



**Human Performance Attachment – Interview with Bus Driver's Family**

**Rushville, IL**

**HWY24MH005**

(44 pages)

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: \*

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FATAL SEMITRUCK & SCHOOL BUS \*

COLLISION AND SUBSEQUENT FIRE \*

Accident No.: HWY24MH005

IN RUSHVILLE, ILLINOIS ON \*

MARCH 11, 2024 \*

\*

\* \* \* \* \*

Interview of: MICHELLE LEMONS, MICHELLE LEKANDER & VERNON SPIKER  
Angela Spiker's Relatives

Littleton, Illinois

Wednesday,  
March 13, 2024

APPEARANCES:

RAFAEL MARSHALL, Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board

SARAH QUINN  
National Transportation Safety Board

I N D E X

ITEM

PAGE

Interview of Michelle Lemons, Michelle Lekander, and  
Vernon Spiker:

By Mr. Marshall

4

I N T E R V I E W

1  
2 MR. MARSHALL: My name is Rafael Marshall, M-a-r-s-h-a-l-l.  
3 Today is March 13, 2024, and we are at [REDACTED],  
4 Littleton, Illinois, interviewing family members of Angela Spiker  
5 in connection to crash number HWY24MH005.

6 The purpose of this investigation is to increase safety.  
7 It's not to assign fault, blame or liability. The NTSB cannot  
8 offer any guarantee of confidentiality or immunity for legal or  
9 certificate action.

10 The transcript or summary of the interview will go into the  
11 public docket. The interviewee can have as many representatives  
12 as you'd like.

13 Do you understand that this interview is being recorded?

14 MS. LEMONS: Yes, we do.

15 MR. MARSHALL: Okay. So I'm going to start with you.

16 INTERVIEW OF MICHELLE LEMONS,

17 MICHELLE LEKANDER & VERNON SPIKER

18 MR. MARSHALL: Could you please state your name, and spell  
19 your, your last name?

20 MS. LEMONS: Michelle Lemons, M-i-c-h-e-l-l-e L-e-m-o-n-s.

21 MR. MARSHALL: Okay. And you are?

22 MS. LEMONS: Angela's daughter.

23 MR. MARSHALL: Okay.

24 MS. LEKANDER: And Michelle Lekander, L-e-k-a-n-d-e-r, and I  
25 am Angela's sister, and executor of her estate.

1 MR. SPIKER: Vernon Spiker, S-p-i-k-e-r. I'm Angela's  
2 brother.

3 MR. MARSHALL: All right. So what I'm going to do, I'm just  
4 going to go through just categories of questions, and the first  
5 thing that we usually do is we try to find out the 72-hour history  
6 of each driver that's involved. And so I was wondering if you  
7 could give me sort of an idea of what Angela's activities were for  
8 the past three days prior to the crash?

9 MS. LEKANDER: The night before she drove to pick up a horse  
10 trailer in Oquawka, Illinois. I don't know the exact time that  
11 she was -- it took her to get it, and then arrive, but I do know  
12 that that was her activity for that night. Do you know what she  
13 did Saturday?

14 MS. LEMONS: I'm trying to think. I think Sunday she also  
15 went to a fish fry with the gentlemen she was seeing. And then  
16 went back to his house. Saturday in the morning she went with me  
17 and my son to his baseball tryouts, and then went to her  
18 boyfriend's house to relax for the day, and then they had a saddle  
19 club Christmas party to go to. I'll be honest, it was at a bar,  
20 but my mom, because she held a CDL, refused to drink if she was  
21 driving no matter what. I know that for a fact because I  
22 bartended that bar, and I was bartending that night, and she drank  
23 water. Friday she worked until probably about five o'clock.

24 MS. LEKANDER: And I talked to her Sunday night.

25 MS. LEMONS: Yup. She went home to get ready, and get her

1 dog, and then go out to her boyfriend's house. They were going  
2 out to eat with his family, and she was driving that night as  
3 well. So --

4 MR. MARSHALL: Okay. Let's go back to, to Friday. What day  
5 would that be? That would be?

6 MS. LEMONS: The 8th, 7th.

7 MR. MARSHALL: 7th.

8 MS. LEMONS: Or --

9 MS. LEKANDER: No, it would have been the 8th.

10 MR. MARSHALL: Yeah. So March 8th you said that she had  
11 worked that day?

12 MS. LEMONS: Yeah. She was bus driving.

13 MR. MARSHALL: Could you -- would you know what her -- did  
14 she have a normal schedule --

15 MS. LEMONS: Yes.

16 MR. MARSHALL: -- when she would -- so what, I mean, like,  
17 did she wake up at, at a certain time?

18 MS. LEMONS: Yeah. She probably got up about 5, 5:30.

19 MR. MARSHALL: Okay.

20 MS. LEMONS: She was usually leaving the house by before six.  
21 Because I don't remember whenever her first kid had to be picked  
22 up, but I know that I could reach her, and she wasn't on the bus  
23 at 6:30, but she was either getting ready to go out or something.  
24 It was right about 6:30. Don't quote me on times exact. You know  
25 what I mean? But she would be driving the bus until like eight or

1 she would be bus duties until like eight. She had some down time  
2 until like 9:30, 9:45, and then she had to go do the pre-K route.  
3 Her pre-K route would last until noon-ish, right about then. And  
4 then from noon to like 2:30, 2:45 at the latest. And then after  
5 2:30 she would be going to pick up the kids for her evening route.

6 MR. MARSHALL: Was it always the same route?

7 MS. LEMONS: Yes.

8 MR. MARSHALL: Okay. Same kids, same --

9 MS. LEMONS: Unless, I mean, we -- talk and she told me that  
10 unless she got new kids, and it was like, fairly new, usually she  
11 would tell me, but I don't think she had gotten any new kids  
12 and --

13 MR. MARSHALL: Okay.

14 MS. LEMONS: -- put on a new route other than if a new kid  
15 comes, it's the same consistently.

16 MR. MARSHALL: Is there usually -- is it usually just her as  
17 the only adult in the bus or was there usually an aide or --

18 MS. LEMONS: As far as I know it was just her.

19 MR. MARSHALL: Okay.

20 MS. LEMONS: My kids would know though. They rode the bus  
21 with her.

22 MR. MARSHALL: Okay.

23 MS. LEMONS: So, [REDACTED], did Nana ever have a helper on the  
24 bus?

25 MS. LEKANDER: An adult?



1 MS. LEMONS: An adult helper? Was it just her?

2 [REDACTED]: Yes. Mostly, most of the time it's just her.

