



SURVIVAL FACTORS ATTACHMENT

First Responder Interviews

Monaville, TX

HWY22FH002

(38 pages)

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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FATAL HEMPSTEAD ISD SCHOOL BUS
CRASH IN WALLER COUNTY, TEXAS
ON DECEMBER 17, 2021

Accident No.: HWY22FH002

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Interview of: MITCHELL CONNER, Fire fighter and Paramedic
Waller/Harris County ESD200

Via telephone

APPEARANCES:

RONALD KAMINSKI, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

I N D E X

ITEM

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Interview of Mitchell Conner:

By Mr. Kaminski

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MR. CONNER: Hello?

MR. KAMINSKI: Hello, good morning, Mitchell.

MR. CONNER: Good morning, sir, how are you?

MR. KAMINSKI: Good, this is Ronald Kaminski with the NTSB.

MR. CONNER: Yes, sir.

MR. KAMINSKI: And okay, you've got a few minutes to talk to me?

MR. CONNER: Yes, sir.

MR. KAMINSKI: Great, now do you mind I'm going to record this so I don't have to interrupt you? I'll let you just talk and -- because I'm a slow writer.

MR. CONNER: That'll work.

INTERVIEW OF MITCHELL CONNER

BY MR. KAMINSKI:

Q. Okay, so going back to the day of the crash on the 17th -- well, first of all, let's get your -- Mitchell, your first name, M I T C H E L L?

A. Correct.

Q. And your last name is spelled how?

A. C O N N E R.

Q. E R, okay.

A. Yes, sir.

Q. And you said you're a Hempstead firefighter, paramedic basic?

A. So, I work for the duty crew, which is the ESD200, Emergency

1 Services District.

2 Q. Right.

3 A. So, we're the certified professionals, like, career guys that
4 they -- we man the stations during the day. I'm not part of the
5 Hempstead Fire Department, I'm part of the ESD200.

6 Q. Okay, and then that's with -- is that the Waller County?

7 A. Yes, sir, it's Waller/Harris ESD200.

8 Q. Okay, so regarding -- why don't you just start from your
9 response from the time you got toned out regarding this crash and
10 you got out there, what you saw, what you did?

11 A. Okay, also to answer the other question, I'm a professional
12 certified firefighter as well as a licensed paramedic.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. However, I work as a basic on -- when I'm working for the
15 ESD, so I don't use most of my advanced skills as far as my medic
16 skills I don't use out there like I do here at my fulltime job.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. But yes, we do operate as at least basics out there on the
19 fire trips as well.

20 Q. Okay, fair enough. So, yeah, just tell me from the point you
21 got toned out and you got there, just go ahead from there?

22 A. Okay, we originally -- we got toned out with another fire
23 department, they sent another station with us career guys that are
24 on duty that day. I responded out as Hempstead, I was red in the
25 seat or what we would call, like, the officer's position that day.

1 We don't have actual rank out there yet, but when you're riding,
2 you know, the front, passenger seat, you're the officer of the
3 truck basically.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. So, me and my partner took off, we already saw a state
6 trooper go by the station right when we had gotten toned out and
7 then we heard that it was overturned -- there was a school bus
8 involved or whatever. At that point, our chief, Jimmy, he's here
9 (audio glitch), so he went in route and, you know, most serious
10 calls like that, they'll send -- he's the safety chief. He also
11 asked for another truck with -- which has another set of
12 professional guys on it, that way we had plenty of resources
13 for -- we would at least have more resources given the nature of
14 the call.

