



HUMAN PERFORMANCE FACTORS ATTACHMENT

Witness Interviews

HWY21MH009

(122 pages)

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

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FATAL MULTI-VEHICLE ACCIDENT *

NEAR GREENVILLE, ALABAMA, *

Accident No.: HWY21MH009

ON JUNE 19, 2021 *

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Interview of: AVERY ROBINSON

Witness

Atlanta, Georgia

Sunday,
June 27, 2021

APPEARANCES:

KENNETH BRAGG, Senior Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

MICHAEL LAPONTE, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

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I N T E R V I E W

(2:55 p.m.)

1
2
3 MR. BRAGG: Today is Sunday, June 27th, 2021; it is 2:55 p.m.
4 Eastern Standard Time and we are at 965 Matthew Street, Southwest
5 in the City of Atlanta, Georgia.

6 My name is Kenny Bragg; I'm an investigator for the National
7 Transportation Safety Board and the Office of Highway Safety, and
8 this interview is in regards to a multiple vehicle crash which
9 occurred in Greenville, Alabama, on June 19th, 2021.

10 Sir, can I get you to state and spell your first and last
11 name, please?

12 MR. ROBINSON: Avery Robinson, and it's A-V-E-R-Y, R-O-B-I-N-
13 S-O-N.

14 MR. LAPONTE: Michael LaPonte, NTSB, Office of Highway
15 Safety, M-I-C-H-A-E-L, L-A-P-O-N-T-E.

INTERVIEW OF AVERY ROBINSON

BY MR. BRAGG:

17
18 Q. Okay. Mr. Robinson, were you in the vicinity of Greenville,
19 Alabama on the afternoon of June 19th --

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. -- of this year? And did you, you happen to see the crash?

22 A. Yes, I happened to see the crash, mostly in my rearview.

23 Q. Okay. Did you -- so you weren't involved in the crash at
24 all?

25 A. No.

1 Q. So meaning by that your vehicle wasn't damaged and you didn't
2 contact anybody?

3 A. No.

4 Q. Okay. So tell me, tell me from your perspective what exactly
5 you saw?

6 A. From my perspective it was raining that day. I think early
7 that morning there was tornados so the whole day was overcast so
8 it was raining spotty rain. And I believe the accident probably
9 happened around like 2:00, if I'm not mistaken.

10 So at mile marker 138, around 138 you come to a point where
11 you have a bridge over there. So coming near the bridge, towards
12 the bridge going north it was raining, not heavy but constant.
13 Once you get to the bridge area it started to look like either a
14 lot of mist off the tires or it was fog because of the bridge, I
15 couldn't really -- you know, just by thinking by God, I can't tell
16 which one it was.

17 But I think everybody was probably going possibly a little
18 too fast for, you know, for that little space right there,
19 especially with the rain and the mist. And so you started to see
20 red lights, you know, because through the mist you see the brake
21 lights.

22 And so I was even -- when I saw the brake lights in the
23 distance I was slowing down but still not enough room. So as I'm
24 coming closer the cars in front of me is getting -- they're
25 getting closer to me as I'm trying to slow down but I know I'm

1 coming up to the bridge, so I'm scared of jackknifing. So I'm,
2 you know, puckering up, you know, getting close to it. I'm, like,
3 ah, it's going to happen, it's going to happen.

4 But a car in front of me just happened to give me just a
5 little more room. It found space so it gave me space so I was
6 even able to slow down and get to it. But then in front of -- the
7 two cars that was in front of me, in front of it, I believe the
8 color was probably burgundy-ish, SUV-ish looking kind of a car and
9 it was swerving in and out of the two lanes, you know.

10 Q. Right.

11 A. I sort of lost control.

12 MR. LAPONTE: It looked like he was out of control or he was
13 just trying to change lanes?

14 MR. ROBINSON: No, he was out of control, yeah.

15 MR. BRAGG: And this is in front of you?

16 MR. ROBINSON: This is in front of me. Now, this is in front
17 of -- like I say, I have two cars in front of me so in front of it
18 there's a car going from lane to lane trying to catch control.
19 You could see he was out of control.

20 So from as -- I can't even remember what happened to him
21 exactly but I know that as it gave me room to move forward I was
22 able to get past just that little situation. I also noticed on
23 my, on my left side because I'm in the far right lane so on the
24 shoulder of the far left lane, if I'm not mistaken, there was a
25 black pickup truck sitting on the side, if I'm not mistaken.

1 BY MR. LAPONTE:

2 Q. On the left shoulder?

3 A. On the left shoulder.

4 Q. Now is this off of the bridge just after you come off of the
5 bridge?

6 A. I believe it was like, yeah, as soon as you come off of the
7 bridge, yeah.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. If I remember correctly.

10 Q. So you made it off the bridge?

11 A. Uh-huh.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. Uh-huh, I made it off the bridge.

14 BY MR. BRAGG:

15 Q. And so the pickup truck was already sitting there?

16 A. From what I remember it was already sitting there on the
17 side.

18 Q. No, when you say, so it was on the shoulder?

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. Completely off the shoulder, partially on the roadway?

21 A. Completely off from what I remember. Completely off the
22 shoulder, yeah.

23 Q. Okay, all right.

24 A. Completely off the shoulder.

25 Q. And it was in the median then?

- 1 A. Now when you say the median do you mean like --
- 2 Q. Was in the middle? Is it to your left as you're driving or
- 3 --
- 4 A. It's on, it's on my left.
- 5 Q. Okay, okay.
- 6 A. So not on the road on the shoulder because of the grass area.
- 7 Q. But between the, between the southbound lanes and the
- 8 northbound lanes?
- 9 A. Yeah, not all the way into the grass now, it's just right off
- 10 of the --
- 11 Q. Gotcha, gotcha, okay.
- 12 A. Right off the highway. Like if somebody blew a tire and just
- 13 pulled to the side, that kind of a way.
- 14 Q. Did the vehicle have emergency lights, headlights on?
- 15 A. That I can't remember if it did or not.
- 16 Q. Do you remember seeing anybody outside of the car or inside
- 17 the car?
- 18 A. No, I don't remember that part either.
- 19 Q. Okay.
- 20 A. Yeah.
- 21 Q. Is there anything else you remember about, about that
- 22 vehicle?
- 23 A. No.
- 24 Q. You said it was a truck, right?
- 25 A. I believe it was a black pickup.

1 Q. Okay. Do you, do you remember what model, make anything like
2 that?

3 A. And I could be incorrect. In my mind I'm thinking like Chevy
4 kind of like.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. You know, something like early 2000s, I'm thinking, yeah.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. Something like that.

9 Q. So, so then what happened next?

10 A. Okay. So once I was able to get off of the bridge and get a
11 little further up and the cars in front of me they were able to
12 get out of -- I guess they kept going because I don't remember
13 them after that.

14 Then I looked in my rearview and maybe like about a second or
15 two after I passed that area then I'd seen the cars like kind of
16 just like movie stars, just kind of came together on the street,
17 you know, where you see that big mass of cars just on the road.
18 And I was like, wow, what's going on, that's crazy and so them,
19 them just coming together.

20 I still looked in the rearview because I was -- wasn't going
21 fast because I was slowing, I'm still slowing down and --

22 (Cell phone ringing)

23 Sorry about that. And so as I see those cars coming
24 together, still look in the rearview, it seemed like the orange
25 tractor trailer possibly hit the black pickup on the side.

1 Seemed like it. This is just because just looking at, just
2 looking at the way it kind of -- and maybe it was just turning
3 that direction, maybe kind of like the front of his truck had kind
4 of came in the air a little bit and to the left towards the grass
5 area, so that was my assumption that he might have hit the pickup
6 maybe.

7 But like I said because of the -- you know, of the weather
8 and the mist, fog kind of a thing, I'm sure he didn't have a
9 chance to really slow down.

10 BY MR. LAPONTE:

11 Q. Were you parked on the right shoulder by this time?

12 A. By that time I'm still, I'm still rolling, but I'm going slow
13 though.

14 Q. Uh-huh.

15 A. You know, I'm looking in the mirror. I'm just in amazement,
16 you know. And so I'm watching as the -- I'm trying to think, when
17 it hit I'm still rolling and my truck is slowing down, I'm hitting
18 the brake going slower.

19 And I'm trying to think, once I -- I can't even remember if I
20 seen in my mirror or once I stopped and got out if I seen when it
21 started to catch fire. I can't remember which one it was. But
22 that was, that was basically what I remember of it all.

23 Q. Were you -- where, where did you go that day to and coming
24 home from?

25 A. I was coming from Mobile, Alabama.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. Kimberly Clark and I was actually headed back to Atlanta in
3 my hub or to the, to the railyard in Atlanta, I believe.

4 Q. So you were loaded, your trailer was loaded?

5 A. I was loaded, yeah.

6 Q. About how much weight did you have on?

7 A. I would say I had probably what a good maybe 25, 30,000,
8 somewhere in there.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. Uh-huh.

11 Q. All right. So when you get over to the right hand shoulder.

12 A. Uh-huh.

13 Q. When you finally stopped the truck you get to the right hand
14 shoulder.

15 A. Uh-huh.

16 Q. Did you get out of the truck to look back or to see what was
17 going on or --

18 A. Uh-huh.

19 Q. -- what happened next?

20 A. Yeah, I got -- once I pulled over I got out of the truck and
21 started making my way towards the accident and this is where you
22 see the -- you see the fire is -- I believe it was already started
23 then. A small fire but, I mean, in just a matter of seconds as it
24 started though you see the fire starting to grow. Then you
25 started hearing the, the tanks starting to explode.

1 BY MR. BRAGG:

2 Q. What tanks?

3 A. On the, on the -- must have been, must have been on the
4 tractor.

5 Q. The air tanks?

6 A. No, the --

7 Q. Oh, fuel tanks?

8 A. -- fuel tanks.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. Started hearing those starting to explode and then you're
11 starting to see the fire growing more into the car that's beside
12 it.

13 Q. Was it -- how loud was the explosion?

14 A. Kind of sounded like kind of like an M-80, like that kind of
15 a sound.

16 Q. Like a shotgun kind of -- that kind of thing?

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. A little louder or little softer?

19 A. Yeah, yeah, probably like maybe a little louder than a
20 shotgun, yeah, uh-huh. And I always think of like an M-80, that
21 kind of a sound, explosion. And as, you know, the fire started to
22 grow you started to see, you know, more cars getting just involved
23 in the fire that was beside it.

24 Got closer you started hearing more of other cars, I'm
25 assuming was exploding also, their tanks.

- 1 Q. Okay.
- 2 A. Uh-huh.
- 3 Q. Now when you left, you left Mobile --
- 4 A. Uh-huh.
- 5 Q. Mobile as they say.
- 6 A. Uh-huh.
- 7 Q. What interstate were you traveling on?
- 8 A. When I left Mobile you have to get on, what is it, I forgot
- 9 the very first road that takes you right out of Mobile onto 65
- 10 North but --
- 11 Q. So, so you picked up 65 North in Mobile?
- 12 A. In Mobile.
- 13 Q. And what was the weather like in Mobile?
- 14 A. It was overcast.
- 15 Q. But was it yet raining?
- 16 A. Spotty rain.
- 17 Q. Spotty rain.
- 18 A. So you'd have a little bit of rain, it'd stop. You go, a
- 19 little, couple of miles, stop, on, off.
- 20 Q. When did it get, when did it get heavy to the point it was at
- 21 the crash?
- 22 A. I was at the crash; it probably was still spotty though
- 23 because maybe about a good, maybe about a good mile or two before
- 24 very, very if no rain, very light.
- 25 Q. So did you have to use your wipers all the way?

- 1 A. No, it was on and off. Your wipers were on and off.
- 2 Q. Okay. How about, how about to the point where you reached
3 the bridge, did you have your wipers on or did you have them off?
- 4 A. Yeah, yeah.
- 5 Q. How long had you had them on?
- 6 A. I would say maybe about a good -- maybe about a -- like I say
7 about a mile or two.
- 8 Q. Okay, about a mile or two?
- 9 A. Uh-huh.
- 10 Q. And how fast was traffic moving approaching the bridge?
- 11 A. Approaching the bridge, I would say -- let me see, me, I
12 probably was doing about -- I probably was around 60 before -- I
13 probably was around 60 with the light rain before you get to the
14 bridge.
- 15 Q. Okay.
- 16 A. Which, you, you know, started to see traffic in the mist
17 starting to, the lights, so you know of course you've got to slow
18 down. With cars, you know, cars is always going to overtake us.
- 19 Q. Yeah. So --
- 20 A. So I figured they had at least, at least five miles on you.
- 21 Q. How much traffic was there?
- 22 A. Truthfully it wasn't a lot of traffic.
- 23 Q. Okay.
- 24 A. But when she's at that point everybody's slowing down now you
25 have a lot of traffic.

- 1 Q. Yeah. I'm speaking before you get to that point.
- 2 A. Oh, very moderate. It wasn't, it wasn't a lot of traffic.
- 3 Q. So was, was cars continually passing you or did you go --
- 4 would you go a few minutes without seeing any car?
- 5 A. I would say not continually not -- every, I don't know, 10,
- 6 15 seconds you might see a car start coming up to you and passing
- 7 you.
- 8 Q. Okay.
- 9 A. It wasn't, I mean.
- 10 Q. So how fast were you, were you traveling when you approached
- 11 the bridge?
- 12 A. By the time I approached the bridge I had slowed down a lot
- 13 because that was already you're starting to see that mist, so I
- 14 would say I had to be slowing down I'd say about down into the 50s
- 15 not wanting to skid or something like that.
- 16 Q. And how well before, was it at the bridge that you -- when
- 17 you reached the bridge --
- 18 A. Uh-huh.
- 19 Q. -- is that when you started seeing stuff to make you slow
- 20 down or did it happen a little bit before that?
- 21 A. Before the bridge.
- 22 Q. Before the bridge?
- 23 A. Uh-huh.
- 24 Q. And so what was causing traffic to slow down?
- 25 A. I would say it was the mist, the mist and/or the fog. And as

1 I, as I got closer and really got to slow down and then you had
2 the car that was going from lane to lane, which, you know, would
3 make everybody like, oh, you know, they don't want to crash so
4 they really slowing down.

5 Q. Right.

6 A. So I would say mostly it was like mist or fog, uh-huh.

7 Q. Now was, was the pickup truck involved in that, that little
8 mix-up when the cars are going like, when the cars are going like
9 -- I mean, is that what made the truck pull over or do you think
10 the truck was already there?

11 A. The pickup truck?

12 Q. Yeah.

13 A. I'm thinking it was already there.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. It was just on the side of the road for whatever reason.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. It could be, I don't know.

18 Q. Just so did you see any, any car in front of you crash into
19 each other?

20 A. Uh-huh. I don't remember them. From what I remember I don't
21 remember them crashing into anything in particular. Once you got
22 to a certain point I don't even remember those cars. I don't know
23 if they -- I don't know if they pulled over or -- I don't think
24 they pulled over because I don't think. I don't remember them
25 crashing so they must have made it through and kept going.

1 Q. So you didn't see anybody completely spin out in front of
2 you, I mean, just, I mean?

3 A. Unless that, like from what I remember the burgundy-ish SUV,
4 unless it did, I don't even remember it going from lane to lane.

