



**Highway Factors Attachment – Fort Worth Fire Department Witness Interview  
Transcripts**

**Fort Worth, TX**

**HWY21FH005**

(70 pages)

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: \*

\*

MULTI-VEHICLE CRASH \*

IN FORT WORTH, TEXAS, \*

Accident No.: HWY21FH005

ON FEBRUARY 11, 2021 \*

\*

\* \* \* \* \*

Interview of: MATTHEW BROWN, Engineer

Fort Worth Fire Department

Fort Worth Fire Department

Fort Worth, Texas

Tuesday,

March 30, 2021

APPEARANCES:

KENNETH BRAGG, Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board

DAN WALSH, Senior Highway Accident Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board

ROBERT ACCETTA, Investigator in Charge  
National Transportation Safety Board

ERIC GREGSON, Highway Accident Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board

I N D E X

ITEM

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Interview of Matthew Brown:

By Mr. Bragg

4

By Mr. Walsh

12

I N T E R V I E W

(12:57 p.m.)

1  
2  
3 MR. BRAGG: Today is Tuesday, March 30th. The time is about  
4 12:57 p.m., and we're at the Fort Worth Fire Department  
5 administrative services building here in Fort Worth, Texas. My  
6 name is Kenny Bragg. I'm an investigator with the National  
7 Transportation Safety Board. And to my left, I have --

8 MR. WALSH: Dan Walsh, senior highway accident investigator.

9 MR. ACCETTA: Robert Accetta, investigator in charge.

10 MR. GREGSON: Eric Gregson, highway accident investigator.

## INTERVIEW OF MATTHEW BROWN

11  
12 BY MR. BRAGG:

13 Q. Sir, will you please say and spell your first and last names,  
14 please?

15 A. Yes, sir, my name is Matthew Brown, M-a-t-t-h-e-w, B-r-o-w-n.  
16 I'm an engineer on Fort Worth Fire Department.

17 Q. Okay. And how long have you been employed with the fire  
18 department?

19 A. Almost 13 years.

20 Q. And were you on duty February 11th, 2021?

21 A. That's the morning of the accident?

22 Q. Yeah, it --

23 A. That's correct. Yes, sir.

24 Q. Yeah. And explain to -- how you'd become involved in this  
25 accident.

1 A. We were -- our station was first due to where this accident  
2 is. We respond to the southbound of the North Tarrant Express  
3 from essentially Basswood all the way to almost downtown. Because  
4 of the way the ramps are on, we can get there first. So I was  
5 driving our ladder truck. We have an engine and a ladder at my  
6 station, and so I was right behind the engine most of the way  
7 down, and so we were the first two units on to the north side of  
8 that incident.

9 Q. And so what was the original call that you got? What was the  
10 nature of the call?

11 A. I mean, initial call -- the initial that came across our  
12 leaderboard was major accident. And so we headed that way. And  
13 on our way south, I don't know if you all have interviewed Captain  
14 Tipton or not from 19's, but I don't know -- I'm sure they got  
15 multiple calls as to how it came in. But Captain Tipton was on  
16 the radio saying there's a massive pileup in the -- in the toll  
17 lanes, and it's growing, and we need -- you could hear it in his  
18 voice, and I'm sure you all have listened to the radio traffic.  
19 It was getting bad.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. And so we were kind of trying to prepare ourselves for what  
22 we were about to roll up on. And on top of that, it was kind of  
23 hard to place where the incident might be, because sometimes  
24 they're not very accurate and, you know, as far as location goes  
25 and the -- we wanted to have plenty of time to stop, because that

1 was an issue that entire evening.

2 Q. And you said you were driving a ladder truck, right?

3 A. Yes. Correct.

4 Q. What was the gross weight of that truck, do you know?

5 A. The gross weight on the sticker is 77,000.

6 Q. Two or three axles?

7 A. Three.

8 Q. Three axles. And where were you at when you got the call?

9 A. Well, ironically, I was already awake, because earlier that  
10 evening, at about 3 a.m., we were working an accident northbound  
11 in the main lanes of 35 at Western Center. And there was several  
12 vehicles involved that were on different sides of the highway, and  
13 we were blocking on the right two lanes. And we had a vehicle  
14 come over the bridge a little too fast and slide and hit our  
15 apparatus. Didn't do a whole lot of damage to the apparatus,  
16 marginal damage to the other one.

17 So that individual was treated by us, and then, before the  
18 cops could interview him, he ran off, so -- so I had woken up -- I  
19 had gone to bed from that incident and woke up intentionally early  
20 to start doing the paperwork for having been hit on the -- we had  
21 already had the mechanics out and the chief out to investigate it.  
22 I just needed to do the litany of paperwork. And so I had started  
23 doing that paperwork when the call for the pileup came in.

24 Q. Okay. The first accident, the one that your vehicle was hit,  
25 was that a weather-related crash?



1 A. Oh, absolutely. It was so slick, I mean, you could barely  
2 walk.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. And that was -- I don't know the order in which that incident  
5 played out and who was involved in what, because we weren't even  
6 on -- when we pulled up on scene, along with ourselves, the -- our  
7 engine from 31, 9's and a blocker truck, we were spread out all  
8 over the highway trying to block off where all this incident had  
9 ended up, you know, to keep our own crews safe. And I hadn't  
10 even -- I had gotten the truck in position. I told the guys to  
11 bail out on the right side to stay out of traffic because we  
12 weren't in the best of spots. And we were in the process, myself  
13 and Captain Dusek, of getting our vests on and masks, everything  
14 else to go help work the incident, and I could see the car coming  
15 in the mirror. I said, we're about to get hit, and so we did. So  
16 that's how this evening actually started.

17 Q. And about what time was that?

18 A. Two or three o'clock in the morning. I was looking, and I  
19 don't have the stuff in my email, but I'm sure you all can get the  
20 paperwork and the incident reports from that incident.

21 Q. So where was this location in terms of proximity to the big  
22 crash?

23 A. So this was at Western Center and 820 is where we were for  
24 the first incident. And that's probably 3, 4 miles north of where  
25 the pileup was. The pileup was southbound at -- I'm guessing

1 between 28th and Northside, roughly, so --

2 Q. So did you -- and during either incident, during your  
3 response, did you respond lights and sirens?

4 A. Oh, absolutely. Yes, sir.

5 Q. So did you notice -- did you notice sliding --

6 A. We were sliding all evening. Yes, sir.

7 Q. All evening.

8 A. And in fact, at the first incident, somebody from -- I don't  
9 remember if it was NTE or who it was said, hey -- after we had  
10 gotten hit, my captain told PD, hey, shut the whole highway down.  
11 This is an untenable situation, and we're just going to get hit  
12 more. So the cops shut it down, having everybody divert. And  
13 some supervisor came over and said, hey, while you all got the  
14 highway shut down, do you mind if we sand it? We're like, oh, it  
15 been good if you sanded it before, but yes, it's slick. Please  
16 sand it while we have it closed.

17 Q. And this is on the first --

18 A. This was around the first incident.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. At 3-whatever in the morning.

21 Q. And this supervisor was from NTE, you say?

22 A. I don't know for sure. He was some sort of supervisor, and  
23 there were sand trucks running up and down. But where we were, I  
24 mean, didn't seem to be.

25 Q. Okay. Sir, when you got to the scene of the big crash, you

1 were the driver. At some point, did you get out of the truck?

2 A. Oh, yeah. I can tell you that story on the way up. So the  
3 engine was pretty far ahead of us, and we commonly respond to this  
4 area of the North Tarrant Express. Anytime it rains or any kind  
5 of Saturday night, the way that highway is shaped, it seems to be  
6 conducive to accidents, and you're kind of -- the way the turns  
7 are, they're kind of blind. So typically, when we have an idea of  
8 where that wreck is going to be, the unit in front will run up to  
9 go find it, and then if -- like, if I'm driving our ladder in  
10 back, I'll try to slow the highway down to keep everybody from  
11 running up into it. Then, once we figure it out, then we start to  
12 strategize or block or whatever.