3 MS. LEMONS: Okay. So it was just her.

4 MR. MARSHALL: So for, for this route it would be the same  
5 kids. How would she -- would the parents secure the kids in the  
6 bus or would, would your mother be the one that's responsible for  
7 that?

8 MS. LEMONS: I think she was, I think she was responsible  
9 from the moment they stepped on the bus. I know she was big about  
10 time to get your seatbelts on and stuff like that.

11 MR. MARSHALL: Yeah.

12 MS. LEMONS: So I think that was her, her thing.

13 MR. MARSHALL: Okay.

14 MS. LEMONS: I'm not 100 percent on that though.

15 MR. MARSHALL: Yeah.

16 MS. LEMONS: That was, I guess that's just a question I never  
17 thought about asking.

18 MR. MARSHALL: So you said that after 9:30 she would be off  
19 for a few, for a few hours?

20 MS. LEMONS: Yeah.

21 MR. MARSHALL: Or an hour or two.

22 MS. LEMONS: Yeah. After eight.

23 MR. MARSHALL: What would she do during that period?

24 MS. LEMONS: It depends. Usually she'd go home because she  
25 gets up so early she had to --

1 MS. LEKANDER: Let her dog out.

2 MS. LEMONS: Yeah. She had to -- usually I'd call her, and  
3 she'd be walking in the door or she'd be at home, or if she had to  
4 stop by the store, she's like, I need to go. I've got to grab a  
5 bit to eat, and just chill for a minute before I've got to go back  
6 and do the pre-K route. So she would go home, and let her dog  
7 out, and just chill for a little bit.

8 MR. MARSHALL: Okay. And that would be the same case for  
9 the, the second --

10 MS. LEMONS: Noon?

11 MR. MARSHALL: Yeah, the noon one.

12 MS. LEMONS: Yeah, so that also depends. Most of the time  
13 she was in town. So like, if she had any errands to run or like  
14 because she lives in Rushville, and I live out here, like my kids  
15 have medicine, and I have medicine. So I'd be, like, hey, if the  
16 pharmacy has the medicine, can you go get it for me? Or if she  
17 needed to go to the store or if she had like --

18 MS. LEKANDER: The bank.

19 MS. LEMONS: -- yeah, the bank, appointments, eye  
20 appointments, doctor appointments, if she could fit them in that  
21 time, then she would do it. Other than that, or if I didn't need  
22 her out here, sometimes she'd come out just visit me on her lunch.  
23 But if I didn't need her out here, then she would stay in town so  
24 she was close.

25 MR. MARSHALL: Okay. And around what time did you say that

1 she would finish her route for the day?

2 MS. LEMONS: Her pre-K route?

3 MR. MARSHALL: Yeah. Just her -- all of her routes.

4 (Crosstalk)

5 MS. LEKANDER: When she's done for the day.

6 MS. LEMONS: Done, done. So I think she got back to the bus  
7 barn probably it would be after four. So I'd say safely about  
8 five she was done for the day.

9 MR. MARSHALL: Okay. And then after five on Friday what did  
10 you say that she --

11 MS. LEMONS: She went home, and she had to get her stuff  
12 ready because she had a bunch of stuff to do over the weekend, and  
13 she was going to stay at her boyfriend's house. So she had to get  
14 her bags packed and get the dog ready and get her food and stuff  
15 ready, and then she went straight out there.

16 MR. MARSHALL: Okay. One thing that we usually try to do is  
17 we try to get an idea of when somebody woke up and when somebody  
18 went to bed every, every day during those three days. Could I get  
19 her boyfriend's name and number so that I can find that out?

20 MS. LEMONS: Yeah, sure. His name is -- I don't have his  
21 phone number.

22 MR. MARSHALL: That's fine.

23 MS. LEMONS: Let me call him. He's not busy. Just let me  
24 call him. I'll get him.

25 MS. LEKANDER: Going to message or calling or?

1 MS. LEMONS: Yeah.

2 MS. LEKANDER: Okay.

3 MS. LEMONS: Because he's --

4 (Phone conversation between Ms. Lemons and Mr. France begins)

5 MR. FRANCE: Hello?

6 MS. LEMONS: Hey, Dave?

7 MR. FRANCE: Yeah.

8 MS. LEMONS: I've got the National --

9 MS. LEKANDER: Safety --

10 MS. LEMONS: Yeah, National Transportation Safety Board here,

11 and they've got some questions about mom, and since you spent the

12 night with her more than I did, they want to talk to you. Is it

13 okay if I give them your phone number?

14 MR. FRANCE: Yeah. Have you got my phone number?

15 MS. LEMONS: I don't. If you could tell me.

16 MR. FRANCE: Okay.

17 MS. LEMONS: That's fine. Yep, I'm ready.

18 MR. FRANCE: [REDACTED] --

19 MS. LEMONS: [REDACTED] --

20 MR. FRANCE: [REDACTED] --

21 MS. LEMONS: [REDACTED] --

22 MR. FRANCE: [REDACTED].

23 MS. LEMONS: [REDACTED]?

24 MS. LEKANDER: And his name is Dave.

25 MS. LEMONS: Okay. So I -- they'll probably get in contact

1 with you --

2 MS. LEKANDER: Here shortly.

3 MS. LEMONS: Probably after a bit.

4 MR. FRANCE: Okay. Yeah, I got a vet coming --

5 MS. LEMONS: He raises horses, and he just had a colt so he's  
6 got a vet coming.

7 MS. LEKANDER: Yeah, that's fine. He and my sister both were  
8 in love with horses.

9 MS. LEMONS: Okay. Thank you so much, man.

10 MR. FRANCE: You bet.

11 MS. LEMONS: Bye.

12 (Phone conversation between Ms. Lemons and Mr. France ends)

13 MS. LEMONS: His last name is France.

14 MR. MARSHALL: France. Okay. I'll give him a call.

15 So she went to his house on Friday night?

16 MS. LEMONS: Um-hmm.

17 MR. MARSHALL: And then on Saturday, could you tell me again  
18 what, what she did?

19 MS. LEMONS: Yup. So she got up Saturday morning. She was  
20 there. I could tell you exactly when I called her. I think she  
21 was awake already, or when she called me back she was awake.  
22 Sunday, Saturday. I called her at 7:05 and she was awake. So she  
23 was getting dressed, and getting ready to leave. So she probably  
24 woke up between 6:30 and -- or 6 and 6:30 probably.

