



Motor Carrier Attachment – AGL Driver Trainer Interview

Louisville, NY

HWY23FH005

(19 pages)

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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FATAL CRASH OF A FREIGHTLINER BOX
TRUCK & BUS IN LOUISVILLE,
NEW YORK ON JANUARY 28, 2023

Accident No.: HWY23FH005

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Interview of: HAROLD CROUCH, Driver Trainer
Aero Global Logistics

Foxboro, Massachusetts

Wednesday,
May 10th, 2023

APPEARANCES:

MICHAEL FOX, Senior Highway Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

THOMAS BAGAGLIO, Terminal Manager
Aero Global Logistics

MARK OESTERLE, Transportation Consultant
Motor Carrier Safety Firm, LLC

I N D E X

ITEM

PAGE

Interview of Harold Crouch:

By Mr. Fox

5

I N T E R V I E W

(12:31 p.m.)

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3 MR. FOX: I'm going on record now. Good afternoon. Today is
4 May the 10th, 2023. This is Michael Fox, investigator for the
5 National Transportation Safety Board. I am located at Aero Global
6 Logistics' terminal in Foxboro, Massachusetts. We're going to be
7 interviewing driver Harold Crouch. And we'll go around the room
8 because there's other folks in the room.

9 Tom, could you introduce your name, give us your title, and
10 spell your last name, sir?

11 MR. BAGAGLIO: Sure. Tom Bagaglio, terminal manager, Aero
12 Global Logistics. B-a-g-a-g-l-i-o.

13 MR. OESTERLE: Mark Oesterle, O-e-s-t-e-r-l-e. I'm with
14 MCSF, LLC, transportation consultant.

15 MR. FOX: Harold?

16 MR. CROUCH: Yes.

17 MR. FOX: Introduce yourself on the --

18 MR. CROUCH: Okay, my name is Harold, I'm a driver for Aero
19 Global and I've been working Aero Global for about 10 years.

20 MR. FOX: Ten years, okay. Can you spell your last name,
21 sir?

22 MR. CROUCH: C-r-o-u-c-h.

23 MR. FOX: Okay. Again, thank you for your time.

24 MR. CROUCH: You're welcome.

25 MR. FOX: I don't have very many questions, but I just needed

1 to get some clarification.

2 INTERVIEW OF HAROLD CROUCH

3 BY MR. FOX:

4 Q. So how long have you been a commercial driver?

5 A. I've held my license since 1985.

6 Q. Okay, a long time. Did you go to truck driver school?

7 A. Yes, I did. I went to -- actually, it was NTTS, it was a
8 truck driver's -- I think they're still open in Syracuse, New
9 York.

10 Q. Okay. And I think you mentioned before we went on the air --
11 before we went on the record, excuse me. How long have you worked
12 for Aero Global Logistics?

13 A. It will be 10 years in October.

14 Q. Okay. What did you do before coming to Aero Global
15 Logistics?

16 A. I was driving a transportation truck, gas and fuels and stuff
17 like that, to gas stations and stuff like that. Terminals and
18 stuff, I'd get the oil and stuff, like heating oil.

19 Q. Hazmat?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Okay. And I understand that you were the driver trainer or
22 trainer for driver Harly Diaz, is that correct?

23 A. That is correct, yes.

24 Q. Okay. How long have you been training drivers?

25 A. Well, we haven't really had the need to train drivers, the

1 other driver we had here was here for, I think, almost as long as
2 me and he just quit here about 9 months ago.

3 Q. I see.

4 A. But I mean, I had trained drivers at other jobs before, as
5 far as in the fuel industry and stuff like that, I had
6 responsibility for training people, as well.

7 Q. Okay. Did you receive any kind of formal training for that
8 or is it just your experience as a driver?

9 A. No, they just kind of handed it off to you and said, you
10 know, gave the cross sign and said do your best, I guess. There
11 was never any kind of paperwork or any type of understanding that
12 you had to do this-this-this-that. I did because I have a
13 military background, so I kind of do --

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. -- things in order.

16 Q. Good, good. Thank you for your service.

17 A. And I kind of treat everybody like they've never -- you know,
18 they've never touched it before and this way here you cover most
19 of the nooks and crannies of something that could happen.