15 Q. Sure.

16 A. So, I believe you already talked to Brooke, she was the one
17 of the -- she was the clinical manager at the time.

18 Q. Right.

19 A. Her and then also the EMS chief out there, they went in route
20 and --

21 Q. And the name of the EMS chief is Jimmy?

22 A. No, sir, the EMS chief would be Bo Hashaw.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. But the -- on the fire department side, Jimmy Worsack (ph.)
25 is our safety chief for us.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. And actually, he's the only technical officer at this point.
3 They're fixing to actually put officers on the trucks too, but
4 that'll hit another day. So, basically, our supervisor on the
5 fire side and then also their supervisor on the EMS side both were
6 there.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. When we pulled up, I was the first fire truck on location,
9 the supervisor and then Brooke also, she had already, you know,
10 given us a heads up on the radio saying there was one DOA and that
11 she was assessing for more patients. We parked -- we had our
12 truck parked in the road, just -- I guess just north of where the
13 bus was off of the road to make sure we blocked traffic and shut
14 the highway down, that way we can work. The EMS chief had already
15 established a command and kind of -- he established an EMS
16 command. So, at that point, I was -- my job was more to make sure
17 that the scene was safe, the bus was safe, and everything like
18 that.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. Because they already had -- I saw three children running
21 around, they were with another adult, but the supervisor was
22 talking to them. Brooke was in -- had already gotten in the back
23 of the bus and she was inside, already assessing patients. So, at
24 that time, I established command for the fire side and I started
25 having -- the other trucks started showing up as well. The first

1 thing I was doing is I got -- climbed up on the motor block
2 because the windshield was busted out and reached through to make
3 sure the bus was in park -- you know, turned off. My job was to
4 secure the scene, anything that could shock us, anything
5 that -- the bus could move while they can work.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. So, I had to put it in park, luckily it was sitting on its
8 tires -- it was sitting right-side-up. So, I climbed through the
9 windshield, it was gone, put it in park, pulled the keys out. And
10 I had -- I told the other guys on the other truck coming in to
11 bring some bolt cutters and to open up the batteries on the bus
12 and cut all the cables off of it so there was no power going to
13 it.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. Like I said, at this time, there was Brooke and another medic
16 crew had already gotten on scene, they were basically doing
17 triage, assessing patients. We were trying to figure out a way
18 how to get them out once they got patches on them and were ready.
19 So, when all the volunteers had shown up --

20 Q. How many people were still in the bus when you got there?

21 A. If I remember correctly, there were two.

22 Q. Two?

23 A. Two civilians.

24 Q. The bus driver and the -- I guess the high school students?

25 A. Yes, sir, it was the 15-year-old child, I believe.

1 Q. Right.

2 A. That was the one they were getting -- they had deemed her the
3 most critical at that time. So, it was her and the bus driver was
4 up front. Once the medic crew got there, they started along with
5 a couple other fire fighters -- a couple volunteer fire fighters
6 showed up and they were inside the bus, actually, getting the
7 patient on a backboard, getting her ready to, you know, come out.
8 Once they had that done, myself and my crew, along with a couple
9 other guys from the fire trucks waited at the back of the bus
10 because they had the patient on a backboard secured and so they
11 handed the patient out to us and then we carried her over to the
12 road where the stretcher was waiting as well as the ambulance.

13 Q. Okay, now I noticed that there was a younger child in the car
14 seat -- child safety seat and I noticed --

15 A. Yes, sir.

16 Q. The on-scene photos from the state troopers showed that it
17 was outside. Do you know why that was thrown outside or do you
18 know who would have -- I was just wondering how that got outside?

19 A. How the car seat got outside?

20 Q. Yes, sir.

21 A. That, I do not know.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. My assumption would be that -- I mean, just from doing this
24 for a little while, the only I could think is somebody pulled it
25 out to move it out of the way to get access to the patients and be

1 able to provide care.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. But I did not actually see it get moved from the bus at all.

4 Q. Okay, and you mentioned that -- so, the EMS chief, was he
5 pretty much the incident commander on scene?

6 A. Yes, so it's weird. The way, like, at my fulltime job and
7 most other places it's a little different I guess than out there.
8 Out there it's a combined department, so we have fulltime -- or
9 like we have paid guys that work these stations during the day
10 from 6:00 to 6:00 basically allowing the volunteers to go to work
11 and do their thing and then when we get off at 6:00 and they can
12 kind of take over. So, we have volunteers that respond with us
13 and operate with us as well the certified guys.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. And out there in that county, EMS -- the EMS is separated
16 from fire. So, this was a discussion that I had with my section
17 chief afterwards, Bo Hashaw, he established EMS command, which to
18 me, that means that's, you know, incident command. I ended up
19 establishing a fire command because I guess for me to pull
20 resources from the fire side. So, the EMS chief had established
21 EMS command and was the one calling all the shots as far as
22 needing more medic units, calling in life flight, stuff like that.
23 Whereas I was on the other side kind of directing the fire
24 department and our guys to do what we needed to do. So, I mean, I
25 wouldn't say that he would have to be incident command if you had

1 to name one incident commander because he's the first there, he
2 established command and he was calling the shots for, like,
3 transport, life flight, and all that.

