



## **SURVIVAL FACTORS ATTACHMENT**

### **First Responder Interviews**

**Bryce Canyon City, UT**

**HWY19MH012**

(91 pages)

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

\* \* \* \* \*

Investigation of: \*

\*

TOUR BUS CRASH \*

BRYCE CANYON CITY, UTAH \* Accident No.: HWY19MH012

SEPTEMBER 20, 2019 \*

\*

\* \* \* \* \*

Interview of: BEN COX, Sergeant  
Utah Highway Patrol

Via Telephone

Thursday,  
September 26, 2019

## APPEARANCES:

RONALD KAMINSKI, Senior Survival Factors Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>I N D E X</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Interview of Ben Cox:		
By Mr. Kaminski		4

I N T E R V I E W

1 MR. KAMINSKI: Ron Kaminski, Safety Board.

2 MR. COX: Good morning. This is Ben Cox, just calling you.

3 MR. KAMINSKI: Hey, good morning, Sergeant.

4 MR. COX: How are you doing?

5 MR. KAMINSKI: I'm doing okay.

6 MR. COX: Good for you.

7 MR. KAMINSKI: So, I probably -- I've already put on 1,500  
8 miles, so I think I'll, unless you want to meet, we could probably  
9 just do this by phone.

10 MR. COX: Yeah. Let's do it by phone. There's no reason, I  
11 guess, I can think of, at least.

## INTERVIEW OF BEN COX

12 BY MR. KAMINSKI:

13 Q. So, I guess, why don't we just start off -- I've got a whole  
14 bunch of questions to ask you, but why would you start off with --

15 A. Okay.

16 Q. -- when you got the call, when you and what all you did when  
17 you got there and what you saw and that?

18 A. Well, I'll tell you what, this is what might be easiest for  
19 me to do, is I've been working on my narrative, which includes a  
20 lot of that.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. It's still in the rough draft form, so I'm just wondering if  
23 maybe I read that to you?

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. I'm thinking that that's going to at least hit as many  
3 points, because that's really watching this body camera of mine  
4 and making sure that I'm getting down a lot of the details, so.

5 Q. Sure.

6 A. So, and stop me in the middle of it, ask questions if I -- in  
7 fact, I might even type a little bit more since I, like I said,  
8 this is still in rough draft form for me, so.

9 Q. Okay. And you don't mind if I record?

10 A. I don't mind. It'll be basically the police report, so.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. Do you want me to just get right into it?

13 Q. Sure. Sure.

14 A. Okay. All right. So, I'm kind of -- and just basically my  
15 first was my dispatcher response. So, on September 20th, 2019 at  
16 1133 hours, I was contacted by Richfield Communications, the  
17 police radio and advised of a bus rollover on SR-12 near Milepost  
18 10.

19 I responded immediately from the Panguitch Elementary in  
20 Panguitch, Utah. On my way out, I drove past and advised Chris  
21 Hatch, Jimmy Oldham, Mike Sorrels (ph.) and Clint Pollock about  
22 the crash. Those are all Garfield County Sheriff's employees.  
23 One of them's just a civilian employee; the other are sworn.

24 While responding to the Ridgefield Communications and  
25 Garfield Dispatch, they began to coordinate and send additional

1 responders. Air ambulances, ground ambulances and local fire  
2 departments were dispatched from Garfield County and surrounding  
3 counties.

4 It was a dry, calm day in the mid-60s, roads were dry and had  
5 and had light traffic. I heard Ambulance 504 arrive on scene near  
6 1142 hours.

7 Now here's my arrival, scene and observation. So, I arrived  
8 on scene about 1149 hours. As I pulled up to the scene, I could  
9 see tire marks that ran off the road to the right and then back  
10 left into the westbound lane. I could see the beginning of marks  
11 where the bus began to roll. I could see a mid-sized bus on its  
12 wheels with a lot of people just outside the bus.

13 I parked in the westbound lane, west of the rollover  
14 evidence. I threw cones out and asked a person standing in the  
15 rest area entrance to stop vehicles from entering the rest area.  
16 I also placed cones out on some of the tire marks.

17 At 1151 hours, Ranger Garrett Miller from Bryce Canyon  
18 National Park brought me the bus driver. I asked if he was okay,  
19 and I had him sit in the front seat of my vehicle. He stayed in  
20 the front seat of my vehicle until he was taken to Garfield County  
21 Sheriff's Office by Trooper Joe Neighbor.

22 Once -- one volunteer approached and said he would be  
23 responsible for landing -- the landing zone. I then approached  
24 the other, another volunteer. He asked about closing the road. I  
25 told him to stop all traffic and not let any cars through.

1           At 1153 hours, Deputy Clint Pierson arrived with the mass  
2 casualty incident trailer. I directed him slightly west of the  
3 bus so the back of the trailer could be accessible to those in  
4 need.

5           I started to observe the scene. I could see a male, later  
6 identified as Zhongliang Qui laying under -- sorry, laying near  
7 the beginning of where the guardrail once was. He was obvious  
8 fatal and was exposed. I grabbed a white sheet from the back of  
9 an ambulance and covered the body of Mr. Zhongliang Qui. I  
10 continue to move around the scene.

11           At this time, there were several first responders checking  
12 out the victims. I was concerned that someone may be under the  
13 bus. I checked under the under the bus from the front. I could  
14 see all the way through and could not see anyone under the bus. I  
15 returned to the MCI trailer near 1155 hours and worked with Clint  
16 Pollock, Clint Pierson and others to lay out the green, yellow and  
17 red tarps so that we could categorize and triage all the victims.

18 Q.   And are the other, the other people you're mentioning are  
19 deputies or they're EMTs from the fire department or both?

20 A.   Most of them that I mentioned by name are deputies.

21 Q.   Okay.

22 A.   In fact, the others when I say that I talked to a volunteer,  
23 those are going to be first responders that I don't know their  
24 names.

25 Q.   Okay.



1 A. I don't -- I don't know all of them, so.

2 Q. Okay, sure. Sure. So, okay, I'm sorry. Continue.

3 A. That's okay. No, no, stop me where you need to -- which,  
4 that would be good for me to clarify because, again, this is going  
5 to be read by thousands, not just locals.

6 Q. Right.

7 A. So, okay.

8 Q. You looked under the bus.

9 A. Yep, yep. So, we're categorizing all of them. got to the MCI  
10 trailer, said -- and then that assignment I gave to both of them.  
11 So, I gave to Clint Pollock and Clint Pierson, both deputies. And  
12 then I left.

13 Multiple ambulances were arriving. I had one of the first  
14 responders turning the ambulances around so that they are facing  
15 west, so they could load and leave quickly.

16 Q. Sure.

17 A. Near 1158 hours, I met with Mr. Robert Jefferson, a witness  
18 to the crash. Just for your record, that's one of the statements  
19 I have. He stated that he saw it directly in front of him. I  
20 walked with Mr. Jefferson and looked at the tire mark evidence to  
21 see if I was seeing 00 what I was seeing matched what he saw.

22 I told him that I would get him a witness statement and not  
23 to leave the area until I got a statement from him. Near 1201  
24 hours, I begin to mark some of the tire mark evidence. I was  
25 concerned that the tire marks could possibly get damaged.

1 I followed the march from where the vehicle ran off the road  
2 to the right and worked my way down, painting what I could see and  
3 identify it as evidence. I also marked the head and feet rest  
4 location of the deceased male identified earlier. After marking  
5 the evidence, I tried to find where the other deceased persons  
6 were at.

7 I found them near the bus door under a black tarp. I also  
8 saw a firefighter enter the bus to double check for any patients  
9 still inside. It had already been cleared earlier by others. I  
10 returned, helping triage patients.

11 I moved several people over to the designated green area. I  
12 marked several of them with a green tag. I spoke with a lady who  
13 was helping one of the husbands of the deceased. I continued  
14 through the scene multiple times, seeing where I could help.

15 I came to where three deceased women were. I could see their  
16 loved ones morning, and let them take some time to mourn. The  
17 deceased were later identified as -- and I don't have that written  
18 into the report, but let me tell you what -- who they are so I can  
19 -- you probably already know but.

20 Q. Right.

21 A. Yeah. I just need to open the actual report. I'm going to  
22 enter those into this this narrative as well. I just realized  
23 this morning that I hadn't put their names in, the women. But I  
24 went to where the three women that were deceased. And that was a  
25 Ling Geng, Xiuyun Chen, and Zhang Caiyu. Obviously, I don't know

1 if I'm saying those correctly or not.