13 So this was no different. And they got up there, and  
14 Courtney, who you'll interview here in just a minute, was saying,  
15 hey, when you get on this bridge, you cannot slow down. And he  
16 was trying to warn everybody, you almost can't stop. And so when  
17 we got on the causeway following up, I was already trying to slow  
18 down, and I probably wasn't doing 30 or 35 miles an hour. And  
19 anytime I even tried to slow down, I was starting to go sideways,  
20 and so -- and I had all the auxiliary braking devices off,  
21 everything else. And so then, at that point, I'm like, I've got  
22 to get this thing stopped because we're still moving, going  
23 towards the incident.

24 And how it ended up -- borrow your glasses?

25 Q. Sure.

1 A. If this is our engine that had stopped just before the  
2 pileup, and there's a PD unit here, I ended up doing one of these  
3 right up just to a few feet and managed to get it stopped so that  
4 we didn't actually make contact. But it was literally for a  
5 quarter to an eighth of a mile, I was trying to get us slowed down  
6 from already not a very, you know, fast speed at that point.

7 Q. So about how fast were you traveling on the approach?

8 A. I think when we started -- because, like I said, we try to  
9 slow down and hold everything back -- I was probably doing between  
10 35 and 40 at most. And I was still a good ways away. And I was  
11 already trying to take some speed off the truck. And anytime I  
12 was just -- I was all over the place.

13 Q. So you were fishtailing and --

14 A. Oh, yeah. I had to completely let off to get us straight  
15 again, because if I'd have just kept on it, we'd have -- you know,  
16 we'd have spun. It was a mess.

17 Q. So at any time, like during the first response for the first  
18 crash, did you ever -- you ever have your communications notify  
19 someone for treat the roads or anything like that?

20 A. So I was the driver, and that's typically the officer's  
21 responsibility. But I feel like I recall somebody saying that.  
22 But we can ask for it all day long. I don't know, once that gets  
23 down the chain, who makes the decision, but --

24 Q. Would that call have been directly related to the toll lanes  
25 of -- or just --

1 A. The first wreck was in the main lanes. We had trucks both in  
2 the main and the toll lanes. I don't know whose responsibility  
3 each is. But, I mean, they were obviously all needing something  
4 because there was just zero control.

5 Q. And so you feel like someone made that call. Do you know who  
6 that would have been?

7 A. I don't actually know.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. I don't actually know if anybody did make said call or not,  
10 but --

11 Q. And, if they would have made that call, would that have been  
12 on your radio?

13 A. If anybody from the fire department would have made the call,  
14 yeah, it should be in the radio traffic.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. But honestly, at the beginning of that storm, everybody was  
17 so busy. You know, that's -- they've got road things to handle.  
18 We had fire department things to handle, so --

19 Q. So what time did the storm -- what time did you feel like the  
20 roads first got bad?

21 A. I'm not entirely sure, to be honest with you. Us getting up  
22 on the highway for the 3 a.m. incident was the first I noticed the  
23 highway was messed up. The city, I guess they almost err on the  
24 side of caution with a lot of this stuff; they seem to sand a  
25 little early, so I didn't really notice any kind of problems prior

1 to that. But I think the storm was coming in that night anyway,  
2 so I couldn't really tell you what --

3 Q. So did you notice that the city roads were a little bit  
4 better or any different from the --

5 A. I mean, I didn't have any issues on the city roads, so I  
6 suppose.

7 MR. BRAGG: Okay. All right. Dan, do you have anything?

8 MR. WALSH: Yeah. Thank you, Mr. Bragg.

9 BY MR. WALSH:

10 Q. So, when you rode up on the crash scene south of 28th Street,  
11 were you in the southbound toll lanes?

12 A. We were. Both the engine and the quint.

13 Q. Okay. And then, as you traveled from the first crash at  
14 Basswood Boulevard to this crash scene, you were entirely in the  
15 southbound toll lanes?

16 A. No, no, no, no. The first crash scene we're talking about  
17 that was at 3 a.m. was northbound in the main lanes of traffic.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. And then we went back to the station and didn't make another  
20 call --

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. -- until the pileup. There's, what, 2½ hours or so  
23 difference.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. See, when we went to the pileup, we went from our station,

1 which is located roughly at Beech and Western Center. We went  
2 down Western Center and got on southbound at Western Center in the  
3 main lanes and took the first entrance to the toll lane -- to the  
4 southbound toll road.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. Which is kind of just south of 820 a little ways.

7 Q. Okay. So --

8 A. That's where we entered the toll lanes. And like I said, we  
9 run that -- they give those calls to our station almost all the  
10 way to downtown because of the way the entrance ramps are situated  
11 and where our stations are.

12 Q. Sure.

13 A. Even though we're that far north, we're the ones that have  
14 the best run to it. And the computer sees it that way and  
15 subsequently sends us that way.

16 Q. Okay. When you were in the southbound toll lane, did you  
17 experience any slick conditions as you approached the crash scene?

18 A. Well, on that -- once you start down to where that's a  
19 causeway, absolutely. There -- we were all over the road. Yeah.  
20 And we were very fortunate in that we had Saginaw behind us by  
21 about a mile, and we were calling back to them saying, hey, don't  
22 even get on this thing. You can't stop. And they ended up doing  
23 a rolling roadblock and kept the rest of traffic off. So they  
24 probably deserve a lot of credit for that not being even worse  
25 than already was.

1 Q. Okay. Did you experience any slick conditions north of the  
2 causeway on the southbound toll lane?

3 A. It's kind of hard to say because I wasn't trying to slow  
4 down. I already wasn't driving very aggressively. Nobody's going  
5 to drive aggressively in that kind of weather anyway, at least  
6 we're not. But where I had the worst problems was right there  
7 leading up to it, and I was like no wonder, you know. It was  
8 impossible to stop.

9 Q. And leading up to it, is that the general location of where  
10 28th Street crosses --

11 A. I'd have to look at a map. You can actually see the  
12 difference in the pavement. In fact, we took the tollway on the  
13 way here just to kind of look over it again, and you can see right  
14 where the pavement changes, where it becomes elevated. And that's  
15 about right where it was, and it was just -- I mean, it was as  
16 slick as can be.

17 Q. Yeah. It's the elevated -- actually the elevated bridge  
18 structure --

19 A. Yes, sir.

20 Q. -- in that location. Okay. Did you experience or see any of  
21 the pavement condition in the southbound general use lanes or the  
22 northbound toll lanes?

23 A. No, because like I said, we would have gotten on just south  
24 of 820, and so that -- at that point, we were off of the main  
25 lanes.



1 Q. Okay.

2 A. And then, as far as the main lanes go, I don't know about --  
3 I mean, I -- you could see, obviously -- I wasn't driving on them,  
4 but when we stopped, obviously the toll -- it was just complete  
5 compaction of vehicles. So one of the first things we did aside  
6 from the beginning of the triage situation was I took every bag of  
7 absorbent we had, cut a hole in it and handed it to cops and just  
8 said walk and just trying to make a surface, because we were going  
9 to need an egress for this giant mess that we had in front of us.  
10 And that took place on the main lanes. I think that's where most  
11 of the operations was on the shoulder of the main lane next to the  
12 toll road, so --

13 Q. Okay. When you got out of the vehicle on the southbound toll  
14 lanes, did you slip or --

15 A. I had a handle to hold onto, and yeah, I needed it. And  
16 everyone that was there was falling, I mean, the whole time.