4 Q. Okay, well yeah, I probably want to talk to him. How do
5 you -- what's -- Bo Hashaw, can you spell his name please?

6 A. B O and then H A S H A W I believe. He -- also if you look
7 up -- or, I mean if you looked up Waller County EMS, but he's
8 their EMS chief. Now, I also know that he hasn't been in the
9 office for a little while, so I don't know if he's out sick or
10 what the deal is. So, you may be able to -- if you call Waller
11 County EMS -- I mean call their office and they'll be able to tell
12 you if he's there or get you his number or anything like that.

13 Q. Okay, so by the time then -- so, let me just go over real
14 quick. You got toned out, you went out there, responded, you were
15 the officer in the truck, you were in the right, front seat, and
16 you mentioned Jimmy as the -- he's the safety chief -- no?

17 A. Yes, sir.

18 Q. Okay, and that's with --

19 A. He's the safety chief on the fire side.

20 Q. On the fire side, okay, and then Bo was the safety chief,
21 he's for Waller Harris County EMS and then you were the first
22 truck on scene. On your way there, Brooke gave you an
23 update -- Brooke Fuentes gave you an update as to what there was
24 on scene, including you had one fatality, and then she was inside
25 when you got there -- she was inside assessing the injuries. The

1 other truck showed up, you put the -- you climbed in through the
2 windshield, put the bus in park, turned off the -- took the keys
3 out. When you got there -- and then the other guys cut the
4 battery cables. There was two left in the bus, the driver and the
5 high school student, some other volunteers showed up. And then I
6 just have a note here that EMS command was the one that called in
7 life flight and Bo Hashaw is probably the person that I probably
8 want to talk to to get any other information that you haven't
9 given me as to regarding what all happened out there. So, did you
10 beat Bo out there or did he beat you out there -- out to the
11 scene?

12 A. He beat us. It was Brooke and then I believe it was him and
13 the supervisor. So, Brooke is a clinical manager, she works
14 during the daytime.

15 Q. Right.

16 A. So, there's also a supervisor vehicle out there that works
17 shift work 48 hour -- 48 on, 96 off like the rest of the crews and
18 then Bo is also -- he's a daytime person. So, you'll have their
19 supervisor, which is S1, which is always going to be out there and
20 then Brooke and Bo --

21 Q. And what their name -- what's Brookes supervisor's name?

22 A. Well, so technically S1 is operations level, not
23 administration and that's a rotating crew. They work shift work
24 just like anyone else. Brooke's supervisor would be Bo.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. And then S1, who's in charge of all the operations, like, the
2 actual on-shift personnel, that day it was -- I want to say it was
3 Jennifer that day.

4 Q. Right, okay. Well, when I talk to -- or if I'm able to talk
5 to Bo Hashaw, maybe he'll be able to fill me in with a couple of
6 other names?

7 A. Oh, he'd definitely be able to tell you all of those for
8 sure.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. Other than that, I guess they took the -- we took the one
11 patient through the backboard and then the bus driver, that was
12 sitting up front, we ended up -- me and a couple of other guys
13 ended up pulling out a couple tools from our truck and we ended up
14 forcing the doors open and taking them off the bus so that we
15 could get the lady out.

16 Q. You're talking about the bifold doors in the front -- the
17 loading doors?

18 A. Correct.

19 Q. Okay, yeah, I noticed they were kind of busted open. Did you
20 break any of the windows while doing that because I noticed there
21 was -- a couple of windows were cracked on that door, but there
22 was one that was knocked out. Do you recall if you guys were the
23 ones that knocked out that window?

24 A. I'm -- I would say 99 percent sure that both of the windows
25 on those doors were intact. I know we did break that one and then

1 we did most -- pretty much all the damage to the windows.

2 Q. Okay, I just want to make sure that what was, you know,
3 accident damage and what was extrication emergency response
4 damage. So -- okay.

5 A. Yeah, and we talked about that. To the best of my knowledge,
6 I don't remember any other windows except for the windshield being
7 gone when I got there when we first started.