25 MR. MARSHALL: Okay.

1 MS. LEMONS: I mean that's just an estimate, but I don't  
2 know. And then she came over here. She was over here by eight  
3 maybe. She was here for a little bit, and then she rode with me  
4 to Rushville for the baseball stuff. We got done with that about  
5 11. And she -- no, she didn't ride with me. She drove behind me.  
6 Yep. So she drove to the baseball thing, and then she left with  
7 her dog to go out to Dave's house. So then she went out there,  
8 and said that they did the horse chores and stuff around there.  
9 And then they had to be at the Rushville Saddle Club party at, I  
10 think she said it started at 2.

11 MR. MARSHALL: Okay.

12 MS. LEMONS: So --

13 MR. MARSHALL: 2 p.m.?

14 MS. LEMONS: Yeah.

15 MR. MARSHALL: Yeah.

16 MS. LEMONS: So then she got there then. They left that  
17 night by maybe 6:30, 7 o'clock. They went to see a band. She  
18 went home, I'm assuming -- because by 1 o'clock she wasn't awake.  
19 So she probably went to bed shortly after they got home. He would  
20 be able to tell you that better.

21 MR. MARSHALL: Yeah.

22 MS. LEMONS: But then Sunday they got up early. I talked to  
23 her at -- I called her a lot on Sunday.

24 MS. LEKANDER: I talked to her too.

25 MS. LEMONS: I called her at 9 something, and then she called

1 me back at 10:03.

2 MR. MARSHALL: Okay.

3 MS. LEMONS: Said that they had gotten the trailer, or were  
4 heading to get the trailer maybe. I called her at -- when I got  
5 off work on Sunday, 4:30, she called me back at 4:47, said that  
6 they had got the trailer, and was talking to me about that, and  
7 that they had to go to a fish fry at a friend of his.

8 MR. MARSHALL: On Sunday, right?

9 MS. LEMONS: Yeah.

10 MR. MARSHALL: Yeah. Okay. And then on Monday -- so I'll  
11 talk to Dave, I guess, about their activities the rest of Sunday.

12 MS. LEMONS: Yeah.

13 MR. MARSHALL: Okay.

14 MS. LEMONS: Because he'll know better from -- honestly, from  
15 the time she got there Friday --

16 MR. MARSHALL: Yeah.

17 MS. LEMONS: -- everything they did.

18 MS. LEKANDER: And what time they went to bed.

19 MS. LEMONS: Yeah. He would know all that.

20 MR. MARSHALL: Okay.

21 MS. LEMONS: Monday, I know that it was a regular day, and I  
22 talked to her on her break before the pre-K route on Monday.

23 MR. MARSHALL: Okay.

24 MS. LEMONS: And she was supposed to come out here after she  
25 got off at noon.

1 MR. MARSHALL: And that means that she probably woke up at  
2 around -- you said 5:30?

3 MS. LEMONS: Probably.

4 MR. MARSHALL: Okay. On Monday.

5 MS. LEMONS: She always had to have her hair done, and a  
6 little bit of makeup. She couldn't ever go out looking like a hot  
7 mess ever.

8 MS. LEKANDER: No. She would be late if it meant that.

9 MR. MARSHALL: Okay. Was there anything, I mean, it sounds  
10 like she had a lot of really fun activities. But is there any --  
11 did you notice anything unusual about her behavior or her mood or  
12 anything like that?

13 MS. LEKANDER: She had an infection.

14 MS. LEMONS: Yeah.

15 MS. LEKANDER: And she had a rash.

16 MS. LEMONS: And -- so she was not officially diagnosed, but  
17 what did she call that?

18 MS. LEKANDER: Lupus.

19 MS. LEMONS: She had lupus. So she was battling really bad  
20 migraines, and the doctor was trying to give her stuff to try to  
21 get, and it was just like every day she had a really bad migraine.  
22 And that's been happening for what? Over a week?

23 MS. LEKANDER: When I talked to her Sunday she had a  
24 migraine, and she had a rash that had started --

25 MS. LEMONS: Yeah, she showed me that one.



1 MR. MARSHALL: How would the migraines affect her?

2 MS. LEMONS: Exhaust her because she couldn't --

3 MR. MARSHALL: Yeah.

4 MS. LEMONS: -- she didn't sleep very well. I mean, on top  
5 of the lupus exhausting her already, but the migraines she just --  
6 you know what I mean. It's like having an earache. It gets --

7 MR. MARSHALL: Right.

8 MS. LEMONS: -- irritating because it won't go away. You  
9 know what I mean?

10 MR. MARSHALL: Was it during certain periods of time? Was it  
11 -- did it happen mostly at night or --

12 MS. LEMONS: All day.

13 MR. MARSHALL: It happened all day?

14 MS. LEMONS: Yeah.

15 MS. LEKANDER: And it just recently started with --

16 MS. LEMONS: Yeah.

17 MS. LEKANDER: -- the headaches, the migraines.

18 MS. LEMONS: Yeah. That wasn't a, that wasn't an all the  
19 time thing. I mean, migraines are -- run in our family, but she  
20 didn't have them all the time until just recently.

21 MR. MARSHALL: Did it affect her vision or, or anything like  
22 that --

23 MS. LEMONS: No.

24 MR. MARSHALL: -- when she was having it?

25 MS. LEMONS: No. She -- the one thing I can say about her is

1 she held that responsibility of having a CDL, and she took it to  
2 heart.

3 MR. MARSHALL: Yeah.

4 MS. LEMONS: And she also held that responsibility of having  
5 children in the vehicle with her, and she took it to heart.

6 MR. MARSHALL: Yeah.

7 MS. LEMONS: And she talked to her or she talked to me, and  
8 if she was having a rough day or she was sick, she'd feel like she  
9 had to go to work, and we're like, no. You know what I mean?

