone was another one. I'm going, what -- what's up with
7 everybody? They're -- we're really getting after it today.

8 Q. Yeah. I remember Mark saying something about that, too, that
9 he was really determined to get to it that day. I don't know --
10 yeah. So that's actually -- but that's interesting. So, because
11 what I haven't been able to figure out is -- you know, there was a
12 group of riders that was first impacted by the truck and what I
13 haven't been able to figure out is -- I've kind of guessed that
14 there's -- you know, it wasn't -- you weren't like a line of like
15 15 bicyclists, right? It seems like there was some separation
16 because it appears that, you know, there was a strike -- the truck
17 drifted off, it struck some people, then hit the barrier and was
18 redirected and then struck another group of cyclists. That's kind
19 of what it seems to me. So that actually helps me quite a bit.

20 A. Yeah. I had not heard that -- I knew he had drifted into the
21 bridge and then drifted left and then drifted right into us. I
22 was not aware that he had drifted in the group behind us. But
23 that was probably -- that group were slower B riders and the C
24 group, and it was that natural separation that had occurred
25 because several of us in the B group, and I was guilty of it

1 initially, were driving faster than most people wanted to go.

2 We were torn between trying to stay close to the A group
3 or-- and normally what would happen after we'd get over the bridge
4 incline and get to that second hill, the entire B group would come
5 back together. So --

6 Q. Yeah. I got it. Gotcha. Yeah, because there actually was
7 even a group ahead of -- I'm not trying to belabor it, but there
8 was actually a group of like two or three riders that was ahead of
9 the B group but not quite the A group either. At least that's
10 that's kind of, was kind of my notes. And one guy was from
11 Michigan and --

12 A. That's correct. And the gentleman from Michigan who had
13 never ridden with us before.

14 Q. Right.

15 A. He -- and I know a couple of people that said that they were
16 already tailing off the B group -- or the A group. So, and -- so
17 it's just all part of a -- you know, I would call it the natural
18 evolution of the peloton on a normal Saturday.

19 Q. Right.

20 A. It just -- we would be scattered up and down -- well, up and
21 down the entire length of Cotton Lane once we would top that first
22 hill that I talked about after the bridge. And you could see
23 almost -- there's another long slow steady incline, and you could
24 see the A group up there, you know, and then if you were in the --
25 toward the middle or back of the B group, the B riders were-- got

1 over the hill quicker than some of us, and then people would work
2 on the downhill, and by the time we'd get to the base of the long
3 incline going up to Estrella Parkway, we would all come back
4 together probably in a -- mostly in a single line.

5 Q. Sure. That makes sense. Okay. So you were -- you remember
6 drifting back and you remember Janice and Karen kind of --

7 A. Chitchatting --

8 Q. Yeah.

9 A. -- and Karen laughing. Yeah.

10 Q. Yeah. Okay. Yep. Yeah, I've heard that, too. I've heard
11 that from a couple people. And then you don't remember -- what
12 was the next thing that you remember?

13 A. Waking up in a rehab center 5 weeks later.

14 Q. Oh, wow. I didn't realize it was 5 weeks. Okay. Jeez.

15 A. Well, 4 to 5 weeks.

16 Q. Well, yeah.

17 A. And that's when I was finally, John, able to -- I call it
18 connect the dots.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. According to -- so after the accident, and apparently -- of
21 course, the way I understood it, I was the first one hit. And he
22 hit me on my left side approximately halfway between my left hip
23 and my spine. And I went down and I went under the truck.

24 Q. Oh, okay.

25 A. And that's based on the observation of my injuries from the

1 trauma surgeons. I've never heard anybody that was there that day
2 say they saw me go under, but with my injuries, that's what
3 they -- it would be consistent with the bruising. And it was my
4 understanding -- and Karen was just right in front of me and she
5 was, you know, struck immediately. And then when it was all said
6 and done, and riders came back and riders caught up, I was laying
7 in the street conscious, moaning about how much pain I was in, and
8 my body had been drug beyond where Karen was hit and where her
9 body lay. So I got hit and I was drug or flung forward by the
10 impact and run over. But I was further up Cotton Lane than from
11 where Karen's body was found, or so I was told.

12 I'll just tell you what I know from piecing together -- and
13 these are from eyewitness accounts that day. And it was just
14 through a series of events that I was able to survive. But it's
15 my understanding the city of Goodyear had an ambulance returning
16 to the fire station up in Estrella Ranch from a previous call,
17 when the call came in about our accident. And they were actually
18 at the intersection of Cotton Lane and Estrella Boulevard in the
19 roundabout and just made the turn and were on scene within, you
20 know, 1 or 2 minutes. They triaged everybody and I was number 1
21 for transport.

22 So I was transported to Abrazo West Hospital to the trauma
23 unit. When I was wheeled in, the trauma nurse asked for contact
24 information and some way I was able to -- I was semi-conscious or
25 conscious enough to give them my wife's cell phone number, but

1 that was it. And the trauma nurse wrote it on her left arm in a
2 Sharpie. And from then on, you know, I underwent five surgeries
3 in the next 36 hours, was in a induced coma for 12 days, I think
4 it was, in ICU.

5 Now during that time, people would talk to me, including my
6 wife was with me, and sometimes I would respond back when I wasn't
7 in a coma, but I have no memory of any of that hospital stay nor
8 the first week in the first rehab center that I was in. The next
9 conscious memory I have is waking up in a hospital bed with my
10 feet and ankles swollen about four or five times normal size and I
11 couldn't move my feet and ankles. So that's the next memory I had
12 of anything happening.

13 Q. I didn't realize that --

14 A. Well, when you read the news accounts of the accident and
15 they talk about two fatalities and one critical, I was the
16 critical injured. The gentleman from Michigan who passed away,
17 he -- from my understanding, he was conscious and talking to
18 people, but he had suffered the same -- one of the same injuries I
19 had, which was a broken pelvis which had penetrated the
20 circulatory system, among other things, and was internally
21 bleeding. And it was only by, you know, me being triaged first
22 and I got transported first, that I survived. Because it was my
23 understanding he was triaged and moved later or transported later
24 and by the time he had gotten to the trauma center, to the ER, he
25 had bled out. So, you know, he had gotten to the trauma center

1 but not in time to save him.

2 And just to give you an idea of how severe my pelvic injuries
3 were, during the next 24, 36 hours, they put 40 units of blood and
4 blood product into me to, you know, stem the bleeding and trying
5 to find where I was bleeding from and, you know, all that goes
6 along with that. During my stay, at least two or three times -- I
7 never coded, but my blood pressure went to zero, so --

8 Q. Wow.

9 A. You know, that was a constant battle for the medical team
10 with regards to my condition and my survival.

11 Q. Yeah, I've seen the -- your medical reports and, yeah, you
12 had quite --

13 A. Yeah. Because I'm constantly reminded by everybody I'm a
14 modern medical miracle and there is no rationale to why I survived
15 all my injuries, so --

16 Q. Yeah. I mean, probably a combination of, you know, the EMS
17 response, the doctors, and your health, you know, is kind of what
18 what got you through.

19 A. Yeah. I did pretty well for a guy that just -- that turned
20 69 during all this.

21 Q. Yes, sir. So how are you doing now?

22 A. Well, except for the paralysis -- I have paralysis of my
23 right foot and ankle. And actually, it has improved from the
24 original injury but I still require a walker or cane to be able to
25 walk and I'm not independent. Obviously, I -- we keep hoping that

1 it -- it shows signs of movement returning. I'm getting sensation
2 back, but I have not regained motor control over the ankle and
3 parts of my foot. So that's the lasting thing.

4 Physically, the rest of my injuries have healed. My physical
5 therapist, last week, said I was about 75 percent back to normal
6 of my normal strength and flexibility and things of that nature.
7 And my PT, I've known her for years, so -- so physically, outside
8 of the paralysis, I'm doing great.