8 Q. Yeah, that was completely out when you got there, correct?

9 A. Correct.

10 Q. Yeah, okay, and that's how you were able to crawl in, right?

11 A. Exactly.

12 MR. KAMINSKI: Okay, Mitchell, I appreciate your help.
13 Continue doing a great job out there and any other comments,
14 questions, feel free to give me a call at this number and again, I
15 want to thank you for all your service and for helping out out
16 there. I know it was a tough day having to respond and deal with
17 that, but I thank you very much for doing that.

18 MR. CONNER: Oh, not a problem. I appreciate it.

19 MR. KAMINSKI: Okay, so you have a happy new year.

20 MR. CONNER: You as well.

21 MR. KAMINSKI: Okay, sir, buh-bye.

22 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)
23
24
25

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: FATAL HEMPSTEAD ISD SCHOOL BUS
 CRASH IN WALLER COUNTY, TEXAS
 ON DECEMBER 17, 2021
 Interview of Mitchell Conner

ACCIDENT NO.: HWY22FH002

PLACE: Via telephone

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.



Carolyn Hanna
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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FATAL HEMPSTEAD ISD SCHOOL BUS
CRASH IN WALLER COUNTY, TEXAS
ON DECEMBER 17, 2021

Accident No.: HWY22FH002

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Interview of: BROOKE FUENTES, Paramedic and Clinical Manager
Waller/Harris County ESD200

Waller, Texas

Tuesday,
January 4, 2022

APPEARANCES:

RONALD KAMINSKI, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

I N D E X

ITEM

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Interview of Brooke Fuentes:

By Mr. Kaminski

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I N T E R V I E W

1
2 MR. KAMINSKI: Today's date is January 4th, 2022, this is
3 Ronald Kaminski with the NTSB. I'm going to be talking with
4 Brooke Fuentes, F U E N T E S, she's a paramedic and at the time
5 of the crash -- the school bus crash, she was the clinical manager
6 and this interview is taking place at Station 11. Ms. Fuentes is
7 going to give us a description of when she got the call, what she
8 did, and what she saw at the scene.

INTERVIEW OF MITCHELL CONNER

9
10 BY MR. KAMINSKI:

11 Q. Go ahead?

12 A. Just walk you through everything?

13 Q. Yeah, just walk me through it?

14 A. Okay, we were at the administration building in Hempstead.

15 We heard on the police scanner that there was school bus
16 accident -- or there was a school bus in a ditch. So, before the
17 call was tone out, we started heading -- myself and my supervisor
18 started heading, in separate vehicles, to the accident. The other
19 supervisor was Heather Harris, she was just a minute or so behind
20 me.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. We -- once I got on scene, there were -- do you want me to,
23 like, describe the scene to you?

24 Q. Sure.

25 A. Okay, so when I pulled up -- this is called 115 -- no, 1897?

1 Q. 1887, yes.

2 A. Okay, down 1887, there was a school bus in the curve. It was
3 kind of in a ditch up in, like, a pasture of some sort. There
4 were several other people on scene, you know, bystanders that saw
5 it happen. There were at least one, if not two, law enforcement
6 personnel on scene. I parked the Tahoe and got out, I was kind of
7 parallel to the bus, but I was in the roadway. So, Tahoe and the
8 bus was on the other side of the road. When I approached, I
9 started triaging, the first person I came up to appeared to be a
10 DOA. I located the patient and quickly determined that she had
11 injuries incompatible with life, so I called out over the radio I
12 had one confirmed DOA and then I moved onto the next patients.

13 There were three little kids, I'm not sure of their ages,
14 they were all outside of the bus standing with I guess people that
15 had stopped. They had all kind of found somebody there. One -- I
16 think one of them was being held by somebody and then two of them
17 were standing up. They were all crying but they were
18 all -- obviously had airways and they were -- didn't have life
19 threatening injuries, so I moved onto the bus. I determined, you
20 know, those were three walking wounded, so I went to the bus where
21 they said there was more patients. The bus, I entered from the
22 back because the front door was not able to open. The front
23 portion of the bus was, you know, where all the damage was -- or
24 most of it. I crawled into the back of the bus and there were two
25 patients seated towards the front. There was a teenager on the

1 back, left side of the bus -- well, I'm sorry, it would've been
2 the front of the bus. I entered through the back.