2 Q. Sure. Sure. Sounds good.

3 A. Okay. We'll carry on here. Near 1213 hours, I asked to have  
4 eastbound SR-12 closed to the junction of SR-12 and 89. It got  
5 closed near 1214 hours. I also asked for messages to go out  
6 surrounding hotels, an area advising that the road be closed.

7 Sheriff Danny Perkins was working to clear traffic east of  
8 the scene. I returned to the very beginning of the visible  
9 evidence and began to take scene photographs. On the way, I  
10 checked on the bus driver near 1116 hours.

11 I started my photographs from the west side and worked my way  
12 east. Near 1227 hours, I met with Garfield County attorney Barry  
13 Huntington. I explained to him what appeared to have happened. I  
14 talked with him about the evidence and some of the details of the  
15 crash.

16 And so that's my response. And it's not totally complete,  
17 but that really, outside of at that point, things started to calm  
18 down, most, if not all of the alive patients had left the scene  
19 and the rest just got into kind of the investigation side where  
20 the drone was flown by one of our investigators.

21 We also had him use the Topcon total station, and we waited  
22 for the medical examiners to arrive on scene where they did their  
23 investigation with those that had passed, and that took another  
24 probably six to seven hours before we opened that road back up.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. In fact, we opened the road -- we were done with all of that  
2 investigation near 1930 hours is when we opened the road fully.

3 Q. Okay. Now, the bodies that were by the bus, the three  
4 females, were they moved there, do you know? We do know that? Is  
5 that confirmed?

6 A. So, we know that one was moved from the guardrail. Another  
7 one was moved off of the bus and then collapsed there. So I don't  
8 know if you've received this, and I'm going to I can probably just  
9 email it to you real quick. But I've got a statement from one of  
10 the not witnesses to the crash, but someone who was on scene  
11 almost instantly, just a civilian, not a first responder. And  
12 she, in poignant language, describes what she experienced. She  
13 talks about --

14 Q. Is that the one with a medical background and she was able to  
15 pinpoint what color shirt somebody was wearing and this and that?

16 A. She doesn't have a medical background, so I don't think it's  
17 the same one.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. Let me, in fact, while we're talking, let's do this real  
20 quick. I'm just going to send it to you, because it is -- it's  
21 great. So, I'm going to send you two emails. One's going to be  
22 the actual document that she wrote up on a word document, and the  
23 other will be the email I'll just forward to you.

24 You're [REDACTED], right?

25 Q. Yes.

1 A. I have your card, so I'm just looking at it. All right.

2 Just send.

3 Q. So, we know -- because I know there was a woman, I've been  
4 hearing -- even Chief Harris, I talked to him yesterday -- that  
5 was very descriptive, had -- this woman wearing a certain color  
6 shirt and was, that was here. And just, do we have any other  
7 witness or people that -- bystanders that have come forward to  
8 give statements since Sunday?

9 A. No, these are the only two. So there was two. Let me find  
10 the email and forward that as well. So I just sent you the one.  
11 I'll forward this too.

12 Q. Because what I've been hearing is there were several  
13 bystanders with -- even an off duty, couple off-duty ER nurses  
14 that stopped and were helping. And the -- I'm just wondering if  
15 we got any names for those people?

16 A. So I have some names. There was one off-duty firefighter EMT  
17 from Washington.

18 Q. Where, in Washington state?

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. Right. I think I heard about him. Okay.

21 A. So it's a lady and --

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. But let me --

24 Q. Yes, it was a lady. Correct.

25 A. -- send this lady -- so right now you've got a [REDACTED]

1 [REDACTED] and then [REDACTED] And  
2 that's the email I just forwarded to you. So I forwarded the  
3 email and then I created my own -- put the document in, because I  
4 don't think the document was going to forward easily -- at least  
5 it didn't, to my supervisor.

6 But, like I said, she's the one that's very descriptive on  
7 what people were wearing. She describes that one lady was helped  
8 out of the bus and then died right there by the front or right by  
9 the door of the bus.

10 So there's at least two that I think we can closely -- we  
11 can't definitively answer, but I think we can definitely say were  
12 not initially in that resting location and were moved there. One  
13 was, I think, moved on her own power and then died right there.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. And I think another was over the guardrail toward the rear  
16 tires of the bus. And they were moved up over the guardrail next  
17 to the other two, so the three dead were right by each other, they  
18 could cover them easily.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. So, let me pull up to this.

21 Q. Yeah, I'm getting your emails now.

22 A. Okay. I'm going to pull up this other lady that was the off-  
23 duty firefighter. I think I had one more. Let's try and put them  
24 all in. I might not have -- I might have just put in the other  
25 witnesses that witnessed the crash. And they didn't --

1 Q. Well, you had the two, the Jefferson and then you had Aragaki  
2 (ph.), a woman, I believe it was -- no, Daniel Aragaki.

3 A. Yeah. Yeah, yep, yep. Those are two. And I don't know if  
4 you have time to read Daniel's. You know, there's -- after coming  
5 back on scene with you guys, realizing how many buses that match  
6 identically to this one --

7 Q. Yeah.

8 A. -- it could or could not be the exact same bus. You can take  
9 it for what it is. You know how these accidents --

10 Q. Sure.

11 A. So, but the Robert Jefferson, you know, was definitive. He  
12 saw this bus because he watched it roll.

13 Q. Right, right.

14 A. Now he did say that he watched it roll six to seven times.  
15 We know that didn't happen.

16 Q. Yeah.

17 A. So, unless he's counting each side, it still only rolled four  
18 times, if you count each side of the bus.

19 Q. Right.

20 A. The gentleman -- or, sorry, the lady -- I had Shalise -- oh,  
21 and so in that email, she references her partner. And I don't  
22 know if that's a romantic partner or if that's a work partner, but  
23 she mentions a D. Sixtus Johnson (ph.) in the statement that I  
24 emailed you.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. So, that's the other gentleman that's there. And I think he  
2 was probably more overwhelmed and emotional with this, that he  
3 didn't -- he's probably not going to write another -- write a  
4 separate statement and we'll just call hers his as well.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. So, but I do have, if you want to write it down, Sunshine  
7 Manning. Sunshine, common spelling and last name, M-A-N-N-I-N-G.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. And her phone number is [REDACTED]. And I don't have a  
10 whole address for her, but it's Redmond, Washington.

11 Q. And she was one of the ones in the to help out?

12 A. Yeah, she was. She -- I think she said that she was at a  
13 nearby campground, which there is one really, really close to that  
14 spot that's a formal campground and heard, either physically heard  
15 the crash or heard that there was something going on and she ran  
16 over. So she helped with the triage and, you know, with all  
17 patient care that she could. And she also speaks Mandarin  
18 Chinese, so she translated Mandarin Chinese with everybody she  
19 could.

20 Q. Oh, okay.

21 A. She did speak with our driver just a little bit, helping us  
22 try to figure out if there was a tour guide, if there was a  
23 passenger manifest and that sort of thing. So, she was  
24 phenomenal, yeah, really impressed with this lady. But so, she  
25 would probably be one you definitely want to try to talk to, I'm



1 sure.

2 Q. Sure. Yeah, it sounds like it.

3 A. If you could get anything from her, so.

4 Q. And also, I got about -- I have to cross-reference to -- I  
5 know you had a couple people that you did not interview, but I  
6 ended up talking with about 16 of them between -- primarily down  
7 at St. George.

8 A. Okay. This was that patients?

9 Q. Yes, the passengers, yes. So, I have to cross-reference  
10 because some of them that were -- had come out of ICU, so you  
11 might not have been able to talk with them.

12 A. Yeah. And I personally haven't, but I know we've been  
13 putting our agents on those like crazy, our list. So, you can  
14 pull that up, see who we haven't interviewed. I think they're  
15 marking them red if an interview had taken place.

16 Q. Right. No, the Reds, I thought, were the deceased on that  
17 chart you gave us.

18 A. The Greens were the deceased.

19 Q. Oh, okay yeah. I got it from you now. Yes, yes.

20 A. So --

21 Q. Yeah, you were missing three at that point.

22 A. So, which I guess they can mark. So, I've got, according to  
23 this list, there's two that were in Dixie that were not  
24 interviewed yet. And then there's three listed towards the bottom  
25 of the list that went to Richfield. They were the husbands of the

1 deceased.