10 MR. MARSHALL: Yeah.

11 MS. LEMONS: You need to be 100 percent. And she would, she  
12 would make sure that she was 100 percent for those, for those kids  
13 because it was on her shoulders.

14 MR. MARSHALL: So you had mentioned that she had had a CDL  
15 for quite a while. Could you tell me when she first --

16 MR. SPIKER: I don't know exactly when she got it.

17 MR. MARSHALL: Okay.

18 MS. LEKANDER: Whenever she started --

19 MR. SPIKER: But her driving experience, she's like I said --  
20 my dad's over-the-road truck driver. He's had trucks. So she's  
21 dabbled in it just like everybody, all of us have.

22 MS. LEKANDER: I would say probably since she was old enough  
23 to drive she was able to drive a truck, and she was able to drive  
24 a horse trailer, and she was able to drive a semi, and she -- back  
25 boats in (ph.) and I mean she just was -- you know.

1 MR. MARSHALL: So when was -- what was her first job as a, as  
2 an actual commercial driver?

3 MS. LEKANDER: She worked --

4 MR. SPIKER: This one.

5 MS. LEKANDER: -- yeah, this one. She worked actually at the  
6 hospital as a secretary for years, and you know, just what -- how  
7 long she start there? Eight months? Beginning of the school  
8 year, right?

9 MS. LEMONS: Yeah. Because she got hired on I think at the  
10 end of last year.

11 MS. LEKANDER: So that would have been when she got her CDL.

12 MS. LEMONS: I think --

13 MR. MARSHALL: Okay.

14 MS. LEMONS: So she had to get her CDL before then, and then  
15 -- well, I think she was doing it at the end of last year, I  
16 think.

17 MS. LEKANDER: I can't remember.

18 MS. LEMONS: I should have wrote it down. I can't remember,  
19 either. I thought she had got hired on and she was doing little  
20 routes for them and stuff. She had to have because last summer  
21 she took Lane to that baseball game in Saint Louis. So she had  
22 it at some point last year.

23 And my neighbor is the bus driver that trained her. So he  
24 helped her get that and get it figured out and get trained for it,  
25 and then -- because she was only doing like, part-time routes

1 whenever they needed it. They didn't have a full-time position  
2 open. And then as soon as the school year started this year, they  
3 had a full-time route for her.

4 MR. MARSHALL: Oh, okay. How did she find out about the  
5 position?

6 MS. LEKANDER: I have a cousin that for Macomb drives a  
7 school bus, and Angie was talking to her about she, she drives a  
8 school bus, and she's also a social worker for the school, and she  
9 was talking to her about them needing school bus drivers. And so  
10 Robbie was the one that was talking to her about that, and --

11 MR. MARSHALL: Yeah.

12 MS. LEMONS: And I think she did it because whenever she --  
13 she had -- originally was going to start driving a bus in Macomb.  
14 She was living there then. But then she moved to Rushville, and  
15 she wanted to be closer to me and my kids, and she wanted the  
16 opportunity to be able to see them every day, and drive the bus  
17 with them. Because she originally was supposed to be on their  
18 route and drive them -- pick them up, and drive them home on her  
19 bus, and she gave it to another lady. So that's why she came to  
20 Rushville. She wanted to be closer, and they were in serious  
21 need.

22 MR. MARSHALL: Okay. Can you tell me a little bit about --  
23 I'm sure she talked to you a little bit about this job. How did  
24 she feel about it?

25 MS. LEKANDER: She loved it.

1 MR. MARSHALL: She loved it? She had no problems with co-  
2 workers or she didn't -- I mean, how did she --

3 MS. LEKANDER: And she loved the kids.

4 MR. MARSHALL: Okay.

5 MS. LEKANDER: I mean, it was just something she looked  
6 forward to every day, and --

7 MS. LEMONS: I think the only problem she ever had is it's --  
8 it's going to happen. I mean, there isn't even specifics about  
9 it. When you meet somebody, and you have a personality,  
10 personalities are going to clash. You're not going to --

11 MR. MARSHALL: Yeah.

12 MS. LEMONS: You know what I mean? You're not going to fit  
13 with everybody. And I think that's the only thing that's ever  
14 happened is some people, she is a -- she just came off as a  
15 strong --

16 MS. LEKANDER: She's a very strong woman.

17 MS. LEMONS: -- woman. And she had very strong opinions.  
18 And some people just don't like it. But other than that --

19 MR. MARSHALL: Did she feel that she was trained properly --

20 MS. LEMONS: Yes.

21 MR. MARSHALL: -- in this position?

22 MS. LEMONS: She --

23 MR. MARSHALL: Okay.

24 MS. LEMONS: -- was like -- there were some nights where I'm  
25 like, mom, why don't you come over for dinner? No, Michelle, I've

1 got to study. Before she got her CDL she was so hardcore about  
2 everything by the book. And my neighbor is a master sergeant, and  
3 was a master sergeant in the Army, and he is like super -- you  
4 call that anal retentive?

5 MS. LEKANDER: Um-hmm.

6 MS. LEMONS: About everything --

7 MS. LEKANDER: Policies and --

8 MS. LEMONS: Yeah, yeah, super big about that. So he  
9 wouldn't have let her, and okayed her if he wasn't sure.

10 MR. MARSHALL: Okay.

11 MS. LEMONS: And I can say that with certainty.

12 MR. MARSHALL: Is there anything else about her job that she  
13 mentioned to you?

14 (No audible response.)

15 MR. MARSHALL: Okay.

16 MS. LEKANDER: We've had a few -- Michelle has had a few of  
17 the kids have contacted --

18 MS. LEMONS: Yes, contacting me --

19 MS. LEKANDER: -- families have contacted her.

20 MS. LEMONS: Probably a handful --

21 MS. LEKANDER: Sent messages where kids left something on the  
22 bus and Angie called them and they've sent her the voicemail so  
23 that she would have her voice.