5 Q. Okay. But that's the only vehicle that you saw spinning out
6 of control?

7 A. That I can remember, yeah.

8 Q. Okay. And at that point you were traveling how fast?

9 A. When it was, when it was spinning out, I mean, going from
10 lane to lane, I had to be down because they gave me room to really
11 slow down so I would say I probably was down into the, into the
12 30s probably.

13 Q. Now do you have an automatic or a manual truck?

14 A. Automatic.

15 Q. Okay, okay.

16 A. Uh-huh.

17 Q. And after you, after you got across the bridge.

18 A. Uh-huh.

19 Q. When you saw the trucks, when you saw the crash behind you --

20 A. Uh-huh.

21 Q. -- were you past the pickup truck?

22 A. I was past the pickup truck.

23 Q. You were past the pickup?

24 A. Uh-huh.

25 Q. And after seeing that did you, did you pull over?

1 A. I just seen it started to kind of crash together on the
2 street area.

3 Q. Yes.

4 A. I was slowing down.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. I was slowing down. I had to be about -- my speed then maybe
7 was probably about a good 20 or less, 15, you know, just amazed at
8 what was going on and also just wanted to just be careful. I
9 didn't -- you know, because you still -- I'm looking at the
10 rearview but also paying attention if anything is in front of me.

11 Nothing in front; there was one car in front of me but it was
12 up a distance and it pulled to the side. So I don't know where
13 they came from. I don't even remember if they were part of -- if
14 they were in front of me the whole time, I don't remember that.

15 Q. Now we -- I know we talked about --

16 A. Uh-huh.

17 Q. -- early in the week about the camera and you said there was
18 no event which caused it to record?

19 A. Right.

20 Q. But does your truck have a GPS on it as well?

21 A. My truck has -- it should.

22 Q. Yeah.

23 A. It should have a GPS. I know the -- it should have a GPS.

24 Q. So do -- on the back of the cab do you have like a little
25 dome or something like that?

1 A. It got to have a GPS because they, because they can look us
2 up, yeah.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. And the trailer, the trailer has a GPS too on the trailer,
5 uh-huh.

6 Q. And do you drive the same truck?

7 A. Yeah, I drive the same truck.

8 Q. With the same trailer?

9 A. No, different trailers.

10 Q. Different trailers, okay, okay.

11 A. Uh-huh.

12 BY MR. LAPONTE:

13 Q. When, when you stopped on the right hand side of the road
14 after all the excitement --

15 A. Uh-huh.

16 Q. -- and you got out of your truck --

17 A. Uh-huh.

18 Q. -- did you talk to anybody else on the side of the road,
19 anyone else come up to you and talk or say things or whatever
20 that, that you remember?

21 A. Uh-huh. I mean I talked to them but it wasn't -- as far as I
22 can remember if anybody said anything in particular about the
23 accident. I think one guy and his wife, I think, something. He
24 just said that he, that he crashed a car in front of him. It
25 wasn't anything in particular that he said that was like any, you

1 know, what happened exactly.

2 Q. But he did state that he had hit, hit one of the vehicles?

3 A. In front of him, yeah.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. Uh-huh.

6 Q. And did he per chance give you his name or anything?

7 A. No, he didn't, un-huh, no.

8 Q. All right. Anything other than the fact that he hit somebody
9 in all of that is that the only thing he said or did he go back
10 and try to figure out what's going on or get, you know, exchange
11 information with the car that he hit or anything of that nature?

12 A. No. I think everybody was mainly, you know, just in awe
13 about what was what was going on just seeing the fire and it
14 growing, you know. Just you had -- you know, you had a couple of
15 women that -- seen a woman sitting on the side she had her head
16 wrapped up bleeding.

17 A couple of ladies walking past, blood on their legs, so
18 those excitements, you know, was, you know, was more than them
19 exchanging any kind of information from what I saw, uh-huh.

20 Q. Were the first responders' fire and police there by the time
21 you got pulled over at the right shoulder?

22 A. No, no, uh-huh. As a matter of fact, it took, it took them a
23 while because traffic built up so fast behind it -- behind the
24 accident, it built up so quickly in like, all lanes. I was like,
25 wow. And so, you know, you could hear the ambulance or fire or

1 whatever it was coming but because of so much traffic, you know,
2 it took them a while for them to come around that, I guess it's
3 like a little, it's a bend also, before you get to that bridge, if
4 I remember correct.

5 It took them a while to get from that way. I actually called
6 them as I got rolling, I called 9-1-1 and told them that they
7 should come down, they should come down on the north side, go
8 south on the north side, on the northbound lane since there was no
9 traffic going up, you know, it would be safe coming down.

10 Q. Except you?

11 A. I was the only. And it's funny that I was the only one, I
12 was the only one going northbound. I'd have to say all the way
13 until, until I got to, what was it Exit 1. It's a pilot, I think
14 it's 153 or 158.

15 Q. Uh-huh, 158.

16 A. 158. It was -- there was no car that got on the highway from
17 any exit from 138 all the way up there. I was like, this is
18 strange. At least and I know nobody traveled on but I at least
19 would see a car coming off the exit onto the highway. Nothing, it
20 was empty all the way up.

21 I had called them, I said, hey, I should come down on the
22 north side because you got everybody stuck. You know, and they
23 also was trying to come down on the south side which was packed.

24 Q. Uh-huh.

25 A. The south side was packed because everybody stopped traffic

1 at the accident. But, yeah, that's, that's right there, uh-huh.

2 Q. So the gentleman that you talked to that stated he hit
3 somebody, do you remember what kind of vehicle he was driving?

4 A. No, I think it might have been tannish looking but I can't be
5 for sure though.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. Yeah, uh-huh.

8 Q. So how, how long did you stay on the side of the road before
9 you decided to continue on your trip?

10 A. I stayed about maybe 10 minutes.

11 Q. Okay. So from the time you made it across the bridge, moved
12 to -- and off the roadway and onto the right shoulder until you
13 left it was -- what was that total time, do you think?

14 A. Once I stopped?

15 Q. Well, from -- yeah, once you stopped?

16 A. Once I stopped. Once I stopped I would say, yeah, it had to
17 be about, it had to be about maybe 10 minutes because I got out,
18 walked down and I asked people that I saw, you know, either
19 walking up that way or parked on the side, are you okay? This,
20 this and that.

21 And, you know, some people couldn't answer, was kind of
22 crying or other people's like, yeah, I'm okay and that kind of a
23 thing. And so once I got down to a certain point, I didn't know
24 how bad an explosion of fire a gas tank could be, so I didn't get
25 so close but, you know, I had a little distance. I figure I was

1 probably what, a good, I don't know, 200 feet away from the actual
2 fire, something like that, 300.

3 MR. LAPONTE: Uh-huh.

4 BY MR. BRAGG:

5 Q. Now I do have another question.

6 A. Uh-huh.

7 Q. So you said when you same off the bridge --

8 A. Uh-huh.

9 Q. -- there was a lot of mist?

10 A. Uh-huh.

11 Q. And that's what caused people to slow down?

12 A. Uh-huh.

13 Q. Was, was there any water collecting on the roadway, was it
14 like a big --

15 A. No.

16 Q. No?

17 A. No, un-huh. No, un-huh. No, there wasn't any water
18 collection.

19 BY MR. LAPONTE:

20 Q. But the roadway was still wet from the --

21 A. Wet, of course, wet.

22 Q. Wet, but it wasn't pooling?

23 A. No pooling, no.

24 Q. Okay, no.

25 A. Because it wasn't like -- because it wasn't a constant rain,

1 it was, it was spotty. Because, like I said, early that morning
2 there was tornado warnings all morning long. In the afternoon it
3 was just overcast but spotty rain. So, you know, you're driving,
4 it's not raining and all of a sudden, you know, light rain and
5 then it gets to be a little heavy and that might last, you know,
6 three, four minutes that you actually turn off your wipers.

7 Q. Uh-huh.

8 A. That kind of a wait. So it was, you know, choppy like that.

9 Q. How, how, just out of curiosity --

10 A. Uh-huh.

11 Q. -- do you make this run down to Mobile quite often?

12 A. Yeah, yeah.

13 Q. Okay. So what is the distance from your yard in Atlanta or
14 wherever you pick up the load going that way --

15 A. Uh-huh, uh-huh.

16 Q. -- to Mobile and back to Atlanta?

17 A. I would say that's probably about a good --

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. -- probably about 500 miles because it's about -- I think
20 it's about 230 or something like that one way just coming from
21 Atlanta all the way to Mobile.

22 Q. Uh-huh.

23 A. If I'm not mistaken, it's somewhere around 230. I usually
24 spend the night.

25 Q. Yeah.

1 A. I usually spend the night like in Evergreen so I'm around
2 like Exit 1, I mean, I'm at Exit 96 I believe in Evergreen.

3 Q. So you make it down there and then back to 96 and then take
4 your rest period?

5 A. I usually do it in reverse because I can make it all the way
6 down.

7 Q. That's what I mean; you make it down into Mobile --

8 A. Oh, yeah, I'm sorry, you're right.

9 Q. -- and you're coming back up?

10 A. Exactly, exactly. And then --

11 Q. And then you take your rest period?

12 A. Exactly. The only difference though, the only difference
13 with this, with this particular day because the day before I was
14 coming back I forgot from where. I forgot where I was coming back
15 from but they didn't give me all my -- I didn't have all my hours.

16 So what I had to do was spend the night the night before in
17 Evergreen, make it down to Mobile and then go on back to Atlanta.

18 Q. Okay. So you were --

19 A. Break it up that way.

20 Q. -- short of -- you didn't have a full 14 hour workday going -
21 - that would be Friday?

22 A. Exactly.

23 Q. Okay. So you went down, laid over, went in and then were
24 coming home?

25 A. Exactly, exactly, uh-huh.

- 1 Q. Okay. All right. But normally you, you just round trip then
2 if you have enough hours?
- 3 A. Oh, yeah, would have spent the night though, yeah. I don't
4 go straight all the way down and make it all the way back.
- 5 Q. Okay. So you always lay over coming home?
- 6 A. Always lay over, yeah.
- 7 Q. Okay, all right.
- 8 A. Just some people do it. It's too, it's too much. It's too
9 much.
- 10 Q. Yeah. That's a long day.
- 11 A. It's a long day, yeah. It's too much, uh-huh.
- 12 Q. Okay.
- 13 A. Uh-huh.
- 14 Q. The hub group, are you an employee or are you an
15 owner/operator?
- 16 A. Employee.
- 17 Q. Employee, okay.
- 18 A. Uh-huh.
- 19 Q. So these are, these are company owned tractors that you're
20 operating?
- 21 A. Yes, yes.
- 22 Q. Okay. And the trailers you pick up are mostly rail loads?
- 23 A. Yeah.
- 24 Q. If my memory serves me the hub group does primarily rail?
- 25 A. Exactly, yes, rail.

1 Q. Okay. So you'll take a pig, which we used to lovingly call
2 them --

3 A. Uh-huh.

4 Q. -- you'll take a pig and have them switch it out and then
5 bring another rail trailer back and drop it off at the railyard
6 for transportation west or wherever it's going?

7 A. Exactly.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. Exactly, uh-huh.

10 Q. All right. Okay.

11 A. Uh-huh.

12 MR. LAPONTE: Well, that's all I have. Ken, anything?

13 MR. BRAGG: I don't have anything further.

14 MR. LAPONTE: Anything you would like to add, Mr. Robinson,
15 you know, that you've thought about now that we've been trying to
16 refresh your memory there?

17 MR. ROBINSON: No, nothing. That's everything I can
18 remember, yeah. Just, I was just sorry to hear about just the
19 loss of lives though.

20 MR. BRAGG: I know.

21 MR. ROBINSON: Just that was about the only thing. It was
22 those nine kids and a grownup?

23 MR. LAPONTE: Well, in that, in that vehicle there were,
24 yeah, nine, eight children and an adult and in another vehicle was
25 a husband and wife and their nine month old child.

1 MR. BRAGG: Three of them.

2 MR. ROBINSON: Oh.

3 MR. LAPONTE: But the husband was, was fatally injured. The
4 wife survived, the child was fatally injured. So you had nine
5 children total, eight in the van --

6 MR. BRAGG: Correct.

7 MR. LAPONTE: -- one in the other vehicle.

8 MR. BRAGG: All right, guys the time is now 3:22. We'll go
9 ahead and conclude the interview. Thanks for your participation
10 and information.

11 MR. ROBINSON: Definitely, definitely.

12 (Whereupon, at 3:22 p.m., the interview was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: FATAL MULTI-VEHICLE ACCIDENT
NEAR GREENVILLE, ALABAMA
ON JUNE 19, 2021
Interview of Avery Robinson

ACCIDENT NO.: HWY21MH009

PLACE: Atlanta, Georgia

DATE: June 27, 2021

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.



Wade Donovan
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of: *

*

FATAL MULTI-VEHICLE ACCIDENT *

NEAR GREENVILLE, ALABAMA, *

Accident No.: HWY21MH009

ON JUNE 19, 2021 *

*

* * * * *

Interview of: MAMAUIE TAKELU, Owner
Azimuth

Clarkson, Georgia

Tuesday,
June 22, 2021

APPEARANCES:

KENNETH BRAGG, Senior Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

MICHAEL LAPONTE, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

DANNY MCNEADERS, Division Administrator
Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration
United States Department of Transportation

ALEBACHEW ADEME, Azimuth Express Manager
Azimuth Express

I N D E X

ITEM

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By Mr. Bragg

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10, 28, 29, 30

By Mr. LaPonte

28, 34, 35, 36

By Mr. McNeaders

32

I N T E R V I E W

(9:49 a.m. EST)

1
2
3 MR. BRAGG: Today is Tuesday, June 22nd, 2021; it's 9:49
4 Eastern Standard Time and we are at 887 North Indian Creek Drive,
5 Clarkston, Georgia.

6 This interview is connected with the motor vehicle crash
7 which took place on June 19, 2021, in Greenville, Alabama. My
8 name is Kenny Bragg; I'm a senior investigator in the Office of
9 Highway Safety for the National Transportation Safety Board.
10 Going around the room starting to my right.

11 MR. LAPONTE: Michael LaPonte, motor carrier investigator,
12 National Transportation Safety Board.

13 MR. BRAGG: Can you say and spell your first name?

14 MR. LAPONTE: Michael, last name, L-A-P-O-N-T-E, LaPonte.

15 MR. BRAGG: Okay. And sir, your first name?

16 MR. TAKELU: Takelu.

17 MR. BRAGG: Can you spell it?

18 MR. TAKELU: T-A-K-E-L-U.

19 MR. BRAGG: And that's your last name?

20 MR. TAKELU: That's my last name.

21 MR. BRAGG: What's your first name?

22 MR. TAKELU: Mamauie, M-A-M-A-U-I-E.

23 MR. BRAGG: Okay. And who do you work for?

24 MR. TAKELU: Azimuth (ph.).

25 MR. BRAGG: Azimuth Trucking?

1 MR. TAKELU: Azimuth Express, yeah.

2 MR. BRAGG: Okay. And sir, your name?

3 MR. MCNEADERS: My name is Danny McNeaders (ph.), United
4 States Department of Transportation, Federal Motor Carrier Safety
5 Administration, Division Administrator.