2 Q. Yes.

3 A. And they weren't interviewed by our investigators, but they  
4 were interviewed by a trooper with a translator. So, I do have  
5 those.

6 Q. Okay. Well, you'll share those with us eventually, I'm sure.

7 A. Yeah. Yeah. So, I think -- now, again, we've got so many  
8 hands in this that I'm pretty sure that our State Bureau of  
9 Investigations have actually made interviews to most of those.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. In fact, it only shows two. One has facial fractures and the  
12 other -- oh, well, that's good news. One was moved off of life  
13 support and moved to the surgical floor. That's good the --

14 Q. Right. Which one was that?

15 A. That looks like a Lang Xu, X-U is the last name.

16 Q. Okay. I have to -- let me see if I -- I've talked to so  
17 many.

18 A. Yeah, and a lot of them have very, very similar names too.

19 Q. Yes. Yeah. I got one, what's her first name? Oh, I've got  
20 a Q-U -- Q-I-N, X-U. I don't know if that's a spouse. And --

21 A. Okay. That one was -- at one point was here in Garfield and  
22 was interviewed.

23 Q. And James -- and there were some name spellings that are  
24 wrong that we're finding out as well, from the hospital, which I'm  
25 trying to get because I'll be requesting their -- during the

1 subpoena of their medicals.

2 A. See, and the names that were on this form, they were actually  
3 updated by the bus driver. Sorry, that's not what I meant to say  
4 -- by the owner who had the manifest and she was going through the  
5 manifest. This was the day of the crash. She was going through  
6 the manifest and this list that we have.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. And she changed -- she corrected a few names that -- so, I  
9 would even bet some of them are probably like an American Brian,  
10 you know, B-R-I-A-N or B-R-Y-A-N.

11 Q. Right.

12 A. There could be a couple of those, but I think our spellings  
13 are --

14 Q. Well, no, I'm not saying your spellings. I know, at the  
15 hospital, when we would be talking to somebody, you know, their  
16 name is up there and then our, the interpreter, this Susan we  
17 used --

18 A. Okay.

19 Q. -- that she was, as she pointed out, that some of the names  
20 that the hospital had were wrong and they changed around.

21 A. Okay.

22 Q. But that, you know, I'm not saying yours are wrong, that  
23 around that list you got, it's the hospital had it wrong because  
24 they've been in there since Friday. So, it's Friday, Saturday.  
25 So, yeah, they hadn't had a chance, I guess, to -- they were going

1 by what they were told initially. So, yeah that may have changed  
2 from that point.

3 A. Yeah. Yeah. Well, and like I said, ours were just, you  
4 know, real quick names and then when she was looking at it, she  
5 had -- you know, she had it in Chinese dialect and changed it  
6 over, so I mean --

7 Q. Okay. Well, you -- I mean, like you said, you read that off.  
8 You've answered a lot of my questions. I still I have some calls  
9 to make. I got to -- you know, this Sunshine Manning sounds like  
10 a good one, you mentioned, and that -- I think you mentioned that  
11 [REDACTED].

12 So, some of these other people I'll definitely be reaching  
13 out and getting a statement from them, but. Oh, so -- well, we  
14 haven't got. Yeah, there's a couple of the things. If I think of  
15 anything else, I'll just text you.

16 A. Okay. Yeah, that's fair.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. Yeah, I'm around, so don't think I'm going anywhere for a  
19 while.

20 Q. Okay. Yeah, I'm hoping to get out of here by -- I have plans  
21 for Saturday, so that's looking good so far.

22 A. All right. Good, good. Good. I'm glad you're having  
23 success, so --

24 MR. KAMINSKI: Yeah. Okay, Sergeant. Well, I thank you very  
25 much. I'll let you get back to work.

1 MR. COX: Okay, thank you.

2 MR. KAMINSKI: Thank you. Take care.

3 MR. COX: You too. All right, bye-bye.

4 MR. KAMINSKI: Bye-bye.

5 (Whereupon, 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:            TOUR BUS CRASH  
                                      BRYCE CANYON CITY, UTAH  
                                      SEPTEMBER 20, 2019  
                                      Interview of Ben Cox

ACCIDENT NO.:                HWY19MH012

PLACE:                         Via Telephone

DATE:                         September 26, 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.

  
Kimberlee Kondrat  
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

\* \* \* \* \*

Investigation of: \*

\*

TOUR BUS CRASH \*

BRYCE CANYON CITY, UTAH \* Accident No.: HWY19MH012

SEPTEMBER 20, 2019 \*

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\* \* \* \* \*

Interview of: RONALD HARRIS  
Fire Chief  
Bryce Canyon Fire Department  
and Tropic VFD

Public Safety Building  
Bryce Canyon City, Utah

Wednesday,  
September 25, 2019

## APPEARANCES:

RONALD KAMINSKI, Senior Survival Factors Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board



<u>ITEM</u>	<u>I N D E X</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Interview of Ronald Harris:		
By Mr. Kaminski		4

I N T E R V I E W

(9:20 a.m.)

1  
2  
3 MR. KAMINSKI: This date is September 25. I'm Ronald  
4 Kaminski with the NTSB. I'm here at the Bryce Canyon --

5 MR. HARRIS: City.

6 MR. KAMINSKI: -- City --

7 MR. HARRIS: Public Safety.

8 MR. KAMINSKI: -- Public Safety Building, and I'll be talking  
9 to Chief Ronald Harris, H-A-R-R-I-S. He is the chief for the --  
10 both the Tropic Volunteer Fire Department and the Bryce Canyon  
11 Volunteer Fire Department.

## INTERVIEW OF RONALD HARRIS

12  
13 BY MR. KAMINSKI:

14 Q. And so, Chief, why don't you tell us what happened both from  
15 the time you got the call and when you got out there, and anything  
16 else you feel that's important?

17 A. I was at work. I work at Ruby's Inn here in Bryce Canyon  
18 City. I was at work, and we got the page on our pager. We're  
19 just on-call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and whoever can  
20 respond, responds.

21 So I left work, came out the back door. Another one of our  
22 soon-to-be-EMTs, who's still a student EMT -- he's not passed his  
23 written certification yet. And so he picked me up, and we headed  
24 right over. We're only one block away from the fire station. We  
25 pulled the ambulance out, picked up another veteran EMT in the

1 parking lot. We responded. Initially we were told to -- in the  
2 page, we were told there was a possible bus accident between  
3 Ruby's Inn and Bryce Canyon National Park. As soon as we called  
4 en route, the dispatch told us that -- go towards 63 and 12  
5 junction, because it sounds like it's that direction.

6       Soon as we pulled out on the highway heading north on 63, we  
7 passed one of our employees in one of the company vehicles. I had  
8 my partner that was sitting next to me, Cody, call him on the  
9 phone, ask him if -- where he was coming from and if he'd seen an  
10 accident. He said he was coming from Tropic, and he did not see  
11 an accident, so we knew it had to be west on 12. As soon as we  
12 made the turn and heading down westbound, the EMT in the back,  
13 Brady, received a phone call from one of his employees that was  
14 just passing by, and he was at the scene. And he told him that  
15 there was a bus accident and it had rolled, there is crap  
16 everywhere. And asked him if he was responding. And about that  
17 time, we went past what used to be called Foster's Hotel and  
18 Restaurant store. I could see down the road. There was a large  
19 gathering of vehicles down towards the rest area just east of  
20 Bryce Canyon Pines.

21       As we were rolling on scene, I called dispatch and told them,  
22 we are confirmed; this is an accident at that location of the rest  
23 area. And they cleared the radio for emergency traffic for 504,  
24 which -- that's what our unit is called. And they cleared the  
25 traffic for -- radio traffic for me to give a scene size-up and an

1 arrival report. As we were arriving on scene, I noticed there was  
2 a dump truck that was parked sideways in the road and a large  
3 white vehicle that was straddling a guardrail. And as we pulled  
4 up, the dump truck pulled out of the road. My initial thoughts  
5 were is -- there was a collision, but later found out there  
6 wasn't; they were just trying to get traffic stopped. Some good  
7 bystanders.

8 So we rolled on scene. There was nothing except debris, and  
9 it was -- you could tell there was a severely damaged midsize  
10 bus. And so I reported our arrival report and confirmed again the  
11 location and told dispatch there was a midsize bus. Looked like  
12 it had rolled, and as I pulled around across the front of the  
13 vehicle and parked on the west side diagonally in the road, that's  
14 when I came around and noticed the congregation of people: a few  
15 bystanders that looked like they were rendering aid, and then the  
16 injured folks from the, from the tour bus.

