



MOTOR CARRIER FACTORS ATTACHEMENT

Universe Express Interview

Randolph, NH

HWY19MH010

(19 pages)

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

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TRUCK/MOTORCYCLE COLLISION *

RANDOLPH, NEW HAMPSHIRE * Accident No.: HWY19MH010

JUNE 21, 2019 *

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Interview of: MURAT SELIM
Owner, Universe Express

Via Telephone

Friday,
June 28, 2019

APPEARANCES:

MICHAEL FOX, Highway Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

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I N T E R V I E W

1
2 MR. FOX: This is Michael Fox, investigator for the National
3 Transportation Safety Board out of the Washington, D.C. office.
4 And on the phone is Murat Selim, who is the president of Universe
5 Express, and he is going to be conducting an interview with us
6 concerning the accident driver.

7 So, for the record, Mr. -- am I mispronouncing it, Miselim?

8 MR. SELIM: Yes.

9 MR. FOX: Is it spelled Miselim?

10 MR. SELIM: Selim.

11 MR. FOX: Selim.

12 MR. SELIM: That's my last name.

13 MR. FOX: Okay, sir. Can you please state your name and
14 spell your last name for the record?

15 MR. SELIM: My first name is Murat, and last name is Selim,
16 S-e-l-i-m.

17 MR. FOX: And what is your title?

18 MR. SELIM: I'm the owner of the Universe Express.

19 MR. FOX: Universe Express. And that is a trucking company?

20 MR. SELIM: Yes.

INTERVIEW OF MORAT SELIM

22 BY MR. FOX:

23 Q. Okay. And as we spoke about earlier, before we went on the
24 record, I just wanted to ask you a few questions concerning a
25 driver who was involved in a fatal crash in New Hampshire,

1 Volodymyr Zhukovskyy. And I understand he was employed by your
2 company?

3 A. Yes, he used to be.

4 Q. He used to be. And do you know what the dates of his
5 employment were?

6 A. You know, I cannot exactly date you but I can give
7 approximate time. I don't remember exactly dates it was.

8 Q. Well, let me -- okay, go ahead.

9 A. But I know since he got his CDL, it was in August.

10 Q. Of what year?

11 A. 2018, last year.

12 Q. Okay, he got his CDL. Now according to his paperwork that we
13 have from him, he started with you in 2016. Does that sound about
14 right?

15 A. Yeah, sometime in 2016, yes. But he was not as a -- he
16 wasn't driving. So he was not a driver. At that time, he didn't
17 have a CDL license.

18 Q. And what did he do for the company?

19 A. His job title was -- because we do car transportation. So
20 his job was doing like paperwork, like doing inspection for the
21 cars, like walk around the car, mark all the damages if there is
22 any damage on pickup and delivery.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. Making -- calling customers, making, you know, time
25 arrangement for pickup and delivery.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. That was his title.

3 Q. And then at some point he decided to get a CDL?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. And were you part of that process?

6 A. Yes. He -- like we went to do a road test together.

7 Q. Okay. Where did you do the road test?

8 A. State of Missouri.

9 Q. In Missouri?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Why did you do it in Missouri?

12 A. Because over there you could take it yourself, like you could
13 make appointment and go take a road test, and there's a company
14 who will teach you like a pre-trip inspection for the ride to get
15 -- pass the test. Like they're giving like a -- people, how can I
16 say, trainings.

17 Q. Training?

18 A. And then they provide truck and trailer, too.

19 Q. Oh, okay.

20 A. So they provide truck and trailer, and then they have, you
21 know, lot where you can actually learn, too. So we went up there.
22 They have instructor there who can actually, you know, tell you
23 how -- you know, teach you the pre-trip inspection, teach you the
24 parkings. So we -- and they provide a truck and trailer, too.
25 And then after, you know, you learn that, and then you make an

1 appointment with the State of Missouri, and you go by the State of
2 Missouri DMV and everything. So, and then we pass the test and we
3 got our CDLs. It was -- the test was taken by, I don't know if
4 it's police officer or inspector, you know, from the DMV, state
5 inspector.

6 Q. Okay. Where is Universe Express located?

7 A. Louisville, Kentucky.

8 Q. Okay. And that just seems like a far away place to go to, to
9 do a CDL, to go all the way out to Missouri, but --

10 A. You know, I -- to be honest, I searched everywhere. Just in
11 Kentucky there were no, like, any -- a company that I could find
12 that provide, you know, the truck and trailer and teach you do it.
13 And then a friend of mine told me that there is in Missouri people
14 who actually provides truck and trailer to learn.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. So that's why I went there. And from Louisville, it's like
17 3-hour drive, I think. Sikeston, Missouri.