9 Q. That's great. Yeah, it must have been a lot work getting
10 back to --

11 A. Yeah. I went back to my orthopedic surgeon, was a week ago
12 this last Monday, to get the staples removed from where they had
13 to go in and remove part of the internal pelvic fixator that had
14 been placed for my pelvis to heal. And he is, along with just
15 about every other medical professional -- was shocked, especially
16 those that had just -- last time they saw me in ICU, was shocked
17 that I wasn't in a wheelchair at best, but I was walking with a
18 cane. So, you know, I've been determined, but I haven't figured
19 out how to will the nerve damage to heal yet. And that's about
20 the only thing he can do for it.

21 Q. Right. Yeah, that's quite a trial you've been through.

22 A. Yeah. I'm the only one, as I understand it, to be injured
23 that day that is still not capable of riding a bicycle.

24 Q. Oh, wow.

25 A. Now some have chosen not to ride, but everybody seems to

1 think they can or have ridden a bike, so --

2 Q. Right. That was a -- thanks for that account. I really
3 don't have too many other questions other than, you know, is there
4 anything that you'd like to add, anything you remember, anything,
5 you know, anything you want to say, you know, about either that
6 day what you remember or the ordeal that you've been through
7 since?

8 A. No. It's -- well, I still constantly struggle with how I
9 survived and Karen didn't. You know, that weighs on me mentally
10 and emotionally time to time and I constantly ask that question
11 myself, or internally.

12 Really, the only other thing is just what we've gone through,
13 highlights that how -- I don't if the word's antiquated or unequal
14 the laws of Arizona are. I mean, I've -- this is not the first
15 friend I've lost as a fatality in an automobile-bicycle accident.
16 And the way these ancient laws in the state of Arizona are --
17 well, I sum up -- the fine for littering is more than a fine for
18 striking a cyclist with an automobile. And I don't quite
19 understand how, you know -- you know, if it -- and I don't know
20 the blood, the test -- the results of the blood test on the driver
21 of the vehicle. But if he were under the influence, this would
22 proceed criminally in a much different path than it has and will
23 if he's not. And I've just seen it before.

24 And I can tell you I know of an incident -- it's been 6 years
25 ago, where a rider, who I knew but not well, was killed up at

1 South Mountain Park in South Phoenix head on by a woman in her
2 automobile who was under the influence of -- she was -- I don't
3 think alcohol, but some kind of drugs. It took them 3 years to
4 bring that trial -- I mean, that case to trial. And I don't know
5 if it would've ever come to trial if it wasn't for the parents of
6 the victim and some good friends. And she was ultimately
7 convicted and then I think sentenced to 4 years. But it's just
8 our -- the incident of February 25th is just another chalk mark on
9 the wall of the inequities of the vehicle laws in Arizona and some
10 other states, too, so --

11 And the -- and I will be the first to say that we as cyclists
12 are as fault as well. I mean, I've been on group rides where
13 people have, you know, gone through stop signs without stopping or
14 even looking. You know, they come up on a red light, you look
15 both ways, there's no traffic, so they blow through or run through
16 the red light. But then again, I know there are motorists that
17 are adamant about the streets and highways are for cars and cars
18 only.

19 I will -- and I'll end this little statement by when they
20 dedicated the ghost bike for Karen out on the bridge that day,
21 somebody drove by and screamed out the window, she got what she
22 deserved and we shouldn't be on the roads and that's why all this
23 happened. So there are -- there's enough blame on both sides to
24 go around, and I just wish we could find some sort of equality on
25 the use of public thoroughfares.

1 Q. Yeah, I can definitely agree with that. There definitely
2 is -- the unfortunate thing is I think people that are in cars
3 lose sight of the fact that there is a gross discrepancy in mass
4 and protection between a vehicle and a bicycle.

5 A. Yeah. I mean, I've been told that the driver in the pickup
6 was doing somewhere between 45 and 50 when he hit me, and the
7 sheer fact that I lived through that. And then I was struck one
8 other time 6 years ago, a T-bone by a car going 35 miles an hour.
9 So, you know, I spent a month in rehab trying to learn how to walk
10 again. So, yeah, it's a little danger. I mean, the weight ratio
11 between the two vehicles is grossly different.

12 Q. Yes, sir. Well, again, I thank you for your time and telling
13 your story. This helps our investigation quite a bit. Is there
14 anything else at all that you wanted to add?

15 A. No. Except I'm glad that you found me and interviewed me
16 because that has been a constant question to me from people on the
17 ride that day, both victims and non-victims, you know, as the most
18 severely injured survival -- survivor, I'll put it, that I had
19 been interviewed by your agency or the Goodyear Police Department.
20 But there was a period there for several weeks where I wasn't in
21 any shape to be interviewed.

22 Q. Yeah. I -- well, there are two reasons from the NTSB's or
23 from my personal point of view is I wanted to give it some time,
24 especially for the most severely injured. But also, I didn't have
25 the right phone number for you. The phone number that was in the

1 police report, you know, I don't think I was able ever to reach
2 anyone at that number and I just happened to -- as I was going
3 through my factual, you were one of the people that I had --
4 wasn't interviewed -- I didn't have anything from the police and I
5 definitely have anything from us. And so I just did a random
6 google search and that's how I got this number. So I thought,
7 I'll give it a shot because, yeah, I definitely wanted to fill in
8 or, you know, close that loop.

9 A. Well, I know when I was admitted to the hospital I was
10 admitted as Trauma Patient Zulu. I was a John Doe.

11 Q. Um-hum.

12 A. And even though they had my wife's number, they didn't -- and
13 they texted her and texted her. She finally called and, of
14 course, they couldn't tell her who was here. They couldn't match
15 the number up with those of us who were admitted. And the way it
16 finally got matched up is that afternoon Suzanne was the only
17 family member still in the waiting room, and the trauma nurse that
18 I referred to came back to the waiting room and went over to her
19 and held out her arm and said, is this you? And she said, yeah.
20 And that's when they were able to -- so from whatever time I was
21 admitted till about 4 or 5 o'clock that afternoon, I was a John
22 Doe patient.

23 Q. Oh, wow.

24 A. So -- my road ID was destroyed when I was under the truck and
25 dragged up top, all the printing on my road ID was scratched off.

1 So there was no way to identify me.

2 Q. Gotcha.

3 A. So -- well, I shouldn't say that. In my -- one of my pockets
4 of my jersey I carry a little, for lack of a word, go kit in a
5 baggie and my driver's license was in there. But when I got to
6 the hospital, I couldn't -- they just cut everything off of me and
7 threw it in the corner, so --

8 Q. Sure.

9 A. And my cell phone was in my kit, too, so -- so, anyway, I
10 mean, it was just a series of events. It was nobody's fault, but
11 that's just how it all took place.

12 Q. Well, I'm happy you, happy you made it through that ordeal.
13 It's amazing.

14 A. Yeah, I am, too. I just wish I could get some more movement
15 so I'm not as much of a burden on my wife. I mean, I've gotten
16 where I'm fairly independent, but if I could drive and help around
17 the house, that would be a big, huge step forward, so -- but we're
18 working on it. That's all I can say, John. We're working on it
19 every day.

20 Q. Oh, that's great. Good.

21 DR. HUMM: Okay. I'm going to stop the recording right now.
22 And if you could just hang on a second, I just want to follow up
23 with a couple --

24 MR. WELLS: Sure.

25 DR. HUMM: -- couple things.

1 MR. WELLS: Sure.

2 DR. HUMM: Thanks. Hold on just a second.

3 The time by my watch is 11:55, and this concludes my
4 interview with Clay. Thank you.

5 (Whereupon, at 11:55 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

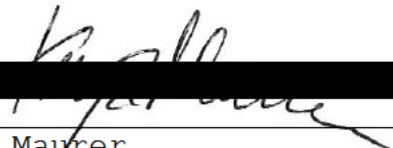
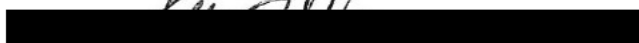
IN THE MATTER OF: CYCLISTS FATALLY STRUCK BY PICKUP TRUCK
NEAR THE COTTON LANE BRIDGE IN
GOODYEAR, ARIZONA ON FEBRUARY 25, 2023
Interview of Everett Clayton Wells, Jr.

ACCIDENT NO.: HWY23FH008

PLACE: via telephone

DATE: August 10, 2023

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.