6 MR. BRAGG: Okay.

7 MR. ADEME: Alabachew Ademe, Azimuth Express Manager.

8 MR. BRAGG: Spell your first name?

9 MR. ADEME: A-L-E-B-A-C-H-E-W.

10 MR. BRAGG: And your last?

11 MR. ADEME: Last name Ademe, A-D-E-M-E.

12 MR. BRAGG: Okay. And what company are you with again?

13 MR. ADEME: Azimuth Express.

14 MR. BRAGG: Azimuth Express?

15 MR. ADEME: Yes.

16 MR. BRAGG: Okay, great.

17 INTERVIEW OF MAMAUIE TAKELU

18 BY MR. BRAGG:

19 Q. And so I just want to talk a little bit about yourself and
20 your background --

21 A. All right.

22 Q. -- before we kind of get into the trucking company. So who
23 do you, who do you work for?

24 A. Azimuth.

25 Q. Are you an owner or just a driver?

- 1 A. I'm an owner.
- 2 Q. You're an owner?
- 3 A. Yeah.
- 4 Q. Okay. How long have you owned the company?
- 5 A. Azimuth Company?
- 6 MR. LAPONTE: He's the owner/operator, meaning he brings his
7 own tractor to his company.
- 8 MR. BRAGG: Okay.
- 9 BY MR. BRAGG:
- 10 Q. Okay. How long have you owned your truck?
- 11 A. Two years.
- 12 Q. Two years?
- 13 A. Yeah.
- 14 Q. And what kind of truck is it?
- 15 A. Freightliner.
- 16 Q. What year?
- 17 A. 2005.
- 18 Q. What model?
- 19 A. The mileage?
- 20 Q. No, what model is it?
- 21 A. It's Century.
- 22 Q. Century?
- 23 A. Yeah.
- 24 Q. Okay. And what color is it?
- 25 A. Orange.

- 1 Q. Orange?
- 2 A. Yeah, both (indiscernible) are orange.
- 3 Q. And how long have you had the truck?
- 4 A. The truck is -- two years ago.
- 5 Q. Two years ago?
- 6 A. Yeah.
- 7 Q. Where did you, where did you get the truck from?
- 8 A. I got it from a driver.
- 9 Q. You bought it from another driver?
- 10 A. Yeah, another driver, yeah.
- 11 Q. Okay. When did you first begin driving tractor trailers?
- 12 A. Huh?
- 13 Q. When did you first start driving tractor trailers?
- 14 A. This one or (indiscernible)?
- 15 Q. All of them.
- 16 A. In 2016.
- 17 Q. 2000 --
- 18 A. 2016, yeah.
- 19 Q. 2016?
- 20 A. 16, yeah.
- 21 MR. BRAGG: I'm sorry, I don't understand.
- 22 MR. ADEME: 2016.
- 23 BY MR. BRAGG:
- 24 Q. 2016, I'm sorry.
- 25 A. Yeah.

- 1 Q. And how did you first get your license?
- 2 A. Huh?
- 3 Q. Where did you get your license?
- 4 A. 2016.
- 5 Q. Where, from where? Did you go to a school?
- 6 A. School, yeah.
- 7 Q. What's the name of the school?
- 8 A. American -- Atlanta, Atlanta Driving School.
- 9 Q. Atlanta Driving School?
- 10 A. Yeah.
- 11 Q. Okay. And that's here in Atlanta?
- 12 A. Yeah.
- 13 Q. And how long was the school?
- 14 A. Two week -- two months or maybe two months.
- 15 Q. About two months?
- 16 A. Yeah.
- 17 Q. So let's talk about the week you began working. So when did
18 you -- when was your first day of work that week? And we're
19 talking about -- let's look at a calendar. So the crash happened
20 on Jan -- on June 19th, right?
- 21 A. June 19th.
- 22 Q. When, when was your first day of work that week?
- 23 A. Tuesday.
- 24 Q. Tuesday?
- 25 A. I pick up Tuesday from a load from Georgia.

- 1 Q. Okay. Where in Georgia?
- 2 (Pause)
- 3 A. Dalton, Georgia.
- 4 Q. Where?
- 5 A. I pick up at Dalton, Georgia.
- 6 Q. Delta, Georgia?
- 7 A. Dalton, Georgia.
- 8 MR. ADEME: No, Dalton.
- 9 BY MR. BRAGG:
- 10 Q. Dalton, Georgia, okay.
- 11 A. Yeah in Dalton.
- 12 Q. And what time did you, what time did you pick up a load?
- 13 A. I think 2, 2, 2 p.m.
- 14 Q. 2 p.m.?
- 15 A. Yeah.
- 16 Q. And how far is Dalton, Georgia from here?
- 17 A. I believe it's 100, 110 miles?
- 18 Q. So what, what time did you leave to go pick up the load?
- 19 A. I pick -- I leave from 10 (indiscernible).
- 20 Q. I'm sorry?
- 21 A. Not 10, 8:00.
- 22 Q. 8:00?
- 23 A. 8 or 9.
- 24 Q. In the morning?
- 25 A. In the morning, (indiscernible) night, it's night.

- 1 Q. And where did you leave from?
- 2 A. From Lithonia (ph.), Lithonia, Georgia.
- 3 MR. BRAGG: Latonia [sic]?
- 4 MR. ADEME: Lithonia, Georgia.
- 5 MR. BRAGG: Lithonia, Georgia?
- 6 MR. ADEME: Yeah.
- 7 MR. TAKELU: Yeah.
- 8 BY MR. BRAGG:
- 9 Q. Is that where you live, is that where you keep your truck?
- 10 A. No, I park over there, I park over there.
- 11 Q. That's where you park the truck?
- 12 A. Yeah, I park the truck.
- 13 Q. And so you left, you left Dalton at 2 p.m. and where were you
- 14 going to?
- 15 A. Dalton, Georgia, I start from Lithonia to go to Dalton to
- 16 pick up the load.
- 17 Q. Yeah. Then and where did you go once you picked up, once you
- 18 picked up the load, where were you taking it?
- 19 A. To Texas, Houston, Texas.
- 20 Q. Houston, Texas?
- 21 A. Yeah.
- 22 Q. And you recorded this trip on your log book?
- 23 A. Yeah.
- 24 Q. Okay. What time did you arrive in Houston, Texas?
- 25 A. I -- one night I stopped in Louisiana.

- 1 Q. You stopped in Louisiana. Where did you stop in Louisiana?
- 2 A. Two, I think around 2 a.m.
- 3 Q. And how long did you sleep?
- 4 A. More than 10 hours.
- 5 Q. More than --
- 6 A. 10 hours.
- 7 Q. Three hours?
- 8 A. 10 hours, more than 10 hours.
- 9 Q. More than 10 hours?
- 10 A. More than 10 hours.
- 11 Q. So where did you, where did you actually sleep?
- 12 A. Huh?
- 13 Q. Where did you sleep? Did you sleep in the truck or did you
- 14 -- did you get a hotel room?
- 15 A. No. No, no, in the truck.
- 16 Q. In the truck?
- 17 A. Yeah.
- 18 Q. So your truck had a sleeping berth?
- 19 A. Yeah.
- 20 Q. When you're -- did you watch, did you watch a movie while in
- 21 the truck?
- 22 A. No, no.
- 23 Q. You just went straight to sleep?
- 24 A. Yes, yes.
- 25 Q. How about, how about your phone, did you use your phone at

- 1 all?
- 2 A. Sometimes, yeah.
- 3 Q. Sometimes?
- 4 A. Yeah.
- 5 Q. A lot or a little?
- 6 A. Huh?
- 7 Q. A lot or a little?
- 8 A. A little.
- 9 Q. Okay. And now that we speak of that, what is your, what is
- 10 your cell phone number?
- 11 A. [REDACTED]
- 12 Q. [REDACTED]--
- 13 A. -- [REDACTED] --
- 14 Q. [REDACTED]--
- 15 A. -- [REDACTED].
- 16 Q. -- [REDACTED]?
- 17 A. Yeah.
- 18 Q. And that's your phone?
- 19 A. Yeah.
- 20 Q. Do you have another phone? Do you have another work phone or
- 21 is that the only one?
- 22 A. No, this is only one, this is only one.
- 23 Q. Okay. And what's your email address?
- 24 A. M-A --
- 25 Q. Uh-huh.

- 1 A. -- [REDACTED]
- 2 Q. At?
- 3 A. [REDACTED]
- 4 Q. Tell you what, just to make sure I've got it spelled right,
5 could you, could you write it right here?
- 6 Okay. So you, you said you slept 10 hours in Louisiana.
7 Where, where in Louisiana?
- 8 A. Louisiana. (Indiscernible).
- 9 Q. Okay.
- 10 A. (Indiscernible).
- 11 Q. Denham Springs got it. So what time did you wake up that
12 morning, I'm not asking what time you started driving, what time
13 did you wake up that morning, the next morning, that would be
14 Wednesday morning?
- 15 A. On the next day, Wednesday?
- 16 Q. Yes, on Wednesday.
- 17 A. 10 hours but I sleep more than 10 hours if I get over here.
- 18 Q. Yeah, yeah, I'm not talking about the log book, I'm trying
19 to, I'm trying to ask what time did you wake up, do you remember
20 what time you woke up that morning?
- 21 A. I think around 11.
- 22 Q. Okay. And what did you do when you woke up?
- 23 A. I go to restroom, grabbed something from the truck stop.
- 24 Q. From the truck stop?
- 25 A. Yeah.

- 1 Q. What was the name of the truck stop?
- 2 (Pause)
- 3 A. I (indiscernible).
- 4 Q. If you, if you don't remember, that's fine.
- 5 A. Yeah, I don't, I don't remember.
- 6 Q. So you got up, you got something to -- used the restroom --
- 7 A. Yeah.
- 8 Q. -- got something to eat?
- 9 A. Yeah. Everything normally when I, when I sleep, I go to
- 10 restroom, get something to eat (indiscernible).
- 11 Q. Did you have to fuel up before you leave?
- 12 A. Huh?
- 13 Q. Did you get fuel?
- 14 A. That day I fueled, I got fuel, yeah.
- 15 Q. That morning?
- 16 A. (Indiscernible) after, after I use (indiscernible), I use
- 17 (indiscernible) when I got the (indiscernible).
- 18 Q. Uh-huh.
- 19 A. Got after, after.
- 20 Q. Take a minute.
- 21 A. Oh. After I drive maybe three hours, three hours, I did, I
- 22 did get fuel.
- 23 Q. You got fuel?
- 24 A. Yeah, yeah, I did, yeah.
- 25 Q. And you put that in your log book as well?

- 1 A. Yes, I put, I on duty and I put on duty (indiscernible).
- 2 Q. Okay.
- 3 A. (Indiscernible) was on something.
- 4 Q. Okay. And so what time did you leave? What time did you
5 start driving on Wednesday?
- 6 A. I don't remember exactly.
- 7 Q. You don't remember exactly.
- 8 A. Yeah. The one I told you, I have the full 10, 10 hours, 10
9 hours, after 10 hours I make sure I sit 10 hours then I go again.
- 10 Q. Okay. And so when you started driving where were you going
11 next from Louisiana?
- 12 A. I, after, start driving and go to (indiscernible) and then to
13 the delivery.
- 14 Q. To the, to the delivery?
- 15 A. Delivery, yeah.
- 16 Q. What time did you make the delivery?
- 17 A. I know that day I think, maybe I think 2, 2 p.m. I arrive at
18 that. But the appointment was the next day so they told me to
19 wait, to wait there --
- 20 Q. Okay.
- 21 A. -- the whole day, the whole night I sleep there.
- 22 Q. Okay. So just let me recap, so you arrived at 2 p.m.?
- 23 A. 2 p.m., yeah.
- 24 Q. And that was in Houston, right?
- 25 A. Huh?

- 1 Q. That was in Houston?
- 2 A. Yeah, Houston, yeah.
- 3 Q. And so but your appointment for the delivery was for the next
4 day?
- 5 A. For the next day.
- 6 Q. So you, so -- I guess, so you just stayed in the truck?
- 7 A. Yeah, yeah, stayed in the truck, yeah.
- 8 Q. So what did you do while you were in the truck, did you
9 sleep, just relax, what did you do?
- 10 A. So, until, until around 2 p.m. until 8 p.m., yes, I relaxed
11 and watched TV.
- 12 Q. 8 p.m. the same day or the next day?
- 13 A. The day, the same day.
- 14 Q. Okay, same.
- 15 A. Then after 8 I sleep. I wake up in the morning, morning 8:00
16 (indiscernible) because my appointment 8:00.
- 17 Q. Okay.
- 18 A. I go to the (indiscernible) and I go delivery.
- 19 Q. Okay.
- 20 A. And after delivery I got another, another load for Texas, out
21 of Texas.
- 22 Q. Where, where was the second load?
- 23 A. I had to go from Texas, from Texas (indiscernible). I take
24 from there to Laredo, Texas.
- 25 Q. To Lariat [sic]?

- 1 A. Laredo, Texas, yeah.
- 2 Q. Laredo?
- 3 A. Laredo, yeah.
- 4 Q. Okay. And so once you delivered your load, what time did you
5 leave to make the next load?
- 6 A. From Laredo my appointment is afternoon, afternoon, night.
7 Take 2 p.m. or 3 p.m. then I go to, I go to, I go there and I pick
8 up because pick up is 3:00.
- 9 Q. Okay.
- 10 A. I went to (indiscernible) at 3.
- 11 Q. Okay.
- 12 A. I go; I go to (indiscernible) Laredo. So when I, when I go
13 to Laredo then I arrive 5 p.m., 6 p.m. Laredo, Texas.
- 14 Q. Okay.
- 15 A. Then at that point (indiscernible) is, again this is on the
16 next day on Friday so I sleep there.
- 17 Q. So you slept from 6 p.m. in the truck until --
- 18 A. Morning, night, morning, my appointment's at 9, 9
19 (indiscernible).
- 20 Q. Okay.
- 21 A. So I deliver at 9:00.
- 22 Q. Okay.
- 23 A. Then that, the same, the same day on Friday, I got a load
24 from Louisville to Georgia.
- 25 Q. Okay.

- 1 A. So I go to the pickup, I pick up that load. That's it. I
2 think that's it, 2 p.m. afternoon.
- 3 Q. Okay. So you left Laredo at 2 p.m.?
- 4 A. No.
- 5 Q. Okay.
- 6 A. (Indiscernible) from the next -- from that, the morning from
7 delivery, I finished my delivery at 10:00.
- 8 Q. Okay.
- 9 A. And then 11:00 I got to the -- to (indiscernible). Then I
10 pick up the load at 2 p.m. afternoon.
- 11 Q. Okay. 2 p.m. on Friday?
- 12 A. 2 p.m. Friday, yeah.
- 13 Q. Okay. And that was in Laredo, right?
- 14 A. It was Laredo, yeah.
- 15 Q. Okay. And when you, when you left at 2 p.m. where did you go
16 to next?
- 17 A. To Georgia, I came from Georgia.
- 18 Q. You went, you went all the way back to Georgia?
- 19 A. Yeah. Oh, no, I driven for 11 hours and I sleep in -- again
20 in Louisiana.
- 21 Q. Okay. You stopped in Louisiana?
- 22 A. Yeah.
- 23 Q. And about what time?
- 24 A. 2 p.m. -- 2 a.m.
- 25 Q. Okay.