18 Q. Okay. So that's pretty doable.

19 A. So it wasn't that -- yes, that's why. It was not much drive.
20 So it's like 2- or 3-hour drive from Louisville.

21 Q. Okay. All right. Well, that's reasonable.

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. And you did this with Volodymyr?

24 A. Yes. So how did we do it. Volodymyr took his permit, like
25 permit test in State of Massachusetts. How did he do it, I don't

1 know, but there's only way to get the permit is pass the
2 questions.

3 Q. Okay. So after you got your permit in Missouri, he went to
4 Massachusetts --

5 A. No, no. No, no. We got permit -- I got my permit in
6 Kentucky.

7 Q. Oh, you got your --

8 A. Because for permit, for permit you don't have to take classes
9 or anything. You just learn, you know, yourself. I went to DMV
10 and I got a book. They give you like a question book, and then
11 you study, and then you go DMV and take the test.

12 Q. Oh, I see. So you and he did the same thing? You got a
13 permit in Kentucky?

14 A. Yes, I got a permit in Kentucky because it's -- and then he
15 got his permit in State of Massachusetts.

16 Q. Oh, and he, Volodymyr, got it in Massachusetts?

17 A. Yes. So he passed his test in Massachusetts for the permit.
18 I did my studying in Kentucky and I passed it in Kentucky. And
19 then we were going to pass in our states, but then -- I don't know
20 about him -- when I find out that, you know, there's guys who
21 provide truck and trailer and training in Missouri, I called them
22 and then they said, you know, we have this date you can come and
23 learn. That's why -- and then I told Volodymyr, I said,
24 Volodymyr, there's a guy, you know, who provides truck and
25 trailer, let's just, you know, go there. And then he said let's

1 go. So we went there.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. You know, because I thought that was reasonable to go.

4 Q. Okay. Now after you went out to Missouri, you were able to
5 get your CDL?

6 A. Yes. We took trainings. After training, we went, you know,
7 to the road test, and we passed it. And then we came to our
8 state, because Missouri DMV, they said it's like 2, 3 days, like
9 48 hours to do like online, you know, DMV system. I don't know
10 how that works. They told us, basically, after 48 hours, you have
11 to go to the DMV of your state and get your license.

12 Q. How long was the training program in Missouri?

13 A. It was 5 hours a day and we took for 2 days.

14 Q. So a 2-day training course?

15 A. Basically they teach you how to do like a pre-trip inspection
16 most of all. But for the -- for like the driving, you learn it.
17 You know, I learned my driving by myself, like how by myself, with
18 my brother-in-law. Because when you have your permit, you can
19 drive with someone who already has a CDL license.

20 Q. Yes.

21 A. So that's what I did before I go there.

22 Q. Gotcha. Okay.

23 A. So they don't teach you how to drive there, they just, you
24 know, they just -- like they provide truck and trailer and they
25 teach you like a basic, you know, saying what's the -- how to do

1 pre-trip inspection. And then like, they teach you how to park
2 there, too, but you have to know, too. You know what I mean?

3 Q. Yes.

4 A. Because for 2 days you won't learn how to drive or do
5 anything. You have to learn ahead of time.

6 Q. So as far as you can recall, this took place in August of
7 2018?

8 A. You know, let me check my license exactly date when did I got
9 it, so I'm sure he should have it same time, too. Issued [REDACTED] 18.

10 Q. Okay. So that was August.

11 A. [REDACTED] '18, yeah, we got our licenses, yes.

12 Q. Okay. And then after you two both came back to your home
13 state and then you got your full CDL from the -- you know, you
14 from Kentucky, and then Volodymyr from Massachusetts, did he come
15 back to work for you in Kentucky, to work at Universe Express?