17 I told dispatch -- I believe I said, this is confirmed; looks  
18 like possibly up to 20 or more injured persons. And I could see  
19 as we pulled up there was one that was obviously deceased, and we  
20 parked fairly close to them. And I declared an MCI and told them  
21 to activate our MCI, and called for two helicopters. And then I  
22 was getting out of the truck.

23 Brady got out of the back, went right to work. He somehow  
24 just picked one patient and started working on him. Cody, which  
25 is the -- our student EMT and firefighter with Bryce Canyon City,

1 went up to the deceased individual that was by the ambulance,  
2 checked him. And at the same time, there was a bystander that was  
3 giving him a report of -- there was 30 occupants plus the bus  
4 driver. Bus driver was uninjured, and he's okay and denying any  
5 treatment. He said they had everybody off the bus, is what he  
6 told Cody. I'm getting this secondhand from Cody.

7 In the meantime, I grabbed our MCI kit and knew that that was  
8 my task at hand, was to immediately do a start triage. And I  
9 started that. And the same gentleman came up and gave me the same  
10 report, it sounds like, that he gave Cody. And he asked me --

11 Q. Was he an off-duty responder, or he just --

12 A. He was --

13 Q. Just a bystander.

14 A. -- just a bystander. He was an EMT. And Brady has more  
15 information, because he actually told Brady who he was. And he  
16 may have told me who he was, but at that time, I was just trying  
17 to focus on my task. But he was -- it was obvious, and that's the  
18 way it went through the whole call as I became triage/treatment  
19 officer. I could see, you know, those that need medical help and  
20 those that were just there to comfort. And as I was making  
21 assignments throughout the entire call, it was, it was obvious.  
22 You could tell who knew what they were doing and who didn't.

23 So he gave me that same information, and I just, I went to  
24 work doing the start triage. I triaged everybody. And at that  
25 time, during that time, we had one unit from Bryce Canyon National

1 Park show up and --

2 Q. Was that a ranger?

3 A. Ranger. There probably was two rangers in that vehicle. One  
4 was a paramedic, his second day on at Bryce Canyon National Park.  
5 And he asked me what needed to be done, and I said pick a red and  
6 just go to work. The other one, I believe, was helping with  
7 traffic, just trying to get traffic stopped. 501 from Panguitch  
8 arrived shortly thereafter, and also Deputy Pearson from Tropic  
9 with our MCI trailer that we stage here at Bryce Canyon City. And  
10 he responded with that.

11 So I finished the triage, the start triage, and at the same  
12 time directing medical treatment. And again, with bystanders, I  
13 know there was two ER nurses there that helped us. There was --

14 Q. They just stopped? Again, bystanders, just stopped to help?

15 A. Um-hum. There was a -- Sunshine, I think I learned her name  
16 was later. Just a young gal. Turned out to be she was a  
17 firefighter/EMT or advanced EMT. Some type of medical  
18 firefighter/something from Washington state somewhere, which --  
19 she knew Mandarin Chinese. None of the occupants could speak  
20 English that I encountered during my first round of triage. She  
21 was also just treating. She was, I mean, she was doing a great  
22 job.

23 There were some other locals there, and Bryce Canyon City  
24 Fire Department showed up just -- seemed immediately. I put them  
25 to work, and it was just helping the EMTs that were there

1 treating. I got the tags, the triage tags. Made my second round.  
2 Went around and tagged individuals, re-triaged and tagged them.  
3 There was a couple that I changed to -- from a yellow to a red  
4 category. Again, at the same time just trying to coordinate the  
5 treatment. Lot of, you know, off-duty -- well, there was -- seems  
6 like there was -- Eric Houston showed up.

7 Q. And he's out of where?

8 A. Eric Houston was out of Panguitch. That's Deputy Houston.  
9 He asked me. He says, do you want me to take over IC so you can  
10 focus on the -- on what you're doing? And I said yes. Because we  
11 really hadn't established IC. There was only three of us there  
12 initially, so I was trying to play the role of all of them. And  
13 so yeah, Eric Houston. Deputy Houston.

14 Q. What's his name again, though?

15 A. Eric Houston, H-O-U-S-T-O-N. He's a deputy with the  
16 sheriff's department. So he showed up. Just seemed like there  
17 was just a --

18 Q. So he took over the IC, then?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Or the IC.

21 A. Yeah, so he was taking over IC, trying to coordinate the  
22 ambulances and the air ambulances that we had already called.  
23 Tammy Barton. She's the ambulance director. She arrived with  
24 501. She actually came POV. So she came to me just as soon as,  
25 just as soon as she got there. She asked me what I had set up,

1 and I says, I've got the initial start triage done; I'm  
2 reassessing and re-triaging, and then at that time applying the  
3 tags. She says, do you have a transportation officer? And I said  
4 no. And she says, I'll take over transportation, and you keep  
5 doing what you're doing, which was the triage treatment officer  
6 role.

7 Things, I guess, just happened. I don't remember the exact  
8 order. But I was directing Deputy Pearson. He just opened up the  
9 back of the trailer. He parked it almost a perfect location and  
10 just started handing out equipment. I told him to get the tarps  
11 out. And they laid out one giant tarp and then put the triage  
12 tarps on top of there, just the red and the green -- or sorry.  
13 The red and the yellow. We used the black tarp to cover the three  
14 deceased females that were close to the coach.

15 And just as more medical showed up and more people showed up,  
16 I just continued to direct them on what needed to be done. We  
17 flew -- well, we had the initial -- the one radio, the patient  
18 radio, was working on, one other one that was being worked on.  
19 Got on 504, and we put some EMTs on there and then got a driver  
20 and just started transporting the red category, the patients that  
21 were in the red category, to the hospital with 504 and 501. 505  
22 showed -- or 502. 502 and 505 showed up pretty quickly.

23 Q. What hospital did you initially start?

24 A. We sent -- started sending all of our patients to Garfield  
25 Memorial Hospital. And that's our local hospital in Panguitch.



1 And so we felt that they were the most critical. You know, as  
2 quick as we could assess them with the limited manpower that we  
3 had with that many patients. It seemed like when I went around  
4 first, on my first start triage, there was -- I mean, every single  
5 person had some type of injury, whether it was just, you know, a  
6 bruise on the head, but they were up walking around. So you know,  
7 I put them in the category of a green.

8       The husbands of the three deceased, I let them stay. Because  
9 we try to filter out, you know, those that are the walking  
10 wounded, they're called, and get them out of the way. There was  
11 some just incredible bystanders that were just -- you know, there  
12 was one that's a flight attendant and -- you know, just helping  
13 keep patients warm and staying with the patients that were moving  
14 around and comforting those that were in the yellow category that  
15 weren't quite as immediate. There was just a lot of, lot of good  
16 help, which we -- we don't see that all the time. There's, you  
17 know, always the people that want to help and they think they're  
18 helping, and you finally have to tell them just get out of the  
19 way. And it just didn't seem like we had any of those.

20       But the three men, I let them stay with their, with their  
21 wives that were deceased. And then there was three local people  
22 that -- I know all three of them really well. Stayed with those  
23 three men and just helped comfort them and helped them --

24 Q. Are they with the fire department or just locals that  
25 stopped?

1 A. Just locals that stopped. Well, there's one that's a  
2 Henrieville, that's a Henrieville firefighter. He actually came  
3 with Henrieville Fire Department, and he stayed with one of them.  
4 And again, they couldn't communicate, but they just, you know,  
5 consoled and keep them warm. So that just continued on. We flew  
6 -- we had a Classic helicopter.

7 Q. And what -- is that Life Flight or --

8 A. It's Classic. Classic Air Medical. Helicopter land on  
9 scene. We flew one of our red patients on the, on the helicopter  
10 to Dixie Regional Medical Center. Classic had a new plane for  
11 them. Fixed-wing that they were -- they had several people on.  
12 Some of the management for Classic Air Medical, nurses, some  
13 paramedics. I still don't know what they were doing, but they  
14 were, they were fairly close. They were flying from Page, Arizona  
15 to the northern Utah area somewhere. They heard the call, and  
16 they turned around and came back to Bryce Canyon Airport.