- 1 A. 2 a.m. (Indiscernible).
- 2 Q. Yeah.
- 3 A. Saturday.
- 4 Q. Okay. So you, you at 2 a.m. Saturday you stopped in
5 Louisiana to rest?
- 6 A. Yeah.
- 7 Q. Do you remember in what city in Louisiana you were?
- 8 A. (Indiscernible).
- 9 Q. (Indiscernible)?
- 10 A. (Indiscernible). I got wrong.
- 11 (Pause)
- 12 A. Hammond, H-A-M-M-O-N-D, Louisiana.
- 13 Q. Hammond, you stopped at Hammond, Louisiana?
- 14 A. Yeah.
- 15 Q. And how long did you sleep?
- 16 A. 10 hours.
- 17 Q. So what time, what time did you get up the next -- what time
18 did you leave out the next day?
- 19 A. No, the next day, (indiscernible).
- 20 Q. Oh. Well, you stopped at 2 a.m., right?
- 21 A. Yeah, 2 a.m.
- 22 Q. What time did you start driving again?
- 23 A. 10 something, 10:15.
- 24 Q. 10:15?
- 25 A. I, 10:15 (indiscernible) I drive (indiscernible), 10:20 I

- 1 think like 10, around 10:20.
- 2 Q. Okay. So same question, what time did you get up that day?
- 3 A. Huh?
- 4 Q. What time did you wake up that day?
- 5 A. 10.
- 6 Q. You got up at 10?
- 7 A. I put on alarm and it wake me up at 10.
- 8 Q. Okay.
- 9 A. I have to (indiscernible) my time to sleep 10, 10 hours.
- 10 Q. Okay.
- 11 A. So (indiscernible).
- 12 Q. And when you wake up, what did you do, get something to eat
- 13 again?
- 14 A. Huh?
- 15 Q. What did you do when you woke up?
- 16 A. I have -- on that day I pick up my lunch I have in my truck
- 17 and I eat my --
- 18 Q. Oh, so you had -- that day you had food already in your
- 19 truck?
- 20 A. Yeah, yeah.
- 21 Q. Did you have to get fuel then or did you --
- 22 A. Yeah. I make fuel then, yeah.
- 23 Q. Okay. So you started driving at about what time?
- 24 A. 10:20 something like that I don't know.
- 25 Q. Okay. And this is Saturday morning at this time, right?

- 1 A. Saturday morning.
- 2 Q. Yeah. So when you, when you left Louisiana at 10:20 or so --
- 3 A. Yeah.
- 4 Q. -- that's, the crash happened after that, correct?
- 5 A. Yeah, yeah.
- 6 Q. So did you stop, did you make any stops from Louisiana to
- 7 when the crash happened, did you stop at all?
- 8 A. No, I didn't stop.
- 9 Q. You didn't stop at all?
- 10 A. (Indiscernible). Yes, I drive for four hours.
- 11 Q. Drove for four hours?
- 12 A. Yeah, four hours.
- 13 Q. So when the crash happened you had been (indiscernible) so
- 14 about, it would be about four hours?
- 15 A. Four hours, yeah.
- 16 Q. So let's talk about when the crash happened. Tell me what
- 17 you saw leading up to the crash?
- 18 A. Huh?
- 19 Q. Tell me what you saw before the crash happened?
- 20 A. Oh, before the crash. Right away before it's raining.
- 21 Q. Okay.
- 22 A. We are moving. We, maybe -- well, before we are -- before
- 23 raining, smooth or (indiscernible) we are driving with
- 24 (indiscernible). But at that time we heard the rain we decreased
- 25 our, our speed to (indiscernible).

1 Q. Okay. So let me, let me help, let me make sure I understand
2 what you're saying?

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. So you say before it was raining you were doing about 70?

5 A. 70, yeah, before rain.

6 Q. And so when you were doing 70 it wasn't raining, is that what
7 you're saying?

8 A. Because no rain. Rain is some, rained and stopped, rained
9 and stopped.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. So some, some -- at that, at the time of crash it's raining
12 so everybody is now maybe 60 (indiscernible).

13 Q. About 60?

14 A. 60, yeah, yeah.

15 Q. What, what lane were you in?

16 A. In the left lane.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. Because on the right side the traffic, the traffic had slowed
19 down so I shift my -- to the left side.

20 Q. Okay. So how long -- so then once you switched into the left
21 lane what happened?

22 A. (Indiscernible) suddenly cars are shut -- stopped soon. And
23 I told them I hit my brake to try to, try to control my, my truck.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. Then I think maybe traffic just maybe (indiscernible) wait

1 because traffic shutdown (indiscernible).

2 Q. Started slowing down?

3 A. Yeah. Something hit (made crash like noise) or something
4 (indiscernible). When I see I, I stopped, stopped and the
5 (indiscernible) hit my brake and was (indiscernible). And then I
6 don't know what happened. I hit, I go and hit the bridge.

7 Q. The what?

8 A. The bridge.

9 Q. The bridge?

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. So you, you hit the bridge?

12 A. Yeah, the bridge.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. Yeah. My truck is jumping sometime.

15 Q. It does what?

16 A. It jumped up.

17 Q. So it jumps up?

18 A. Yeah. So I focused on just -- I see a -- under the bridge
19 there is river. I told, I think, that I'm falling from to the
20 river so I think, I guess, I'm watching how I can fall, think
21 maybe the truck (indiscernible) or something. I say I don't -- I
22 don't -- I (indiscernible) remember some, what happened. Yes, I
23 (indiscernible) when I stopped everything was okay, I'm okay.

24 Q. Okay. Now after hitting the bridge did you see another car
25 around you?

1 A. I didn't nothing. I don't know something like that. That, I
2 know my truck is going up to the, to the bridge. I'm
3 (indiscernible). The truck is up or down.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. I'm thinking about how I (indiscernible).

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. But I don't know.

8 Q. Did your truck hit -- did your truck ever hit another car or
9 just hit the bridge?

10 A. The bridge (indiscernible). See, the (indiscernible) is
11 right over the (indiscernible) to the bridge, going to the bridge.

12 Q. So did, did you fall off the bridge at some point or did you
13 stay on the road?

14 A. No, it hit the bridge.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. I don't know. All I see is I hit the bridge, after that I
17 don't even know what happened.

18 Q. Okay. So did your truck -- do you remember your truck
19 stopping at some point?

20 A. The truck, finally when I stopped I stopped on the grass out
21 of, out off the street on the grass.

22 Q. Okay. And then, so once you stopped off the street or onto
23 the grass, what did you do then?

24 A. When I stopped my door is already opened (indiscernible).

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. Then I (indiscernible). Okay, so people were out running
2 around, so I (indiscernible). And when I go, I guess,
3 (indiscernible) the fire starting for the cars (indiscernible) my
4 truck. There are fires starting. Somebody, oh, fire, fire, fire
5 starting. So they asking everybody shouting about a fire
6 extinguisher.

7 So they asking for fire extinguisher. Oh, I have, I have.
8 Went running to, to (indiscernible). The door is open, the fire,
9 the fire extinguisher, (indiscernible) running (indiscernible)
10 when I walk in the (indiscernible) I can't see, I didn't see.

11 Q. Okay. So did you -- what was on fire, did you see, was it
12 your truck or was it some -- another car?

13 A. No, (indiscernible) car. Only my truck is -- the fire is
14 starting from behind of my trailer. See, from my truck it's from
15 trailer, under trailer behind, trailer. The cars are under my --

16 Q. Under the trailer?

17 A. Under trailer. The fire is starting from there.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. The fire (indiscernible) my trailer is (indiscernible).

20 Q. Okay. So at some point the police arrived, correct?

21 A. The police arrive, yeah.

22 Q. Did you talk to the police?

23 A. (Indiscernible) after two hours (indiscernible).

24 Q. So after about two hours?

25 A. After, after they controlled the fire, the fire and the

1 people (indiscernible) the police contact and they asked me and I
2 don't (indiscernible) asking me, taking my name, my license
3 number.

4 Q. Uh-huh. Did you take a drug test?

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. What, what kind of test was it?

7 A. They take blood.

8 Q. They take blood?

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. Okay. And that State Trooper took your blood test?

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. State Police took your blood test?

13 A. Yeah. They took me to I think somewhere (indiscernible).

14 Q. Hospital?

15 A. Not hospital, I think (indiscernible).

16 Q. Okay. And so after they -- after the drug test where did you
17 go, what did you do then?

18 A. They took, they took me to the (indiscernible) and they
19 (indiscernible) they checked, they checked (indiscernible). They
20 took me to a hotel.

21 Q. A hotel?

22 A. Yeah. They pay for me.

23 Q. They paid for your room?

24 A. Yeah. Paid for my room and I stayed.

25 Q. What, do you remember what hotel it was?

- 1 A. Holiday Express.
- 2 Q. Holiday Inn?
- 3 A. Holiday Express I think.
- 4 Q. Okay, okay. And you said the church; someone from the church
5 took you there?
- 6 A. What?
- 7 Q. You said someone from the church took you there?
- 8 A. Where, to the hotel?
- 9 Q. To the hotel?
- 10 A. Yeah, yeah, yeah.
- 11 Q. Okay.
- 12 A. They have a shuttle, a shuttle.
- 13 Q. How did you get back to Georgia?
- 14 A. By taxi. I took a taxi.
- 15 Q. You took a taxi?
- 16 A. Yeah, to Georgia, yeah.
- 17 Q. Oh, how much did that cost?
- 18 A. It was \$300.
- 19 Q. Okay.
- 20 A. From, from (indiscernible) to Montgomery, Alabama, I took
21 contract, contract taxi (indiscernible) taxi and asked for plane,
22 the plane is the same price as taxi. Taxi because if, if I come
23 with plane I have to take another taxi to (indiscernible).
- 24 Q. Yeah.
- 25 A. So I have to take a taxi and pay (indiscernible).

1 MR. BRAGG: Okay.

2 MR. LAPONTE: Excuse me, was this a regular taxi, do you have
3 the name of the taxi company?

4 MR. TAKELU: He give me, he give me --

5 MR. LAPONTE: Did he give you a receipt?

6 MR. TAKELU: Yeah, yeah, he give me a receipt and a business
7 card. I think he give me a business card.

8 MR. BRAGG: Okay.

9 BY MR. LAPONTE:

10 Q. And do you still have that receipt?

11 A. I think it's in my car, yeah. I'd have to --

12 Q. Good. Could we take a picture of it?

13 A. Can I bring it in?

14 Q. Yeah.

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. Not right now, no, when we're all done.

17 A. Okay, I can do.

18 MR. LAPONTE: Okay.

19 BY MR. BRAGG:

20 Q. All right. So you have your CDL, correct?

21 A. Huh?

22 Q. You have a commercial driver's license, correct?

23 A. Yeah, yeah.

24 Q. Where do you get your medical exam at?

25 A. Huh?

1 Q. Your commercial, your medical card, where do you get that
2 from?

3 A. Medical card, it is (indiscernible).

4 Q. Do you have the card on you now?

5 A. Huh?

6 Q. Do you have the card with you now?

7 A. No, it is in the truck.

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We have a picture.

9 MR. TAKELU: It's in the truck.

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I've got it here.

11 BY MR. BRAGG:

12 Q. Okay. Do you -- are you healthy, have you -- when was the
13 last time you've been to a doctor?

14 A. (No audible response).

15 Q. Do you have a normal doctor, just a regular doctor that you
16 see?

17 A. No, I do not have.

18 Q. You don't have one?

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. Do you have, do you have health insurance?

21 A. Yeah, I have.

22 Q. Who's your health insurance through?

23 A. (Indiscernible).

24 MR. ADEME: Has Obama Care.

25 MR. TAKELU: Obama Care (indiscernible).

1 BY MR. BRAGG:

2 Q. Okay. Do you have, do you have a health insurance card at
3 home?

4 A. At my, at my home?

5 Q. Yeah.

6 A. I have it.

7 Q. Yeah, okay. Can I see it, take a picture of it?

8 (Phone ringing)

9 A. (Indiscernible).

10 Q. So you don't, you don't see a doctor normally for regular
11 care?

12 A. No, no.

13 Q. No. You don't have any health conditions?

14 A. No, I don't have any.

15 Q. No blood pressure?

16 A. No.

17 Q. High blood pressure or blood sugar?

18 A. No, I don't have.

19 Q. When you go to the doctor, where do you get your
20 prescriptions filled at?

21 A. Huh?

22 Q. For medicine, where do you go for medicine? Do you go to
23 like CVS, Walgreens, a pharmacy?

24 A. I go to (indiscernible) Emory, Emory Hospital.

25 Q. Emory Hospital?

- 1 A. Yeah.
- 2 Q. And that's where you get your medication from too; do they
3 have a pharmacy there?
- 4 A. I didn't think, I didn't get anymore (indiscernible). I
5 didn't go, I didn't use.
- 6 Q. Never?
- 7 A. Never didn't use. Maybe some, one times. I didn't, I don't
8 remember.
- 9 Q. Okay. So I see your cell phone, do you, do you use your cell
10 phone when you're driving?
- 11 A. Huh?
- 12 Q. Do you use your phone while you drive?
- 13 A. Sometimes when I drive, yeah, I talk with (indiscernible).
- 14 Q. So how do you, how do you, how do you talk, do you hold it to
15 your ear or do you use an ear piece or what do you use?
- 16 A. The one, Bluetooth.
- 17 Q. You have a Bluetooth?
- 18 A. Yeah.
- 19 Q. Were you using a cell phone when you -- when the wreck
20 happened?
- 21 A. Huh?
- 22 Q. When the crash happened were you using -- were you on the
23 phone?
- 24 A. No, I not on the phone. Before 1:00, 1:00 before
25 (indiscernible), more than one hours I talked with my friends and

1 (indiscernible).

2 Q. Okay. How about texts, do you text your friends too?

3 A. Huh?

4 Q. Do you, do you send text messages to your friend?

5 A. No.

6 Q. You don't text at all?

7 A. No, no. (Indiscernible).

8 Q. No, just at all?

9 A. Sometimes maybe.

10 MR. BRAGG: Okay. Mike, do you, do you have any questions?

11 MR. LAPONTE: No, go ahead, Danny.

12 BY MR. MCNEADERS:

13 Q. So is your orange freightliner, your orange 2005 freightliner
14 Century the only vehicle you've driven in the last 30 days?

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. You have not driven another truck at all?

17 A. No. (Indiscernible) I didn't take any, any (indiscernible).

18 I didn't get in the (indiscernible). I didn't get in

19 (indiscernible) in another (indiscernible).

20 Q. When you obtain fuel, how do you get fuel?

21 A. I use my company fuel card.

22 Q. Okay. What is -- do you have -- does your fuel card have a
23 number?

24 A. Fuel card number?

25 Q. Yeah. Does the card have its own number?

- 1 A. Yeah, (indiscernible) number.
- 2 Q. So you've got a driver ID for that fuel card?
- 3 A. (Indiscernible). Driver, yeah, I have it right here.
- 4 Q. You only have one fuel card or you have more than one?
- 5 A. No, just the company, the company. I didn't use
- 6 (indiscernible) for fuel (indiscernible) the company, the company.
- 7 Q. So just one fuel card?
- 8 A. One fuel card, yeah.
- 9 Q. Okay. So your ELD device, all right, how is your ELD device
- 10 connected to the ECM, do you plug it in --
- 11 A. Yeah, I plug it in.
- 12 Q. -- or is it hardwired?
- 13 A. It's plugged, it's plugged, it's plugged.
- 14 Q. Okay. How do you connect -- how do you view your hours of
- 15 service?
- 16 A. How do you view service?
- 17 Q. Yeah, how do you look at your, your log book?
- 18 A. RD, right, when I, when the (indiscernible).
- 19 Q. Okay.
- 20 A. They give me -- when I, when I (indiscernible) they gave me
- 21 notification (indiscernible) notification (indiscernible). So I
- 22 have to connect it every time. When I get out, out of the truck
- 23 maybe three feet they give me (indiscernible) notification so I
- 24 have to, I have to (indiscernible) do it. When I get in truck
- 25 (indiscernible) notification (indiscernible).