20 Q. Okay, good. Thank you for your service. I'm an old army man
21 myself.

22 A. Oh, good for you. Thank you, too.

23 Q. Can you explain what kind of training you did provide Harly?

24 A. I mean, we went through the basics, we showed him how to do
25 like a DOT, when they do a DOT inspection, a lot of times they'll

1 check the brakes down to make sure that the low-level alarm is on.

2 Q. Right.

3 A. I made sure he understood then how to do that. We went
4 through -- we pulled the truck up, we went through the fluids and
5 checked the fluids and I pointed out, you know, the coolant, the
6 oil dipstick and stuff like that and on the pre-trip we checked
7 the lights and I got a handbook (ph.) that I check the tires
8 with --

9 Q. Um-hum.

10 A. -- and kind of went through all the basic stuff, we went
11 through the safety equipment with the fire extinguisher and where
12 the triangles were located, which was underneath the seat.

13 Q. Okay. Do you speak Spanish?

14 A. No, I don't.

15 Q. Now, I interviewed Harly and --

16 A. Um-hum.

17 Q. -- he did not speak any English to me.

18 A. Oh, he didn't?

19 Q. No.

20 A. I mean he spoke, but I mean, sometimes he had to repeat
21 himself a few times for me to understand what he was saying.

22 Q. Right. But you could converse, you had no problem
23 communicating with him?

24 A. No, he seemed to understand me and I understood him.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. Not that we had long, lengthy conversations. We've talked.

2 Q. Okay. Can you recall when the first day was that you started
3 training him?

4 A. It would've been our first day is Monday and the Tuesday.

5 Q. Yeah. So obviously, you can't see it, but I have the trip
6 sheets here with Tom and --

7 A. Um-hum.

8 Q. -- from what I can see, it looks like he started on the 12th.

9 A. Oh, I'm going to have to go with you on that, I'm not sure.

10 Q. Okay. Do you recall how many days you did train him?

11 MR. BAGAGLIO: The 10th.

12 MR. OESTERLE: The 12th?

13 MR. BAGAGLIO: No, it's not --

14 MR. FOX: Oh, I'm sorry, not the 12th, it was the --

15 MR. BAGAGLIO: Tenth.

16 MR. FOX: I stand corrected. I'm looking at the wrong date.

17 It was the 10th. No, the 9th, right? Or no.

18 MR. OESTERLE: His date of hire is the 9th.

19 MR. FOX: Right, but it's the date he started. He started on
20 the -- I mean, it's the operations data for the 9th but, you know,
21 it was supposed to have been, I guess, the 10th. I'm sorry, we're
22 looking at the papers and I'm just trying to correct myself here.

23 MR. CROUCH: Okay.

24 BY MR. FOX:

25 Q. So on the sheet it has Harly Diaz training. Is that you --

1 A. Um-hum.

2 Q. Did you author that as -- is that your handwriting?

3 A. I mean, I can't see it. If it's on the trip sheet, yeah, it
4 should be mine.

5 Q. Okay. So can you recall how many days you did train him?

6 A. I think we trained him for 3 days.

7 Q. You know, of course, it's quite a few months ago. According
8 to the sheets it shows 4 days, it shows the 10th, 11th, 12th, and
9 13th. Does that sound about right or --

10 A. Maybe it was. If I wrote it down on the sheet, I mean, the
11 sheet would be more correct than my memory as far as recall.

12 Q. Of course. Now, during that time, you're showing him the
13 route, is that correct?

14 A. Yes. Actually, the first day, what I do when I start
15 training is I have him sit in the passenger seat --

16 Q. Right.

17 A. -- and just kind of observe how to pull into a place, how to
18 leave a place, how to back up to the garage door or door, wherever
19 the access place is at the building, and it's more just to kind of
20 get acquainted with the stuff and then as we go on, it gets a
21 little more involved.

22 Q. Okay. And how long does -- how long did -- can you recall
23 how long you had him just as an observer? Was it just 1 day and
24 then he drove the next or can you recall?

25 A. I believe it was just 1 day, then he drove and then if there

1 were any issues like that, we'd point it out, you know, maybe he
2 missed a turn or whatever, but he -- he was using a GPS so that
3 kind of helped him, you know, tell him to take a left at certain
4 routes, stuff like that through voice command.

5 Q. Okay. So the first -- I'm just going to recap what you just
6 said. The first day, you showed him the route and you showed him
7 all the particulars --

8 A. Um-hum.

9 Q. -- do's and don'ts or whatever, maybe, about the route and he
10 was just as an observer and then the following 3 days he was
11 running the route and you were monitoring his performance.