Kay Maurer
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of: *

*

CYCLISTS FATALLY STRUCK BY PICKUP *

TRUCK NEAR THE COTTON LANE BRIDGE * Accident No.: HWY23FH008

IN GOODYEAR, ARIZONA ON *

FEBRUARY 25, 2023 *

*

* * * * *

Interview of: MARK WOLLGAST, Cyclist



Wednesday,
March 1, 2023

APPEARANCES:

JOHN HUMM, Survival Factors Group Chairman
National Transportation Safety Board

I N D E X

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I N T E R V I E W

(1:09 p.m. MST)

1
2
3 MR. HUMM: Today is March 1st, 2023. The time by my watch is
4 1:09 p.m. I'm here today to interview Mark Wollgast, at [REDACTED]
5 [REDACTED] in Goodyear, Arizona. This interview is in
6 reference to NTSB Case Number HWY23FH008.

7 I'm John Humm of the NTSB, and I am the survival factors
8 group chairman.

9 MR. HUMM: Mark if you could just state your name and then
10 spell it, too.

11 MR. WOLLGAST: It's Mark Wollgast. The spelling is W-o-l-l-
12 g-a-s-t.

13 MR. HUMM: And then, Mark, as we discussed right before this,
14 could you just give your verbal consent to record this?

15 MR. WOLLGAST: Yes, I give my verbal consent to record.

16 MR. HUMM: All right. Thank you very much. Mark, if you
17 could give me some -- your basic contact information in the form
18 of an email, just so that I can email this to you.

19 MR. WOLLGAST: Yeah, it's [REDACTED]

20 [REDACTED] --

21 MR. HUMM: Yeah.

22 MR. WOLLGAST: -- [REDACTED].

23 MR. HUMM: Okay. Thank you.

24 INNTERVIEW OF MARK WOLLGAST

25 BY MR. HUMM:

1 Q. So, Mark, you live here in Arizona, but do you live here full
2 time?

3 A. I do.

4 Q. Okay. And how long have you been living here?

5 A. 61 years.

6 Q. Oh, 61. Okay. All right. So you --

7 A. Born here.

8 Q. -- born and raised. Oh, nice. All right. So do you have
9 family in this area?

10 A. I've got one daughter in Chandler which is the other side of
11 town.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. And my wife and I live here. Now, the rest of my family's
14 deceased --

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. -- pretty much. So.

17 Q. So is that the wedding that you're --

18 A. Yeah, that's my daughter's wedding next week. Yeah, next
19 week.

20 Q. And is that going to be --

21 A. It's in Chandler.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. But we're having an event at our house for family coming in
24 out of town like Thursday, a week from tomorrow.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. Yeah. So.

2 Q. All right. So big things going on.

3 A. Yeah, it's pretty big. There's over 150 people planning to
4 be at the wedding. We plan about half that here for the Thursday
5 event. So.

6 Q. That's exciting. So, what do you do right now during the
7 day? Like what's your -- what are your days?

8 A. I'm retired. So biking is really -- really biking and
9 working out is our primary thing when we're in Arizona, but we do
10 have an RV and travel, all outdoor recreation, fishing. I have a
11 house boat up on a lake up north, and it's just all outdoor type,
12 hiking, biking are the primary things we do.

13 Q. Wow.

14 A. And fishing. Not like Michigan or Minnesota fishing, but
15 similar.

16 Q. Yeah, yeah.

17 A. Or I guess you're Wisconsin.

18 Q. Yeah, it's cold, especially relative to here. What did you
19 do before you retired?

20 A. I was a software engineer for Lockheed Martin.

21 Q. Oh, wow.

22 A. But mostly, the last 25 years, I was in management, just
23 going project management for radar programs.

24 Q. Oh, cool.

25 A. Yeah, it was good. It was fun.

1 Q. Yeah. All right. So how long have you been riding a bike,
2 bicycle would you say?

3 A. I'd say 20 years.

4 Q. 20 years. And are you doing mainly road biking --

5 A. Since I retired two years ago, I probably did heavy road or
6 mountain biking for 15 prior and then 2 years ago, I retired and
7 got involved with this club, and it was very addicting. So I just
8 -- I've been doing 90 percent road probably and 10 percent
9 mountain over -- for like 26 months now.

10 Q. And how many miles would you say you do a week about roughly?

11 A. I would say 60, 40 and another 40. What's that? 140, 120 to
12 140.

13 Q. Nice. So you do like three -- are you doing --

14 A. Three rides a week usually, 60 and two 40s is kind of where
15 -- that would be a typical week I'm in town.

16 Q. Nice. Okay. So tell me a little bit about the bike club.
17 When did you get started with it?

18 A. Well, my good friend started it 20 years ago. My wife has
19 been involved in it while I was working, ever since I can
20 remember. Probably 20 years, she's been riding and doing century
21 (ph.) events and it's just grown, and it's just -- it's a
22 community. And, this group in particular, we've had a lot, a lot
23 of out-of-town visitors and people then that hear, and they have
24 ridden in dozens and dozens of groups across the country, and they
25 all come back and say, you know, this is such a camaraderie, you

1 know, welcoming group, and that's -- you ask pretty much anyone of
2 the 2400 people on the Facebook page, and I think you'll get the
3 same response. So, it really, it really is -- I did about, I
4 don't know, 10 months of riding -- I was afraid to ride on the
5 road. So my wife and I, while I was kind of getting used to the
6 road like I had been an avid mountain biker, but we rode on --
7 there is a path 25 miles out, 25 miles back, but it's just -- it
8 wasn't the same just the two of us, the camaraderie and the
9 dynamics of Peloton riding. It's just a lot more invigorating.

10 Q. Sure.

11 A. So -- and I also liked the fact that I could start without
12 driving somewhere from here. Our start points for all three of
13 those rides were within 3 miles of here which made it real -- just
14 made a little warm up ride, and then we'd join the group and
15 usually -- I betcha half the rides at least we stop afterwards and
16 have coffee together.

17 Q. Sure.

18 A. That's typical.

19 Q. So you probably already answered this question but, you know,
20 what I like hearing is what's a great memory or what do you think
21 of first -- like what sticks out in your mind when you think of
22 this club?

23 A. It's definitely the community or camaraderie or welcoming
24 feeling that they give you. No matter what your level is, there's
25 folks that are 25 plus mile an hour riders down to 14 mile an hour

1 riders. They're all welcomed and they'll pair you up with
2 somebody if you just ask and there are all out rides but you can,
3 you know, request somebody to hang with and kind of get you up to
4 speed. So it's just extremely inviting. I mean it is amazing.

5 Q. Sounds great. Everybody else has kind of echoed the same
6 thing.

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. Yeah. And how would you characterize the -- like the helmet
9 use amongst the group?

10 A. Oh, my gosh. No question. It's mandatory. There's been
11 some cases where people drive from the East Valley, in fact, just
12 one in the last month that I can think of, forgot theirs. Oh,
13 shit I left my helmet at home. Somebody that lived close by like
14 myself, it wasn't me, but zipped home, grabbed an extra helmet and
15 the whole group waited until that helmet got there for this rider.
16 I mean that's no questions asked on that. That's just what you
17 do.

18 Q. Um-hum.

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. That's great. And what about, what about the reflector or
21 rear road facing flashers? How would you characterize it?

22 A. Highly encouraged. Almost everybody uses them. I know very
23 few that don't. I had mine on that day. We do vary between
24 leaving it on the bike, single versus the flash. There's some
25 theories that the flashing is distracting, you know, to the

1 bikers. So it does tend to -- I tend to keep my solid, just
2 because it's still visible but not disruptive to, you know, other
3 people in the group riding behind you.

4 Q. Sure. Yeah.

5 A. It's sort of what I've been told anyway.

6 Q. And what was your -- which was your bike? Has that been
7 impounded by the police?

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. Okay. So which one? Do you know which one that was or --
10 you would know.

11 A. Yeah, I do but there's another one that's exactly like it
12 that's completely destroyed, but it was a Trek Domane.