3 Q. Right.

4 A. So, she was in the front, left side of the bus. She was
5 awake and responding, she was shaken up and then I talked to her,
6 I gathered that she was awake and she was talking. She was
7 injured. And then I went to the driver of the bus who was
8 sitting, like -- she wasn't in the driver seat anymore, she was on
9 the aisle sitting there.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. She was awake, but she wasn't really talking. She was
12 very --

13 Q. Like in shock?

14 A. Very much in shock. I was trying to put everything together
15 to figure out who was the driver, who was this person that was
16 dead in the road? I thought she was, like, a pedestrian because
17 she was just trying to get words out of her mouth and then I
18 realized later that that was the aide.

19 Q. Right.

20 A. So, I talked to her, tried to get her to calm down enough to,
21 you know, be able to determine whether she was alert and oriented,
22 you know, if she had sustained a head injury or not and
23 eventually, we did get everything out of her that we needed to
24 know. She knew where she was, she knew -- well, she didn't really
25 tell me what happened. She knew what her name was, she was

1 concerned about her husband, who is disabled at home. She was
2 very concerned about having someone take care of him. She didn't
3 want to go to the hospital, she wanted someone to go make sure he
4 was taken care of. So, we started looking through --

5 Q. Did she have any injuries -- any type of injuries that you
6 could tell?

7 A. She had some glass in her left arm, she had pain in her left
8 shoulder, like paraspinal area. She definitely did not have any
9 spinal pain or cervical spine pain. It was all the left side and
10 besides that and the glass in her arm, I did not see any injuries.

11 Q. Which arm was that?

12 A. Her left.

13 Q. Okay, and how about the teenager?

14 A. The teenager, she had a laceration, I think it was above her
15 right eye. There was not a lot of blood, but she had a lot
16 of -- noticeable amount of blood on her face. She had glass in
17 her arms and her legs. She complained of leg pain, but I know I
18 didn't clear her of C-spine before I went onto the next patient.
19 But those are the only injuries that I saw on her -- like,
20 physically saw.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. What else?

23 Q. And then did you take a look at the two -- the other two
24 youngsters?

25 A. So, when I approached them at first, I kind of went up to

1 them and they were crying, so this sounds weird, but I just, like,
2 went like this to make sure I didn't feel anything huge deformed
3 because they were crying and because they were responsive.

4 Q. Right.

5 A. I kind of had to go onto the next patients. So, you know,
6 we're trained to triage everybody before we start treating them,
7 so that's the extent of what I did with them.

8 Q. And I guess there was -- so, that life flight came for the --

9 A. Teenager.

10 Q. The teenage and then I guess there was -- two were
11 transported -- the two kids were transported?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. And one was driven from a parent?

14 A. Yes, one was released to their parent.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. And then the --

17 Q. Did you --

18 A. I wouldn't have any other --

19 Q. Contact with them?

20 A. Contact with them, no. Once the other people started getting
21 there, I stayed on the bus for the remainder until we got both of
22 them out and both little boys were -- I think they'd already left
23 by the time we got both of them out of the bus.

24 Q. And then the bus driver, she was transported as well?

25 A. She was, yes.

1 Q. Right, and they all when to Herman downtown?

2 A. Different Hermans. The little boys I think went to Herman KD
3 and then both on the bus went to Herman the medical center because
4 we wanted to keep them together, I guess because they were
5 related.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. So, I wanted the driver to go to the same hospital her
8 granddaughter was going to.

9 Q. And that was Herman downtown?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Okay, the -- when you got there, the deceased, was
12 she -- where was she located, outside the back of the bus or -- do
13 you recall?

14 A. Yeah, so I'm trying to describe how it was, she was -- I can
15 draw something?

16 Q. Yeah.

17 A. Okay, so this is the curve -- do you got to go?

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah, we're just getting
19 (indiscernible).

20 MR. KAMINSKI: Do you have a business card or something you
21 can give me your phone number?

22 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: That would be cool but
23 (indiscernible).

24 MS. FUENTES: I'll give you his number.

25 MR. KAMINSKI: Well, you have my card, so you have my number

1 on my call. So, okay, just give me a call or email me, whatever
2 works out best.

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

4 MS. FUENTES: Okay, this is the school bus, I was --

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You good Brooke?

6 MS. FUENTES: Yes.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

8 MS. FUENTES: That's where I parked, that's the school bus.
9 She was -- and there was, like, a barbed wire fence, but this was
10 all plowed through and all the damage was, like, right here.