1 Q. So you connect to your ELD through your phone using
2 Bluetooth?

3 A. Yeah, it is plugged.

4 Q. So do you get notifications when you get phone calls --

5 A. On cell phone.

6 Q. -- when you get a phone call on your Bluetooth headset --

7 A. Uh-huh.

8 Q. -- right?

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. Does that kick you off your ELD?

11 A. No.

12 Q. So your ELD continues to work?

13 A. Yeah, continues to work.

14 Q. It does not disconnect you?

15 A. The only way I get off my truck is (indiscernible). When I
16 (indiscernible) so I have to (indiscernible) off my Bluetooth.
17 Every, every (indiscernible). (Indiscernible) notification, is
18 something to (indiscernible) it's continuous, continuous
19 notification is coming from (indiscernible) when I go out by truck
20 I just (indiscernible) my Bluetooth.

21 Q. So when you exit your truck you shut off your Bluetooth?

22 A. Yeah, because the notification it's sending me every, every
23 second. So I have to connect (indiscernible) truck.

24 BY MR. LAPONTE:

25 Q. So going back a little bit, when you left Laredo and stopped

1 en route, when you left Louisiana on the way home, were you loaded
2 or empty at that point?

3 A. I was loaded.

4 Q. You were loaded?

5 A. When I come here?

6 Q. Yes.

7 A. It was loaded.

8 Q. It was loaded. So you picked that load up in Laredo? I'm a
9 little confused about where you got the load coming home?

10 A. Yeah. The road is coming from Laredo to (indiscernible),
11 Georgia.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. (Indiscernible).

14 Q. All right. So at the time of the crash the truck was loaded?

15 A. It's loaded, yeah.

16 Q. Okay. And do you remember how much weight was on the truck?

17 A. 24,000, the equipment only, 24,000.

18 Q. Okay. And what was it, what was on it?

19 A. It was metal. Metal.

20 MR. ADEME: Metal, metals.

21 MR. LAPONTE: Oh, metal?

22 MR. ADEME: Yeah, go to the True, True Value, nuts, bolts and
23 all that stuff.

24 BY MR. LAPONTE:

25 Q. Oh, okay. Were they -- how were they packaged, do you

1 remember, were they in cardboard or were they in bins?

2 A. (Indiscernible).

3 MR. ADEME: Was it palletized or floor loaded?

4 MR. TAKELU: No, (indiscernible). (Indiscernible)
5 palletized. (Indiscernible) palletized (indiscernible).

6 MR. ADEME: So if it's in a box, of course, it's going to be,
7 of course, it's going to be in the box. If the box is palletized.

8 MR. TAKELU: Yeah, the box is palletized, it's palletized.

9 MR. ADEME: Is palletized?

10 MR. TAKELU: Yeah, palletized.

11 MR. ADEME: Not going to be (indiscernible) on the floor, got
12 to be in the box and palletized.

13 MR. TAKELU: No, it's in box. Yeah, in box palletized, yeah.
14 It's palletized.

15 BY MR. LAPONTE:

16 Q. Okay. So 24,000 pounds of carts were palletized in cartons?

17 A. Yeah, yeah.

18 Q. How many pallets, do you remember?

19 A. (Indiscernible). I (indiscernible).

20 Q. Okay. Do you -- when you purchased the truck from another
21 driver back in 2016, was that when you purchased this truck?

22 A. 2019.

23 Q. `19?

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. Okay. I'm sorry. Do you know where he had purchased that

- 1 truck, where that truck had originally had come from?
- 2 A. Before I bought, I bought from -- before I make it
3 (indiscernible)?
- 4 Q. Yeah.
- 5 A. I drive 50/50 for the guy.
- 6 Q. Oh, you drove that same truck?
- 7 A. Yeah, same truck 50/50. I drive for 50/50.
- 8 Q. Okay. Meaning that you drove it half the time?
- 9 A. Half, I worked, the money I make we divide in two.
- 10 Q. Okay. Did you run sleeper team with him?
- 11 A. Huh?
- 12 Q. Were you in the sleeper?
- 13 A. No, no, no.
- 14 Q. You're just a single man?
- 15 A. Kind of. Yeah, just, he gave me the truck and --
- 16 Q. Okay. And then, and then so you had driven this truck since
17 when, how long have you been driving -- had you been driving that
18 specific vehicle?
- 19 A. When was, when was (indiscernible). (Indiscernible) I'd been
20 in almost three years using truck.
- 21 Q. Okay.
- 22 A. Almost, I think almost.
- 23 Q. Okay.
- 24 A. Approximately three years.
- 25 Q. And so you and this other driver split the work for the

1 truck. You had one truck; the other guy owned it and you worked
2 for him, correct?

3 A. I'll tell you, I'll tell you (indiscernible) that truck for
4 (indiscernible), he buy that truck, I think --

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. (Indiscernible).

7 Q. And then he sold you this truck?

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. Okay. Do you know where he got the truck you were driving
10 from?

11 A. I don't know. (Indiscernible). It's a long time, he drive
12 for a long time.

13 Q. Yeah. One, one last question, when the -- when you loaded
14 the truck in Laredo, did you load the truck or did the shipper
15 load the truck?

16 A. The shipper loaded the truck.

17 Q. Okay. Do you remember where the pallets were in the truck,
18 were they up in the nose or towards the rear or --

19 A. It's full, it's full.

20 Q. Huh?

21 A. It's full.

22 Q. It's full?

23 A. Yeah. The last, the last pallet (indiscernible).

24 Q. So you had -- that trailer was what, 48 or a 53 foot trailer?

25 A. 53.

- 1 Q. Okay. So you could get 22 pallets on it, standard pallets?
- 2 A. I don't know, I not do that, I didn't do any counting of
3 that.
- 4 Q. Okay, all right. But it was -- the pallets ran from the
5 front to the rear?
- 6 A. Yeah, front to the rear.
- 7 Q. Okay. And the total weight, according to the shipper, was
8 24,000 pounds?
- 9 A. 24, 24.
- 10 Q. Yeah.
- 11 A. Yeah.
- 12 Q. Did you go across any scales or scale the truck after you
13 loaded it?
- 14 A. No.
- 15 Q. Okay.
- 16 A. Yeah.
- 17 Q. So you never got it scale weighed to --
- 18 A. Yeah, yeah.
- 19 Q. -- to determine the actual gross weight of the vehicle?
- 20 A. Yeah, because if the weight is around 40, 40, 40,000 --
- 21 Q. Yeah.
- 22 A. -- I have to go to scale. Because it's 24 it's done enough.
- 23 Q. Yeah. If it's under that then. So at what, at what point do
24 you decide when you need to scale versus when you don't need to
25 scale, what's the weight limit?

1 A. Maybe it's, the way he told me is that if it's 20,000, 25,000
2 the total --

3 Q. Yeah.

4 A. -- for the truck it's more than -- we didn't take. Actually
5 I don't know for more than 30 my truck, more than 30 for that.

6 Q. Okay. All right. Okay. Thank you.

7 A. All right.

8 MR. BRAGG: Sir, do you have anything else?

9 MR. MCNEADERS: No, sir.

10 MR. BRAGG: The time is 10:30 a.m.; we will conclude the
11 interview. Thank you.

12 MR. TAKELU: Thank you.

13 (Whereupon, at 10:30 a.m., the interview was concluded.)
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: FATAL MULTI-VEHICLE ACCIDENT
NEAR GREENVILLE, ALABAMA
ON JUNE 19, 2021
Interview of Mamaue Takelu

ACCIDENT NO.: HWY21MH009

PLACE: Clarkson, Georgia

DATE: June 22, 2021

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.


CHERYL FARNER DONOVAN
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of: *

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FATAL MULTI-VEHICLE ACCIDENT *

NEAR GREENVILLE, ALABAMA, *

Accident No.: HWY21MH009

ON JUNE 19, 2021 *

*

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Interview of: JAMES WOODFORK, Driver
Handsen & Adkins Auto Transport

Birmingham, Alabama

Friday,
June 25, 2021

APPEARANCES:

KENNETH BRAGG, Senior Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

MICHAEL LAPONTE, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

JOSEPH STEWART, ESQ.
Austill Lewis Pipkin & Maddox, PC
On behalf of James Woodfork

RICHARD W. LEWIS, ESQ.
Austill Lewis Pipkin & Maddox, PC
On behalf of Handsen & Adkins Auto Transport
and James Woodfork

I N D E X

ITEM

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Interview of James Woodfork:

By Mr. Bragg

5, 8, 13, 17,
18, 19, 31, 32,
33, 35, 36, 42

By Mr. LaPonte

17, 36, 40

I N T E R V I E W

(3:34 p.m. CST)

1
2
3 MR. BRAGG: Today is Friday, June 25th, 2021; it's about 3:34
4 p.m. Central Standard Time and we are at 600 Century Park South in
5 Birmingham, Alabama, the law offices of --

6 MR. STEWART: Austill.

7 MR. BRAGG: -- Austill Lewis Pipkin and Maddox. My name is
8 Kenny Bragg; I'm a senior investigator with the National
9 Transportation Safety Board, Office of Highway Safety. And this
10 interview, it's about the events of a motor vehicle crash which
11 took place on June 19, 2021, in Greenville, Alabama.

12 Sir, if I can get you to say and spell your first and last
13 name, please?

14 MR. WOODFORK: James Woodfork, J-A-M-E-S, W-O-O-D-F-O-R-K.

15 MR. BRAGG: And, sir, who do you work for?

16 MR. WOODFORK: Handsen & Adkins Auto Transport.

17 MR. LAPONTE: Yes. Michael LaPonte, I'm an investigator with
18 the Office of Highway Safety, National Transportation Safety Board
19 and I am here with Mr. Bragg and Mr. Woodfork.

20 MR. STEWART: Jeb Stewart, I'm an attorney with Austill Lewis
21 Pipkin and Maddox, I'm here on behalf of Mr. Woodfork.

22 MR. BRAGG: Spell your name, say and spell your name.

23 MR. STEWART: Oh, J-E-B, S-T-E-W-A-R-T.

24 MR. BRAGG: Okay.

25 MR. LEWIS: And I am Richard Lewis and counsel for Hansen, as

1 well as Mr. Woodfork. My name is R-I-C-H-A-R-D, L-E-W-I-S.

2 MR. BRAGG: Thank you.

3 INTERVIEW OF JAMES WOODFORK

4 BY MR. BRAGG:

5 Q. And, Mr. Woodfork, it is with your knowledge and consent that
6 this interview is being recorded, is that correct?

7 A. That's correct.

8 Q. So go ahead and tell us about your company. Who do you work
9 for?

10 A. Handsen & Adkins Auto Transport.

11 Q. And what's your position there?

12 A. Driver.

13 Q. How long have you been employed there as a driver?

14 A. Nine years.

15 Q. Nine years. Have you worked in any other roles for the
16 company other than driver?

17 A. No.

18 Q. Have you worked for any other company as a driver?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. So how many, how many total years of driving experience do
21 you have?

22 A. 34 years.

23 Q. And all 34 years are commercial vehicles?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. What types of vehicles have you driven in that 34 years?

- 1 A. Dry vans, lowboy and auto carriers.
- 2 Q. Have all of those vehicles been Class A vehicles?
- 3 A. Yes.
- 4 Q. And you currently have a Class A, correct?
- 5 A. Yes.
- 6 Q. Do you have any, any restrictions on your license?
- 7 A. No.
- 8 Q. What type, what type of endorsements do you have?
- 9 A. Doubles.
- 10 Q. Doubles.
- 11 A. I have doubles.
- 12 Q. Okay. So the crash happened on Friday.
- 13 A. Saturday.
- 14 Q. Oh, I'm sorry, Saturday. So I'm going to, I'm going to ask
15 some questions about your week leading up to the crash.
- 16 A. Okay.
- 17 Q. We're going to go back to Monday. Did you work on Monday?
- 18 A. No.
- 19 Q. You were off all day Monday?
- 20 A. I went and loaded the vehicle, loaded my truck Monday.
- 21 Q. Uh-huh.
- 22 A. I didn't actually pull a load Monday.
- 23 Q. Well let me ask you this, do you work for any other -- do you
24 have another job, part-time driver?
- 25 A. No.

1 Q. Okay. So what time did you, what time did you wake up Monday
2 morning?

3 A. Roughly around 7 a.m.

4 Q. And what did you do when you got up?

5 A. Got ready to go to work.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. I didn't shower, just washed, brushed my teeth, you know,
8 shaved and everything.

9 Q. And went to work. Where do you work at?

10 A. At the terminal right there. It's CSX Rail, Railyard
11 Terminal where the main office is.

12 Q. And what city is that in?

13 A. That's in Birmingham.

14 Q. That's in Birmingham. How far from your drive from your job
15 to your house?

16 A. It's about a 15 minute drive.

17 Q. About a 15 minute drive okay. So about what time did you
18 get, you get to your job?

19 A. I'd say about 8:00.

20 Q. And what did you do when you, when you got to your job?

21 A. Went into the dispatch office to see what type of loads that
22 they had.

23 Q. Okay. And then?

24 A. Then I chose a load then I went and loaded it.

25 Q. Okay. And how long did it take you to load it?

1 A. I'm not exactly sure because when I'm not going to run I just
2 kind of take my time so maybe it was, it was a few hours.

3 Q. Okay. And so when you finished your load what did you do?

4 A. I went home.

5 Q. You went home. What time do you -- what time did you get
6 home, do you know?

7 A. I'd say it was after 1, 1 p.m.

8 Q. And what did you do when you got home?

9 A. Nothing, just relaxed around the house.

10 Q. Just relaxed, okay. Are you married?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Do you have kids?

13 A. Not living with me.

14 Q. Not living with you.

15 A. (Indiscernible).

16 MR. LAPONTE: So you can get some relaxation at home?

17 MR. WOODFORK: Yes, sir, I do.

18 BY MR. BRAGG:

19 Q. So when'd you -- what time did you go to bed Monday night?

20 A. It was, it was around, around 12:00.

21 Q. Around midnight?

22 A. Yeah. My wife, she gets home at 10:30 so I sit up with her
23 and then we, you know, go to bed around 12.

24 Q. Okay. What time did you get up Tuesday?

25 A. I don't recall exactly what time I got up.

- 1 Q. What, what did you do Tuesday?
- 2 A. I ran a load Tuesday.
- 3 Q. You ran a load. So what time did you get to work?
- 4 A. It was after six, I believe.
- 5 Q. Six a.m.?
- 6 A. Yes.
- 7 Q. Okay.
- 8 A. After 6 a.m.
- 9 Q. And so the load that you ran on Tuesday, that's the same one
10 that you loaded on Monday, correct?
- 11 A. Yes.
- 12 Q. And where did you take the load to?
- 13 A. I don't recall.
- 14 Q. Do you know what state?
- 15 A. More likely it was here. I can't -- I don't want to say the
16 wrong thing, tell you a lie.
- 17 Q. Uh-huh.
- 18 A. I just don't remember exactly where I went that day.
- 19 Q. Okay. Let me ask you this, when you went out on Tuesday did
20 you, did you stay out all day, did you come back? Did you run a
21 load and came home?
- 22 A. I ran a load and came back home.
- 23 Q. Okay. What time did you, what time did you get, you get the
24 truck back to the terminal?
- 25 A. It was around four or five in the evening.