13 Q. How do you spell that? I'm sorry.

14 A. D-o-m -- Domane -- D-o-m-o-n-e [sic], and I think there's a
15 apostrophe after the e.

16 Q. So yours was not --

17 A. As far as my -- I didn't look at it close but from just a
18 quick look, it looked repairable.

19 Q. Okay. I'm just trying to -- I actually went to the bikes
20 yesterday. I'm just trying to see --

21 A. This would be a purple -- purplish Domane.

22 Q. Oh, okay.

23 A. There's another one almost identical that's in about five
24 pieces.

25 Q. Yeah, I remember that one. Oh, I had somebody that was

1 working with me. So he may have inspected that one. Anyway, so
2 yours was intact. I know, I definitely did the one that was
3 destroyed. Okay. So, let's talk a little bit about the morning
4 of the crash or the day of the crash. Like what were your, what
5 were your plans that morning or --

6 A. Do the full ride --

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. -- 60 miles, you know, looking forward to it. I had been
9 sick a couple weeks. So I've been off a little bit. I did a
10 mountain bike ride with a buddy just to make sure I was ready to
11 do 60 miles, you know, on Saturday. And so I did 20 miles on my
12 mountain bike on Friday, and it felt good. My legs were feeling
13 really good Saturday morning, too. I was like, oh, this is, this
14 is good, but just normal. You meet at Santini.

15 Q. Yeah.

16 A. There's a spot there everybody kind of groups and they launch
17 on time unless, you know, there is a situation where, you know,
18 somebody needs a helmet or something like. We've waited for
19 other, you know, small repairs to be done, but if it's a major
20 repair, the group does try to still launch on time, and then you
21 just miss out on that Saturday ride anyway.

22 Q. Sure. Yeah.

23 A. That one's pretty rigid. That's kind of designed for the
24 folks that work during the week and they want to really get the
25 most out of the 3 hours that they've got budgeted on Saturday for

1 that type of activity.

2 Q. Yeah.

3 A. Whereas the ones during the week are really, you know,
4 they're mostly attended by retired folks and a much more relaxed
5 pace.

6 Q. Okay. And so you guys rolled out at about like 7:30.

7 A. Exactly 7:30.

8 Q. 7:30, and you were in -- were you kind of aligning with the B
9 group or were you --

10 A. Yeah, I mean when you roll out the first four miles is what
11 they call neutral miles.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. And it's just a lot of -- it's all talking. You're -- we're
14 three, four wide and we take up a full lane all the way to Cotton
15 Lane where we then start heading south, but this is just north of
16 MC 85. We're about -- come out of there about -- we're still
17 south of Interstate 10, but we're just half a mile north of MC 85.
18 And that's kind of now where it goes from a warm up to
19 positioning. You'll see the A riders, if they haven't already
20 positioned up front, they'll be passing right in there trying to
21 get up front real quick. So that's where you sort of figure what
22 group -- big group you're in. And then from there it does tend to
23 split just based on your ability. So the B group going up that
24 hill, it splits usually two or three times. There's -- our B
25 group now has gotten to where it's 18 plus -- 18 mile per hour

1 plus riders like myself all the way up to guys that can hold 22
2 for 2 hours. And so it's sort of split into, you know, that --
3 I'll call it that B+ and B- type thing where the B- is, you know,
4 closer to a 20 mile an average where that B+ is a little closer to
5 a 21, 22. And then the A is 22 to 25 kind of average which is
6 tough for that many miles.

7 Q. Yeah.

8 A. Because there's a grade out there.

9 Q. Yeah, yeah.

10 A. It's definitely -- it's not flat. Well, intentionally. I
11 mean that's part of what the cycling community wants. They want a
12 variety. Just flat gets -- it's just not conducive for like a
13 century ride, organized century ride or something like that. So
14 that's -- this is designed to push you a little bit, that Saturday
15 ride.

16 Q. And does that Saturday ride stay fairly consistent for a
17 while? Like, you know, the route. Is it like -- has it been --
18 do they change it every year or has it been like that for years
19 and years and years would you say?

20 A. Well, I've only been riding it for 2 years, but it's been --
21 it's changed a little bit only because there's so much
22 construction on the West Valley. There's roads that are either
23 closed or in terrible shape. And so we'll try to work around it.
24 There's still some really horrid sections on it which we just
25 haven't been able to find a way around it and still get a 60 mile

1 type loop from here, you know, where you can get back to the
2 starting point.

3 Q. Yeah.

4 A. That's sort of the objective. I'd say there's -- there's a
5 few spots that are just still under construction and still really
6 bad.

7 Q. Right.

8 A. And quite honestly what we do there, just like the law says,
9 we take the entire land intentionally which obviously upsets
10 drivers, but that's -- I mean we really have no choice but that is
11 essentially our right according to the law. But I used to wonder
12 why we would take the whole -- as a novice, the whole lane, and
13 what was explained to me is if you try to single file it with no
14 shoulder, then you get, you know, two cars and a bike and no room
15 in between, they'll still do it, where if at least you take the
16 whole lane, you hope to eliminate the car behind you until you get
17 to a spot where there is enough shoulder or bike lane where the
18 construction goes away.

19 Q. So, for example, like that area where you come over, that we
20 were talking about before we started this interview, the area
21 where you come down over the bridge there's that curb and it's
22 two lanes and there's no shoulder, would you guys take up the
23 whole lane in that area you think?

24 A. Typically if there's two lanes on the Saturday ride when we
25 have that many people, some of those rides will start at 150

1 people.

2 Q. Yeah.

3 A. Yeah, they'll be intentionally -- they'll intentionally try
4 to take the lane to just force drivers into the other lane.

5 Q. This is a single -- I'm sorry. When you come over the
6 bridge, it's a two lane, one either direction.

7 A. Right, right. No, no, then we would try to single file it
8 and get within the -- call it the shoulder, call it the bike lane.
9 I don't know if that's actually considered a bike lane there, but
10 there's definitely a shoulder. That's a fairly new section of
11 road.

12 Q. Okay. I was talking about -- sorry, specifically right after
13 you come over the bridge when you're going south, there is no
14 shoulder. Actually, it's just that hard curb, and it's --

15 A. Is it? Yeah.

16 Q. Yeah. The only reason I bring that up --

17 A. Did it kind of -- but it would widen or it wouldn't narrow
18 down from something pretty wide down to then the two lane or is it
19 -- I call it two lane, one lane each direction.

20 Q. Sure, that's fine. Yeah.

21 A. But I recall at least there, there is at least 2 feet of
22 shoulder going up that hill.

23 Q. It's -- well, okay. So after you come over the bridge, it
24 comes and it turns and then there's this area that there's a -- if
25 you're going south, there's a curb. There's not, you know, it's

1 single lane.

2 A. Yeah, I do know where that is.

3 Q. Yeah.

4 A. Yeah, we do have to scoot back to the left, and I do remember
5 hugging the line in that spot and staying out of the roadway,
6 but --

7 Q. Yeah, that's --

8 A. -- there would be definitely cases where there's enough
9 riders that you would get somebody over there. That road is at
10 least -- I mean relative to a lot of the other roads, there's at
11 least enough road for two cars and a couple of riders there, where
12 there's other spots where that's just physically impossible --

13 Q. Yeah. Okay.

14 A. -- to put people in that condition.

15 Q. Yeah, I'm not trying to belabor that point. That was the
16 second of road where I was like, wow, that -- this seems like
17 where, you know, something could potentially happen.

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. So, anyway. So you're at the point, let's say when you've
20 just kind of completed the neutral spin up, you know, you're
21 chatting. Then -- and then things start to split up and then what
22 happened.

23 A. Well, things just -- I mean that's a big hill. So, you know,
24 it's like 3, 4 miles to the top. There's a roundabout up there,
25 and that's kind of where you'll regroup if you will, but just --

1 these cyclists like -- including myself, like to push it. I run
2 in zone 4 to zone 5, you know, basically my max heart rate from
3 that bridge. I was watching my heart rate and it wasn't max. I
4 was like 150, and I was doing like 20. My goal was to try to hold
5 18 to go up, you know, make it up to the top. Yeah, they try to
6 push it, but on the other hand, you don't want to lose the group.
7 Once you loose the group, all the aerodynamics are gone.