17 And we flew one patient that I initially triaged yellow. She  
18 was degrading quite rapidly, and so we took her. Because I knew  
19 that we'd already sent several red category patients to Garfield,  
20 which I knew that would, that would probably be starting to tax  
21 their, you know, immediate capabilities. So I was thinking this  
22 person's -- she went from just lower back pain to severe abdominal  
23 pain. And that's when I re-triaged her red, got her on the -- got  
24 her to an ambulance, transported her to just short -- what is  
25 that, 2 miles or so -- to the airport and got her en route to

1 Dixie Regional Medical Center as well.

2 Q. Now that one that you said that had the abdominal pain, was  
3 she -- did she have any facial or other injuries that you could  
4 physically see?

5 A. Scratches. I know when I first went around, you know, the  
6 start triage, check for respirations. If they're greater than 30  
7 or less than 30. Peripheral pulse. So I check the radial pulse.  
8 If I can't find one on one arm, I try the other one. And then  
9 motor function. And I've always just -- you know, squeeze my  
10 hand, or you touch your nose, is the command and where they  
11 couldn't understand anything.

12 But I, as a rule, roleplay, which I've learned over the many  
13 years that I've been doing this. We treat patients that can't  
14 speak a lick of English quite often. So you have to do a  
15 roleplay. So I would, I would look at them, and you know, you can  
16 tell. I mean, I could tell if they were -- I mean, they're  
17 looking at me but there's nobody home. I pick up their hand. I  
18 would show them. I says, you, you know --

19 Q. Touch your nose.

20 A. Then I'd pick their hand up and I'd take their finger and I'd  
21 touch their nose, and then I'd say -- and you know, and then they  
22 could -- oh. You know, there was some -- so the one that I  
23 initially -- she had good -- her respirations were good. Her  
24 pulse was -- her pulses were good. She followed motor commands.  
25 But then as I came back around, somebody grabbed me and said she's

1 complaining of belly pain. And as I was coming back around to re-  
2 triage them again, that's when she was complaining that she had  
3 some, you know, really bad abdominal pain. And she was actually  
4 doing this and moaning a little bit. And I touched her, and she  
5 jerked like that. Just said -- I retagged her red and hollered at  
6 somebody, and I says, let's get on her and get her on the  
7 ambulance and get her on the fixed-wing because --

8 Q. So how many people went on the fixed-wing? A couple, you  
9 think?

10 A. Just one on that one.

11 Q. Just one on the fixed-wing.

12 A. One on that fixed-wing. And one on the helicopter. And the  
13 airplane, we didn't know they were -- they could take two. No,  
14 no, no, that was a different airplane. Never mind. So the extra  
15 staff that they had on that airplane, they put on the ambulance  
16 that was -- I just remember Mary Jane. I've known her for a long  
17 time. But there was two nurses. I believe they were both nurses.  
18 They put them on the ambulance to come back to the scene to help  
19 us, because they didn't need them on the airplane. And so they  
20 ended up going in on our ambulance, helping us on scene, going in  
21 on the ambulance, and then went to the hospital and helped at the  
22 hospital until they caught a ride back to the airport. And that  
23 plane actually came back, picked them up again. And then --

24 Q. So it looks like we only had two that were flown out?

25 A. From the scene.

1 Q. From the scene.

2 A. From the scene.

3 Q. Yeah, and I know Tropic from Garfield, they probably had --  
4 took a whole bunch too.

5 A. Like, 11, I think? If I remember right.

6 Q. That transported out?

7 A. Seven? Let's see. That number is not firm, but I think  
8 there was 11 that they actually flew out, because they were  
9 working on a Life Flight patient at the same time, or just -- they  
10 were just trying to get him out on the helicopter Life Flight. So  
11 IHC's Life Flight was there picking that patient up before the bus  
12 accident. And they were just trying to get them on the helicopter  
13 when this call went out. And so then that helicopter turned  
14 around and made two more trips. Classic from Moab took two -- I'd  
15 better not say. Because I was, I was just there observing, but  
16 there was -- I know there was two Life Flight fixed-wings flew  
17 into Panguitch Airport.

18 Q. Two fixed-wings? Two other --

19 A. Two IHC fixed-wings. And Classic. The helicopter that we  
20 used from the scene flew from Garfield as well. Their Moab unit  
21 flew from Garfield, and their -- oh, down by Lake Havasu. What's  
22 it called? Anyway, they had another helicopter come up. I'll  
23 think of it in a minute.

24 Q. Was there anybody other than the Classic, then?

25 A. Classic and Intermountain Healthcare. So the Life Flight --

1 so Life Flight is their --

2 Q. (Indiscernible).

3 A. Yeah. So IHC is Life Flight. They had a fixed-wing come  
4 from St. George and -- rotor come from St. George. And then I've  
5 heard they had another helicopter come, but I didn't see it, come  
6 from Provo. But the hospital will have all those stats.

7 Q. Right. Yeah.

8 A. That are accurate. And I'll get a report tonight, actually,  
9 but --

10 Q. So a lot of them came into Panguitch? At least the fixed-  
11 wings, then, came into Panguitch. That's close to the Garfield  
12 hospital? Yeah.

13 A. Yeah. So that's just right outside of town. Once we got  
14 done on scene there, we transported three greens, which were the  
15 three gentlemen with the deceased wives. We sent them to  
16 Richfield, because I wanted to keep -- because that's where the  
17 mortician was. And I didn't, you know -- I guess I just wanted to  
18 get them in that area, knowing that, you know, the deceased, I'm  
19 sure, would go to the state medical examiner and -- but anyway, so  
20 I got with Tammy and explained that to her. She said, makes  
21 sense. That's where that ambulance came from, is Piute County,  
22 which is on the way to Richfield. So I think they came from  
23 Junction -- Circleville. So they came from Circleville.

24 So they took the three to Richfield. Just minor injuries.  
25 Kane County came up with an ambulance, and we sent two patients to

1 Kane County, just to help disperse the load to Garfield. The  
2 majority of them went to Garfield Memorial. And we transported 26  
3 patients, either by, you know, the two, the two air ambulances on  
4 scene, and the rest of them went to hospitals. So we --

5 Q. Twenty-six?

6 A. So yeah, 26. Because the four deceased and the driver ended  
7 up going in POV later just to get checked out, I guess. Once we'd  
8 cleared the scene, picked up our, picked up our stuff. The  
9 troopers -- once we got done, we left. We didn't do anything with  
10 the deceased. The troopers took over and said, you know, you guys  
11 are done. And so we released the fire units, and then we had to  
12 go into Panguitch and get our ambulances restocked and just try to  
13 gather, you know, ourselves and our equipment and paperwork. And  
14 I ended up going in the hospital and helping there, which we often  
15 do. Helped a little bit inside the hospital there, and then we  
16 got our ambulances put back together. Just helped shuttle people  
17 out of the ER and get them on the, on the air ambulances.

18 Q. You gave me an incredible, descriptive description on all  
19 this stuff. Excellent job.

20 A. It's been going through my mind.

21 Q. Yeah.

22 A. 4 o'clock in the morning, you know.

23 Q. Told dispatch I had something regarding -- something about  
24 the dispatch. And dispatch is where I went at Panguitch, right?  
25 Garfield. That's where -- Garfield County. That's where the --

1 A. Yeah, that's the county seat. So that's where the sheriff's  
2 office is.

3 Q. So how many ambulances showed up, approximately?

4 A. So we had, we had -- well, we had six of them, because we  
5 only had one ambulance in our county that didn't respond. 506  
6 came all the way from Escalante. They showed up in time to  
7 take -- I think they took a yellow and two or three green.

8 Q. Escalante.

9 A. Escalante. That's east. They're --

10 Q. How far is that away?

11 A. So it'd be 30, 40 --

12 Q. Approximately.

13 A. -- 53 miles? 52 miles?

14 Q. Wow. Okay.

15 A. So they came over. They showed up and really -- it was  
16 pretty much winding down by then and --

17 Q. They just took some greens or --

18 A. Yeah, they might have had one yellow in there and then a  
19 couple of greens.

20 Q. Still going to Garfield?

21 A. Yeah, they went to Garfield and then they got back in service  
22 back home. Because there's not a -- the only other ambulance is  
23 in Boulder, and it's pretty limited staff over there. So yeah, we  
24 had 501, 502 out of Panguitch, 503 out of Hatch, 504 here, 505  
25 from Tropic and 506 from Escalante.