1 Q. When you got, when you got home to -- about what time after
2 you dropped the load off, do you remember?

3 A. Normally it takes -- once I, once I get back to the terminal
4 I do my paperwork and then it's about another 20, 15, 20 minute
5 ride to the house.

6 Q. Okay. So that would put you about what 5:30, 6:00?

7 A. About 6:00.

8 Q. About 6:00. And when you got home at 6:00 those kids still
9 wasn't living with you?

10 A. Yes, they were not living with me.

11 Q. Okay, okay. And so what did you, what did you do the rest of
12 the evening?

13 A. Just relaxed.

14 Q. And what time did you go to bed?

15 A. Around the same time.

16 Q. Around midnight?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. Okay, let's go to Wednesday, did you work Wednesday?

19 A. Yes, I worked Wednesday.

20 Q. What time did you wake up Wednesday?

21 A. Wednesday was -- I believe Wednesday was an early day. I
22 woke up at four.

23 Q. Okay. And what time did you leave the house?

24 A. About 4:30 a.m.

25 Q. And where were you, where were you going when you left the

- 1 house?
- 2 A. Headed to the terminal.
- 3 Q. What time did you arrive at the terminal just about?
- 4 A. Around 5 --
- 5 Q. Okay.
- 6 A. -- a.m.
- 7 Q. And what did you do when you got to the terminal?
- 8 A. I went to my truck, started it up, did my pre-trip. Went and
9 parked my truck, my personal truck. Came back to the truck, I
10 always do a walk around before I get into the truck and go and I
11 headed out through the gate.
- 12 Q. And where were you going?
- 13 A. I don't remember.
- 14 Q. Was that -- was it another load?
- 15 A. Yes, it was another load and it was a, it was a longer trip
16 than the day before.
- 17 Q. Okay. Do you remember, do you remember about what time you
18 got back or did you stay overnight?
- 19 A. No, no, I rarely stay overnight.
- 20 Q. Okay.
- 21 A. Okay. So we didn't stay overnight anywhere.
- 22 Q. Okay, great. Do you remember what time you got back to the
23 terminal?
- 24 A. No.
- 25 Q. Okay. Do you remember about what time you got home that day?

- 1 A. I believe that day it was, it was dark when I got home.
- 2 Q. Okay. So about what time would that be?
- 3 A. That would be around 7:30, 8:00.
- 4 Q. Okay. And about what time did you go, did you go to bed?
- 5 A. Around midnight, same time.
- 6 Q. Okay.
- 7 A. That's, that's our pattern, I guess.
- 8 Q. And Thursday morning, do you know what time you got up?
- 9 A. Thursday morning it was around 6 a.m.
- 10 Q. Six a.m. And did you work Thursday?
- 11 A. Yes.
- 12 Q. And so when you left, you left the house you --
- 13 A. I was headed to the terminal.
- 14 Q. To the terminal?
- 15 A. Yes.
- 16 Q. What time did you get to the terminal, do you remember?
- 17 A. Around seven.
- 18 Q. And what did you do when you got to work?
- 19 A. That day I believe I ran a short one and so I went to the
- 20 dispatch office, get in at -- gets there at seven.
- 21 Q. Okay. And do you -- you said you don't remember where you
- 22 were going to?
- 23 A. No, I really don't.
- 24 Q. Okay. Do you remember what time you got back at the
- 25 terminal?

- 1 A. That one, it was late.
- 2 Q. About what time?
- 3 A. No, no, I got back around 4, 4:30 because, yeah.
- 4 Q. Uh-huh. How long before you left to go home?
- 5 A. It was, it was about after I did my pre-post trip, about 20
6 minutes to a half an hour.
- 7 Q. Okay. So what time?
- 8 A. It's around, around five.
- 9 Q. Around 5:00 in the morning?
- 10 A. Yes.
- 11 Q. What did you do when you got home?
- 12 A. Relaxed.
- 13 Q. Just relaxed. What time did you go to bed?
- 14 A. Around midnight.
- 15 MR. LAPONTE: You say your wife gets home at 10:30, your wife
16 works, I assume somewhere else?
- 17 MR. WOODFORK: Yes, yes, she does.
- 18 MR. LAPONTE: And so she gets home every night around 10:30?
- 19 MR. WOODFORK: Yes.
- 20 MR. LAPONTE: Okay. Thank you.
- 21 BY MR. BRAGG:
- 22 Q. Did you work Friday morning?
- 23 A. Yes.
- 24 Q. What time did you get up Friday morning?
- 25 A. Got up at six.

- 1 Q. What time did you get to work?
- 2 A. Around seven.
- 3 Q. Around seven. I assume you drove a load that day?
- 4 A. Yes. I drove a short one.
- 5 Q. A short one?
- 6 A. I remembered this one.
- 7 Q. What time, what time did you get back from the load?
- 8 A. I got back at around 4:30 because I delivered the load, came
9 back and got another load, yeah, you know, for the next day.
- 10 Q. Okay.
- 11 A. And then I went and loaded it, okay, and I finished up about
12 6, 6:30.
- 13 Q. Okay. So just to, just to clarify, you got back from
14 delivering your load on Friday around 4:30?
- 15 A. Right, yes.
- 16 Q. But at that time you went, you went and loaded -- did a load
17 of cars for the next day?
- 18 A. Yeah, I went and I call it pre-loading.
- 19 Q. Okay.
- 20 A. So I loaded.
- 21 Q. Did you have to go anywhere else or did you do it all there
22 at the terminal?
- 23 A. Yeah. I had to go to our other yard --
- 24 Q. Okay.
- 25 A. -- to pick up the other load.

- 1 Q. How far is the other yard?
- 2 A. It's about 25 minutes away from --
- 3 Q. Okay. So you went to the other yard, picked up the -- loaded
- 4 up the cars?
- 5 A. And came back to this yard and parked it.
- 6 Q. Okay. You went to park and then you went home?
- 7 A. Yes.
- 8 Q. About what time did you get home?
- 9 A. I guess it was around seven.
- 10 Q. Around seven?
- 11 A. Wait. Yeah, around 7:30. Let's say around 7:30.
- 12 Q. And you go to bed about what time?
- 13 A. My wife she had left to go out of town with one of her
- 14 friends --
- 15 Q. Uh-huh.
- 16 A. -- so I was home by myself.
- 17 Q. Okay.
- 18 A. So I went to sleep, it was about 10:00.
- 19 Q. Okay. So that brings us to Saturday. What time did you get
- 20 up Saturday morning?
- 21 A. I got up at 3:45 Saturday morning.
- 22 Q. 3:45. And what time did you leave the yard?
- 23 A. It was a little after five, that's when I left the terminal.
- 24 Q. After five. And where were you going?
- 25 A. To Mobile, Alabama.

- 1 Q. And how long does that trip normally take?
- 2 A. About 4-1/2 hours.
- 3 Q. What time did you arrive at Mobile?
- 4 A. It was around like 10:30.
- 5 Q. And what did you do when you arrived at Mobile?
- 6 A. I had four stops, four different delivery points in Mobile so
- 7 that's when I started with the first one and continued on through
- 8 all four.
- 9 Q. Okay. And about how, how long did it take you to unload the
- 10 vehicles at each stop?
- 11 A. The first one had the most so that took about 20 minutes.
- 12 Q. Okay.
- 13 A. Then about 15 minutes at the second, 15 at the third and
- 14 about 15 at the fourth so --
- 15 Q. Okay. So where was the last, the last place that you
- 16 unloaded vehicles at?
- 17 A. It was McConnell Chevrolet, no, McConnell Buick GMC in
- 18 Mobile, Alabama.
- 19 Q. McConnell Buick GMC?
- 20 A. Yes.
- 21 Q. And that's in Mobile, right?
- 22 A. Yes.
- 23 Q. And what time did you leave Mobile?
- 24 A. I believe it was after 12, 11:30, 12 or somewhere around
- 25 there.

1 Q. Okay. And so when you left Mobile at 12 what, what was your
2 route, what road did you drive?

3 A. 65 North.

4 Q. And that was all -- you kept 65 North until the crash
5 occurred?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Okay.

8 BY MR. LAPONTE:

9 Q. Did you -- excuse me, the cars you're transporting, are these
10 primarily new vehicles or used vehicles?

11 A. Yes, they're new vehicles, new.

12 Q. So they're all new?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Okay. And I know you have in your yard in Birmingham is a
15 marshalling yard that for -- is it just GM products or --

16 A. GM, GMs and Hondas.

17 Q. Thank you.

18 A. You're welcome.

19 BY MR. BRAGG:

20 Q. Now when you, when you left Mobile at noon did you have to
21 get fuel at any point?

22 A. No.

23 Q. Would you have been required to get fuel before getting back
24 to your yard?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. You would. Where would you have gotten fuel at?

2 A. At exit -- it's the Love's Truck Stop at Exit 158.

3 Q. What area is that in?

4 A. Hope Hull, Hope Hull.

5 Q. Hope Hull?

6 A. Yeah, yeah.

7 MR. LAPONTE: We drove by there today as a matter of fact.

8 MR. WOODFORK: Okay.

9 BY MR. BRAGG:

10 Q. So about how much fuel did you have when the crash occurred?

11 A. I had about a quarter of a tank.

12 Q. Okay. And leading up to the crash -- well, let's back up,
13 when you left Mobile what was the weather like when you left
14 Mobile?

15 A. Partly cloudy.

16 Q. Partly cloudy?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. Did it start raining at some point?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Where, where were you when it started raining?

21 A. Coming out of Mobile it started raining but then it stopped.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. And then it was partly cloudy and then I made -- going up to
24 where the -- coming up on Exit 130 on Interstate 65 that's when it
25 started raining again.

1 Q. Okay. And so when the crash -- leading up to when the crash
2 happened like moments before was it raining or not?

3 A. Yes, it was raining.

4 Q. How long had it been raining when the crash occurred?

5 A. I'd say about a good five to seven minutes.

6 Q. Between five to seven minutes?

7 A. Yeah, from when, from when that exit when the rain started to
8 then.

9 Q. And about where were you when the rain started, do you know
10 what exit you were at?

11 A. 130.

12 MR. BRAGG: Exit 130.

13 MR. LAPONTE: That's at Greenville --

14 MR. WOODFORK: Yes.

15 MR. LAPONTE: -- Interchange?

16 BY MR. BRAGG:

17 Q. And how hard was it raining at that point?

18 A. It wasn't raining hard but it wasn't light, it was like
19 somewhere in between. It was -- it was like -- it wasn't misty
20 but it was more of -- it wasn't a torrential downpour or anything
21 like that, it was just coming. It just came.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. Not just regular. I don't know how to describe that.

24 Q. Were you using your wipers?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Okay. Here's, here's, here's how, how I determine how hard
2 it's raining. If your, if your mother was outside would she,
3 would she have an umbrella or would she just walk through it?

4 A. Oh, she'd have an umbrella.

5 Q. Okay. And so leading up to the crash, I'm talking about just
6 there was a bridge, do you remember the bridge?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Okay. Tell me what traffic was like?

9 A. It was, it was flowing smoothly.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. And it, it, it wasn't heavy.

12 Q. So when you mean, when you mean it wasn't heavy, were cars
13 passing you?

14 A. Before then?

15 Q. Yes.

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. I'm talking about before --

18 A. Oh.

19 Q. -- before the crash just when you were driving?

20 A. Yes, cars were passing.

21 Q. What, what lane were you in?

22 A. I was in the right lane.

23 Q. Right lane. So cars, cars steadily passed you or every now
24 and then?

25 A. They were consistently passing.

- 1 Q. How about other trucks, did other trucks pass you?
- 2 A. I didn't notice any other trucks.
- 3 Q. You didn't see any other trucks?
- 4 A. No.
- 5 Q. Well did you, did you see any trucks in front of you?
- 6 A. No.
- 7 Q. No. Did you notice if any trucks were, any trucks were
- 8 behind you?
- 9 A. No.
- 10 Q. Okay. So you're leading, you get to the bridge and then
- 11 what, what did you see?
- 12 A. Brake lights. I just saw a car slam on the brakes.
- 13 Q. Okay.
- 14 A. And that's when I hit the brakes, tried to swerve to the
- 15 right. I'm sorry, tried to swerve to the left.
- 16 Q. Okay. Hold on, hold on, before you get to that and that's a
- 17 good point. When you saw these brake lights did you, did you see
- 18 the cars already there and suddenly the brakes come on or when you
- 19 first saw the cars the brakes are already, the lights were already
- 20 on?
- 21 A. When I, when I saw the brake lights, when I saw the car
- 22 that's when I saw the brake lights.
- 23 Q. Okay.
- 24 A. That's when I hit the, hit the brakes hard.
- 25 Q. Okay. Those cars with the brake lights were they doing

1 anything unusual, did you see anybody slide or spin or --

2 A. No.

3 Q. No. So you just saw, you just saw brakes come on?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Could you determine at that point any of the vehicles in
6 front of you had stopped?

7 A. No.

8 Q. No, okay. So then as you saw the brake lights come on you --
9 what did you do?

10 A. So hit the brakes and swerved to the left trying to avoid
11 this vehicle right here.

12 Q. So how far, how far ahead of you was the car that was closest
13 to you when the brake lights come on, was it --

14 A. It was, it was like maybe three car lengths.

15 Q. Three car lengths ahead. And so you saw that vehicle, you
16 saw that vehicle before the lights came on then?

17 A. I maybe noticed the vehicle there but I didn't notice
18 anything else until I actually hit the brakes and the brake lights
19 came on.

20 Q. Okay. And so you said you steered to the left?

21 A. I swerved to the left, yes.

22 Q. Swerved to the left. How, how hard did you press your
23 brakes?

24 A. I mashed them all the way to the floor.

25 Q. Okay. So you, so you did an emergency brake application?

1 A. Yes, I just slammed on the brakes.

2 Q. Okay. So then when you slammed on the brakes what did you
3 feel the truck do, did you feel it slide or did you feel it
4 respond to the brakes?

5 A. I felt it respond to the brakes.

6 Q. Okay. Then go ahead, what did you experience next?

7 A. Then that's when I felt the impact.

8 Q. Okay. And what, what did you impact?

9 A. It was a vehicle that was in front of me.

10 Q. What kind of vehicle was it, do you know?

11 A. I have no idea.

12 Q. You have no idea?

13 A. No.

14 Q. Do you know what color it was?

15 A. No. I know it was a dark color.

16 Q. It was a dark color, okay. And so go ahead and, go ahead and
17 just explain to me what's your, what's your experience after that?

18 A. Okay. Once, once I made impact I don't remember anything
19 else after that.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. After that as far as the truck moving forward or anything, I
22 don't remember.

23 Q. Okay. And where did your truck stop?

24 A. When I came around and gathered myself it was in the median
25 sideways to the left like leaning, leaning to the left.