8 Now, we did happen to have more of a tailwind that day. So
9 that wasn't as much of an issue which I don't think we would have
10 dropped too many people unless they just couldn't handle 18 but,
11 yeah, you want to stay in a group, you know, for safety one, and
12 just the aerodynamics for two. And that's that's kind of the
13 reason. So, yeah, you -- the talking stops. You get, you get
14 focused on that hill and you're in your steady rhythm. I mean at
15 least I do. I try to find, I try to find riders ahead of me or
16 near me that I know that I've ridden with enough that I think I
17 can stay with. And, you know, that's where I'll be trying to
18 position myself. I just happened to actually be in the front and
19 a few people passed me, but not that many which is a little bit
20 unusual. That's just how it worked out that day. No rhyme or
21 reason. It's just where I was.

22 Q. Um-hum.

23 A. I think eventually by the top of the hill, I would have been
24 past certainly by a lot more of those folks that were in the rear.

25 Q. Yeah.

1 A. They would have found their pace, and they would have stuck
2 to it, and if I could have -- if they would have passed me and I
3 could have grabbed on, I would have. But that's not, you know,
4 they're not required to stop and wait for me on the Saturday ride.
5 They're encouraged to do what they can do to, you know, become a
6 better cyclist.

7 Q. Oh, yeah. So would you say you were in -- at the time that
8 you were on the bridge near the site of the accident, would you
9 say you were like more towards the B+ group?

10 A. Well, I think there was --

11 Q. Or how would you characterize it?

12 A. As far as we recall, there's 20 of us involved in the vehicle
13 crash. There was approximately -- I don't know, but I know four
14 guys came back. That would have been the B+ group.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. They had -- I could still see them, when we were hit, going
17 up that hill. So they weren't that far, maybe a quarter of a mile
18 ahead of us, but just without the metal, there wasn't enough noise
19 for them to realize we had been taken out. And, you never look
20 back especially on that road. I mean you're just too focused on
21 the wheel in front and avoiding rocks. So it's not like you're --
22 I mean the most you're ever looking is like this to see if there's
23 somebody like right here next to you, but not -- you never look
24 back like this. As soon as you look back like this, you're wheel
25 goes like this.

1 Q. Yeah, yeah. Right.

2 A. So that just never happens. So it's common for them on a
3 situation like that continue going on, and they did, those guys.
4 So I ended up in the 20. I was I believe now -- I think I was the
5 number fourth rider out of that 20, and I'm thinking we were
6 single file although there was somebody, just as the car or the
7 vehicle passed me, I believe was right next to me or maybe the
8 vehicle was dragging it. I don't know, but I was close. I was at
9 least as close as me to you with my shoulder to that white
10 vehicle, but I'm kind of thinking there might have been another
11 bike in between us that was either just starting to pass me or the
12 truck dragged there. I don't know.

13 Q. Yeah, yeah. Understood. Do you, do you know who was in
14 front of you, like the wheel in front of you?

15 A. Yeah, I believe it was -- I believe the order now, after
16 talking to Chad who you interviewed --

17 Q. Yeah.

18 A. -- was Ethan Boch in the front of that. I believe then Steve
19 Rhode who you talked to --

20 Q. Yeah.

21 A. -- was two. I believe Chad was three, and I believe I was
22 four. And then behind me, I really can't say.

23 Q. No, I understand that. Okay.

24 A. But I do know that everybody but two people that was behind
25 me ended up quite a ways in front of me when I stood up, when I

1 got up off the ground.

2 Q. Um-hum.

3 A. And in some cases, they were 100 yards past me.

4 Q. Yeah, yeah.

5 A. So it wasn't like we got hit and the guy slammed on the
6 brakes and stopped in 30 feet. Yeah, I actually believe he -- my
7 memory and recollection was I could hear the motor accelerating
8 because there was, there was a thought as I was going down, that
9 this guy was hit and run. And so when I finally did get up after,
10 you know, I don't know, 60, 90 seconds, I don't think I blacked
11 out, but I didn't jump up. I was assessing my injuries, and I was
12 somewhat relieved to see that the truck was at least down there
13 but down there about 100 yards.

14 Q. So I just want to go back a little bit. When was -- what was
15 the first indication to you that something was wrong?

16 A. Yeah, so this has gotten a lot clearer to me over the last 2
17 days. There was a popping noise, and it was the bikes. So it
18 probably happened I'm guessing anywhere from 2 to 3 seconds, and
19 the reason I say that is I heard it, probably sounded more like a
20 firecracker. I heard it again, and in my mind did process it, it
21 was a bike frame being run over. It wasn't a crash of metal type
22 of noise. It was this kind of exploding of these carbon fiber
23 frames. And so I heard that.

24 Obviously I know now more than 1 second, probably not more
25 than 3, but then the next thing was I believe it was Cheryl

1 Herzog, because I know her well and her voice, I recognized her
2 voice, she -- it was either her or Janice. That was the only two
3 it could have been, yelled what's going on? So when I say what's
4 going on, what's going on here or what's going on, you know,
5 that's a -- that is a full 1 to 1.5 second verbose statement. And
6 so I would put it, you know, 3 to 5 seconds after the initial pop
7 that I heard in my ear. At that same time, as soon as she let out
8 the last syllable of that question, somebody either hit me or my
9 bike was going. I was on my way down, but at that same exact
10 instant, that truck was passing me. And I saw -- before I hit the
11 ground, I definitely saw it, you know, go a couple of truck
12 lengths beyond me. So I deduced, you know, it was going very
13 fast, 40 to 60 miles an hour. My initial reaction was it had to
14 be doing more like 50 to 60, but I don't know now. It's just
15 hard.

16 Then I was down, and the next thing I know I was looking up,
17 you know, just -- and I mean I got very few -- I've got road rash
18 on my back but I'm not beat up at all, a little -- a couple of
19 spots on my leg where I must have hit my bike hard, but -- going
20 down. It just -- I don't know how I survived that one. Or
21 Cheryl, I don't know how Cheryl walked away from that one either.
22 That's amazing.

23 Q. Okay. Yeah, I haven't talked to her. So when you fell, did
24 you fall -- do you remember which way did you fall? To your
25 right, to your left.

1 A. I was going straight. I heard that, and then I remember
2 after -- I kind of tensed up but then I remember after I knew I
3 was going down, I just relaxed which I think helped me because I
4 didn't break a clavicle. My helmet doesn't have any scratches on
5 it at all. So I think I tucked and rolled. All my stuff is on my
6 ass and my back mostly. A couple of gouges on my leg that, you
7 know, that's not from the road. That's a bike part or something
8 that hit me there. I gouged this up, and I think that was bike,
9 too, when I was going down. So -- but then it just -- did you
10 stop and look at that concrete on the bridge? It's that
11 corrugated.

12 Q. Yeah, I know.

13 A. Yeah. So --

14 Q. It's not soft.

15 A. Yeah, I mean I've got a jersey in here. I was wearing four
16 layers. I have a jersey. (Indiscernible).

17 Q. No, I just saw the bikes.

18 A. That's where my jacket's torn up. That's my back.

19 Q. Oh, okay.

20 A. There's my hip. So then my pants, you know. So, yeah, I've
21 got if you put this on, it's like right here and wherever that is.
22 It was on my back, but that corrugated road rash.

23 Q. After it's over, do you mind if photograph that, after the
24 interview?

25 A. No, no, that's fine. I was going to wear it to the court on

1 Friday.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. I mean there was worse ones there. I don't know where they
4 ended up. Well, the paramedics had to cut some of them off the
5 folks I know.

6 Q. Okay. So you went down, and you stayed down for a minute
7 maybe to try and assess your injuries maybe.

8 A. Yeah, I just -- I kind of remember looking up, breathing, and
9 then I just do this methodical -- I'm an engineer, too, so kind of
10 methodical, just start wiggling everything slowly to see if
11 there's any pain, and I was like, ah, there's no pain. I could
12 not believe it. So then I just stood up quickly and I immediately
13 began to look for the truck, but then, then there was just -- then
14 it became -- all this groaning and moaning and screaming. There
15 were screams in there. It was not good and, you know, guys piled
16 up right around me and strewn up and then I finally got up because
17 then the other two guys, I could see they were up and okay, and
18 they were kind of running around starting to check on folks, and
19 then I was -- once I got up and could stand a little bit, I kind
20 of did the same thing.

