



**SURVIVAL FACTORS ATTACHMENT**

**Witness Interview Transcript**

**Philadelphia, PA**

**HWY23FH014**

(9 pages)

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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FATAL VEHICLE FIRE & COLLAPSE OF  
INTERSTATE 95 NEAR PHILADELPHIA,  
PENNSYLVANIA ON JUNE 11, 2023

\* Accident No.: HWY23FH014

\* \* \* \* \*

Interview of: ARIEL MCGRATH, Witness

Via telephone

Wednesday,  
June 14, 2023

APPEARANCES:

RONALD KAMINSKI, Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board

I N D E X

ITEM

PAGE

Interview of Ariel McGrath:

By Mr. Kaminski

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I N T E R V I E W

1  
2 MR. KAMINSKI: Hello, Ronald Kaminski, Safety Board.

3 MS. MCGRATH: Hi there. This is Ariel McGrath returning your  
4 call. You had just left me a voicemail.

5 MR. KAMINSKI: Yes, ma'am. Thank you so much for calling.  
6 So, as I said, my name is Ronald Kaminski. I'm with the National  
7 Transportation Safety Board and there's several of us in town  
8 investigating this crash that occurred that on Sunday I guess you  
9 witnessed, and I guess I'm just calling to get a statement from  
10 you again as to what you saw on Sunday; Sunday morning?

11 MS. MCGRATH: Sure, I can definitely provide that.

12 MR. KAMINSKI: Okay, and would you mind if recorded your  
13 conversation, so I don't have to interrupt you?

14 MS. MCGRATH: No, that's totally fine.

INTERVIEW OF ARIEL MCGRATH

15  
16 BY MR. KAMINSKI:

17 Q. Great, thank you very much. So, why don't you start with,  
18 how do you spell your name? Let's get your name spelled  
19 correctly.

20 A. Sure, Ariel McGrath, A-r-i-e-l M-c-G-r-a-t-h.

21 Q. And this is a good phone number for you?

22 A. Yes, the [REDACTED].

23 Q. Okay, and why don't you just describe what you were doing and  
24 what you saw?

25 A. Sure, the reason I was on 95 that early in the morning, there

1 was the event; the Bike to the Beach from Philadelphia to Atlantic  
2 City. So, we had went down early that morning to drop my husband  
3 off down there to meet at the bridge and I was on 95 northbound  
4 coming home. And I was getting off at the Continent (phonetic)  
5 exit, again, I'm 95 northbound, and I was all the way to the right  
6 and I was, it's a pretty big exit, but by almost at the point  
7 where it actually splits from 95, I had seen the truck. I don't  
8 know if it lost control or flipped a little or what, but I saw the  
9 truck like right underneath the 95 overpass. I saw it, I think  
10 hit the wall, and a bunch of dirt come up, kind of rise above it,  
11 so, I could tell it lost control, or flipped or hit something, so  
12 I didn't want to get stuck behind that, so I went to get right  
13 back over onto 95 and that was when it just erupted, like  
14 completely exploded, huge ball of fire. When I drove by it, like  
15 I could feel the heat in my car. It just completely exploded. I  
16 think it happened between the time I saw it lose control and hit  
17 and the dirt fly up and the explosion may have been a few seconds.

18 Q. Okay, so, you were back what at the stop light then, would  
19 you say?

20 A. So, I wasn't at the stop light. I was still on 95 and I was  
21 about to get onto the off ramp, so like right where it actually  
22 starts to split and go down to the off ramp.

23 Q. Okay, got it.

24 A. I was still able to get back on 95.

25 Q. Okay, and then -- so, did you see it sliding or you -- or you

1 just saw this dust fly up?

2 A. I saw it like hit, like it rumbled, so it looked like it slid  
3 or rolled a little bit, but I saw it hit the side and that's when  
4 I saw the dirt come up too, so I don't know how that happened, I  
5 just know it lost control at some point.

6 Q. So, you saw it hit the sidewall of the underpass?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Okay, and then it -- and then you saw it flip over on its  
9 side?

10 A. No, it didn't completely flip over, that's what I kind of  
11 considered like it starting to flip, like I didn't see it go all  
12 the way over on its side. I just saw it kind of tip over a little  
13 bit, hit the wall.

14 Q. Because you kept on driving and you need to keep your eyes on  
15 the road, I imagine?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Okay. And then it was pretty much instantaneous you said  
18 with the fire?

19 A. Yes. I want to say by the time I saw it hit and then the  
20 explosion it may have a few seconds.

21 Q. Had you noticed the truck before the exit?

22 A. I did not, honestly. I just -- I happened to see it when it  
23 was, you know, going down the off ramp, but I don't really have a  
24 recollection of what it may have been doing ahead of time.

25 Q. Did he look like he was going at highway speeds or was he,

1 did you see any brake lights?

2 A. I really don't recall. I know I was in not really much  
3 traffic in the morning, so I was driving pretty fast, but I don't  
4 -- I can't say how fast he was going. I really just noticed it  
5 once it hit the wall.

6 Q. Okay. Well, this is my phone number if you think of anything  
7 else or that you think would be of interest, feel free to give me  
8 a call, and I appreciate you taking the time to give me a call  
9 back.

10 A. Yeah, no problem. And I didn't see any other cars around it,  
11 like there were no other cars in front of me, like I think I was  
12 probably the closest car to it.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. So, I think there was, at least from my vantage point, I  
15 didn't see anybody else go down the off ramp in front of me  
16 between me and the truck. So, I believe it was just isolated to  
17 the truck's accident.

18 Q. Yeah, and that's what's come out. It was just a single  
19 vehicle, just a truck there, so. Okay, well again, I thank you  
20 very much for taking the time to give me a call.

21 A. Sure, no problem.

22 Q. Thank you, take care.

23 A. You too, bye bye.

24 Q. Buh bye.

25 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)



CERTIFICATE

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


IN THE MATTER OF: FATAL VEHICLE FIRE & COLLAPSE  
OF INTERSTATE 95 NEAR PHILADELPHIA,  
PENNSYLVANIA ON JUNE 11, 2023  
Interview of Ariel McGrath

ACCIDENT NO.: HWY23FH014

PLACE: Via telephone

DATE: June 14, 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.



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Jacqueline Roberts  
Transcriber