17 Q. So you saw numerous individuals slipping and --

18 A. Oh, absolutely.

19 Q. -- falling.

20 A. Absolutely.

21 Q. Okay. Did you see any other vehicles that were sliding on  
22 the -- on the pavement as you were -- as you were traveling down  
23 the southbound toll lanes?

24 A. They were in front of us sliding.

25 Q. Were they? Okay.

1 A. I think only one other one was behind us at any point that  
2 still slid in. But because everything behind -- everything back  
3 from there had been shut down or at least stopped by Saginaw's  
4 unit.

5 Q. Okay. Did you see any pretreatment on the roadway, any salt  
6 brine mixture as you were traveling the southbound toll lanes?

7 A. It felt like solid ice. Whether there was something there or  
8 not, it didn't feel like there was. You know, I can't speculate  
9 as to what was or wasn't there, but it didn't feel like there was  
10 anything.

11 MR. WALSH: Okay. I have no further questions.

12 MR. BRAGG: All right. Thank you for your participation.

13 I'm going to close the interview. It's now 1:13 p.m., and thank  
14 you again.

15 MR. BROWN: Yes, sir. Thank you.

16 (Whereupon, at 1:13 p.m., the interview was concluded.)  
17  
18  
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21  
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23  
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25

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

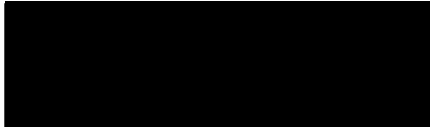
IN THE MATTER OF:           MULTI-VEHICLE CRASH  
                                  IN FORT WORTH, TEXAS,  
                                  ON FEBRUARY 11, 2021  
                                  Interview of Matthew Brown

ACCIDENT NO.:               HWY21FH005

PLACE:                       Fort Worth, Texas

DATE:                         March 30, 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.



Karen Ehatt  
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

\* \* \* \* \*

Investigation of: \*

\*

MULTI-VEHICLE CRASH \*

IN FORT WORTH, TEXAS, \*

Accident No.: HWY21FH005

ON FEBRUARY 11, 2021 \*

\*

\* \* \* \* \*

Interview of: STEVEN BROWNEN, Lieutenant  
Fort Worth Fire Department

Fort Worth Fire Department  
Fort Worth, Texas

Tuesday,  
March 30, 2021

APPEARANCES:

KENNETH BRAGG, Senior Highway Accident Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board

DAN WALSH, Senior Highway Accident Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board

ROBERT ACCETTA, Investigator in Charge  
National Transportation Safety Board

ERIC GREGSON, Highway Accident Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board

I N D E X

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I N T E R V I E W

(1:28 p.m.)

1  
2  
3 MR. BRAGG: Today is Tuesday, March 30th, 2021. It's about  
4 1:28 p.m., and we are at the Fort Worth Fire administration  
5 services building in Fort Worth, Texas. My name is Kenny Bragg.  
6 I'm an investigator with the National Transportation Safety Board,  
7 Office of Highway Safety. Also --

8 MR. WALSH: Dan Walsh, senior highway accident investigator.

9 MR. ACCETTA: Robert Accetta, investigator in charge.

10 MR. GREGSON: Eric Gregson, highway accident investigator.

## INTERVIEW OF STEVEN BROWEN

11  
12 BY MR. BRAGG:

13 Q. And, sir, can I ask you to say and spell your first and last  
14 name please?

15 A. My name is Steven Brownen, and it's S-t-e-v-e-n, Brownen,  
16 B-r-o-w-n-e-n.

17 Q. Okay. And who are you employed with and what's you --

18 A. City of Fort Worth, I'm a lieutenant for the City of Fort  
19 Worth Fire Department.

20 Q. Okay. And were you working on February 11th?

21 A. I was.

22 Q. And were you involved in a traffic crash that happened in  
23 toll lanes?

24 A. Yes, we were.

25 Q. So describe for us, you know, how you become involved in

1 this.

2 A. When we got dispatched, I guess it was after the furthest  
3 north on the toll, we got called in by (indiscernible) 31, and I  
4 was working at Station 9. And so we had to go down to Basswood  
5 and come back to get on the toll northbound. And so, once we got  
6 to about the 28th, it was starting to get a little slick. And we  
7 were following Haslet 214, and we were going kind of slow, but  
8 once we got over the -- where the wreck had started, the engine, I  
9 didn't think we was going to get it stopped, because it was pretty  
10 slick.

11 Q. And I'm sorry, you said you was following what 214?

12 A. I think it's another city that does mutual aid with us, so  
13 Haslet, our -- whichever one that is, and so they had -- they got  
14 dispatched to it as well. So, once we got over the top, we were  
15 trying to slow down or stop, and I was just telling the driver,  
16 because he kept pumping the brakes, and I was like, man, just stay  
17 on them. We're going to slide and probably hit. But we got off,  
18 and it was pretty slick. It was -- I mean, we almost busted our  
19 butt trying to get off the truck and get our tools, you know. And  
20 we were actually on the toll, so --

21 Q. What kind of truck were you in?

22 A. We were on a engine.

23 Q. Okay. Two axles?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. About how much weight? I'm just asking just for --



- 1 A. Oh, I forget how much they weigh. 750 gallons of water --
- 2 Q. It's heavy.
- 3 A. Yeah, it's heavy.
- 4 Q. Yeah.
- 5 A. Yeah, it's heavy. And --
- 6 Q. And so where were you responding from?
- 7 A. We were at Station 9, off of Meacham.
- 8 Q. Meacham.
- 9 A. And 35.
- 10 Q. And how far -- about how far away is that?
- 11 A. From where we had to go, we had -- from where the wreck was
- 12 it, if you got to go that way, it was about 4 miles, but we had to
- 13 go from -- because at 9, you can't get on the toll from there.
- 14 You had to go north, get off at Basswood, and turn around and come
- 15 back, and then get on the toll and come back down that way.
- 16 Q. Okay.
- 17 A. For us, because we can't get -- we're past that 28th if we go
- 18 28th.
- 19 Q. And you weren't driving; is that correct?
- 20 A. No, sir.
- 21 Q. Where were you seated?
- 22 A. In the lieutenant's seat, the front.
- 23 Q. Front right?
- 24 A. Yeah.
- 25 Q. Okay. And how were the side streets leading up to you

1 getting on the interstate?

2 A. Didn't notice anything, but like at 3 o'clock that morning,  
3 we had responded to a wreck on 35 North right at Basswood, and we  
4 had got it as the toll, and so we went down to 28th and come back  
5 and got on the toll going northbound.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. And so the side streets over there were pretty slick because  
8 we had to block 35 traffic, actual 35, and -- but we were on the  
9 toll, but our wreck was kind of in between the median type deal.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. So we worked it off of that, but I didn't let my driver go up  
12 Basswood off the toll, that big high one. I was like, eh, if it's  
13 this slick here, it's probably going to be slick up there, because  
14 the people that were getting diverted onto the side street, they  
15 were wrecking over there, over by Twin Peaks. I forget what  
16 (indiscernible) that is.

17 Q. And so the first crash that you responded to, what time was  
18 that one?

19 A. Three o'clock in the morning.

20 Q. About 3 o'clock in the morning?

21 A. Yes, sir.

22 Q. And did you observe the roads to be slick at that point as  
23 well?

24 A. Yes, yeah. 35 was really slick when we got on it.

25 Q. And was your truck the first one to respond?

1 A. We got on the northbound toll or the -- yeah, the northbound  
2 toll at Basswood, and we were the first engine there, and then the  
3 (indiscernible) came on the 35 regular, and that's when they got  
4 hit by a car that slid into them.

5 Q. So, at any time, did you request for the roads to be sanded?

6 A. They were calling people out that night, because the chief  
7 came out and everything, and so they were calling for it to be  
8 sanded right there.