1 Q. Can you go over the --

2 A. Sorry.

3 Q. 503 out of Hatch.

4 A. 501 and 502 is Panguitch.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. Now 503 --

7 Q. 503 is Hatch.

8 A. 504 is here.

9 Q. Is Bryce?

10 A. Yeah. And 505 is in Tropic. And then you got 506 already.

11 They were from Escalante.

12 Q. Right.

13 A. Yeah, and then there was -- can't remember their numbers, but

14 there was the ambulance out of Junction from Piute County. And

15 then out of Alton from Kane County.

16 Q. So there were two other ambulances from those counties?

17 A. Yeah. One from Kane County, which is south.

18 Q. Right, you had mentioned Kane County.

19 A. Yeah. And one is Piute, which is north.

20 Q. How do you spell Piute?

21 A. P-I-U-T-E. Yeah. And then Alton was a town that the other

22 one came from. And they also had other ambulances coming, but we

23 turned them around.

24 Q. Okay. It's probably since -- you've given me pretty much

25 everything. I just wanted to let -- do you think I'd get anything

1 more talking to the deputy who assumed, you know, incident command  
2 after you left, after you kind of went --

3 A. He was keeping track of -- because people kept -- he kept  
4 asking me, how many reds do you have; how many yellows do you  
5 have? And so I -- initially I think I had five. So I confirmed  
6 the four deceased; I had five red. Fourteen-ish? I just -- he  
7 was keeping track for me, so yeah, I don't know if he would have,  
8 I mean, a different -- I mean, there's not any different  
9 perspectives, really, but he was keeping track of them.

10 And then we downgraded the two to red. Later on, there was  
11 one we sent on the fixed-wing and one we sent by ambulance because  
12 they were degrading. Yeah, and he was just coordinating -- you  
13 know, our dispatch was just calling in the resources and, you  
14 know --

15 Q. Did you guys set up, like, an incident command? Did he -- I  
16 mean, you had the MCI. Is that pretty much where the -- did the  
17 incident command from, or --

18 A. Yeah, he was -- you know, we had, we had the bus. We had our  
19 ambulance at the block, just trying to just quickly block the road  
20 there. So all the people are congregated here or positioned here.  
21 We set our tarps up here. He was hanging out right here. And  
22 here, we know everybody. So you know, you get all dressed up in,  
23 you know, the command vest, and everybody knows. So once  
24 everybody knew Tammy was the transportation officer, we -- you can  
25 spot her away. You know, me -- you know, ugly head like mine, you

1 know, it's easy to find. So everybody knew he was command, I was  
2 treatment and triage --

3 Q. Did you guys all have vests saying what your responsibility  
4 is?

5 A. I gave, I gave him -- I threw him the command vest, so he did  
6 have it on. Now I remember. But I didn't have a vest. Tammy  
7 didn't have a vest on. But it was, it was really a --

8 Q. Pretty tight.

9 A. -- fairly small scene, tight scene. And again, there was a  
10 lot of people congregated, lot of looky-loos that was over on the  
11 bike path across the road. I looked up a few times. But I mean,  
12 people were just staying out of the way. It was just really  
13 amazing.

14 Q. What would you guesstimate the time it took to get everyone  
15 transported out of -- away from the scene?

16 A. From page to on scene, we were 6 minutes, for 504. An hour  
17 and 57 minutes, we had every patient at the hospital.

18 Q. 1 hour and 56 minutes [sic].

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. Everyone was at the hospital.

21 A. Everybody was at the hospital.

22 Q. For being this remote, that's very good.

23 A. Yeah. And not -- that's not counting the Kane County and the  
24 Piute. Because I mean, that was -- which they wouldn't have taken  
25 them an hour because the sheriff was driving, you know, to go from

1 here to Richfield. So I don't know what time they got to  
2 Richfield.

3 Q. Yeah, that might have been -- right. Yeah.

4 A. But I'll bet it took them not more than an hour and a half  
5 from the time they left the scene. Tammy has a log, a very  
6 detailed log, of every patient, what ambulance they got in, what  
7 time they left.

8 Q. Oh, I'd like to get a copy of that, if I could.

9 A. So she's got a book just like that that she's just been --  
10 and she lives in Panguitch. So yeah, I'll get a hold of her and  
11 have her scan that in. And I'm sure, knowing her, she'll type up  
12 a pretty detailed report. But she was -- she kept excellent track  
13 of exactly -- we didn't have any names. We couldn't even get a  
14 name from any of them, you know. We couldn't -- when you just --  
15 and that's a culture that, you know, you don't -- I mean, you  
16 don't look at them. You don't -- you know, for me and you to talk  
17 like this, that's disrespectful. You know, when you talk, you're  
18 talking like this and -- so I mean, for me to go up to somebody  
19 and all of a sudden you start feeling them out and trying to find  
20 out what's wrong with them because they can't tell you, you know,  
21 except for -- you know, when they say grab me, and it's like,  
22 oh -- and they were talking, and you know, I just, I just said,  
23 okay, okay. And I'd tag them and, you know, move on and --

24 Q. So what types of injuries were you seeing? Was it the head  
25 injuries, broken bones?

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. Road rash?

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. All of the above.

5 A. All of the above. There was -- Brady's -- the person he went  
6 to first was right close to the tire. He ended up moving one  
7 or -- he ended up moving two of the deceased out of the way, just  
8 to push them together.

9 Q. Oh, yeah. That's what I was going to ask is, the deceased --  
10 I know the one that was by the guardrail stayed there. And then I  
11 guess the three others were by the, by the bus -- were removed by  
12 the bus.

13 A. Yeah, one was actually still in the stairwells, which I found  
14 out from somebody that saw the -- or came on right when it  
15 happened. Because there was still people on the bus.

16 Q. Do you have her name and number, by chance?

17 A. I've got their dad's. His dad is actually a captain of my --  
18 on the fire department.

19 Q. Okay. Just text or email that information to me.

20 A. Okay.

21 Q. Because that's what we're trying to figure out, you know,  
22 based -- you know, we know that there was, there was more than  
23 four that were ejected. We talked to people down at the hospital  
24 that they were ejected and, you know, had some injuries, but they  
25 were conscious and were able to walk away. But you could see a

1 guy's face, you know, that's all scratched up and all swollen out.  
2 And I was like, looks like he got thrown out. And sure enough, he  
3 was.

4 A. Yeah. And the gal -- so [REDACTED], he and his  
5 girlfriend were there. And she is very meticulous [sic]. So she  
6 was -- she came to our debriefing. Because they were struggling,  
7 so I just had them come with their dad even though it was just for  
8 first responders. But I had them come, and she is very, she is  
9 very detailed. She was, you know, the girl -- the lady wearing  
10 this colored shirt was in the stairwell, and she was still  
11 actually breathing. I mean, that's how quick they -- I mean, they  
12 were right there. I don't know if they actually saw --

13 Q. Yeah, I'd like to get some of that information to -- because  
14 according to the state police when I asked about your brother-in-  
15 law is that they said that he was the one that moved the bodies  
16 closer to the, to the bus. I was like, okay. Just, is that -- do  
17 you know that for a fact, or is that --

18 A. That's what he said. No, because he actually went back down  
19 there and met with Sergeant Cox that evening as he was getting  
20 ready to go home. He had to come back to work and finish up, and  
21 then he actually went down and pointed out to them where they  
22 were. And he had to move them so he could get to the one patient  
23 that he was there. And I didn't see that because I had my back  
24 turned. I was getting the, I was getting the kit out. The MCI  
25 kit, the triage kit. Getting the belt and all the tags and --

1 Q. Okay, so he gave that information to Sergeant Cox. Okay.

2 A. Yeah. And then there was -- the girl said there was actually  
3 one -- there was -- she said there were several. She couldn't  
4 remember exactly how many, but there were several still on the  
5 bus. And people were telling them they were trying to come over  
6 top of the one that was dying.

7 Q. In the doorway in that stairwell.

8 A. That was there in the stairwell. And they -- and she  
9 mentioned that they were telling the other people to go out the  
10 driver's side door, go out the driver's side door. And so they  
11 got her out just as she took her last breath, and then there was  
12 another one that had -- the husband was actually holding her when  
13 she died. And again, this all happened, you know, 2 to 4 minutes,  
14 probably, after the accident happened. Because we were there in 6  
15 minutes, and everybody was off the bus then.

16 Q. Yeah, but -- so that was -- you know, I would like to get her  
17 -- that's Dawson Johnson, and you said her husband?