21 Q. So by other two guys, do you know who that was?

22 A. Yeah. That was Steve Rhone and Ethan Boch.

23 Q. Okay. And the police have him as Charles but --

24 A. Yeah, it is Charles Ethan Boch, B-o-c-h, I think is his last
25 name.

1 Q. Yeah. I tired, I tried to reach out to him, but I haven't
2 been able to get ahold of him yet.

3 A. He works.

4 Q. Yeah.

5 A. I don't know. In fact, nobody's been able to talk to him.
6 So I'm not really -- I haven't heard one word this week since --
7 yeah, I haven't heard one word on that, on him or seen him at any
8 of the little gatherings.

9 Q. Yeah.

10 A. That's my cousin.

11 Q. Okay. So you got up with Steve and Ethan and you started to
12 do -- then what did you do?

13 A. I just stood there for a minute looking around. I was a
14 little woozy. And then I -- there was three guys right next to
15 me. Mike Smith, he's still in the ICU. Mike Reyor (ph.), who's
16 now home. I know him real well. And another guy I didn't know,
17 but I could see --

18 Q. What was the other Mike's name? Sorry.

19 A. Mike Smith and Mike Reyor. He's a German guy, Re --

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. -- R-e-y-e-r, or something like that.

22 Q. Yeah.

23 A. I have to look it up.

24 Q. Actually I think they gave me his contact information.

25 A. Yeah, yeah, so he's -- he was there up, kind of funky on the

1 barrier, and -- but I could tell he was hurt was pretty bad but
2 not like he was going to die. The guy right next to him, he was
3 actually kind of half leaning on him, he was unresponsive
4 basically but I got a little video where he did lift his head and
5 put it back down, but when he put his head back down, it was just
6 like this and he -- but we could still see his lungs going up and
7 down. So he was, he was definitely --

8 Q. Is this Mike Smith? Sorry.

9 A. No, no, this was the deceased male.

10 Q. Oh.

11 A. Dave.

12 Q. Yes.

13 A. Dave's his name.

14 Q. Okay. Sorry. Go ahead.

15 A. So he was breathing. Mike Smith was real close to me. I
16 think Mike was the one that was right behind me and flew over but
17 I don't know that for a fact, but somebody definitely went over
18 top of me, and the only one that makes really sense based on where
19 we were positioned is Mike Smith.

20 Q. Um-hum.

21 A. But it was fast when he went over, I know. But, yeah, he was
22 hurting, but I think -- yeah. Poor Mike, he was trying to get up,
23 and he needed to just lay there, and I think eventually he did
24 kind of curl up and calm down a little bit, but he was -- he
25 definitely had a lot of injuries. He still does.

1 Q. Yeah.

2 A. So those were the guys right around me. And then Cheryl was
3 not too far. She wasn't moving. So was really worried about her
4 because that's the wife of Dave, the guy, you know, I'm really,
5 really close with, and I was like, oh, my God. So I went over to
6 her, and she was, she was asking what happened? What happened?
7 So I was like, oh, okay, you're okay, but I still thought she was
8 probably pretty injured, but then she started kind of just
9 babbling incoherently, and I was like, oh, she's going into shock
10 here. And it just kind of progressively.

11 So after I kind of walked around the area -- well, I saw --
12 there was a first responder up -- not a first responder. There
13 was a vehicle that stopped and somebody got out. It was a lone
14 person doing CPR on a victim up there. I didn't know at the time
15 who it was, but I didn't take me long to figure it out. Just
16 standing there, and then I saw that person. I went on for like
17 15, 20 minutes, but I was like I don't know any -- I don't know
18 what to do, and I was just like, I don't know. I don't think I
19 really want to go see how bad that is. So I kind of stayed just
20 where I was and just kind of started talking to those folks and
21 trying to keep them calm. And then I basically started to try to
22 calm Cheryl down and keep her from going into shock, went and got
23 her a blanket. And then just kind of cuddled up to her because
24 she started just shivering and shaking and then, then finally the
25 medics started coming around to see who was really bad. And then

1 I could see them working on Karen up in the front. At that point
2 I knew it was Karen. Then I saw them cover her. And then I just
3 couldn't even go up that way because I just knew it wasn't going
4 to be good. And sure enough, those guys that were all around her
5 there, were bad. All four of them are really, really banged up.

6 Q. So there were -- not to get too much into the details, but if
7 you think about it, there was a cluster of people around you that
8 included Mike, Mike, Dave and Cheryl.

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. And then up a little bit in front of you might have been,
11 just based on my conversation, maybe Chad was. Did he get thrown
12 in front of you?

13 A. Oh, Chad was in that same group.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. Chad was right in front of the deceased guy.

16 Q. Oh, yeah, yeah. Okay.

17 A. When I say in front, that's looking south.

18 Q. Yeah.

19 A. Chad, when he was describing it, he was calling in front as
20 he sat up and looked to the east describing it, but I say in front
21 meaning how far you were from the -- or relative to the rear going
22 south.

23 Q. Um-hum.

24 A. And then it went Artie (ph.), his Hispanic name, Gravalia
25 (ph.), and then you get up there, over more towards the center

1 median, these are the people I believe were, you know, dragged or
2 really, really launched. You've got Janice, this guy, Mike Serta
3 (ph.). He definitely got run over by the vehicle. Clay Wells, I
4 believe he either got struck really hard and/or run over by the
5 vehicle. Janice got dragged. Her -- half her face is missing.
6 And, she's got broken hands and hips. So it seems like she might
7 got run over. Those three were kind of there in a pile. And then
8 Karen was up behind the truck. I can't tell you exactly, but it
9 was -- from my view, it looked like she was about here to my --
10 about that wall. Her body and then the back of that pickup truck
11 was about that distance still in front of her.

12 And I would say that that pickup truck seemed it was a 100
13 yards, maybe 150 from where I was, at least 100. Yeah, at least
14 100. And when I went back and looked, what I scoped off, there's
15 two expansion joints on that bridge that roughly separate that
16 bridge into three sections. It looked to me like the initial
17 impact was like at that first expansion joint, and it looked like
18 that vehicle stopped right around the second expansion joint which
19 would have been two-thirds of the way. So it started at one-third
20 into the bridge and ended two-thirds of the way. And there would
21 still be a third left. I don't know how long that bridge is, but
22 that was my assessment of it.

23 So -- and I didn't see -- I didn't hear any rubber, like
24 errrt (ph.), you know. I only heard acceleration, and I didn't
25 see any sign that there was braking of any kind and even, you

1 know, even with antilock, I would think that vehicle with the
2 brakes applied would have stopped. I've got an F-350 and I can
3 stop that thing with a 10,000 pound trailer in way less distance
4 than, you know, what this guy did. So it's capable of stopping.
5 They're decent brakes on those big Fords. So this tells me, you
6 know, that tells me it was no accident. It was, you know,
7 something just really [REDACTED] up but we'll see. It'll come out,
8 yeah. I've heard some theories that I think make sense to me now,
9 but hopefully it will be resolved.

10 Q. Sure. Is there anything that, anything that you want to
11 share that you observed about those theories or --

12 A. Well, it's all post, and it's all speculation. Somewhere I
13 was told, and I believe it was through the police report, that the
14 driver indicated that the wheel locked up. At first we didn't
15 believe that, that it just magically locked up and then unlocked.
16 But then, there was another comment made either by the judge or
17 something that there was enough allusion that even though there --
18 didn't wake up that morning with the intent to go out and kill
19 people, there was still an intent to do something malicious or
20 joking (ph.) of some sort, you know, not, you know, not just
21 concentrating to move over but perhaps we get buzzed all the time.
22 So I speculated it was just buzzes, you know, get as close as you
23 can, try to scare them. Maybe they'll fall over on their own, and
24 you drive off. That happens quick often, quite often.

25 But then I've had some friends say that a popular technique

1 now to scare people is to cause a vehicle to backfire. And the
2 way they do that apparently, turn the ignition off, it kills the
3 spark, but the fuel stays in the cylinder and you turn the
4 ignition back on and start it, and the first thing it goes is
5 squirt fuel in. That extra fuel then will cause a backfire. I
6 never heard a backfire that I can recall. So I don't know if
7 that's bullet proof.