9 Q. So who was calling?

10 A. I believe the chief was, battalion chief.

11 Q. And this is -- and what point did you hear the chief calling?  
12 Was that for the first crash or before the first --

13 A. The 3 o'clock crash.

14 Q. Three o'clock?

15 A. Yeah, because we had to block 35 off with two trucks going  
16 north, and so I believe they were going to sand that spot right  
17 there, so I didn't -- we got released, so I didn't ever see  
18 anything, so --

19 Q. I see. Okay. So you --

20 A. They stayed blocking for a while.

21 Q. Got you. And then so you -- after you got released from the  
22 first one, you went back to the station?

23 A. The station, yes, sir.

24 Q. Okay. And then about what time did you get dispatched for  
25 the second one?

- 1 A. Oh, that was probably close to 6.
- 2 Q. Close to 6?
- 3 A. I believe, yeah.
- 4 Q. What was the weather doing at that time?
- 5 A. At that time, I think it was just misting, you know.
- 6 Q. Misting?
- 7 A. Yeah. They said it rained a little bit before that, but when
- 8 we got on, we really didn't --
- 9 Q. And it's the same thing for the first, 3 o'clock crash?
- 10 A. Yes.
- 11 Q. Misting?
- 12 A. Yeah, yeah, yeah.
- 13 Q. So weather didn't really change from that?
- 14 A. No, sir.
- 15 Q. Okay. And the side streets, they were pretty much the same
- 16 condition, or had they gotten worse by the time the second one --
- 17 A. We really didn't see any side streets because, I mean, we
- 18 went -- we get on 35 from Meacham.
- 19 Q. Okay.
- 20 A. You know, and it's just right there on access, and then
- 21 you're up on 35, and then you go down to -- you know, I didn't let
- 22 him speed. I mean, we kept it about 30 miles an hour.
- 23 Q. Lights and siren?
- 24 A. Yes, sir.
- 25 Q. When was the first time you felt the vehicle sliding?

1 A. I think when we got close to where the 28th, where you get on  
2 there at 28th, where you can exit off of 28th, it started getting  
3 a little slicker there, you know, but I mean, we were going pretty  
4 slow and trying to move our way through the vehicles. But then,  
5 once we crested and then we seen the wrecks, that's when it was  
6 just like a skating rink. It was just -- it wasn't going to stop.

7 Q. And did you guys bump into anything getting --

8 A. No, we finally got it stopped before we hit the wall, so that  
9 was a good thing. I mean, we were only going 15 -- 10, 15 miles  
10 an hour when we come over the top, because we were going through  
11 cars. As soon as we got over the -- you know, and kind of started  
12 downhill, it was like, you're not stopping.

13 Q. And I assume, by that point, you were looking for a slick  
14 spot?

15 A. Oh, yeah, I mean, it was all slick, yes, sir.

16 Q. And so what was it like when you finally stopped the truck  
17 and got out? What --

18 A. We got out real careful, started sliding around, and we were  
19 trying to get off all of our tools to start cutting people out,  
20 and we were just trying to be real careful. And then we got over  
21 the median or the barrier and walked down actual 35 going south to  
22 get down to the first -- the far -- the last group of wreck is  
23 where we worked. I didn't realize anything down south was  
24 happening because it was just all bunched up right there.

25 Q. So what was the roadway like walking on it?

1 A. It was slick. Yeah, you had to -- we kind of like carry a  
2 piece and kind of hold onto the median or the barrier.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. Because it was -- our bunker boots our kind of -- they're not  
5 -- they don't grip real good, so -- but it was pretty slick.

6 MR. BRAGG: All right. I don't have anything further.

7 MR. WALSH: Thank you, Mr. Bragg.

8 BY MR. WALSH:

9 Q. Did you see any NTE trucks sanding --

10 A. No, sir.

11 Q. -- with the first crash at Basswood?

12 A. I didn't witness any.

13 Q. Didn't witness any?

14 A. No, sir. I mean, if they did, I was already -- we were  
15 already gone and done by that time, because they stayed on,  
16 because they were -- the wreck was actually on 35, and we were the  
17 only engine on the northbound toll.

18 Q. Okay. As you rolled up on the crash scene south of 28th  
19 Street, which -- were you in the southbound toll lanes?

20 A. We were headed -- yeah, we were headed south in the toll.

21 Q. Were you in the actual southbound toll lane?

22 A. Yes, sir.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. Were you in the left lane or right lane? Do you --

1 A. We were in all the lanes, because, I mean, by the time we got  
2 ready to come over the top, because we were going around cars,  
3 trying to maneuver our way through, you know, and they would just  
4 kind of split for us, but we were more in the slow lane, in the  
5 right lane when we come over and started trying to stop, because  
6 we were going to hit the right side barrier wall.

7 Q. Okay. And you mentioned you were coming from Basswood --

8 A. Yes, sir.

9 Q. -- down to the crash scene at 28th Street in the southbound  
10 toll lanes.

11 A. Yes, sir.

12 Q. Did you experience any sliding on the -- in the southbound  
13 toll lanes?

14 A. Not until we got to about the 28th area, you know, because  
15 once we got to Basswood, because we went 35 to Basswood instead of  
16 getting on the toll and then turned around and come back and you  
17 catch the toll right there. That's the only way we can get on  
18 going that way.

19 Q. So you didn't experience any slipping or sliding of the --

20 A. Not too bad, but I was -- I mean, we weren't going over 30  
21 miles an hour, so we didn't -- I didn't notice anything, but  
22 actually, by that time, I was like reading my notes, and he was  
23 driving. I just told him, hey, be careful and be safe, you know,  
24 and drive safe. And I was reading the notes on what we had, what  
25 kind of -- what all was going on with the wreck.

1 Q. Okay. And when you got out of the vehicle, you were -- did  
2 you slide?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Slipped?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. You slipped quite a bit?

7 A. Yes, sir.

8 Q. Did you see any other individuals slipping?

9 A. Oh, yeah. The firefighter on the side that I'm on. That's  
10 when I said, hey, y'all just be careful, you know. And we had to  
11 get all of our spreaders and cutters and the fire plan out, so  
12 carrying that stuff, we were trying to be pretty safe going down,  
13 but we crossed over to actual 35 south so we could get down to the  
14 cars, because everything was blocked off, so we could get in and  
15 get on top of the cars and start getting people out.

16 Q. Okay. Did you see any pretreatment --

17 A. I didn't notice any, and then, when we got ready to leave,  
18 they had -- the sand truck came then and had to put some out, and  
19 we put absorbent out so we could back, back up that hill, or we  
20 wasn't going to get out.

21 Q. Got you. At any time, did you go over the barrier into the  
22 southbound general use lanes?

23 A. Yeah, yeah. That's -- when we got on, we couldn't make it  
24 way down on the toll, so we had -- we made it just a little bit,  
25 and then we crossed over on the barrier to the southbound 35



1 getting down to there.

2 Q. Was it slick in that location as well?

3 A. Yes, sir.

4 MR. WALSH: Okay. I have no further questions

5 MR. ACCETTA: I don't have any.

6 MR. BRAGG: I do have one question.

7 BY MR. BRAGG:

8 Q. From the time that you cleared the second crash and you  
9 responded to the first crash, do you know if the highway had been  
10 opened back up after the first crash?

11 A. The actual 35?

12 Q. Yeah.

13 A. Yes, it was, because we had to -- we went that way to get  
14 onto the toll.

15 Q. Okay, so --

16 A. When we got dispatched at that 6 o'clock, or around 6  
17 o'clock, so we -- you go 35 and exit Basswood and then turn around  
18 and then catch the toll right there --

19 Q. So could you tell if the highway had been treated --

20 A. They'd treated it then, you know, on that part because that's  
21 where we had that wreck, the one at 3.

22 Q. But that's not the same location as the first wreck?

23 A. That was the --

24 Q. I mean the same as the second wreck.

25 A. No, sir.

1 Q. How far is it apart?

2 A. Oh, that's a good 7 miles probably.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. Probably about that. Somewhere around there.