24 MS. LEMONS: There's -- I have probably a handful of people  
25 that reached out and said I know you don't know me, but your mom

1 was my kids' bus driver. They loved her so much. She was so good  
2 to them. I -- we loved seeing her smile. She was so happy every  
3 day. She always gave my kids a sucker before they got off the  
4 bus. Like, she was one of those people. So in my family, nana  
5 usually like, is grandma, right? This is my nana. And to her  
6 children my mom was their nana. And so she was just nana to  
7 everybody. She used to baby-sit years ago, and she like just  
8 welcomed in all these children, and she just became their nana.  
9 She's everybody's nana. You know what I mean? And that's how she  
10 treated other kids is they called her Ms. Angie, and she gave them  
11 treats, and she was crazy silly and made them laugh, and she was  
12 just funny.

13 MR. MARSHALL: All right. So I know we've talked a little  
14 bit about this now, but could you describe what her general health  
15 was like?

16 MS. LEMONS: That's all you.

17 MS. LEKANDER: So Angie had some health issues. She was --  
18 had been not diagnosed, but said she had the markers for lupus.  
19 She had had some neck surgery where her spine was fused, and she  
20 was, you know, she struggled a lot with pain with that.

21 MS. LEMONS: Yes.

22 MS. LEKANDER: She would get infections easily. So and --

23 MS. LEMONS: She just told me the other day she could feel a  
24 flare coming on.

25 MS. LEKANDER: Um-hmm, that's what --

1 MR. MARSHALL: For her back you mean or --

2 MS. LEMONS: No, like a lupus flare.

3 MS. LEKANDER: The lupus flare. She would just --

4 MS. LEMONS: She felt it coming.

5 MR. MARSHALL: Did her spine fusion limit the amount that she  
6 can move her neck or --

7 MS. LEMONS: Yes.

8 MR. MARSHALL: Okay. You had mentioned -- well, another  
9 question that I, I usually ask is how well she slept, like, in  
10 general how long she slept?

11 MS. LEKANDER: She could fall asleep sitting up.

12 MS. LEMONS: Yeah. So --

13 MS. LEKANDER: And so --

14 (Crosstalk)

15 MS. LEMONS: When she was real tired she could do that.  
16 There were some nights she was up every couple hours. It could  
17 have been pain. It could have been a flare.

18 MR. MARSHALL: Okay.

19 MS. LEMONS: I'm not going to tell you that she slept all  
20 night every night and had a solid sleep because it's, it's  
21 unrealistic for anybody, but you know what I mean? She --

22 MR. MARSHALL: Did she always -- did she mention anything  
23 about being tired when she's -- after waking up or?

24 MS. LEMONS: For a little while. But she's also one of those  
25 people as soon as her feet hit the floor she's awake. So --



1 MS. LEKANDER: And she's going --

2 MS. LEMONS: Yup. So she -- it took her a little bit. But  
3 the only time she's ever mentioned to me that she was tired if she  
4 was in the middle of a flare.

5 MS. LEKANDER: Or an infection.

6 MS. LEMONS: Yep. And her body was just exhausted.

7 MR. MARSHALL: Okay. Was she under a doctor's care for the  
8 lupus?

9 MS. LEMONS: Yes.

10 MR. MARSHALL: Would you know who the doctor is?

11 MS. LEMONS: I'd have to look to be honest.

12 MS. LEKANDER: I don't know who the doctor is that switched  
13 to here. I don't know.

14 MR. MARSHALL: Did she have a general practitioner that she  
15 would go to?

16 MS. LEMONS: So she's seen -- there's a lady in Macomb, and  
17 I'd have to look through because she, she just told me about her.  
18 I'd have to look through and see if I can find her name. I know  
19 the other person that she had seen was Kirsten Stitt (ph.) in  
20 Rushville.

21 MR. SPIKER: I was going to say wouldn't that be on her  
22 insurance record?

23 MS. LEMONS: It should be.

24 MR. SPIKER: Far as the doctors?

25 MR. MARSHALL: Okay.

1 MS. LEMONS: It should be.

2 MR. SPIKER: If they -- she had health insurance, I'm sure  
3 that any physician she seen would be --

4 MR. MARSHALL: Yeah.

5 MS. LEMONS: That's eye shit, right?

6 MS. LEKANDER: It's medical, glass prescription, yeah.

7 MS. LEMONS: I have some -- I saw some like, EOB stuff. We  
8 were sorting through this whenever you guys got here. So I'm  
9 sorry.

10 MS. LEKANDER: So here's her eyesight as of 12/23.

11 MR. MARSHALL: Did she have corrected vision or --

12 MS. LEMONS: Yes. She had glasses and contacts.

13 MS. LEKANDER: Contacts.

14 MR. MARSHALL: Okay.

15 MS. LEMONS: And she, she usually wore contacts. She never  
16 wore glasses in the bus.

17 MR. SPIKER: I'm sure she had to get a DOT physical.

18 MS. LEMONS: Yeah.

19 MS. LEKANDER: Yes.

20 MS. LEMONS: So that's --

21 MR. SPIKER: Guess I shouldn't say that because I don't know.  
22 With the bus routes, it's --

23 MR. MARSHALL: Yeah.

24 MR. SPIKER: You know as, as a truck driver, CDL physical, I,  
25 I carry a DOT physical.

1 MR. MARSHALL: Yeah. There was something about in her  
2 driving record about self-certifying. So I'm not sure -- yeah,  
3 that was one of the questions I had was whether she would do DOT  
4 physicals?

5 MR. STRIKER: I don't know. I guess that would be something  
6 to ask the school district --

7 MR. MARSHALL: Yeah.

8 MR. STRIKER: -- as far as what their qualifications would  
9 be.

10 MS. LEMONS: I think she had to --

11 MR. STRIKER: In the state of Illinois, I know there's -- I  
12 don't know that her CDL was to drive a commercial 18-wheeler.

13 MR. MARSHALL: Yeah.

14 MR. STRIKER: I, and don't quote me, I think a school bus is  
15 a CDL license, but it's a different classification for the state.  
16 I think it's a CDL license, some of the same tests, but, you know,  
17 I don't know what tests and qualifications she had to carry as far  
18 as a DOT physical or anything.

19 MR. MARSHALL: Yeah.

20 MS. LEKANDER: But going to the doctor was nothing new to  
21 her. I mean, she was --

22 MS. LEMONS: So this is as of 1/18/24. Those are the  
23 injections she was talking about?

24 MS. LEKANDER: Um-hmm.

25 MS. LEMONS: Starting to get -- Sarah Culbertson in

1 Rushville, this one is Daniel -- I think these were for the  
2 migraines. I think that's Botox for migraines. Daniel Kimple, K-  
3 i-m-p-l-e, that one -- I'm not saying that's her -- one of the  
4 regular doctors, but that's --

5 MR. STRIKER: Yeah. You said Sarah Ferguson?

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah. Sarah Culbertson, Memorial  
7 Hospital.