8 I don't know what, but I can -- I have heard that it struck
9 the -- the vehicle did strike the wall to the right. I went back
10 and there was what looks to me like a very brush -- where it looks
11 like the vehicle climbed this high and then came back down. And I
12 marked the distance. I know where Mike -- where I was. I know
13 where Mike Smith was. And I went back, you know, 10, 15 bikes,
14 and it would make sense that I could see somebody if they driving,
15 turn the ignition off, just as you're doing that, your wheel would
16 go just like this, now it locks, hit that, lift the front of the
17 vehicle up because it definitely climbed up that wall a little
18 bit, and now you're back pointed a little bit more towards, you
19 know, 10 degrees off or 5 degrees off.

20 I believe the engine was running. I'm 99 percent sure of
21 that because I could hear it. I could hear that there, you know,
22 an acceleration sound. So I'm guessing it got started, panicked
23 and, you know, why you wouldn't hit the brake, I don't know. That
24 part I struggle with which hopefully the judge or jury will ask
25 that serious question because that's the part I don't see any

1 excuse for. I think, I think half that group would have been
2 spared if brakes were just applied instantly. I don't see any
3 reason they wouldn't have.

4 Yeah, and the fact -- so, you know, if the toxicology report
5 comes back, you know, clean. I don't believe he just drifted off,
6 you know. That just didn't make sense to me. That would -- if
7 you drifted off, the wheel wouldn't have locked up, right, because
8 he was conscious enough to say the wheel locked up. That actually
9 got broadcasted by the police I believe or in the police report.

10 So that's the only theory that makes sense to me, that I can
11 plausibly think. Okay. You have an intention to scare us. This
12 would have been cruel. I'm 26. I'm a stupid kid. Let me see if
13 I can -- because I've seen enough of that kind of stuff. That,
14 that part of the behavior doesn't really surprise me but, boy, did
15 it go wrong. I mean holy cow.

16 And again, we're talking -- it was the only vehicle for quite
17 a while that showed up. So it's not like you've been up there.
18 We're a big group of flashing lights. You can see us for probably
19 2 miles. You can see us from MC 85. You can see the bridge from
20 MC 85. So you can definitely -- it's not like you can't, you
21 know, we're just riding in the dark. That is not the case.

22 And like I said, we've got intentional brighter colors and a
23 lot of people just wear fluorescent green and yellow period. They
24 don't even wear our standard kit. Just they really want to be
25 bright. So I don't know. We'll see what comes out of it, but I

1 think it's got to be something close to what I -- with what I saw.

2 Q. Yeah. It's interesting. I haven't heard that theory yet.

3 A. Well, it's just a theory and speculation. I think -- the
4 backfire thing was -- I think I caught that more from just threads
5 where people as they read about this say, oh, yeah, a popular
6 technique for scaring people is to do this, you know, shut your
7 car off, restart it and let it backfire. Oh. Then I started
8 thinking, well, yeah, I can see where -- I'm not convinced that
9 the wheel would lock up, but I am convinced the power steering and
10 power brakes would go away when you turn off the engine. So that
11 would explain a little bit more of drifting in. And I do believe
12 there was two riders that had fallen off the back of that B, that
13 second B group that we -- that I was in, saw the truck pass. Now,
14 what I don't know, if they saw the vehicle strike the wall or not.
15 I would like to know that, and I haven't been able to able to
16 contact them to know. One of those people was the other out of
17 town -- well, I think they were both out-of-town guys. They were
18 very new to the group.

19 Q. Yeah. So it might have been Bob.

20 A. Bob. Yeah, Bob, I'm pretty sure he didn't get hit. I'm
21 pretty sure he's one of two people that said that they -- he
22 remembers the white vehicle passing them, but I don't know if he
23 saw -- what he saw beyond that.

24 Q. Yeah.

25 A. But he's the one that lost his brother-in-law.

1 Q. Right, yeah.

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. I just actually called him. He's up in Minnesota, but I'm
4 going to --

5 A. Oh, is he already?

6 Q. Yeah. I'm going to do a phone interview with him.

7 A. Okay. I was going to call him, too. He -- I sat with him in
8 the ambulance there, but we were all so numb. We just didn't even
9 know what to say, and I didn't even realize until 10 minutes
10 before they were going to release us that he was on his first ride
11 from Minnesota. And then his brother-in-law was there, and then
12 all of a sudden we're talking, talking. Okay. You can go. It's
13 now 11 o'clock and as we're getting back to the thing, that's when
14 he met his family member, and he was going to go try to find him
15 but his family member said I just got a call. He passed. And
16 he's just like, ah. I mean that was like -- that was just
17 devastating to him. He was just -- and he went into total shock,
18 you know. He just didn't know.

19 Q. So the whole time he didn't know.

20 A. He didn't know. He didn't know where he was because this was
21 his very first ride, and his brother-in-law said, hey, join us on
22 this ride. And so he's like okay. And I don't know where his
23 brother-in-law was in the group. I'm pretty sure he was behind
24 me. I'm pretty sure I was fourth, and he was back there. So he
25 might have been -- I don't think they were right next to each

1 other because that wouldn't have made sense. He would have seen
2 that then. So his brother-in-law must -- I think is, he's an avid
3 bike rider, the one that died. He has to be up there but towards
4 the back.

5 Q. Um-hum. Yeah.

6 A. That would be good to get what his story was. I mean I'm --
7 yeah, I was going to call him just to see, now that he's had a few
8 days to kind of rethink things, calm down after the death.

9 Q. Yeah, I told him I'd give him a call sometime, you know. I
10 want to give the family some time.

11 A. Yeah. He doesn't know the route or anything. I mean that
12 literally -- that was 6 miles, his first 6 miles in Arizona bike
13 riding, yeah. He had no idea. I think he had his phone and was
14 trying to call. His family member's still in town, and he's like,
15 I don't really know. We're on a bridge. I remember him saying
16 that's all I know, and I think somebody might have helped with
17 that, but he, you know, he has just no idea as far as the route or
18 -- I'd be surprised if he even knew how many miles we had gone,
19 you know, at that point.

20 Q. Is there anything you can tell me about EMS response that you
21 recall?

22 A. At that point, I had stood up, and I, and I was really close
23 to Steve Rhone who was making that call.

24 Q. Right.

25 A. Ethan might have been doing it at the same time, too, I don't

1 know but I definitely was close to Steve, and -- you know,
2 obviously it seemed like it took a while, but thinking back,
3 coming out of the Estrella, Steve lives just a couple of miles up
4 the road there. There was now cars that had come in and stopped,
5 and there were actually cars that perpendiculared (ph.) the road
6 to keep -- to basically shut the road off both directions. I do
7 remember a couple driving by, but it was so much carnage, and I
8 think the one video you probably seen where that was a car that
9 actually drove through but it was southbound or northbound car,
10 not a southbound. You couldn't, you couldn't have driven through
11 the southbound not without going in the northbound lanes. You'd
12 had to be all the way over into the northbound lanes to go south
13 because there was bikes from the wall, you know, to the me, all
14 the way over to that first lane, there were bicycles. And then
15 there was still parts in the other, you know, northbound lanes.
16 But you could have driven over those smaller parts, but you
17 couldn't have worked your way through, not without a lot of, you
18 know, weaving which is what they did with the fire trucks, you
19 know, and ambulances.

20 But, no, I thought that was, that was fine. The ambulances
21 might have -- it seemed like the paramedics got there quick. The
22 police were there like instantaneously. That was like boom. Of
23 course, they're patrolling. So that kind of makes sense, you
24 know. Then the fire trucks, the bigger trucks and then it seemed
25 like the medics started to show up. I couldn't tell you when the

1 first ambulance got there, but it definitely seemed -- I can tell
2 you, by the time Cheryl got taken away, she was considered the
3 least risk. It seemed like that was a good 45 minutes, but I
4 might have lost track of the time on that. I don't know.