5 MR. BRAGG: Okay. That's all I have, sir.

6 MR. BROWNEN: All right.

7 MR. BRAGG: Thank you for your participation. Have a good  
8 afternoon.

9 MR. BROWNEN: Y'all have a good day.

10 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

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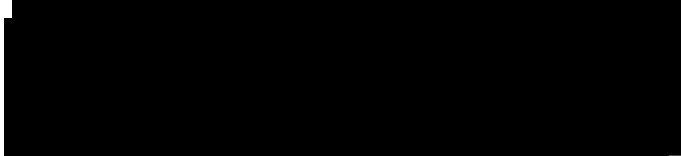
IN THE MATTER OF:           MULTI-VEHICLE CRASH  
                                  IN FORT WORTH, TEXAS,  
                                  ON FEBRUARY 11, 2021  
                                  Interview of Steven Brownen

ACCIDENT NO.:               HWY21FH005

PLACE:                       Fort Worth, Texas

DATE:                        March 30, 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.



Autumn Weslow  
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

\* \* \* \* \*

Investigation of: \*

\*

MULTI-VEHICLE CRASH \*

IN FORT WORTH, TEXAS, \*

Accident No.: HWY21FH005

ON FEBRUARY 11, 2021 \*

\*

\* \* \* \* \*

Interview of: BRIAN CALL, Lieutenant

Fort Worth Fire Department

Fort Worth Fire Department

Fort Worth, Texas

Tuesday,

March 30, 2021

APPEARANCES:

KENNETH BRAGG, Senior Highway Accident Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board

DAN WALSH, Senior Highway Accident Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board

ROBERT ACCETTA, Investigator in Charge  
National Transportation Safety Board

ERIC GREGSON, Highway Accident Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board

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By Mr. Bragg

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By Mr. Walsh

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I N T E R V I E W

(3:41 p.m.)

1  
2  
3 MR. BRAGG: Today is Tuesday, March 30th, 2021. It's about  
4 3:41 p.m., and we're at the Fort Worth Fire Services  
5 administration building. My name is Kenny Bragg. I'm a senior  
6 investigator with the Office of Highway Safety for the National  
7 Transportation Safety Board. In addition, we have --

8 MR. WALSH: Dan Walsh, senior highway accident investigator.

9 MR. ACCETTA: Robert Accetta, investigator in charge.

10 MR. GREGSON: Eric Gregson, highway accident investigator.

## INTERVIEW OF BRIAN CALL

11  
12 BY MR. BRAGG:

13 Q. Sir, will you say and spell your first and last name please?

14 A. Brian Call, B-r-i-a-n, C-a-l-l.

15 Q. And who do you work for, and what's your position?

16 A. Fort Worth Fire Department, I'm a fire lieutenant on Squad 2.

17 Q. Squad 2. So were you working on February 11th, 2021?

18 A. I was.

19 Q. And did you somehow become involved in a crash on I-35 toll  
20 lanes?

21 A. We did.

22 Q. So explain to us your involvement and how you became to --

23 A. Sure. We were on scene on another accident on I-30. There  
24 was a tractor trailer involved, and there was a fuel leak from one  
25 of the saddle tanks of diesel of the tractor trailer, and part of

1 what we do -- so my truck is a heavy rescue and hazmat, and so we  
2 get called out in a hazmat capacity to stop leaks or offload  
3 spilled fuel on a lot of accidents, and that's what we were doing  
4 prior to the big wreck. And so we had -- we were finishing up at  
5 that previous wreck and heard the radio traffic, heard the  
6 buildup, knew that it was going to be something that we were going  
7 to need to be at, because we're the -- one of just three, you  
8 know, rescue companies in the city, and we have the biggest  
9 selection of tools really of anybody.

10 And so we got available from that other wreck, and before  
11 we'd even been dispatched, we were heading that way because we  
12 knew -- you know, we'd heard the traffic. We knew that the  
13 conditions were bad. We were already starting to think about how  
14 we were going to come in to gain access to it. And then, about  
15 that time, we actually were dispatched to the call.

16 Q. So, when you were dispatched to the first crash, were you one  
17 of the first units, or did they -- did the other units get on  
18 scene and then realize they needed hazmat?

19 A. The crash before?

20 Q. Yeah, the first crash.

21 A. Yeah, we got called out for hazmat capacity for that one  
22 afterwards.

23 Q. Okay, so -- and who called you out?

24 A. Whoever was on -- already on scene. There were a couple of  
25 companies already there.



1 Q. Okay. And so had you been warned of any -- of the road  
2 conditions while you were en route to the first crash?

3 A. Not that I remember.

4 Q. Okay. And how would you describe the road conditions going  
5 to the first crash?

6 A. I didn't notice any ice conditions. They seemed fine, but we  
7 were just on city roads, very close to the first station, so we  
8 didn't have -- it was probably a quarter mile from our house, so  
9 -- and we had to navigate a ramp to get up on the freeway, but we  
10 were moving so slowly because we had to maneuver around a bunch of  
11 cars that were already backed up from that accident. I never  
12 noticed any --

13 Q. So how about when you got -- when you arrived at the scene of  
14 the first crash, and you got out of the truck. What did you --

15 A. I noticed it was icy there because we were actually up on an  
16 elevated portion of the freeway.

17 Q. Okay. And how long were you there, approximately?

18 A. Thirty minutes.

19 Q. About 30 minutes. And did you call for or did you see any  
20 road treatment trucks while you were at the first one?

21 A. Not that I recall.

22 Q. No, okay. And, if I understand you correctly, while you were  
23 at the first one, when you finished up, the second one had already  
24 started to unfold.

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. And so you just knew that you should head that way because it  
2 was major, and then while you were en route to that one, you were  
3 dispatched.

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. So you went from the first crash directly towards the second  
6 crash.

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. What route did you take?

9 A. I don't remember exactly.

10 Q. Did you stay on -- did you get off the interstate and then  
11 go, or did you just drive down the interstate?

12 A. If I recall correctly, we stayed on the interstate.

13 Q. Okay. And while you were en route to the second crash, did  
14 you notice anything unusual about the road conditions?

15 A. Not that I recall.

16 Q. Not that you recall. When you got to the second crash, did  
17 you notice anything about the road conditions?

18 A. Well, yes. I mean, we were warned because of the trucks that  
19 were already there and the issues that they were having, and then  
20 so we were taking it easy getting up on the -- and we actually --  
21 where we parked for the big crash was we went northbound on the  
22 southbound exit ramp from Northside Drive. And we weren't the  
23 only ones that were doing that. We got that cleared as our route  
24 in once we knew that the road was shut down. But I mean, as soon  
25 as we parked and got out, that's when we realized how slick it

1 was.

2 Q. So was the icy condition, was it isolated pretty much to the  
3 elevated portions of the road, or was all of the interstate you  
4 were driving on that icy?

5 A. I don't remember it being an issue until we got on scene and  
6 got out of the truck.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. But of course, I wasn't driving, but, you know, my driver  
9 didn't seem to be having issues sliding around or anything.

10 Q. And where were you seated?

11 A. I'm sorry?

12 Q. Where were you seated in the truck?

13 A. Oh, front passenger, front officer's seat.

14 MR. BRAGG: Dan, you have anything?

15 MR. WALSH: Thank you, Mr. Bragg.

16 BY MR. WALSH:

17 Q. So, as you approached the crash scene, the big crash scene  
18 south of 28th Street, you approached from the south --

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. -- is that correct?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Okay. And the vehicle was in the southbound general use  
23 lanes?