- 1 Q. So it was leaning to your left?
- 2 A. Yes.
- 3 Q. So the left side of your truck was lower than the right side?
- 4 A. Yes.
- 5 Q. Okay. How about was it parallel to the roadway, was it --
- 6 A. It was angled to the left.
- 7 Q. Okay. How many impacts did you feel?
- 8 A. Just the one.
- 9 Q. Just the one?
- 10 A. Yes.
- 11 Q. Was it a substantial impact or just felt like a fender
12 bender, I mean?
- 13 A. No, it was -- it felt like something really hit hard.
- 14 Q. Okay. And that's from the car that you hit?
- 15 A. Yes.
- 16 Q. Okay. Did your, did your trailer disconnect?
- 17 A. No.
- 18 Q. No. Anything else unusual you noticed with your truck at
19 that point?
- 20 A. I don't recall anything else.
- 21 Q. Okay. So after the truck stopped then what, what did you
22 experience?
- 23 A. After I -- after the truck stopped I gathered myself and
24 realized that I was leaning to the left so that's when I unbuckled
25 my seatbelt and pulled myself over to the passenger seat.

- 1 Q. Okay. And why did you choose the passenger seat instead?
- 2 A. Because I felt that I had to pull up this way because
- 3 everything was leaning toward the left.
- 4 Q. Okay.
- 5 A. So I had to pull myself out, out the --
- 6 Q. So it was leaning to the left, were you worried about it
- 7 overturning or was it that much?
- 8 A. No, I didn't think about that at the time.
- 9 Q. Okay, okay. And you said you had your seatbelt on?
- 10 A. Yes.
- 11 Q. Were you injured?
- 12 A. Yes.
- 13 Q. What were the nature of your injuries?
- 14 A. I had a swollen bump here on my head and lip.
- 15 Q. Okay. Do you know what you hit inside the truck?
- 16 A. No, I don't.
- 17 Q. You don't, okay. So once you moved to the passenger side of
- 18 the truck then what did you --
- 19 A. The next thing I remember there was a guy come up to me and
- 20 said I need to get your fire extinguisher.
- 21 Q. Okay.
- 22 A. So I reached down, there's one on the passenger side.
- 23 Q. Okay.
- 24 A. So I reached down and grabbed for that one, gave him that
- 25 one. I said, here, wait, take this one. I have a bigger one

1 mounted right here on the floorboard. So I gave him. I said take
2 this one too.

3 Q. All right. What was on fire, could you tell?

4 A. No.

5 Q. You couldn't tell?

6 A. I couldn't tell.

7 Q. You didn't see any, any (indiscernible)?

8 A. Not any, no.

9 Q. Okay. And so, and then what happened?

10 A. Then I was sitting there for a minute then I remember
11 somebody said you need to move back because it's going to go. And
12 so that's when I jumped out of the passenger window.

13 Q. Okay. Could you not open the door?

14 A. I didn't try. This window was already open.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. I don't know how that --

17 Q. And so you jumped out of the truck?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. And then what happened?

20 A. Then I was just standing there for a second. Then I noticed
21 that they were taking a lady out of the car that was in front of
22 me.

23 Q. What kind of car was that?

24 A. I don't know.

25 Q. What color was it?

- 1 A. It was a dark color.
- 2 Q. Okay. And was she in there from the driver position, the
3 passenger piece?
- 4 A. That I can't tell you.
- 5 Q. Okay. But what side did they take her out of the car?
- 6 A. It was on the side, on this side. The car was here in the
7 middle.
- 8 Q. Yeah.
- 9 A. I guess it was right there.
- 10 Q. And they were taking her from the car?
- 11 A. They were taking her from the car going this way.
- 12 Q. Was it the passenger side taking from the car?
- 13 A. That I can't tell you.
- 14 Q. Okay. Was the car upside down?
- 15 A. I don't remember.
- 16 Q. You don't remember, okay. Okay. And then, and then what
17 else do you experience?
- 18 A. Then I was thinking, okay, he said that it was about to go.
19 So then I walked to the back toward the, toward the back of the
20 vehicle out of -- getting out of the way, passing other vehicles
21 that I knew they were in the wreck and then I went and sat on the
22 bridge.
- 23 Q. Okay.
- 24 A. The railing of the bridge.
- 25 Q. And what other vehicles did you see at that point?

- 1 A. There was a couple of them.
- 2 Q. Okay.
- 3 A. There were.
- 4 Q. Did you see another; did you see another commercial truck?
- 5 A. No.
- 6 Q. You didn't?
- 7 A. Well, well, I did.
- 8 Q. Okay.
- 9 A. It was over here to my left.
- 10 Q. And so where was the truck exactly?
- 11 A. It was on the left hand side of my truck.
- 12 Q. In the median or on the other side of the roadway?
- 13 A. It was in the median, yeah.
- 14 Q. Okay. And at some point you -- did you go to the doctor or
- 15 were you treated on scene?
- 16 A. I was treated at -- well, I had a cut on my arm; I was
- 17 treated for that at the scene by just a passenger who had a safety
- 18 kit.
- 19 Q. Okay.
- 20 A. And I was transported by EMT to a hospital in Montgomery,
- 21 Alabama.
- 22 Q. Okay. And how long, how long were you there?
- 23 A. A few hours, three, four.
- 24 Q. Few hours.
- 25 A. Three, four hours.

1 Q. At some point the State Police --

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. -- contacted you and where did you first contact State Police
4 at, at the roadway or at the hospital?

5 A. Well, it was the sheriff's department that I talked to and
6 gave my information there at the scene.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. And the State Trooper gave me -- took a report at the
9 hospital.

10 Q. Okay. And did he just interview about what happened?

11 A. Yes, that's what he asked me.

12 Q. Okay. And, and at some point he took blood from you?

13 A. Yes, it was, it was two different ones. One came and took
14 the blood first and then the other one came and asked me the
15 questions.

16 Q. Okay, understood, understood. I'm going to ask you a little
17 bit about your, about your medical background. How old are you?

18 A. 57.

19 Q. How tall are you?

20 A. 5'10".

21 Q. How much do you weigh?

22 A. 181.

23 Q. [REDACTED]

24 A. [REDACTED]

25 [REDACTED]

1 [REDACTED].
2 Q. [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
3 [REDACTED]
4 A. [REDACTED]
5 Q. [REDACTED]
6 A. [REDACTED]
7 [REDACTED]
8 Q. [REDACTED]
9 A. [REDACTED]
10 Q. [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
11 A. [REDACTED]
12 Q. [REDACTED]
13 A. [REDACTED]
14 Q. [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
15 A. [REDACTED]
16 Q. [REDACTED]
17 A. [REDACTED]
18 Q. [REDACTED]
19 A. [REDACTED]
20 Q. [REDACTED]
21 A. [REDACTED]
22 Q. [REDACTED]
23 A. [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
24 [REDACTED]
25 Q. [REDACTED]

1 A. [REDACTED]

2 Q. [REDACTED]

3 A. [REDACTED]

4 Q. [REDACTED]

5 A. [REDACTED]

6 Q. [REDACTED]

7 A. [REDACTED]

8 Q. [REDACTED]

9 A. [REDACTED]

10 Q. [REDACTED]

11 A. [REDACTED]

12 Q. [REDACTED]

13 A. [REDACTED]

14 Q. [REDACTED]

15 A. [REDACTED]

16 Q. [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

17 A. [REDACTED]

18 MR. LAPONTE: You and about every other American.

19 BY MR. BRAGG:

20 Q. [REDACTED]

21 A. [REDACTED]

22 Q. [REDACTED]

23 A. [REDACTED]

24 Q. [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

25 A. [REDACTED]

1 Q. [REDACTED]

2 A. [REDACTED]

3 Q. [REDACTED]

4 A. [REDACTED]

5 Q. [REDACTED]

6 A. [REDACTED]

7 MR. STEWART: [REDACTED]

8 BY MR. BRAGG:

9 Q. [REDACTED]

10 A. [REDACTED]

11 Q. [REDACTED]

12 A. [REDACTED]

13 Q. [REDACTED]

14 A. [REDACTED]

15 Q. [REDACTED]

16 A. [REDACTED]

17 Q. [REDACTED]

18 A. [REDACTED]

19 Q. [REDACTED]

20 A. [REDACTED]

21 Q. [REDACTED]

22 [REDACTED]

23 A. [REDACTED]

24 Q. [REDACTED]

25 A. [REDACTED]

1 Q. [REDACTED]

2 A. [REDACTED]

3 Q. [REDACTED]

4 A. [REDACTED]

5 [REDACTED]

6 Q. [REDACTED]

7 A. [REDACTED]

8 Q. [REDACTED]

9 A. [REDACTED]

10 Q. [REDACTED]

11 A. [REDACTED]

12 Q. [REDACTED]

13 A. [REDACTED]

14 [REDACTED]

15 [REDACTED]

16 Q. Okay. But your, your employer --

17 A. My, yes.

18 Q. No. So here's the question, does your employer direct you to

19 that place or do you pick them on your own?

20 A. Yes. My employer directs me to that place.

21 MR. BRAGG: Okay, okay.

22 MR. LAPONTE: Do they pay you for the DOT physical as well?

23 MR. WOODFORK: Yes, they do.

24 BY MR. BRAGG:

25 Q. [REDACTED]

- 1 A. [REDACTED]
- 2 Q. You said, you said earlier that your cell phone burned on the
3 truck, correct?
- 4 A. Correct.
- 5 Q. What type of cell phone did you have?
- 6 A. It was an LV20 Android.
- 7 Q. I'm not sure why anybody would buy an Android but okay. How
8 long had you had that phone?
- 9 A. About four years.
- 10 Q. Four years. Do you, do you ever drive, do you ever talk on
11 your phone while you're driving?
- 12 A. Yes, I have a hands-free.
- 13 Q. Hands-free?
- 14 A. Yes.
- 15 Q. Do you have, do you have a work cell phone?
- 16 A. No.
- 17 Q. No. What's your cell phone number to your --
- 18 A. [REDACTED].
- 19 Q. Now when the crash happened were you on the phone?
- 20 A. No.
- 21 Q. Had you sent a text?
- 22 A. No.
- 23 Q. Did you send a text? When was the last time you used the
24 phone before the crash occurred?
- 25 A. When I was at the rest area taking a break my wife texted me

1 a picture of her on the beach.

2 Q. Okay. That's just mean.

3 A. It didn't matter, it was (indiscernible).

4 Q. And how far was that, how far was that rest area from where
5 the crash occurred?

6 A. About 50, 54 miles, about that.

7 MR. BRAGG: Okay. So, so --

8 MR. LEWIS: So what's the name of it, do you remember?

9 MR. WOODFORK: It's the Castleberry Exit.

10 MR. BRAGG: Okay. So you --

11 MR. LEWIS: (Indiscernible) that up.

12 BY MR. BRAGG:

13 Q. So you were at the Castleberry Exit the last time you used
14 your phone?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. And that was a text message?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. How about, how about for a voice call, when was the last time
19 you used your phone?

20 A. I didn't really talk to anybody.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. Okay.

23 Q. When you're off work, how frequently do you use your phone?

24 A. I'm on it checking social media, doing other things with it.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. Playing games.

2 Q. Until you go to bed usually?

3 A. In between that and watching television, yeah.

4 MR. BRAGG: Okay.

5 MR. BRAGG: That's all I have. Michael.

6 MR. LAPONTE: That's it?

7 MR. BRAGG: Yes.

8 MR. LAPONTE: You're letting me down, man. Now I have to do
9 something.

10 BY MR. LAPONTE:

11 Q. Mr. Woodfork, I'd like to ask just some questions about your
12 -- kind of your history in the trucking industry. Where did you
13 first learn how to drive?

14 A. In the military.

15 Q. In the military?

16 A. Yes.

17 MR. BRAGG: Okay. What branch, sir?

18 MR. WOODFORK: Army Reserves.

19 MR. BRAGG: Okay.

20 BY MR. LAPONTE:

21 Q. And when you got -- when you went into commercial driving
22 what type of vehicle did you do, what was your first job?

23 A. It was driving, driving a 45 foot.

24 Q. And was that primarily local work --

25 A. Yes, it was.

- 1 Q. -- around Birmingham here?
- 2 A. No, no, it was in Buffalo, New York.
- 3 Q. Oh, no wonder you're here. It's cold up there in the winter,
4 my friend.
- 5 A. Summerton.
- 6 Q. All right. And then, and then what was the next, you had
7 mentioned earlier that you also had operated a lowboy?
- 8 A. Yes, that was, that was when I got back from Afghanistan so
9 when after driving I moved here to Alabama and that's when I
10 started into car hauling and then after that, that's when I went
11 to Afghanistan for a year.
- 12 Q. With the --
- 13 A. With the Reserves, yes.
- 14 Q. -- Reserves? Okay.
- 15 A. Didn't want to get back into car hauling so I got a local job
16 driving a guy's lowboy.
- 17 Q. Okay. And why did you leave that job --
- 18 A. Because --
- 19 Q. -- if I may ask?
- 20 A. -- he did construction work so if it rained we didn't work.
- 21 Q. Oh, yeah.
- 22 A. And there was an ad in the paper for another car hauling job
23 so I got back into it.
- 24 Q. And that's why you were so fit having to do a car hauling
25 job?

- 1 A. Okay.
- 2 Q. Climbing up and down the rigging there?
- 3 A. Yes.
- 4 Q. Okay. Okay. So how many terminals does your employer have?
- 5 A. They have quite a few.
- 6 Q. Do they have -- so they're in regional areas around the
7 country?
- 8 A. Yes.
- 9 Q. Okay. Do most of the other drivers out of your terminal in
10 Birmingham operate day cabs?
- 11 A. Yes.
- 12 Q. And do local type work or regional work, if you will?
- 13 A. Exactly, yes.
- 14 Q. Okay. All right. Okay. Let's see, okay. And you've been
15 back with this employer for nine years --
- 16 A. Yes.
- 17 Q. -- with your current employer?
- 18 A. Yes.
- 19 Q. Okay. And how many hours on an average do you work on a
20 given week? So just take a Monday, I assume you just work Monday
21 through Friday or Saturday?
- 22 A. I try to, I try to take two days off so and I chose that
23 Sunday and Monday as my off days.
- 24 Q. Okay.
- 25 A. And so I guess it's roughly maybe 60 on average.

- 1 Q. Okay. And how are you paid by the company?
- 2 A. Weekly.
- 3 Q. Weekly but it is a salary or an hourly?
- 4 A. Yeah, it's commission as they call it.
- 5 Q. So you get a percentage of --
- 6 A. Of the load --
- 7 Q. Of the load.
- 8 A. -- that we deliver.
- 9 Q. -- so that's why. Do you have a seniority system at your, at
10 your terminal?
- 11 A. No.
- 12 Q. So when you show up at seven to pick the load they let you
13 choose, there's no pecking order (indiscernible) there?
- 14 A. No, I just choose wherever I want to go, what's available at
15 the time.
- 16 Q. Okay.
- 17 A. Yeah.
- 18 Q. All right. And then you get a percentage of that load?
- 19 A. Yes.
- 20 Q. Okay. All right. Okay. Do you get -- that percentage,
21 that's a gross percentage, it doesn't include load and unload time
22 or --
- 23 A. That's, that's a base percentage.
- 24 Q. Okay.
- 25 A. Well, that's, that's base and then unloading the vehicles,

1 that's extra that they add onto it.

2 Q. Oh, okay. How much do you get per vehicle?

3 A. As far as unloading it stops, not the actual vehicle itself.

4 Q. Oh, I see. Okay, all right.

5 A. So we get paid per skid drop.

6 Q. Okay. So you get so much extra per drop?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Okay. So in your business just is it better to get multi
9 drops or just to get a full load from A to B?