18 A. Girlfriend.

19 Q. The girlfriend. Okay. If I could, you know, just get a, you  
20 know, statement from them, if it's not too traumatic for them. If  
21 you could just give my information and tell them to email me if  
22 they want to email me the description, or they could talk to me.  
23 Whatever they'd like to do.

24 A. Okay.

25 Q. Okay. Like I said, you've given me an incredible description

1 here. And I don't have any follow-up right now. I can't think of  
2 anything, because as I said, you've given me such good info here.  
3 But if I do, I may end up just following up and giving you a call  
4 back. Do you have a good email?

5 A. [REDACTED].

6 Q. Okay, great.

7 A. And I can't -- I don't know. I can't think of anything else.  
8 There's just little, just little things.

9 Q. There was no issues? You didn't have any problem -- no  
10 communication issues? The radios are working pretty good out at  
11 that location?

12 A. Yeah, it's just, I finally -- as I was trying to do -- start  
13 triage, I actually just turned mine off because I was trying to  
14 give updates as I was doing my triage, which -- you know, we had  
15 probably 12 resources all calling en route and calling on scene,  
16 so --

17 Q. And that's another thing. Would you be able to -- maybe it's  
18 -- you can't think of them all now. I'd like to get a -- I need  
19 to get a list of all the responding agencies. Because if there's  
20 any reports, you know, generated, I want to get a copy of those.  
21 Would you have those in your head, or do you just want to email  
22 those to me?

23 A. Well, we got -- so we already got the ambulances, right?

24 Q. Right, we got --

25 A. So we got Henrieville Fire Department.



1 Q. Henrieville. That's a new name. Okay.

2 A. H-E-N-R-I-E-V-I-L-L-E. They showed up with two firefighters.  
3 And then Tropic showed up. Most of Tropic was on an ambulance,  
4 because we do both. The Tropic Fire Department showed up. Bryce  
5 Canyon City. Rangers with Bryce Canyon National Park. And  
6 then --

7 Q. Panguitch.

8 A. Panguitch Fire Department. And that's everybody.  
9 Cannonville doesn't have a fire department. Hatch didn't respond.  
10 Panguitch -- that's it. Plus, you know, highway patrol, Garfield  
11 County Sheriff's. Sheriff's department had some off-duty  
12 corrections officers/deputies that showed up to help. Deputy  
13 Pearson was off duty, but he --

14 Q. But you said there was an ambulance from Hatch that came.

15 A. Um-hum. Just not the fire department. So our -- maybe you  
16 already know, but our fire departments are operated by the towns.  
17 So I don't get paid, but I guess I work -- I work for the town of  
18 Tropic and Bryce Canyon City. And then Dave -- Chief Dodds is  
19 with Panguitch City. And then the ambulances are all under one  
20 group, which is operated by Garfield County. You know, there was  
21 some Garfield County Search and Rescue there too, which falls  
22 under the sheriff. So then we're members of the Garfield County  
23 Search and Rescue, which -- we work for the sheriff. So I've got  
24 lots of bosses.

25 Q. That's with the sheriff, you said.

1 A. Yeah. So yeah, I'm pretty sure there was some search and  
2 rescue guys.

3 Q. Yeah, if you think of any others that -- you know, just email  
4 those to me.

5 A. Okay.

6 MR. KAMINSKI: Okay. That concludes our interview here with  
7 Chief Ron Harris. It is approximately 10:00 a.m.

8 (Whereupon, at 10:00 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:            TOUR BUS CRASH  
                                      BRYCE CANYON CITY, UTAH  
                                      SEPTEMBER 20, 2019  
                                      Interview of Ronald Harris

ACCIDENT NO.:                HWY19MH012

PLACE:                         Bryce Canyon City, Utah

DATE:                         September 25, 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.

  
Eil \_\_\_\_\_  
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

\* \* \* \* \*

Investigation of: \*

\*

TOUR BUS CRASH \*

BRYCE CANYON CITY, UTAH \* Accident No.: HWY19MH012

SEPTEMBER 20, 2019 \*

\*

\* \* \* \* \*

Interview of: BRADY SYRETT  
EMT

Via Telephone

Friday,  
September 27, 2019

## APPEARANCES:

RONALD KAMINSKI, Senior Survival Factors Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>I N D E X</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Interview of Brady Syrett:		
By Mr. Kaminski		4

I N T E R V I E W1  
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MR. KAMINSKI: -- to Mr. Brady Syrett?

MR. SYRETT: This is him.

MR. KAMINSKI: Did I pronounce your last name right, sir?

MR. SYRETT: Syrett. Yeah.

MR. KAMINSKI: Syrett. Okay. This is Ronald Kaminski. I'm with the National Transportation Safety Board.

MR. SYRETT: Oh, okay.

MR. KAMINSKI: And do you have a couple minutes to talk to me?

MR. SYRETT: Sure.

MR. KAMINSKI: Regarding the bus crash?

MR. SYRETT: Yeah.

MR. KAMINSKI: Okay. If you don't mind, I'm going to tape this so I don't have to interrupt you and we can just talk, and I'll just have some follow-up questions at the end, if possible.

MR. SYRETT: Okay.

## INTERVIEW OF BRADY SYRETT

BY MR. KAMINSKI:

Q. So yeah, I just wanted to get a -- I know you're probably one of, I would say, the first ones. But you were on the scene fairly quick and I just --

A. We were the first ambulance for the --

Q. Okay, perfect. And just want to get a -- get your -- get a statement from you as to what you saw and what you all did out

1 there when you were -- from the time you got the call.

2 A. Okay.

3 Q. Go ahead.

4 A. You know, we got the call. It was -- we showed up. There  
5 was the bus. It was sitting right side up. There was patients  
6 out in front of it there, laying out. There was one by the  
7 guardrail that was obviously a fatality. We just jumped in and  
8 set up incident command and started identifying the most critical  
9 patients, and then started treatment from there.

10 Q. Okay. And the one person that was fatal by the guardrail  
11 that -- they remained there, but the other three fatals, were they  
12 -- they were right next to the bus or close to the bus?

13 A. They were, they were within proximity of the bus. We had to  
14 move two of the bodies just to get in to treat some patients.

15 Q. And when you mean move them, you moved them away from the  
16 door or --

17 A. Well, there was a way -- they were, they were down from the  
18 door a little ways. One was laying parallel with the bus. The  
19 other two was kind of perpendicular to the bus within the same  
20 area as the one. And we just took the two that were perpendicular  
21 and put them parallel with the bus where we could get in to two  
22 patients.

23 Q. Okay. And that makes sense. Sure. And then how many -- was  
24 everybody out of the bus when you guys got there?

25 A. As far as I could tell. I did not, I did not notice anybody



1 in the bus when we got there. They said everybody was out.

2 Q. Okay. And what types of injuries were you seeing?

3 A. Neck, spine. Lot of bleeding. The patient that we had to  
4 move the dead bodies to get in to had a scalp fracture with a hole  
5 in the top side of his head.

6 Q. Okay. Yeah, I think I read that there was brain matter  
7 exposed or something like that.

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. Yeah.

10 A. That one there. There was a lot of, you know, just -- a lot  
11 of blood, lot of, you know, bruises, broken bones, stuff like  
12 that.

13 Q. And there's no way you could tell that the -- how many others  
14 were ejected, correct, by the time you got there? I mean --

15 A. It didn't -- to my -- I, you know -- looking at the bus when  
16 I came in there, I was -- I thought they were all ejected. The  
17 way it looked, you know, there was -- if any of the bystanders  
18 before we got there helped them out of the bus, I'm not aware of  
19 that. But the way it looked, most of the critical patients that  
20 we were treating were -- looked like, to me, they were ejected.

21 Q. Okay. Now did you stay on scene the whole time, or did you  
22 end up --

23 A. Yeah, I -- well, the majority of the scene. Then they had  
24 one of the probably not-so-critical patients that I come in on the  
25 hospital bringing that person in.

1 Q. Okay. And what was the ambulance unit you guys were on?

2 What number?

3 A. Oh, we were on 504.

4 Q. 504. And I think there was a total of five ambulances that  
5 were -- that responded. Do you know?

6 A. Yeah, there was 501, 502. I don't know if 503 was there or  
7 not. 506 out of Escalante was there. 504, which is here in  
8 Bryce, and 505 in Tropic. So we could have had six ambulances.  
9 And then they had one out of Kane County and one out of Piute  
10 County.