11 MR. KAMINSKI: Okay.

12 MS. FUENTES: Well, there was damage everywhere, but the
13 majority of it was in the front.

14 MR. KAMINSKI: Right.

15 MS. FUENTES: She was, like here.

16 BY MR. KAMINSKI:

17 Q. So, on this side, closer to the roadway, towards the middle
18 of the bus would you say?

19 A. Yes, initially, I thought that she was a pedestrian that got
20 it and then once I started thinking about it and I saw the damage,
21 how the front windshield was open, and all the damage to this part
22 of the bus, then I realized she was ejected.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. Well, I thought she was ejected.

25 MR. KAMINSKI: Right, okay. I think that's -- you've given

1 me a great description, I appreciate all your information.

2 MS. FUENTES: Sure.

3 MR. KAMINSKI: That -- I'll get your contact phone number in
4 case I have any follow up.

5 MS. FUENTES: Okay.

6 MR. KAMINSKI: And you have my business card there.

7 MS. FUENTES: Okay.

8 MR. KAMINSKI: And that will conclude our interview here at
9 4:20.

10 (Whereupon, at 4:20 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

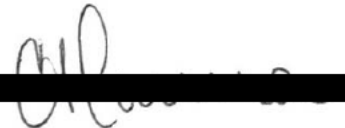
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ON DECEMBER 17, 2021
Interview of Brooke Fuentes

ACCIDENT NO.: HWY22FH002

PLACE: Waller, Texas

DATE: January 4, 2022

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.



Carolyn Hanna
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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FATAL HEMPSTEAD ISD SCHOOL BUS
CRASH IN WALLER COUNTY, TEXAS
ON DECEMBER 17, 2021

Accident No.: HWY22FH002

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Interview of: TANYA STANFORD, Sheriff's Deputy
Waller County Sheriff's Office

Via telephone

Wednesday,
January 12, 2022

APPEARANCES:

RONALD KAMINSKI, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

I N D E X

ITEM

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Interview of Tanya Stanford:

By Mr. Kaminski

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I N T E R V I E W

INTERVIEW OF TANYA STANFORD

BY MR. KAMINSKI:

1 Q. Today's date is January 12th, 2022, this is Ronald Kaminski
2 with the National Transportation Safety Board and I'll be talking
3 to Waller County Deputy Stanford and could you spell your first
4 and last name, please?

5 A. Sure, first name is Tanya, T A N Y A, last name is Stanford,
6 S T A N F O R D.

7 Q. Okay, and then if you could just give me a brief description
8 of your response to the school bus crash back on December 17th?

9 A. Sure, the call came in over dispatch that, you know, there
10 was a bus accident and apparently a couple of citizens had stopped
11 to help and called and let us know. I wasn't too far from the
12 scene of the crash and responded and was the first one to arrive
13 on the scene. And at that time, you know, pulled up to the scene
14 and saw an adult female outside of the bus and then there was a
15 few children that I could see from the roadway in the bus as well
16 as another adult female. And then I checked the female that was
17 outside of the bus and, you know, let EMS know that she was
18 possibly deceased.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. So, at that time, I saw one of the kids in the bus was in the
21 exterior window where she could see the adult female laying on the
22 ground. She was crying, the bus driver was trying to kind of

1 assess what was going on. You could tell she was very shook up.
2 I went in there and one of the individuals that was there shortly
3 after the accident -- you know, one of the citizens had made it up
4 into the bus prior to me, unfastened the juvenile that was on that
5 outside window and handed to me and took her around the backside
6 of the bus so she could no longer see the female on the ground.
7 He went ahead and handed me --

8 Q. So, that was passerby -- a good samaritan that stopped and
9 then jumped in?

10 A. Correct.

11 Q. Did you guys get his name by chance?

12 A. I'm sure DPS did.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. At the time, you know, my biggest concern was kind of
15 assessing, making sure that there was no -- you know, what
16 injuries were there and, you know, getting the kids out of the
17 bus. So, he went ahead and proceeded to hand me out two other
18 juveniles -- all juveniles and I kept them all around on the far
19 side of the bus.