16 A. Yes, he did. Yes.

17 Q. And what was his job then?

18 A. As a truck -- then he did truck driving. Then he drove a
19 truck.

20 Q. What kind of equipment did he operate?

21 A. Eighteen-wheeler.

22 Q. Eighteen-wheeler? Okay. So what was -- what kind of power
23 unit was it? Do you remember?

24 A. Oh, it's a 2016 -- I mean, 2015 Freightliner Cascadia.

25 Q. And what kind of trailer was it?

1 A. It's a 2016 Cottrell.

2 Q. And what were you hauling?

3 A. Cars. We haul cars.

4 Q. So it was a car hauler?

5 A. Yes, it's a car hauler. Yes.

6 Q. And it was not -- was it with canvas sides or was it open
7 frame?

8 A. Canvas sides? You mean enclosed?

9 Q. Yeah.

10 A. No, no, this was open trailer.

11 Q. Open trailer. Okay. And where did you -- where would he
12 deliver to?

13 A. Usually, we go from Northeast, like Massachusetts,
14 Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Upstate New York, to
15 Texas and back.

16 Q. Now, you say we. Did you guys do sleeper berth?

17 A. Oh, when I -- no, when I say we, like Universe Express. So,
18 you know, our trucks goes usually in that direction. But he was
19 going Northeast to Texas, and from Texas to Northeast.

20 Q. I see.

21 A. And then, you know, anything between, you know, sometimes we
22 would pick up cars in Ohio, Tennessee, Arkansas.

23 Q. Okay. Now did he ride by himself?

24 A. No, he did with me, together. We did as a team drive.

25 Q. Team drivers. Okay.

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. And during that time did you see any unusual behavior?

3 A. In the beginning, no. But sometime in November/December, I
4 kind of felt like he's like -- the way he talks is different. You
5 know, it's like -- and then he is like kind of shaky and stuff.
6 And I got scared, you know? Like I said what's going on, are you
7 sick? He goes, no, no, no, I'm normal. And then it didn't happen
8 once, it happened -- you know, like to be honest, I kind of -- and
9 like, he went, like, a week like this.

10 And I talked to my wife, I said, you know, this is what
11 happened and I just don't know what it is, is he got sick or
12 anything. And my wife is a medical assistant. She said he must
13 be doing something. And I asked him. He goes no, no, Murat, no.
14 But then I told my wife it continues like this and my wife said,
15 Murat, just let him leave. Because we're scared, you know?

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. Because I have two kids and I, you know, I don't want to go
18 to sleep while he drives and never wake up.

19 Q. Right.

20 A. So then I told him, Volodymyr, I'm sorry, you know, the way
21 you acting up, you saying it's normal but it seems not normal from
22 the side. And I said, you know, I don't know what to tell you but
23 please look for job, it's done. You know, I don't want to work
24 with you anymore but we can be friends. And this is what
25 happened. And I let him go.

1 Q. Okay. I received from the third-party service, Carrier
2 Concepts, Incorporated -- is that a vendor that you use to do your
3 driver file?

4 A. Yes, clinic Carrier Concept?

5 Q. Yes, Carrier Concepts.

6 A. Yes. Yes. Every time when I hire a driver, all my driver
7 goes through them. They go there, do the drug test. They do --
8 they take some tests that they require as a truck driver. You
9 know, they have, like, the videos that drivers watch. It's like,
10 I think, like hour, hour and a half. And then they take like pre-
11 employment test, I think, like questionnaire.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. I think that's what it is. But there's questions that every
14 driver has to answer before they get a job.

15 Q. All right. Now, this company, did they do any kind of
16 background check on the driver?

17 A. Yes, they check, I think they check his -- what is it? You
18 get it from DMV. Driver record, I think?

19 Q. Yes.

20 A. So they do check it.

21 Q. Now, I'm looking at his medical card. Is that something that
22 you told him to get?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Is that a medical office that you use regularly?

25 A. I just don't know -- to be honest, I don't remember where he

1 did his medical. Did he do it in Kentucky?

2 A. He did it in Kentucky. Hold on a second. I'm pulling it up
3 on my computer.

4 A. Is it on Bardstown Road?

5 Q. It says, yeah, Steven Carter.

6 A. Yes. That's where I do it. And then when we went to this
7 Carrier Concept, I said let's do it here, so I took him to there.
8 Yes, that's the place where I did it myself, yes.

9 Q. Bardstown Road in Louisville.

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Okay. It does show a valid national registry number. All
12 right. Now did he ever have a drug test while he was in your
13 employ?

14 A. When he got his license, yes. But when he was just doing
15 like the paperwork, no.

16 Q. Yeah, I'm looking, it shows --

17 A. Because when he was paperwork, he wasn't driving. So to be
18 honest, I didn't know that you had to do drug test then. But then
19 I know it when you get a CDL, you have to do drug test before you
20 start working. So we did drug test after he got CDL.