24 A. My vehicle?

25 Q. Yes.

1 A. Yes, we -- well, we entered the freeway northbound on the  
2 southbound exit ramp from Northside.

3 Q. Right. So you'd be in the southbound general use lanes.

4 A. Yes, um-hum.

5 Q. Okay. When you got out of your vehicle, did you experience  
6 icy conditions --

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. -- on the southbound general use lanes?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Okay. Did you hop over the barrier at any point to the  
11 southbound toll lanes?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. Okay. Did you experience icy conditions walking on the  
14 southbound toll lanes?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Okay. Was there a difference between the icy conditions on  
17 the southbound toll lanes and the southbound general use lanes?

18 A. Not that I remember.

19 Q. Okay. They both were icy?

20 A. (No audible response.)

21 Q. Okay. Did you experience any sliding of the vehicle while  
22 traveling from the Northside entrance ramp up to the crash scene?

23 A. Not that I recall.

24 Q. Not -- okay. Did you see any pretreatment or brine mixture  
25 on the roadway?

1 A. Not that I remember, no.

2 MR. WALSH: Okay. I don't have any further questions.

3 MR. ACCETTA: I have one question for clarification. The  
4 first accident, where was that located again, the one with the  
5 truck tractor?

6 MR. CALL: This was --

7 MR. ACCETTA: Trailer.

8 MR. CALL: -- on I-30 eastbound, just west of Henderson.

9 MR. ACCETTA: Okay.

10 MR. CALL: In that -- in the Henderson area. I don't  
11 remember if it was west or east of the actual street, but --

12 MR. ACCETTA: Okay, yeah. Just wanted to clarify that, that  
13 you were on I-30 before you --

14 MR. CALL: Yes.

15 MR. ACCETTA: -- went to I-35.

16 MR. CALL: Yes.

17 MR. ACCETTA: Okay. Thank you.

18 MR. BRAGG: All right. We'll go ahead and conclude the  
19 interview. Thank you very much for your participation.

20 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)  
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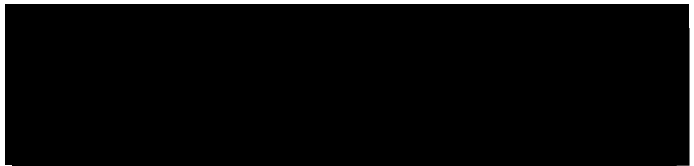
IN THE MATTER OF:           MULTI-VEHICLE CRASH  
                                  IN FORT WORTH, TEXAS,  
                                  ON FEBRUARY 11, 2021  
                                  Interview of Brian Call

ACCIDENT NO.:               HWY21FH005

PLACE:                       Fort Worth, Texas

DATE:                         March 30, 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.



Autumn Weslow  
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

\* \* \* \* \*

Investigation of: \*

\*

MULTI-VEHICLE CRASH \*

IN FORT WORTH, TEXAS, \*

Accident No.: HWY21FH005

ON FEBRUARY 11, 2021 \*

\*

\* \* \* \* \*

Interview of: COURTNEY PENNINGTON, Lieutenant  
Fort Worth Fire Department

Fort Worth Fire Department  
Fort Worth, Texas

Tuesday,  
March 30, 2021

APPEARANCES:

KENNETH BRAGG, Senior Highway Accident Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board

DAN WALSH, Senior Highway Accident Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board

ROBERT ACCETTA, Investigator in Charge  
National Transportation Safety Board

ERIC GREGSON, Highway Accident Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board



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I N T E R V I E W

(1:15 p.m.)

1  
2  
3 MR. BRAGG: Today is Tuesday, March 30th, 2021. It's about  
4 1:15 p.m., and we're at the Fort Worth Fire Department  
5 administration services building. My name is Kenny Bragg. I'm an  
6 investigator in the Office of Highway Safety. And seated to my  
7 left --

8 MR. WALSH: Dan Walsh, senior highway accident investigator.

9 MR. ACCETTA: Robert Accetta, investigator in charge.

10 MR. GREGSON: Eric Gregson, highway accident investigator.

## INTERVIEW OF COURTNEY PENNINGTON

11  
12 BY MR. BRAGG:

13 Q. All right, sir, will you say and spell your first and last  
14 name please?

15 A. It's Courtney, C-o-u-r-t-n-e-y, Pennington, P-e-n-n-i-n-g-t-  
16 o-n.

17 Q. And who are you employed with?

18 A. Fort Worth Fire Department.

19 Q. And what's your position there?

20 A. I'm the lieutenant at Engine 31.

21 Q. Okay. And were you working that night?

22 A. Yes, I was.

23 Q. And so describe with me -- just walk us through your  
24 involvement, how you came to become involved in this incident.

25 A. Well, earlier on that night, probably about, I don't know,

1 3-something in the morning, we had a call on the highway that was  
2 -- we just had an accident on the highway, and we came to block  
3 for Engine -- or for (indiscernible) 31 on the highway north of  
4 820, and I noticed the conditions on the roads were getting --  
5 were deteriorating early on that night. And I called Lorm (ph.)  
6 and told Lorm, we need to get this -- these roads sanded from 820  
7 all the way to Heritage Trace on 35, I-35. And then I saw the one  
8 sand truck, little pickup truck it looked like, from NTE show up,  
9 and they were sanding the roads. I saw them going by. It looked  
10 like they were sanding the roads. I told Lorm to make sure they  
11 sand the bridges and the highway both. And that was 3-something  
12 in the morning.

13 And then 6:15 in the morning's when that call came in for the  
14 accident, the big accident, and we heard the size up from Engine  
15 19 that there was possibly 100 cars involved. They said -- he  
16 said there were cars on fire, and we were like, oh no. So we  
17 started heading that way, and as we were hitting -- getting on the  
18 tollway, you know, we weren't driving very fast at all. We may  
19 have been going 30 to 35 miles per hour. I'm not sure exactly how  
20 fast. Very slow compared to normal. And we came over the -- we  
21 turned and then came over the hill, and about that time, we hit  
22 ice, and we slid for probably I'm guessing between 70 and 100  
23 yards before we stopped right before we hit the cars that were in  
24 the pileup. And I radioed to Lorm, I said Lorm -- I don't know if  
25 y'all have heard that tape or not, but there's -- they have it on

1 YouTube. I told Lorm that we hit a patch -- we hit ice and let  
2 everybody know coming southbound, all the engines, the trucks,  
3 that you will not be able to stop when you hit the ice, just kind  
4 of giving them a heads-up.

5 When we got off the truck -- I mean out of the truck, I  
6 almost fell down. I didn't fall down, but I was kind of like,  
7 whoa. Super icy. I did not see anything on the roads myself.  
8 There may have been something on the road; I never saw it. I  
9 looked around, I didn't see any -- it looked like a thick sheet of  
10 ice to me on that bridge area that we were at, and -- anyway, so I  
11 did not see anything. I saw a lot of fuel on the ground once we  
12 got to the actual cars, and they were probably about 20 yards  
13 ahead of us. We stopped -- we could not stop; we finally stopped,  
14 and we got out and just (indiscernible) the whole road was a sheet  
15 of ice, and as we got to the cars, we saw lots of fuel on the  
16 ground. That's what I saw, before we started doing some actual  
17 triage patients and cars.

18 Q. Okay. So the first accident, what time was that one?

19 A. I'm not sure.

20 Q. Approximately.

21 A. Between 3 and 4 o'clock in the morning.

22 Q. So there was some amount of time between the first one and  
23 the big one, correct?

24 A. Correct.

25 Q. And had everyone cleared the scene from the first one by the

1 time the second one occurred?

2 A. Correct.

3 Q. And you called for the roads to be sanded after arriving at  
4 the first one; is that correct?

5 A. Correct. And the first one's our territory, so that's the  
6 reason why I told -- I don't usually go down south of -- but since  
7 it's on the tollway, we have better access, our station does.  
8 That's why we exited and went there. But it's more in the 19's  
9 territory, but they were already on an accident, so we were really  
10 -- we were first on, on the actual tollway.