8 MR. MARSHALL: Colvertson (ph.).

9 MS. LEMONS: Culbertson

10 MS. LEMONS: Is this vision?

11 MS. LEKANDER: Refraction, yes.

12 MR. MARSHALL: Okay.

13 MS. LEMONS: I'm trying to get you -- I know she was seeing  
14 somebody in Macomb. I'm trying to get for you.

15 MR. MARSHALL: The Daniel Kimple that is for the, the lupus?

16 MS. LEMONS: No. Those are for -- so she must have just did  
17 something for that. She went to see that guy for injections for  
18 the migraines.

19 MR. MARSHALL: Oh, okay. And then Sarah Culbertson is?

20 MS. LEMONS: That's the hospital there. That's the name of  
21 it.

22 MR. MARSHALL: Oh, that's the hospital name?

23 MS. LEMONS: Yes.

24 MR. MARSHALL: Do you mind if I take a photo of this?

25 MS. LEMONS: Definitely.

1 MR. MARSHALL: Okay. Thank you.

2 MS. LEMONS: You're welcome.

3 MR. MARSHALL: Okay. While you're searching, I'll just go  
4 through my questions so we don't --

5 MS. LEMONS: Okay.

6 MR. MARSHALL: -- take up all of your time.

7 MS. LEMONS: You're fine.

8 MR. MARSHALL: Next section. We talked about her visual  
9 acuity. And she wore contacts usually.

10 MS. LEMONS: Yes. Yes.

11 MR. MARSHALL: And her hearing, how is her hearing?

12 MS. LEMONS: She could hear a pin drop.

13 MR. MARSHALL: Okay.

14 MS. LEKANDER: Unless she didn't want to talk to you.

15 MS. LEMONS: She had selective hearing, but that was with me.

16 MS. LEKANDER: Sorry, Michelle.

17 MS. LEMONS: I know.

18 (Crosstalk)

19 MR. MARSHALL: Then the next, the next section I had was --  
20 you mentioned she didn't drink alcohol?

21 MS. LEKANDER: She did occasionally, but not when she -- not  
22 with this.

23 MS. LEMONS: She was a social drinker. And only when she did  
24 not have to drive. She 100 percent had to have a --

25 MS. LEKANDER: I mean, they would go on horse rides and

1 stuff, and at the end of the day, but, yeah, not --

2 MR. MARSHALL: Okay. And we talked about fatigue already.

3 We talked about her training. Actually, I think, I think you

4 mentioned -- I apologize, I didn't write down the name but --

5 MS. LEMONS: You're fine.

6 MR. MARSHALL: -- who trained her?

7 MS. LEMONS: Calvin.

8 MR. MARSHALL: Calvin. Calvin?

9 MS. LEMONS: I have no idea what his last name is --

10 MR. MARSHALL: Okay.

11 MS. LEMONS: -- to be honest. Everybody just called him

12 Calvin or Mr. Calvin.

13 MS. LEKANDER: But he's a neighbor.

14 MS. LEMONS: Yeah. He lives right, right over there.

15 MR. MARSHALL: Okay. And he is a school bus driver as well?

16 MS. LEMONS: Yes, he is.

17 MR. MARSHALL: With Rushville?

18 MS. LEMONS: Yes.

19 MR. MARSHALL: Okay. Did she -- would you know whether she

20 drove the same bus every day or was it a different bus?

21 MS. LEMONS: [REDACTED] --

22 [REDACTED]: Yeah?

23 MS. LEMONS: Did nana drive the same bus every day or did she

24 drive a different bus?

25 [REDACTED]: She didn't drive a different bus. Maybe for

1 the pre-K for like a little --

2 MS. LEMONS: Oh, she drove that small bus for the pre-K, but  
3 her regular big bus was the same bus?

4 [REDACTED]: Yeah.

5 MS. LEMONS: So unless her bus was getting fixed, it was the  
6 same bus.

7 MR. MARSHALL: Okay.

8 [REDACTED]: Oh, yeah, because something happened. Her  
9 bus didn't work, and they had to --

10 MS. LEMONS: I remember.

11 [REDACTED]: Yeah.

12 MS. LEKANDER: And there's something on the back too. It's  
13 got her schedule.

14 MR. MARSHALL: Oh, this is very helpful.

15 MS. LEKANDER: Trying to be.

16 MS. LEMONS: Yes. I don't have anything. So if -- I will  
17 have to try to find that, and call you guys with it because I  
18 don't, I don't know who that lady was in Macomb.

19 MR. MARSHALL: Okay, that's fine. So she would always drive  
20 the same bus on her trips. And it was the same bus that, that she  
21 was driving during the crash? Okay.

22 MS. LEMONS: Well, I mean her pre-K bus was.

23 MR. MARSHALL: Her pre-K bus.

24 MS. LEKANDER: So what was that about the bus getting fixed?

25 MS. LEMONS: I don't -- that was her big bus. I think there

1 was something going on with it, and they had to switch her out. I  
2 don't know specifically.

3 MR. MARSHALL: Okay.

4 MS. LEMONS: But I know that like with any bus, it needs  
5 maintenance. They just switch her out so schedules don't have to  
6 stop. You know what I'm saying?