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. Okay. Did you have any training records or a checklist or
14 anything?

15 A. Not that I recall.

16 Q. Okay. In his DQ file, driver qualification file, there's
17 three documents that the driver signed.

18 A. Okay.

19 Q. There is the driver evaluation road test form and then there
20 is an employee acknowledgement of receipt of the company handbook
21 and then there is, I think, the drug and alcohol, if you test
22 positive or if you refuse. Did you provide him this paperwork to
23 sign?

24 A. No, I wouldn't have had, I wouldn't have had, I wouldn't be
25 involved in the drugs or anything like that.

1 Q. The signature for the receipt of the driver handbook?

2 MR. BAGAGLIO: Can I interject with that?

3 MR. FOX: Yeah.

4 MR. BAGAGLIO: That paperwork would've been sent up in a
5 packet for him to finalize and finish out and send back to us.

6 MR. FOX: Okay. Okay, got you. Okay, that was -- Tom is
7 providing the answer to that question.

8 BY MR. FOX:

9 Q. Two of those documents were sent up by mail or courier to
10 Diaz and then he signed off on those. So you were not involved in
11 that. But from what --

12 A. No.

13 Q. Yeah. But from what I can understand, this one, the driver
14 evaluation road test form, that one was filled out by you for
15 Diaz. It says Harold (sic) Diaz, observed by Harold Crouch and
16 then it says like general vehicle condition noted, parking,
17 lighting, and placing vehicle in operation, there's all these yes
18 or noes, you know, check things like that. Do you recall that
19 document?

20 A. Yeah, yeah, I think so.

21 Q. Well, did you author this document? Did you fill this
22 document out?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. You did. And you did it on the 16th, is a question that I
25 have for you.

1 A. That, I'm not sure. I mean, I submitted it on the 16th. I
2 would've done it when he -- I mean, I would've done that at the
3 end of the training period.

4 Q. Yeah. So that's a question that I have that didn't add up,
5 is, you know, he -- according to your sheets, he -- you know, your
6 training sheets --

7 A. Um-hum.

8 Q. -- it says, you know, your name on there and Diaz for 10, 11,
9 12, 13.

10 A. Okay.

11 Q. And then this training form is -- says that he was tested and
12 observed on the 16th, which he was not working. Did he come in
13 off duty or did you conduct this test while you were doing the
14 training?

15 A. I would've done it when I was doing the training because
16 that's when I would've observed all that.

17 Q. That would be -- yeah, that would be logical. So he didn't
18 come in, you did it probably his last day, but I don't want to
19 give -- put words in your mouth.

20 A. That, I'm not sure.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. Like you said, what was that, 4 months ago?

23 Q. Yeah, yeah. It was 4 months ago. Okay, so for whatever --

24 A. I mean, I didn't -- as far as this guy driving-wise, I had no
25 red flags and this guy did everything correctly, I mean, he was

1 looking in the mirrors like every 8 seconds and so and he did a
2 good job.

3 Q. Yeah, yeah, yeah. I'm going to get to that point. Like I
4 said, the only document that shows that he was trained or received
5 any training is this document that you -- you signed off on and I
6 just had a question about the date, because the date that says
7 that he was observed doing this road test was on the 16th and he
8 was not working that day. And as you're saying -- and I concur
9 with your statement that he -- you probably tested him the last
10 day and you just, you know, dated the wrong date or whatever, you
11 did it that Monday and said oh, I need to send this in to the
12 office. I'm just making a guess.

13 A. That's what I'm thinking, I may have screwed up on that.

14 Q. Okay. Well, it's fine. Like I said, my biggest question
15 was, from what you can recall, when you did do the testing, it was
16 done during his regular shift and he didn't come in on his off
17 day, is that correct?

18 A. No, no, it was done as regular shift on the regular route
19 that we were training.

20 Q. Okay, okay. All right, fair enough. All right. So going
21 into your earlier comment, when you were -- when you were road
22 testing him and you were observing his -- this time when he was
23 training, did you notice anything, any bad habits or anything that
24 was a red flag?

25 A. Absolutely nothing. The guy did a good job, he was an honest

1 fellow, like I said, he was looking in the mirrors, he wasn't in a
2 hurry, like we had to stop at a light or a stop sign, he wasn't in
3 a hurry.