11 Q. And so, when you called for it to be sanded, did you actually  
12 call someone to sand it, or did you notify your fire  
13 communications?

14 A. I notified a fire communications.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. The first time, early in the morning, and the second time,  
17 once we hit that ice, I said, Lorm, we have to have somebody come  
18 out and sand these roads.

19 Q. So you made two. You made on the first call --

20 A. Um-hum.

21 Q. -- and then for that big accident, you made the call again?

22 A. Correct, and that was basically right we had stopped, and I  
23 was letting them know, hey, we got to get somebody to sand these  
24 roads, because we got people going to come up behind us and hit  
25 us. That's what we were worried about. We had no idea what -- it

1 really was 100-something cars. We thought it was just -- guy was  
2 exaggerating or -- you know, I don't -- you don't see 100 cars  
3 every day on an accident anyway.

4 Q. Yeah. So -- and you said at some point you did in fact see a  
5 sand truck, correct?

6 A. In the morning, early in the morning, yes, the first  
7 accident, yes, but not the second.

8 Q. Okay. And how far was the first accident from the second  
9 accident?

10 A. Probably 4 or 5 miles.

11 Q. Four of five miles?

12 A. Guessing. Three or four miles, something like that.

13 Q. And with the first -- that first sand truck, would he have  
14 put down product from where the first accident was all the way to  
15 the second one, or just --

16 A. I have no idea what he did. All I know is I saw him, one  
17 little truck, go by us sanding as they went. But I have no idea  
18 what happened south, and that was where the accident was.

19 Q. And you said little truck; how little?

20 A. It was just like a pickup truck that throws out sand.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. What I recall. I'm not sure exactly what it was. I didn't  
23 have a really good view. But I saw the sand truck going by --  
24 don't remember if it was on the tollway. I don't think it was on  
25 the tollway. I think it was on the -- I'm not sure where it was.

1 All I know is I saw a truck go by going north, but not south. I  
2 never saw anything --

3 Q. And were the side streets in the same condition as far as  
4 icy?

5 A. I don't recall. I don't recall it being as bad. I think the  
6 highway seemed to be worse to me. I don't know. The tollways, of  
7 course, were -- whatever reason, they seemed to be really bad, and  
8 I'm not sure why.

9 MR. BRAGG: Okay.

10 MR. WALSH: Thank you, Mr. Bragg.

11 BY MR. WALSH:

12 Q. So just to be clear, the sand truck that you did see, the NTE  
13 sand truck, you believe it was a northbound --

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. They were treating northbound --

16 A. Northbound, where I had asked them to treat it. That's where  
17 they came -- we were waiting there, and they finally showed up and  
18 were treating it.

19 Q. And you didn't see any NTE sand trucks southbound?

20 A. Never.

21 Q. Never?

22 A. Never.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. No, sir.

25 Q. And as you rolled up onto the crash scene south of 28th

1 Street, what lane were you in?

2 A. In the tollway.

3 Q. The southbound tollway?

4 A. Southbound tollway, correct.

5 Q. And where did you get on the southbound tollway?

6 A. I think we got on right there at Basswood. There's a -- you  
7 can enter the tollway right around Basswood.

8 Q. Okay. Did you experience any sliding in the southbound toll  
9 lanes from Basswood to the crash scene south of 28th Street?

10 A. Not that I recall. But we were driving really slow. No, I  
11 do not recall if we did or not.

12 Q. Okay. How slow were you going, approximately?

13 A. I'm guessing between 30 and 35 miles per hour. We were  
14 driving extra slow because we knew, obviously, it was some kind of  
15 bad situation on those bridges, and I didn't know exactly where it  
16 was for sure, where he was telling us it was, so --

17 Q. Were you in the left lane or right lane?

18 A. I don't recall. I think right lane at first. I'm not sure  
19 if he moved over. I know we had a car coming up next to us, and  
20 we tried to kind of push him -- because we knew there was going to  
21 be a bad accident, and this guy was like in a regular vehicle,  
22 whoever it was. We kind of pushed him, kind of like cut him off a  
23 little bit so they wouldn't get ahead of us and get wiped out  
24 themselves.

25 Q. Sure.



1 A. We were trying to protect them, but --

2 Q. As you approached the crash scene south of 28th Street, did  
3 you experience any sliding of the vehicle as you --

4 A. I don't recall. I do not recall that. I'm not sure.

5 Q. Okay. As you got out of the vehicle, did you slip or slide  
6 on the pavement?

7 A. I noticed it was -- there was -- I didn't see anything down.  
8 I looked. First thing I did is I looked on the ground to see,  
9 because obviously there was a big pileup from people sliding, I  
10 figured, and I looked down, and I didn't see anything. And I kind  
11 of sort of slid a little bit. I didn't fall down, but I kind of  
12 caught myself, because it was so slick, extra slick. It was very  
13 unusual to me, so --

14 Q. Did you see anyone else slipping and sliding?

15 A. I did see somebody on the -- not on the tollway, but right  
16 off the tollway on the highway, a cop fall down. He fell all the  
17 way to his back, so we ended up sanding that area, too, just so we  
18 could get the trucks up there, because it was so slick, we  
19 couldn't even get anybody up the road.

20 Q. Did you walk on the -- any other portion of I-35 besides the  
21 southbound toll lanes? Did you --

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. -- walk on the northbound toll lane?

24 A. No, I just stayed on the southbound toll lane, but I jumped  
25 over on the regular 35 and walked, and it was slick in there too.

1 Q. That was slick as well?

2 A. Yes. I recall that being slick.

3 Q. The same amount of slickness?

4 A. It did not feel as slick to me as the tollway. That's just  
5 my personal opinion. I remember thinking, oh my gosh, this is so  
6 slick, you could wipeout. Usually, you can kind of sort of catch  
7 yourself. This was so slick, you had to be very, very careful.  
8 Like it was extra slick for whatever reason.

9 Q. And you're -- what you're referring to is the southbound toll  
10 lane?

11 A. Correct, correct.

12 Q. Did -- you mentioned earlier that you did not see any  
13 pretreatment or any type of brine solution --

14 A. On the southbound toll lane?

15 Q. -- on the southbound toll lane.

16 A. No, sir. I didn't see anything. I looked. Matter of fact,  
17 that's one of the first things I looked and was thinking, where's  
18 the sand at, you know? I just figured it would be that way, just  
19 like the northbound. They wouldn't sand the northbound lanes -- I  
20 supposed they did the tollway, too. I'm not sure. But I know  
21 they did the main road trying to get the -- you know, because we  
22 had just -- or (indiscernible) had gotten hit by a truck, a car --  
23 I think it was a car or truck or car, you know. I think I'd  
24 already asked for sand by then, because I knew it was bad out  
25 there.

1 MR. WALSH: I have no further questions.

2 MR. BRAGG: I do have a question.

3 BY MR. BRAGG:

4 Q. What type of vehicle were you riding in?

5 A. An engine.

6 Q. An engine?

7 A. Um-hum.

8 Q. And that's two axle? How many --

9 A. Two.

10 Q. How many -- how much weight?

11 A. I'm not sure, I'm not sure. It holds 750 gallons of water,  
12 so it's probably -- I have no idea, 30-, 40,000 pounds probably.

13 Q. And you were not the driver, correct?

14 A. No, correct. I was the officer.

15 Q. Where were you seated?

16 A. The front --

17 Q. Front right?

18 A. Front right, in the officer.

19 MR. BRAGG: All right. I have nothing further. The time is  
20 1:26. We'll conclude the interview. Thank you for your  
21 participation today.

22 MR. PENNINGTON: Yes, sir.

23 (Whereupon, at 1:26 p.m., the interview was concluded.)