10 A. Full load from A to B.

11 Q. Okay, okay. All right. Okay. How long have you been
12 driving the truck that you were driving the day of the crash, that
13 particular unit?

14 A. I got it in the summertime so I would say roughly a year.

15 Q. Okay. And you were the only one that drives that truck, they
16 don't slip seat them and --

17 A. No, not, not this particular truck.

18 MR. LAPONTE: -- somebody takes it at night or -- okay. So
19 you're the only driver.

20 MR. BRAGG: And this truck is manual or automatic?

21 MR. WOODFORK: It's automatic.

22 MR. BRAGG: Right.

23 BY MR. LAPONTE:

24 Q. Okay. And what, what -- how much does that particular unit
25 weigh when it's not ladened, when you don't have any cars on it?

1 A. I guess around 42,000 pounds.

2 Q. Empty?

3 A. Empty.

4 Q. Okay. And it's licensed for 80,000?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Okay. Okay. Back to your medical, when were you first
7 diagnosed with high blood pressure and Type II diabetes?

8 A. High blood pressure was two years ago.

9 Q. Okay. And the Type II?

10 A. It was in October of last year.

11 Q. Okay, so just not even a year yet?

12 A. No.

13 Q. Okay. Okay. And the acid reflux?

14 A. That was maybe about three years ago.

15 Q. Okay. Okay. I think that about wraps it up for me. I don't
16 -- unfortunately the FMCSA is in California at the motor carrier
17 and they did secure copies of his hours of service and I would
18 probably have a couple of questions about some of that but I don't
19 have the documents with me so that's -- we'll just have to do
20 something else.

21 What I would like to do now, James, if you don't mind is, in
22 this I know it's going to be painful, would like to play the
23 recording of the dash cam. But the reason we're interested in is
24 that the police are still having trouble placing all the vehicles.

25 A. Okay.

1 Q. And hopefully when you look at this, you know, you can place
2 some of the vehicles for them. I mean, because after everyone
3 came to rest your truck and the orange truck and then the fire
4 ensued, unfortunately it's tough to tell which vehicle was where.

5 A. Okay.

6 Q. Okay. And so we're going to play that. Before we do that do
7 you remember when you were coming up to the crash scene did you
8 look in your left hand mirror and see a truck coming up on your --

9 A. No.

10 Q. -- on your left side? Okay. Okay. So this, this is from
11 the dash cam of your truck and it's about 10 seconds long. So, I
12 mean, at full speed it's going to be quick. But would like to
13 stop it just shortly before your impact with the car and see if
14 you can recognize the position --

15 A. Okay.

16 MR. LAPONTE: -- of any of the vehicles.

17 BY MR. BRAGG:

18 Q. Oh, before you start questions, the display in the upper
19 right corner says, shows your speed about 70 which is the speed
20 limit. Is that accurate; is that about what you were driving?

21 A. I don't, I don't recall what I was driving.

22 Q. You don't recall?

23 A. No.

24 Q. Let me ask you this, does your truck have a speedometer on
25 it?

- 1 A. Yes.
- 2 Q. Okay. And what was it set at, do you know?
- 3 A. It's governed at 68.
- 4 Q. It's governed at 68, okay. And so as you see -- do it again.
- 5 Pause it, stop. Just a little bit, get the wiper out of the way.
- 6 Okay. So does this accurately represent what you first saw?
- 7 A. Yes.
- 8 Q. Did you notice anything before --
- 9 A. No.
- 10 Q. -- you get to this point?
- 11 A. No.
- 12 Q. At what point did you realize something was going on, I mean?
- 13 A. When I saw that car hit the brakes, when I saw it --
- 14 Q. Which car, the car on the right?
- 15 A. This one right here in the front.
- 16 Q. Okay.
- 17 A. When it slammed on brakes I noticed it moved to the right.
- 18 Q. Okay. Go ahead, let it go. Okay. So just and it's not --
- 19 what you saw there leading up to that moment, all right, so up to
- 20 your knowledge, up until that point traffic was going free?
- 21 A. Yes.
- 22 Q. There was no, there was no indication before that that
- 23 traffic somehow stopped?
- 24 A. No.
- 25 Q. Okay. All right. One more time. So from this image and

1 this is pretty early on that vehicle in the left, there's not -- I
2 mean, this is what you -- what traffic would look like as far as
3 volume?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. There wasn't bumper to bumper --

6 A. No.

7 Q. -- it was pretty much like this?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. So you would, you would occasionally encounter another
10 vehicle?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. And from -- and I see, I see your wipers are on here. And so
13 the roadway was covered with water, you can see, even on the
14 vehicle on the other side you can see mist coming up off the
15 roadway?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. So the road was covered in water?

18 A. Yes.

19 MR. BRAGG: Okay. Anything else, any questions about this?

20 MR. LAPONTE: No. Like I said, we have some, I have some
21 questions based upon, you know, your log books, not their accuracy
22 but certainly, you know, the timing but I don't have those
23 documents so we'll --

24 MR. BRAGG: If we have any other questions based on that,
25 would it be, would it be okay to put them in a written form,

1 submit them to you and have them answered and respond to us, would
2 that be permissible?

3 MR. STEWART: Yeah, that's fine.

4 MR. BRAGG: All right.

5 MR. LAPONTE: I don't foresee any per se.

6 MR. BRAGG: Do you have anything else, Michael?

7 MR. LAPONTE: I'm done.

8 MR. BRAGG: Anything else you, you know, you feel like we
9 should know anything we're missing?

10 MR. WOODFORK: No.

11 MR. BRAGG: Okay. All right. So the time is now 4:21; we
12 will conclude the interview. Thank you for your participation.

13 (Whereupon, at 4:21 p.m., the interview was concluded.)
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: FATAL MULTI-VEHICLE ACCIDENT
NEAR GREENVILLE, ALABAMA
ON JUNE 19, 2021
Interview of James Woodfork

ACCIDENT NO.: HWY21MH009

PLACE: Birmingham, Alabama

DATE: June 25, 2021

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.


Cheryl F. Donovan

CHERYL FARNER DONOVAN
Transcriber



RECORD OF INTERVIEW

Dennis J. Collins
Senior Human Performance Investigator, Investigator-in-Charge

Date: July 1, 2021 (3:00 p.m. local time [CDT])
Interviewed: Ms. Candice Gulley, driver of the 2017 Ford 350 Transit Van
Location: [REDACTED]
NTSB Accident Number: HWY21MH009

Note: Also present was J. Greg Allen, Attorney for Ms. Gulley; Ms. Gulley's husband, and an additional attorney. At the request of Mr. Allen, the interview was not recorded.

Additional information added to the narrative for clarification is contained in footnotes. At the start of the interview, an overview of the NTSB's mission and process was provided. At the conclusion of the interview, contact information for TDA/Max Green was provided.

Interviewee's Narrative

- The Ranch¹ is a group home for girls.² It is capable of housing 20 children. At the time of the crash, there were 12 residents.
- Ms. Gulley has worked for the Ranch for 10 years. Her title is Director of Ranch Life. This means she oversees that location.
- The only drug/alcohol testing Ranch employees are subject to is reasonable suspicion/probable cause testing.
- The Ranch provides annual vehicle safety training. This training covers basic hazards, inclement weather, breakdowns, and accident reporting. The training is specific to the Ranch

¹ Formally known as the Tallapoosa County Girls Ranch. Physically located at [REDACTED]

² According to its [website](#), the purpose of the ranch is "to provide Christian, family-style residential homes for Alabama's needy, neglected, or abused, school-age children in an atmosphere where they may grow spiritually and physically into productive, responsible, and happy adults."

and was developed by them. Ms. Gulley had the training when she was hired and annually since, and now is responsible for teaching it to Ranch employees.

- Ms. Gulley drives a Ranch van approximately once a week.
- Approximately one week prior to the crash, Ms. Gulley drove to the Gulf Shores (beach). They were returning to the Ranch from a week at the beach at the time of the crash.
- In general, the van is used to do the shopping and take residents to work, the doctor, and church.
- Ms. Gulley first received a driver's license when she was 16 years old.
- She does not hold a commercial driver's license or a motorcycle license. She has one restriction, a requirement to wear glasses.
- The vans at the Ranch (there were two prior to the crash) undergo an internal inspection once a month. This involves an employee looking for any issues. Approximately three months prior to the crash, the involved van had an oil change and tire rotation. The last non-maintenance service on the van was brakes and tires; Ms. Gulley could not recall the date.
- The only medication she takes on a regular basis is a shot, two times a month, for arthritis.
- Her doctor is John Stewart, a dermatologist.³
- She describes herself as generally healthy with no other chronic conditions.
- Her weight is 200 pounds, and she is 5 feet 2 inches tall.
- Ms. Gulley described the trip she was returning from as a family vacation. The Ranch does this trip annually. She described the trip down to the beach (a week prior to the crash) as smooth with a stop at the Boys Ranch in Baldwin County, AL.⁴
- Her last time on the trip was last year (2020).
- The Ranch⁵ owns the beach property; the physical address is [REDACTED].
- The annual trip to Gulf Shores is usually seven days. This year, the trip was longer. They went to the Baldwin County ranch on Thursday (June 10), departed there for the beach house on Saturday (June 12), and were returning to the Ranch when the crash occurred (June 19).
- The trip from the beach back to the Ranch is approximately four hours.
- There were three vehicles on the trip and returning to the Ranch. These were the van Ms. Gulley was driving, a second van, and a passenger car towing a trailer with luggage.
- Typically, the vehicles form a "caravan", travelling together, when returning from the beach. However, they decided not to do so on this trip because Ms. Gulley was making a brief detour/side trip to pick up her nephews.
- Ms. Gulley fueled the van at a Shell station on the Gulf Side of the canal as they departed
- They stopped at a Love's gas station at the I-10 exit for 59 approximately 11:30 a.m. This is where she picked up her nephews.

³ Stewart Dermatology, Medical Arts Center, 122 North 20th Street #25, Opelika, AL 36801.

⁴ Located at [REDACTED].

⁵ The ranch is one of four operated by the Alabama Sheriffs Youth Ranches, a charitable organization.

- They took 59 to I-65N. There were several patches of light rain which she described as “sprinkles” and “bands”.
- They discussed the rain and the fact that the rain was “feeder bands” for the tropical storm.
- They stopped at the Shoney’s restaurant in Greenville, AL at about 1:30 p.m. for lunch. She estimated they were there for 35-40 minutes.
- When they left Shoney’s, her son was in his car seat (a Graco model) and everyone else was wearing their seatbelts; Ms. Gulley specifically recalls checking, as wearing them is Ranch policy.
- Ms. Gulley thought the crash occurred about 10 minutes after they left Greenville.
- Once back on the road, they continued discussing feeder bands. It was not raining at the time.
- As they approached the bridge at the location of the crash, she saw the brake lights of the cars in front of her. She described the braking of those cars as gentle and then becoming harder. She began with light/gentle braking and then the cars ahead went to harder braking, she did as well.
- She saw the silver/grey car in front of her hit the car in front of it.
- She was in the left lane at the time, just behind the cab of a car hauler in the right lane.
- The car hauler came left, in a motion she described as a turn, and impacted the van.
- Ms. Gulley next described opening her eyes and the van was stopped in the median, facing “the wrong way” (south). Her seat was laid back and there was already a fire outside of the van, to the front. She stated the front seat passenger was trapped, pinned by parts of the van that had crushed when struck by the car hauler. The front passenger was talking/screaming.
- Ms. Gulley tried to turn off the ignition. She could reach it but was unable to turn it due to the damage from the crash. During the crash, her seat had collapsed backwards. She unbuckled her seatbelt. All the windows in the van were busted out. She began to crawl out the driver’s door window. The surfaces were already hot, and she sustained burns and scratches to her stomach. She was half in and half out of the van when a man arrived and helped her out through the window. She began to crawl over part of the car hauler trailer to get around to the passenger side of the van. She had to do this because the truck-tractor of the car hauler was up against the rear of the van, blocking the way. She made her way to the passenger side of the van, intending to open the sliding door to get to the children. However, when she got there, in her words, “there was no door” due to the damage from the truck’s impact. She went to the rear of the van, intending to open the doors there. She described the rear doors as being up, higher than she thought they should be. At this point, people began to pull her away from the van because of the fire and possible explosions. She resisted because she wanted to get to the children but was pulled away. She laid down, closed her eyes, and kept them closed until she arrived at the hospital.
- She had also sustained a head injury, which she realized she had when she had to wipe blood off and away from her face. Her doctors described the injury as “scalping”.

- She stated that when she went to the passenger side of the van, there was what appeared to be a fuel tank separated from its vehicle. She described it as a large, oval, metal container near the orange commercial vehicle.
- On Monday, June 14, she was in Gulf Shores. She woke at 8:30 a.m.
- She and the children went to the beach, ate out, shopped for souvenirs, and went to the water and theme parks. She went to bed at 11 pm.
- June 15 and 16 were similar with similar times for waking and going to bed.
- At about 2:00 a.m. on Thursday June 17, one of the girls snuck out and was caught. The girl made statements indicating self-harm and jumped into a canal. She was rescued by the fire department and taken to the hospital. Ms. Gulley was with the girl at the hospital until noon.
- That afternoon, another girl fell at the park and was taken to the emergency room via ambulance. The girl was treated and released.
- Friday was again like Monday with similar times.
- On Saturday, June 19, she awoke at about 8:30 a.m.
- They cleaned the house and loaded the van and began the trip back to the Ranch at 10:30 a.m.
- She followed her planned route; there were no detours or closures.
- She provided a cellular telephone number of [REDACTED]. She had her phone with her at the time of the crash.
- She does not use her cell phone while driving and did not at or near the time of the crash.
- She was not experiencing any acute health issues on the day of the crash (cold, cough, etc.)
- She was not adjusting the radio, talking to the passengers, or any other additional activity at the time of the crash.
- The headlights of the van were set to automatic.
- Ms. Culley could not recall if the vehicles around her had their headlights on.
- She was wearing her seatbelt and does not recall if the van's airbags deployed.
- After the crash, she was helped by several people, including a dentist and a nursing student. She was given a towel to help control the bleeding from her head wound. She was also given what she described as a rubber tourniquet for her head as well but stopped using it as it was too tight.
- When asked, she did not recall seeing an orange truck before the crash.
- She was going 70 to 75 miles per hour before the crash.
- She described the traffic at the time of the crash as good and light.
- When asked, she could not recall if the roadway was wet, but stated she was not driving as if the roadway was wet. She added that it did begin to rain after the crash.
- Her first indication that something was happening was the brake lights in front of her. She described it as light braking at first, then heavy braking, then the car hauler coming over into her as she began heavy braking.
- When asked how well she could see traffic ahead, she said she could not see why the car in front of her was braking. She believes the road geometry may have contributed to this.

- She stated the speed limit was 70 mph.
- She described the children as “good” that morning.
- She did not have any issues with the van that morning.
- When asked, Ms. Gulley stated there was a silver SUV or van in front of her, the car hauler was to her right, and she does not recall what vehicle was behind her.
- When asked, she described her injuries as a scalp degloving, a broken nose, and three broken ribs.

END OF RECORD OF INTERVIEW

Record revisions:

1. July 9, 2021 – based on comments from interviewee’s lawyer
2. July 13, 2021 – additional information provided in response to questions.