4 Q. Um-hum.

5 A. I thought he did a fantastic job, I had no red flags with
6 this guy at all.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. I mean, I've been with guys that you're afraid to even ride
9 with them in a truck.

10 Q. I've been in that situation myself.

11 A. On other jobs. I didn't have the feel on this guy, this guy
12 did a decent job.

13 Q. Sure. Okay.

14 A. And, you know, he was awake and he was always alert when we
15 were working, I mean, it wasn't, you know --

16 Q. Okay. Who's running the route now?

17 A. I am.

18 Q. You are, okay. And you live up there locally, right, in
19 Utica or --

20 A. Yeah, I live where we park the truck. We domicile the truck
21 in Whitesboro, New York --

22 Q. Yeah.

23 A. -- and I live in Whitesboro, New York.

24 Q. Okay, cool. Yeah. Now, I have one other question and again,
25 you're not here to look at it, so it's a little unfair. But --

1 A. Okay.

2 Q. -- I did ask Tom about this. Now, you trained him for,
3 according to your log sheets, for 4 days, the 10th, 11th, 12th,
4 13th.

5 A. Okay.

6 Q. The 14th he ran it by himself, is that correct?

7 A. I believe so. Yes.

8 Q. Okay. Now, did you -- one of the things that's a question is
9 that we have your log, your ELD, and it shows you coming on duty
10 on the 13th. So did you train Harly and then go run the other
11 route?

12 A. On the 13th?

13 Q. Can you recall?

14 A. No, I don't.

15 Q. All right. It's unfair because you can't see the paperwork,
16 so that's -- I'm not going to -- I'm not going to harp on it.
17 What I'll do is we'll make a copy for Tom and then I'll just have
18 you two kind of look at it and you can get back with me.

19 A. Okay.

20 Q. All right. So it's unfair for me to try to ask you something
21 you can't see, so I don't want to, you know --

22 A. I appreciate that, thank you.

23 Q. Yeah. Well, that's not fair of me to ask you that, but I'm
24 just -- I didn't know if you could recall, but the fact is that
25 the -- the ELD shows you working and it appears that you had just

1 trained Harly, so I had a -- can you recall, did you train Harly
2 and then run that other route?

3 A. No, I wouldn't have been able to do that.

4 Q. Okay. All right. Well, we'll need to try to get our arms
5 around that. The other thing is on your ELD, it says, you know,
6 White Stone pre-trip, blah, blah, blah, and then it says Emporia.

7 A. I don't even know where those places are.

8 Q. Okay. You never noticed that on your printout or anything,
9 on your ELD showing 2 miles east of Emporia, Virginia?

10 A. No, I don't even know where that is.

11 Q. Okay. Again, that's a Tom question. We'll have to try to
12 figure that one out. Have you been in touch with Harly since the
13 crash?

14 A. No, I have not.

15 Q. Nothing? Okay.

16 A. I mean, I think the day of the crash I asked him if he was
17 doing all right, but I got no reply back. And that was about it,
18 I never -- he's never called me and I've never called him.

19 Q. Got you. Okay. All right, sir, that's basically all the
20 questions that I have. Do you have anything you want to add or
21 anything that I didn't cover that you think that would be
22 important to the investigation?

23 A. Not that I can think of.

24 MR. FOX: Okay. Well, as mentioned, that's all the questions
25 that I have. As you could tell, it was just a couple little

1 things with the paperwork and we'll leave a copy here for Tom so
2 that he can chat with you about it and then he can circle back
3 with me, okay?

4 MR. CROUCH: Okay.

5 MR. FOX: I really appreciate your time and I really
6 appreciate your service to the country and being a safe driver and
7 I hope you have a great day.

8 MR. CROUCH: Thank you, as well, I appreciate your service
9 and the time that you took, too. Thank you.

10 MR. FOX: All right, sir. Okay, the time now is 12:50, we're
11 going to conclude the interview.

12 (Whereupon, at 12:50 p.m., 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: FATAL CRASH OF A FREIGHTLINER BOX
TRUCK & BUS IN LOUISVILLE, NEW YORK
ON JANUARY 28, 2023
Interview of Harold Crouch

ACCIDENT NO.: HWY23FH005

PLACE: Foxboro, Massachusetts

DATE: May 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.



David A. Martini
Transcriber