7 MR. MARSHALL: Okay. So she would usually drive two types of  
8 buses --

9 MS. LEMONS: Yes.

10 MR. MARSHALL: -- each day?

11 MS. LEMONS: Yes.

12 MR. MARSHALL: When was --

13 MS. LEMONS: So big bus in the morning.

14 MR. MARSHALL: Yeah.

15 MS. LEMONS: Small bus in the afternoon for pre-K. Big bus  
16 in the evening.

17 MR. MARSHALL: Okay. And it would always be the same route?

18 MS. LEKANDER: Yes.

19 MR. MARSHALL: Sarah, do you have any questions?

20 MS. QUINN: No.

21 MR. MARSHALL: Okay. Just want to make sure I have all --  
22 everything that I need. Had she been in any other crashes or  
23 accidents in a vehicle that you --

24 MS. LEMONS: The only other accident I know of, and it wasn't  
25 an accident, she hit a deer.



1 MR. MARSHALL: When was that?

2 MS. LEMONS: When was that? She had a car. So it wasn't  
3 last year.

4 MS. LEKANDER: It was a while back.

5 MR. SPIKER: I was going to say, it's -- because she's had  
6 the truck for a couple years.

7 MS. LEMONS: Yeah, so -- she -- oh, shit. She was living up  
8 here though. So it was probably --

9 MS. LEKANDER: Three years.

10 MS. LEMONS: At least --

11 MS. LEKANDER: At least because she's had the trailer for  
12 that long.

13 MS. LEMONS: Maybe two years.

14 MR. MARSHALL: Okay. And so just so that I'm clear. So she  
15 took injections for lupus. Was there any other --

16 MS. LEMONS: She took injections for migraines.

17 MR. MARSHALL: For migraines.

18 MS. LEMONS: Yup.

19 MR. MARSHALL: Sorry. What -- do you know what other  
20 medications she might have been on?

21 MS. LEKANDER: Oh my God.

22 MS. LEMONS: No. I couldn't tell you. She took a lot of  
23 vitamins.

24 MR. MARSHALL: Okay.

25 MS. LEMONS: But she was on medication for pain management.

1 MR. SPIKER: That should be on her DOT because what I just  
2 read, I think --

3 MS. LEMONS: Yeah, she has to have --

4 MR. SPIKER: -- to drive a school bus, she has to have a DOT  
5 physical.

6 MS. LEMONS: And they have to see the medication she takes.

7 MR. SPIKER: Every 90 days. So that -- I mean, --

8 MS. LEMONS: (Indiscernible), what's that?

9 MS. LEKANDER: The muscle relaxant she was on.

10 MR. SPIKER: -- the school district should have some kind of  
11 record for you guys to --

12 MR. MARSHALL: Yeah. We're going to meet with them in about  
13 30 minutes. So hopefully they'll have some information on the DOT  
14 physical.

15 MR. SPIKER: I'm sure they've got to have a file. It's -- I  
16 mean --

17 (Crosstalk)

18 MR. SPIKER: -- same as her inspections or anything that --

19 MS. LEKANDER: I know that she took Gabapentin.

20 MR. MARSHALL: Okay.

21 MS. LEKANDER: Which is a muscle relaxant for the injury to  
22 her neck. She had her neck was fused, and she took tramadol for  
23 that sometimes.

24 MR. MARSHALL: Okay.

25 MS. LEMONS: I think the tramadol was a PRN thing.

1 MS. LEKANDER: Yeah. But the Gabapentin she did take on a  
2 regular basis.

3 MS. LEMONS: Yes.

4 MR. MARSHALL: Do you know which, which -- was part of her  
5 spine was fused?

6 MS. LEKANDER: Up by her neck.

7 MS. LEMONS: And they went in through the --

8 MS. LEKANDER: The had to go through the throat.

9 MS. LEMONS: -- yeah, through the front.

10 MR. MARSHALL: Okay. So it's like, maybe like the C4 to C5  
11 or something?

12 MS. LEMONS: That's what I was thinking, C4. I just didn't  
13 want to say it and be wrong.

14 MR. MARSHALL: Yeah.

15 MS. LEMONS: So I think that's right about there.

16 MR. MARSHALL: Okay.

17 MS. LEMONS: Because she still had range of motion. Like,  
18 she could look like this. You know what I mean? But she couldn't  
19 like --

20 MS. LEKANDER: She couldn't jerk real fast.

21 MS. LEMONS: Yeah.

22 MR. MARSHALL: Right. Okay.

23 MS. LEMONS: And she was working with somebody on that  
24 because I know sometimes she was -- sometimes she had trouble just  
25 because her neck would hurt, and some of the medicine wasn't

1 cutting it. And like, she'd just be in pain --

2 MR. MARSHALL: Yeah.

3 MS. LEMONS: -- and she'd have random like, --

4 MS. LEKANDER: I'm pretty sure --

5 MS. LEMONS: -- spasms.

6 MS. LEKANDER: -- not too long ago she had some x-rays done  
7 of her neck again.

8 MS. LEMONS: Yup.

9 MS. LEKANDER: But I don't know where at, whether it was  
10 Macomb or here.

11 MR. MARSHALL: Okay. Was that due to like a, an accident or  
12 is that due -- just the --

13 MS. LEKANDER: Just --

14 MR. MARSHALL: -- (indiscernible), or?

15 MS. LEMONS: It's just to keep up on what she needed.

16 MS. LEKANDER: No, the --

17 MR. MARSHALL: No, I mean the --

18 MS. LEKANDER: The surgery, was it -- that was --

19 MS. LEMONS: Oh, yes, that was an accident. That she had to  
20 have that, she fell.

21 MR. MARSHALL: Okay.

22 MS. LEMONS: Holy shit, like --

23 MS. LEKANDER: When you lived in --

24 MS. LEMONS: -- 20 years ago. It was probably less than  
25 that, but it was more than 10 or 15 anyway.

1 MR. MARSHALL: Yeah.

2 MS. LEMONS: But she fell, and then she had to -- she had all  
3 these problems, and then she had to have neck surgery twice.

4 MR. MARSHALL: Oh. Was that here or --

5 MS. LEMONS: No. That was --

6 MS. LEKANDER: That was Pitts --

7 MS. LEMONS: -- down in Pike County.

8 MS. LEKANDER: Pittsfield, Illinois is where she had that --

9 MR. MARSHALL: Okay.

10 MS. LEKANDER: -- first surgery.

11 MR. MARSHALL: Okay. Yeah, I -- mine is -- I, I don't have a  
12 fusion, but I have a lot of back issues as well. So I feel for  
13 her.

14 MS. LEMONS: It's understandable.

15 MR. SPIKER: Our mother had fibromyalgia, degenerative disk  
16 disease.

17 MS. LEKANDER: I mean she did, she did have degenerative disk  
18 disease because it showed up on one of her x-rays.

19 MS. LEMONS: Nana -- or mom?

20 MS. LEKANDER: Yeah.

21 MS. LEMONS: I didn't know that.

22 MS. LEKANDER: Yeah.

23 MS. LEMONS: Okay, so -- yeah. And she probably did have  
24 fibromyalgia. It just was not diagnosed. That woman was a ball  
25 of everything.