20 Q. Sure.

21 A. I approached the bus from that far side struck with the other
22 adult female that was in the bus, which happened to be the bus
23 driver. She was kind of flipping through papers, you could tell
24 she was very upset and kind of, you know, distraught with
25 everything that's going on, naturally, and I asked her if there

1 was anybody else on the bus. She said no and she was kind of
2 stuck in there with the way everything was and so I just told her,
3 you know, go ahead and stay put and then I went and stayed with
4 the kids at that point. Others had already arrived and began to
5 kind of assess things as well, EMS started arriving and, you know,
6 I stood out there with the three kids on the far side of the bus
7 where they couldn't see the deceased and waited with them, and
8 talked to them, and tried to calm them down as much as possible.

9 Q. Sure.

10 A. And then the parents started to arrive. There was a bit of a
11 language barrier with the kids as well as the parents, but we were
12 able to communicate well enough that we could decipher whose
13 children was whose. And then, you know, at that time, we worked
14 them around the accident as much as possible to get them over to
15 EMS so they could be assessed. Then at that time, I was kind of
16 hands off from that and that was the biggest part of everything.
17 At that point, I went ahead and went down a little further to
18 block traffic from coming by as well as one of the other deputies
19 went to the opposite side of the accident and we just blocked
20 traffic and that was kind of the extent of my involvement.

21 Q. Okay, no the -- you mentioned the male that jumped in and
22 released the juvenile from the car seat and I noticed that the on-
23 scene photos that the car seat was sitting outside, did he throw
24 that out as well after handing out the young child? I'm just
25 wondering how that got out there?

1 A. It seems like -- yeah, it seems like to me that it was handed
2 out because it was undecided as to whether they were going to be
3 transported and if that was going to be needed. That rings a bell
4 to me, but I can't completely, a hundred percent attest to it.
5 There was so much going on and so much, you know, conversation and
6 just trying to make sure that the kiddos were safe.

7 Q. Sure, well, it sounds like you did an outstanding job. We're
8 kind of -- we were working with Trooper Mathis and I'm sure you're
9 aware you guys are a small community and I guess his grandfather
10 passed away last Wednesday, the we were there. So, we didn't get
11 to kind of finish up gathering out our information from him and
12 getting the reports and the names and all that stuff. So, we're
13 still kind of working on that, we're kind of letting him go
14 through his process before -- we don't want to want to be rushing
15 him back into that.

16 A. Yes, sir, understandable.

17 Q. But okay, well, it sounds like you did an outstanding job out
18 there and keeping everybody calm and keeping them away from the
19 female that was closest to the road there -- the deceased.

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. Yeah, traumatize the kids.

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. So, okay, is there anyone else out there you think I
24 should -- I've talked to the EMS crew chief, the fire fighter who
25 jumped on the bus. I still haven't talked to Trooper Mathis yet

1 again, because of the -- what he's dealing with right now.

2 A. Right.

3 Q. But is there anyone else you think I should talk to --

4 A. I think Deputy Bennet, he would have a very similar story to
5 mine because, I mean, I don't think there would be any difference
6 other than he went on the far side to direct traffic.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. So, you know, I mean, he may or may not, but I think you're
9 going to get pretty much the same. We were working pretty much
10 hand in hand and we were -- you know, I mean, literally, I would
11 have to say no more than a minute difference in arrival time.

12 Q. Yeah, and going back to that, you had mentioned before we
13 started that you thought that the dispatch logs had you clocked in
14 a little bit later than when you got there?

15 A. Possibly so, you know, because my review of the log, they
16 showed Trooper Mathis and Sergeant Lewis there first, when it was
17 actually myself that arrived first and Deputy Bennet.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. And then it was shortly after that that others began to
20 arrive. So, the only ones that were there as far as emergency
21 services was myself and Deputy Bennet and then the two good
22 samaritans that had stopped.

23 MR. KAMINSKI: Okay, well again, I thank you for giving me a
24 great description of what you all did out there and I appreciate
25 your service.

1 MS. STANFORD: Oh, no problem. Thank you very much. I
2 appreciate it.

3 MR. KAMINSKI: Okay, you take care.

4 MS. STANFORD: Yes, sir, you do the same. Buh-bye.

5 MR. KAMINSKI: Buh-bye.

6 (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: FATAL HEMPSTEAD ISD SCHOOL BUS
CRASH IN WALLER COUNTY, TEXAS
ON DECEMBER 17, 2021
Interview of Tanya Stanford

ACCIDENT NO.: HWY22FH002

PLACE: Via telephone

DATE: January 12, 2022

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.



Carolyn Hanna
Transcriber