5 Q. Yeah.

6 A. And I understand, you know, it was just -- I can believe that
7 because there was definitely an ambulance from Surprise, and
8 that's a 45 minute drive even with your lights flashing, I think
9 that would be 45. I don't know how -- Buckeye would be 25, you
10 know. They're just distances. That's -- some are rural towards
11 that Estrella Park there.

12 Q. Right.

13 A. It's not like there's communities all around it. It's mostly
14 north of there and west. There's not much east either. There's a
15 -- it's riverbed and mountainous. So, you know, they had to go a
16 ways, the ambulances did, but I'm not sure that would have --
17 yeah. I mean by the time it was all said and done, there was 50
18 at least vehicles on that road. I don't know if anybody
19 documented that, but that's sure what it seemed like on that
20 bridge. It was, it was amazing. Yeah, I think they were, they
21 were extremely good and thorough. Oh, my gosh, the police were
22 just, you know, very detail oriented at what was going on. They
23 did not mess around. They had that road down for the entire day.

24 Q. Yeah, they got the job done.

25 A. And cleaned up. I mean I went back the next day expecting,

1 expecting to see a lot more sign, but it was scrubbed. I mean
2 there was not a drop of blood. So they, you know, they took the
3 time to do that. And I mean there's little pieces of -- you can
4 imagine a carbon fiber bike. I only found one carbon fiber piece
5 and it was tipped over the wall on the sidewalk, but in the
6 street, I didn't find really any carbon fiber. So they really
7 cleaned up that, you know. We're talking little pieces of carbon
8 fiber. They definitely a job of cleaning it.

9 Q. Yeah, I walked that entire road. I mean a lot of from the
10 median, but some of it in the road, and I didn't see a lot either.

11 A. Yeah, yeah. Did you -- you didn't walk on the side, because
12 we just set -- we found a dozen pieces of something and put a
13 little memorial on the walkway, you know, on the other side of the
14 median.

15 Q. Yeah, yeah.

16 A. There was a couple of benches, and there's like alcoves that
17 go up like five of them. So one of them, right in the middle kind
18 of up toward where Karen was, there's, at least on Sunday, we
19 placed a bunch of flowers and --

20 Q. Yeah, I saw some flowers, yes.

21 A. Some people put them on the road, but I think that's just
22 such a busy road, it seemed -- if you put them down on the benches
23 you can't see them when you're driving by, but at least they're
24 there. I don't know. I don't know. It was -- everybody kind of
25 had their own thought on that, but --

1 Q. Did you observe any triaging by the EMS? Like any tags. So
2 sometimes they --

3 A. Oh, yeah.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah, yeah. Immediately. I was laying next
6 to Cheryl trying to keep her calm, and they asked a couple
7 questions, what do you think your injuries are? Something like
8 that. And I basically spoke up. I said, well, it looks like
9 she's just going into shock, but nothing's broken at this point.
10 And so he threw something down for both of us, you know. I wasn't
11 injured. I couldn't really read what it was, but it was
12 definitely we were less critical than anybody else. Yeah, he --
13 they came right away. There was two cards thrown down on the
14 ground right next to us. I've never seen that before. I didn't
15 realize they did that, but --

16 Q. Yeah, it was -- I mean if I had to guess, it might have been
17 like a green tag.

18 A. It was a card. You know, it was definitely bigger than my
19 phone.

20 Q. Yeah.

21 A. It was like the size of two phones together --

22 Q. Sure.

23 A. -- about that big.

24 Q. Yeah. Sometimes they color code it.

25 A. And there was a color on it.

1 Q. Yeah.

2 A. And I think -- I remember seeing green on it.

3 Q. Yeah.

4 A. So that might have meant we were okay, whereas I assume a red
5 would have meant critical.

6 Q. Red means critical.

7 A. Okay. Ours were green.

8 Q. Yeah.

9 A. I do remember the green. Yeah, I didn't -- I can't see real
10 good close. I can see good real far but 18 inches is like, oh. I
11 couldn't read the words. I remember that, but I do remember
12 seeing the green.

13 Q. Yeah. That's a typical way they triage victims.

14 A. Okay. That's interesting.

15 Q. Anything else that stands out in your mind from the day?
16 Like do you remember anything -- any of the actions of the driver?
17 Like did you catch any of that? Is there anything that sticks out
18 in your mind?

19 A. No, I deliberately -- when I knew Karen had passed, I just --
20 I deliberately did not want to go up there and live through that
21 scene. I had one -- a guy that came back. I mean he, you know,
22 he didn't know she had passed. I think he was there even before --
23 -- he got there right when the nurse. It was a nurse, a male nurse
24 is what he told me had stopped and he was trying to give her CPR
25 until the medics got there, but when, when he came up to me, he

1 says, don't go up there. You don't want to see anything in that
2 direction, and he just pointed in that direction. So I didn't.
3 At that point, I just stayed with Cheryl and was just like, I
4 don't need to go see. I can't do anything and it's just ah.

5 Q. Understood.

6 A. I think -- so I didn't go to the driver. Yeah. Yeah.
7 Thinking back, I kind of wish I would have. I don't know why.
8 That kind of pissed me off later that I hadn't gone up and starred
9 him down or something, but that wouldn't have done any good
10 either. So I just -- I guess it don't really matter now, but --

11 Q. Yeah, I know.

12 A. But I was curious what he looked like. So I was -- I did
13 appreciate the photo. Now, it's everywhere. I mean everybody's
14 reposted it, the booking photo, yeah. Again, I think the only
15 thing that is still just so puzzling to me is, which is what I
16 keep going over, there's intent and a desire to -- I hope they can
17 figure out if the vehicle stalled on its own or if he truly
18 brought it to a stop because there's just no indication in my
19 mind, from what I observed, that he was trying to stop even after
20 the terrible thing went wrong.

21 I mean -- and that's I think the most disturbing part at this
22 point in time, you know. I just, you know, you could stop. It
23 just -- but I also looked at that hood, and I kept thinking to
24 myself, I don't know how he could have even seen over that hood.
25 So if he was trying to escape, wouldn't you think if you couldn't

1 see over the hood, you'd also want to stop right away? I mean
2 what's, what's -- I don't know. That's just bizarre to me. But
3 I'm sure some lawyers or somebody will try to piece that story
4 together I would assume.

5 Q. The police.

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. The police will do their best.

8 A. Yeah. And I think they -- and I'd be curious how fast he
9 really was going. I was going to talk to the detective. We all
10 have GPS, Garmins. And they measure velocity, not acceleration,
11 but they measure velocity based on, you know, two position points.
12 But it does calculate your max speed.

13 Q. Right.

14 A. And, you know, it was more than a few seconds. So a GPS,
15 there should have been three or four data points on all of those
16 victims that got dragged up to the front and max speed, and all
17 their GPSes would have died by now, but I've got a feeling Garmin
18 could retrieve that data. I know it's not volatile. I believe
19 it's non-volatile, you know, right when it's recorded. I would
20 just be curious what those speeds of those people that ended up,
21 you know, right behind that truck were, that max speed.

22 Q. Yeah.

23 A. Or if they can tell what the speed of the vehicle was after,
24 after the impact or on the first impact. You know, I mean 50 is
25 not excessive for that part of the road. That's probably I would

1 say average even though it's posted 45, but 60 might be. And the
2 other thing I don't know is how much weight was in the back of it.
3 Somebody said there was building materials in the back which could
4 have been significant, you know, 1500, 2,000 pounds, I don't know.
5 That would change the braking dynamics a little bit, but like I
6 said, I pull a 10,000 pound trailer, and I can stop it. I've got
7 a 5,000 pound boat, and I can stop it. So, we'll see.

8 Q. Yeah, thank you. I'm going to, unless you have anything to
9 add, I'm going to stop the --

10 A. No, that's fine.

11 MR. HUMM: Okay. This concludes this interview. The time by
12 my watch is 2:08 p.m.

13 (Whereupon, at 2:08 p.m. MST, 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: CYCLISTS FATALLY STRUCK BY PICKUP
TRUCK NEAR THE COTTON LAND BRIDGE
IN GOODYEAR, ARIZONA ON
FEBRUARY 25, 2023
Interview of Mark Wollgast

ACCIDENT NO.: HWY23FH008

PLACE: Goodyear, Arizona

DATE: March 1, 2023

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