24

25

CERTIFICATE

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NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

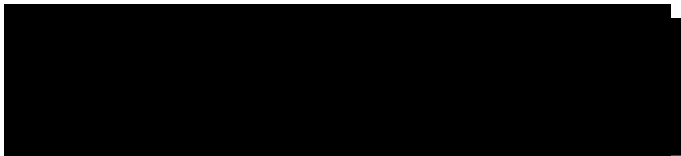
IN THE MATTER OF:           MULTI-VEHICLE CRASH  
                                  IN FORT WORTH, TEXAS,  
                                  ON FEBRUARY 11, 2021  
                                  Interview of Courtney Pennington

ACCIDENT NO.:               HWY21FH005

PLACE:                       Fort Worth, Texas

DATE:                        March 30, 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.



Autumn Weslow  
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

\* \* \* \* \*

Investigation of: \*

\*

MULTI-VEHICLE CRASH \*

IN FORT WORTH, TEXAS, \*

Accident No.: HWY21FH005

ON FEBRUARY 11, 2021 \*

\*

\* \* \* \* \*

Interview of: CALVIN TIPTON, Captain

Fort Worth Fire Department

Fort Worth Fire Department

Fort Worth, Texas

Tuesday,

March 30, 2021

APPEARANCES:

KENNETH BRAGG, Senior Highway Accident Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board

DAN WALSH, Senior Highway Accident Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board

ROBERT ACCETTA, Investigator in Charge  
National Transportation Safety Board

ERIC GREGSON, Highway Accident Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board

I N D E X

ITEM

PAGE

Interview of Calvin Tipton:

By Mr. Bragg

4

By Mr. Walsh

7

I N T E R V I E W

(1:51 p.m.)

1  
2  
3 MR. BRAGG: Today is Tuesday, March 30th, 2021. The time is  
4 1:51 p.m. We're at Fort Worth Fire Department administration  
5 services building in Fort Worth, Texas. My name is Kenny Bragg.  
6 I'm an investigator with the National Transportation Board, Office  
7 of Highway Safety.

8 MR. WALSH: Dan Walsh, senior highway accident investigator.

9 MR. ACCETTA: Robert Accetta, investigator in charge.

10 MR. GREGSON: Eric Gregson, highway accident investigator.

## INTERVIEW OF CALVIN TIPTON

11  
12 BY MR. BRAGG:

13 Q. Sir, will you please say and spell your first and last name  
14 please?

15 A. Calvin Tipton, C-a-l-v-i-n, T-i-p-t-o-n.

16 Q. And, sir, where do you work, and what's your position there?

17 A. Captain at Station 19.

18 Q. Okay. And were you working on February 11th, 2021?

19 A. Yes, sir.

20 Q. And, at some point, were you involved in a crash which took  
21 place on I -- on the toll lanes of I-35?

22 A. Yes, sir.

23 Q. So explain to me how you became involved in this incident.

24 A. We were dispatched to a MVA accident on the northbound lane  
25 at Northside Drive, and when we arrived in the area, we noticed it



- 1 wasn't northbound but southbound in the expressway.
- 2 Q. Okay. Was that the first crash of the day?
- 3 A. That's the first one we made.
- 4 Q. Okay. And about what time was that?
- 5 A. 6:30, 6:20.
- 6 Q. Okay. And for clarification, MVA stands for --
- 7 A. Motor vehicle accident.
- 8 Q. Okay. And where were you at when you were dispatched?
- 9 A. We were at the station.
- 10 Q. And how did you get there?
- 11 A. Engine 19.
- 12 Q. Engine 19. Were you driver?
- 13 A. No.
- 14 Q. And where were you seated?
- 15 A. In the officer seat, right side.
- 16 Q. Front right side. And engine is a two-axle truck?
- 17 A. What's that?
- 18 Q. That -- you said you were in an engine?
- 19 A. Engine.
- 20 Q. Two-axle truck?
- 21 A. Yes.
- 22 Q. Okay. And, when you responded there, lights and sirens?
- 23 A. Yes.
- 24 Q. So what were the road conditions like before you got on the
- 25 interstate?

1 A. They weren't terrible. There were some slick spots, but they  
2 weren't terrible.

3 Q. Did you experience the truck sliding at all at that point?

4 A. A little bit, not a lot.

5 Q. Okay. And how far is the trip from the station to the --  
6 where the crash happened?

7 A. Oh, probably about 2 miles, 3 miles.

8 Q. About two -- so how long did it take you to get there,  
9 approximately?

10 A. Probably about 6, 7, maybe 8 minutes.

11 Q. And how did you access or where did you access the toll road  
12 at?

13 A. We went down Sylvania and we hit 121 and we got 121 to 35.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. North.

16 Q. And what were your observations upon getting on that?

17 A. Well, since we were dispatched to the north -- MVA on the  
18 northbound lane, we noticed that there was just two 18-wheelers  
19 that were stuck on the ice, and the cars behind them were, you  
20 know, stuck too. But we did notice the accident, there was an  
21 18-wheeler and I believe three, maybe four small vehicles in the  
22 southbound express lane. We also noticed that several of the  
23 occupants of them vehicles were standing or setting on the divider  
24 between the northbound express lane and the northbound freeway.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. So that's where we stopped.

2 Q. And did you see any the collisions happened?

3 A. All of them.

4 Q. All of them, okay. And so what was the roadway like when you  
5 began to walk on it?

6 A. Well, we got out to get the people into our truck, and it was  
7 a sheet of ice.

8 Q. All right. Did you -- could you determine if the roads had  
9 been treated or not?

10 A. I can't -- I couldn't, but I just know there was -- it was a  
11 sheet of ice.

12 Q. It was sheet of ice?

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. And, at some point, did you see the roads being treated, or  
15 just the crash just kept unfolding?

16 A. It just kept, kept happening.

17 Q. How long did that go on?

18 A. Seemed like forever.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. I can't, I can't tell you how long it was. It just, it  
21 seemed like it took forever, hours. And I know it was probably  
22 10, 15 minutes maybe.

23 MR. BRAGG: Dan, you have anything?

24 MR. WALSH: Thank you, Mr. Bragg.

25 BY MR. WALSH:

1 Q. So just following up on Mr. Bragg's question, did you see any  
2 NTE trucks sanding that --

3 A. Not that I can remember.

4 Q. Okay. And as you rolled up to the crash scene, you were in  
5 the northbound toll lanes?

6 A. No, northbound freeway.

7 Q. Northbound general use lanes?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Okay. And is that where you stopped your vehicle --

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. -- in the northbound general use --

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. -- lanes? Okay. And so did you jump the barrier into the  
14 northbound toll lanes?

15 A. No, we just took the people -- we got them over into the  
16 freeway lane and into our truck.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. They were already there, so --

19 Q. Okay. When you got out of your vehicle, you were on the --  
20 you were in the northbound toll lane?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Did you experience any slipping and sliding personally?

23 A. Oh, yeah.

24 Q. Okay. Did you see any other individuals slipping and  
25 sliding?

1 A. Oh, everybody.

2 Q. Okay. On the general -- on the northbound general use lanes?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Did you see individuals slipping on the northbound toll lanes  
5 and southbound toll lanes?

6 A. Yes.

7 MR. WALSH: Okay. I have no further questions.

8 MR. ACCETTA: I don't have any questions.

9 MR. BRAGG: Captain, thank you for your participation.

10 MR. TIPTON: Thank you, gentlemen.

11 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

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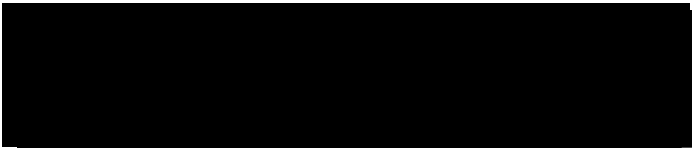
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Transcriber