1 MR. MARSHALL: I think that's all the questions I have. Do  
2 you have any questions for us?

3 MS. LEKANDER: So, you know, there's a lot of things that we  
4 can't move forward until we get a death certificate. And from  
5 what the funeral home is saying, they can't give a death  
6 certificate until the investigation is done. What -- how do we go  
7 about -- you know, I mean, we can't even stop any of her stuff  
8 until we have death certificate.

9 MS. QUINN: So generally it's not dependent upon the safety  
10 investigation. There would be a death investigation that's  
11 happening with the Schuyler County coroner.

12 MS. LEKANDER: And she's been released from that. She's at  
13 the local funeral home now. But they said that they could not  
14 give a death certificate because there was an ongoing  
15 investigation.

16 MS. QUINN: Let me connect. I'll --

17 MS. LEKANDER: Okay. Thank you.

18 MS. QUINN: -- connect you with somebody -- it's going to be  
19 through the coroner. I'll get them to -- I want to let them speak  
20 to their process specifically. If there's a question or something  
21 that is dependent upon our safety investigation, I'll connect with  
22 them.

23 MS. LEKANDER: Okay.

24 MS. QUINN: But they may have -- let's get clarification on  
25 what investigation that they're considering is open and pending.

1 MS. LEKANDER: So we really don't even know who --

2 (Crosstalk)

3 MS. LEKANDER: -- to contact to find out, you know, and get  
4 that.

5 MS. QUINN: And that's what the funeral home saying that  
6 the --

7 MS. LEKANDER: The funeral home I talked to this morning.  
8 Lunning's Funeral Home is where they were picking up her body  
9 today, and I asked -- said I was coming up here to do the banking  
10 and all of that, and ask if they had a death certificate, and she  
11 told me she was not allowed to get a death certificate because  
12 there was an ongoing investigation.

13 MS. QUINN: Thank you. I will check in with them.

14 MR. MARSHALL: Is there anything else?

15 MS. LEMONS: If you talk to them, can you have the coroner  
16 reach out to me or like -- or do you guys know maybe with -- I  
17 know there's an investigation and stuff, but we kind of want to  
18 know what's going on like autopsy, all that stuff.

19 MR. SPIKER: That can take time too. I mean, with the state  
20 of Illinois they're slow about everything and they way the  
21 process --

22 MS. QUINN: So the -- well, and there may be -- an autopsy is  
23 something that can take time in terms of --

24 MS. LEKANDER: Toxicology reports --

25 MS. QUINN: -- getting results and things, so -- but I will

1 reach out to -- have you been talking to Sherry? Did she reach  
2 out to you at all?

3 MS. LEMONS: Is she working with the coroner?

4 MS. QUINN: The deputy coroner?

5 MS. LEMONS: Yes. So I talked to her, and she said -- she's  
6 the one that told me about you guys.

7 MS. QUINN: Um-hmm.

8 MS. LEMONS: Yes, so that would be her. I talked to her.

9 MS. QUINN: Okay.

10 MS. LEMONS: Well, I haven't talked to her recently. She --  
11 the only time I talked to her is when she told me about you guys.

12 MS. QUINN: I will reach out to her today, and ask if she can  
13 give you a call.

14 MS. LEMONS: Okay.

15 MR. MARSHALL: I'm going to conclude the --

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you.

17 MR. MARSHALL: -- interview. It's 12:28 p.m.

18 (Whereupon, at 12:28 p.m., the interview was concluded.)  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25



## CERTIFICATE

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

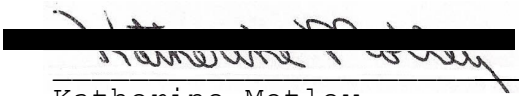
IN THE MATTER OF: FATAL SEMITRUCK & SCHOOL BUS  
COLLISION AND SUBSEQUENT FIRE  
IN RUSHVILLE, ILLINOIS  
ON MARCH 11, 2024  
Interview of Michelle Lemons,  
Michelle Lekander & Vernon Spiker

ACCIDENT NO.: HWY24MH005

PLACE: Littleton, Illinois

DATE: March 13, 2024

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

  
Katherine Motley  
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

INVESTIGATION OF:

Multi-Vehicle Crash in \_Rushville, IL, on March 11, 2024    Accident No.: HWY24MH005

ERRATA SHEET

For

NTSB Interview of Michelle Lemons on March 13, 2024

Page	Line	Change This	To This	Reason for Change
7	23	Wayne	■	Incorrect name
18	21	Wayne	■	Incorrect name

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**From:** [michelle Lemons](#)  
**To:** [Rafael Marshall](#)  
**Subject:** Re: FW: National Transportation Safety Board: Interview of Michelle Lemons  
**Date:** Tuesday, April 23, 2024 11:09:51 AM

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[CAUTION] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click any links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Everything looks good. My sons name is [REDACTED] though not Wayne lol

On Tue, Apr 23, 2024, 9:40 AM Rafael Marshall <[REDACTED]> wrote:

Hi Michelle,

I hope you and your family are well. I just wanted to check if you were able to read through the transcript and confirm its accuracy. If everything is fine, please let me know.

Take care,

Rafael Marshall

Senior Human Performance Investigator

Office of Highway Safety

National Transportation Safety Board

(office) [REDACTED]

(cell) [REDACTED]

(fax) [REDACTED]

---

**From:** Rafael Marshall  
**Sent:** Friday, March 29, 2024 3:34 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED]

**Cc:** Sarah Quinn [REDACTED]

**Subject:** National Transportation Safety Board: Interview of Michelle Lemons

Hello Michelle,

Thank you again for speaking with me during such a difficult time for you and your family. I have attached a transcript of our interview. Please review to make sure the information is accurate. If there is anything you would like to clarify, please note it down in the accompanying errata sheet. If you have any questions for me, please do not hesitate to contact me at the numbers below.

Sincerely,

Rafael Marshall

Senior Human Performance Investigator

Office of Highway Safety

National Transportation Safety Board

(office) [REDACTED]

(cell) [REDACTED]

(fax) [REDACTED]

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