21 Q. Correct. And that is correct. He doesn't need it if it's
22 non-regulated. But once he got his CDL and operated CDL
23 equipment, it is required. So, you know, while I'm looking at his
24 paperwork here, it seems like the agency did a good job for you.
25 I mean, they have everything in here that looks to be appropriate.

1 A. You know, when I started this job, I started in December of
2 2013. But, you know, I open December 2013, but I start operating,
3 you know, January of '14. And I started, you know, started doing
4 then. I didn't know about this company. I think in May of 2014,
5 I find out about this company and I started right away working
6 with them because, you know, like you learn by experience. So I
7 started, 2, 3 months later the told me, hey, you know there's a
8 company like this, it helps with the DOT, you know, drivers' files
9 and everything so you don't have no problem in the future. And I
10 said, you know, let's do it, because I want to do whatever is
11 right, you know?

12 Q. Um-hum. So --

13 A. And so far, they've been good.

14 Q. So going back to when you parted ways with Volodymyr, what --
15 you said that you spoke to your wife and you felt uncomfortable
16 with his behavior?

17 A. Yes. And my wife, she's a medical assistant, so she probably
18 see in her job stuff like that. And she told me, Murat, maybe he
19 is using something. And I said I don't know because I don't, so I
20 have no idea how people act like that. And like, he went like a
21 week like this, and I got scared being in the same truck with him,
22 and I said, Volodymyr, I'm sorry, you know, I have to let you go.
23 And that's how we let him go.

24 Q. Okay. When you hired him, did you find out anything about
25 his previous employment?

1 A. To be honest, I didn't. We had a mutual friend. Like some
2 friend of mine, you know, he knows this job, like he's been doing,
3 like, you know, like, this paperwork before. And like I told you,
4 I was new to this business, and I hired him because he knew some
5 paperwork and everything.

6 Q. All right.

7 A. That's how we started. That's how we started.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. So I did not even check anything, he just -- because, you
10 know, he knew stuff. And then when he -- you know, when he was
11 doing all paperwork, everything was fine, everything was good.

12 Q. Right.

13 A. And there was no problem. But just recently, like one week,
14 like last year, December, that's when everything -- like he start
15 acting different, you know. But before then, he was good.
16 Everything was good.

17 Q. I see. Well, you've been very helpful and I appreciate your
18 time. Is there anything that you can add that may be helpful in
19 our investigation learning more about the accident driver?

20 A. I don't know what else. You know, and then like I said,
21 since December, when he quit, I don't really -- he called me
22 couple times. Like, we talk on the phone.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. One second. One second. I'm trying to -- give me one
25 second, please. One second.

1 (Pause.)

2 I am sorry. Yes, say it again?

3 Q. I was saying, you know, did you have any contact with him
4 since he left? Did you ever get any inquiries of his employment
5 with other companies?

6 A. No. When he quit, we did talk with him. Like he would be on
7 the road, he would call me, and then we talk. He goes, oh, you
8 know, I am in this state, I am driving, I'm working, I'm happy,
9 everything is good. And I said, you know, good for you; is
10 everything all right? He goes, yes, everything fine. So it's
11 like we were just talking as like, you know, drivers on the road,
12 you know, whatever state he is, like that. But nothing, you know,
13 serious about, you know, his, like, being -- acting different, no.
14 And I didn't know how he is because I have not seen him, you know,
15 only just on the phone.

16 Q. Right. Okay. All right. Well, you've been very helpful,
17 sir. I appreciate your time. And you have my contact information
18 if you want to reach out and talk to me or ask me any questions in
19 the future. But I do appreciate all of your time and effort. And
20 so what I'm going to do -- you can just hang on the phone for a
21 minute -- I'm going to go ahead and end this interview.

22 MR. FOX: So this is concluding the interview. The time now
23 is 6:13 p.m. on 6/28/19.

24 (Whereupon, at 6:13 p.m., the interview was concluded.)

25

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: TRUCK/MOTORCYCLE ACCIDENT
RANDOLPH, NEW HAMPSHIRE
JUNE 21, 2019
Interview of Murat Selim

ACCIDENT NO.: HWY19MH010

PLACE: Via Telephone

DATE: June 28, 2019

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.


Lisa Fuerstenberg
Transcriber