11 Q. And then -- and you were in 501, and you guys were out of  
12 Tropic or Panguitch?

13 A. I was in -- no, I was in 504. 504. 504 is out of Bryce  
14 Canyon City.

15 Q. Okay. And okay. You said then there's one out of Kane and  
16 one at Piute?

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. Okay. And so you had plenty of -- it sounds like you had  
19 plenty of ambulances --

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. -- to transport. And then you had -- just had the one  
22 medevac helicopter that landed on scene?

23 A. The one that landed on scene, and then there was a -- I don't  
24 know. There was a fixed-wing crew that was at the airport that  
25 come to the scene. Because two of the crewmembers on that rode

1 down in the ambulance with me when I took the one patient down.

2 Q. Okay. And you, and you took your patient where? To Garfield  
3 Hospital?

4 A. Yeah. Garfield Memorial.

5 Q. Okay. And with the ones from Kane and Piute, would you know,  
6 would they have taken them to Garfield as well, or would they  
7 have --

8 A. No, they were -- I think they was going to send the Kane  
9 County ones to Kanab.

10 Q. Yeah. Yeah, that makes sense.

11 A. And I, and I think Piute went -- was going to -- they was  
12 going to send them -- because they were hauling in the, you know,  
13 just the minor injuries.

14 Q. Oh, so is that the one that went up here to Richfield?

15 A. Yeah, they could have gone to -- Piute could have went to  
16 Richfield, and Kane County probably went to Kanab. Yeah, because  
17 they were just minor cuts, bruises, maybe some broken bones.  
18 Just, they would have been green on the trauma scale.

19 Q. Right. Right. So have you guys -- the one question I forgot  
20 to ask Chief Harris was, have you guys done MCI drills full-scale  
21 with tabletops?

22 A. We have, we have before. You know, we just -- you know, kind  
23 of rusty, and then this thing was -- the toll of this one just --  
24 it threw us for a loop.

25 Q. Yeah. Well, you can probably practice all day, and when the

1 real thing happens, it still becomes total chaos.

2 A. I mean, when you show up on scene and the way that was, it  
3 was -- but it came together quick. I mean, we -- you know, nobody  
4 lost their cool or anything like that, but it just took a minute  
5 to realize what we had.

6 Q. Right, right. Okay. Anybody else you think out there that  
7 would -- I should maybe talk to that would --

8 A. Who have you talked to so far?

9 Q. Well, Sarles. He's the one that, I guess, initially spoke  
10 Mandarin and went to Garfield to help out.

11 A. Yeah, on the ambulance crew that we showed up on, 504, we was  
12 the first one. There was me and Harris. And then there was a  
13 Cody Sharif (ph.).

14 Q. Oh, Harris. Yeah, I think I just tried Cody? Yeah, I tried  
15 calling Cody, and there was -- his mailbox was full and couldn't  
16 leave a message.

17 A. Yeah. There was us three that showed up on the ambulance.

18 Q. Okay. Well, if you get a chance and can talk to him over the  
19 weekend or something, I'm leaving -- I'm finally leaving town  
20 tomorrow. And if you could give him my contact information and  
21 just tell him next week if he gets a chance?

22 A. Okay. (Indiscernible) so I'll get with Ron too, so --

23 Q. Well, I talked to Ron already. I did.

24 A. I mean, I'll get with Ron, and Ron can find Cody. We can get  
25 Cody, since we all work here. Ron's my brother-in-law, so --

1 Q. Right, right, right.

2 MR. KAMINSKI: So okay. Fair enough, sir. I thank you very  
3 much for your help and your service out there.

4 MR. SYRETT: Okay.

5 MR. KAMINSKI: Thank you, sir. Bye-bye.

6 MR. SYRETT: Bye.

7 (Whereupon, 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:            TOUR BUS CRASH  
                                      BRYCE CANYON CITY, UTAH  
                                      SEPTEMBER 20, 2019  
                                      Interview of Brady Syrett

ACCIDENT NO.:                HWY19MH012

PLACE:                         Via Telephone

DATE:                         September 27, 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.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Eil  
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

\* \* \* \* \*

Investigation of: \*

\*

TOUR BUS CRASH \*

BRYCE CANYON CITY, UTAH \* Accident No.: HWY19MH012

SEPTEMBER 20, 2019 \*

\*

\* \* \* \* \*

Interview of: MIKE SARLES  
Firefighter  
Panguitch City Fire Department

Via Telephone

Tuesday,  
September 24, 2019

## APPEARANCES:

RONALD KAMINSKI, Senior Survival Factors Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board



<u>ITEM</u>	<u>I N D E X</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Interview of Mike Sarles:		
By Mr. Kaminski		4

1 I N T E R V I E W

2 MR. KAMINSKI: Hello. Ron Kaminski. Safety Board.

3 MR. SARLES: Hey, good morning. This is Mike Sarles with  
4 Panguitch City Fire Department. How are you?

5 MR. KAMINSKI: Good, sir.

6 MR. SARLES: Good. We're finally connecting. That's a good  
7 thing.

8 MR. KAMINSKI: Yeah, yeah.

9 INTERVIEW OF MIKE SARLES

10 BY MR. KAMINSKI:

11 Q. So basically, you are, you are the one who spoke Mandarin,  
12 then?

13 A. I am. I was, yes.

14 Q. Okay. And do you mind if I tape this conversation so I  
15 can --

16 A. No. No, that's perfectly fine.

17 Q. And why don't you start off and tell me your name again?

18 A. Mike Sarles. S-A-R-L-E-S.

19 Q. S-A-R-L-E-S.

20 A. L-E-S. With Panguitch City Fire Department.

21 Q. Okay. And you're a firefighter/EMT?

22 A. I am a firefighter. I have taken all the EMT classes but  
23 haven't finished the national board test yet, the computerized --

24 Q. Okay. And what -- I guess, why don't you just give me a  
25 description? When you got the call, you got out there, what all

1 happened?

2 A. So I was with another firefighter who is also an EMT at the  
3 elementary school. We were spraying water on kids as they were  
4 coming through a fun run. Highway patrol -- the highway  
5 patrolman, Sergeant Cox (ph.), was there also. He came over to us  
6 and said, hey, you know, we might want to pack everything up;  
7 we're going to an accident. So we packed everything up, got over  
8 to the station, got our turnout gear and then headed up to the  
9 accident. We were probably about 10 minutes behind 501 getting  
10 there.

11 And then when we got on scene, we just parked on the same  
12 side of the road as the bus but back a ways, walked up to see what  
13 we needed to do. Jumped in, started handing people things that  
14 they needed. And then I was approached by a couple people, but I  
15 remember Eric Houston, the sheriff's deputy. He said, hey, Mike,  
16 you need to jump in that first ambulance and get down to the  
17 hospital; they're going to need help with translating. So I  
18 jumped in the first ambulance.

19 On the way down the hill, they had two patients in the back,  
20 and I was trying to help them translate from the front seat of the  
21 -- or the passenger seat of the ambulance. I tried to get through  
22 the little hole in the ambulance to get back there to help, but I  
23 couldn't fit. So I didn't make it with all my gear on. So  
24 anyway, so I translated stuff on the way down and got to the ER.  
25 And they just put me in the ER so that I could bounce around as

1 they rolled people in.

2 Q. The Garfield?

3 A. This was at Garfield Memorial, yeah.

4 Q. Right.

5 A. And so I --

6 Q. Where I think the majority were taken initially?

7 A. Yeah, exactly. I think they only transported one by airplane  
8 out of there, and then another by helicopter from up there as  
9 well. And then the rest of them came through us. Except for some  
10 that went directly to other hospitals in their respective  
11 ambulances. But then I just was in the ER and sometimes in  
12 patient rooms that day, just helping nurses and doctors figure out  
13 what the heck they were saying and then translating back for them  
14 what was happening for them.

15 Q. Okay, so were you -- did you ever at any time get on the bus  
16 or no? Everybody was off the bus by the time you --

17 A. I did not get on the bus. I was not anywhere near the bus.  
18 The closest I got to the bus was one of the EMTs was working on a  
19 patient by the rear wheel, I think, or in that area, and I took a  
20 scoop stretcher over to them. But I never got on the bus, so --  
21 and I was only on scene for about 2 minutes, or maybe 5 minutes.  
22 I was not there very long.

23 Q. Okay. Because I guess I was led to believe that you were  
24 there on scene and just helped, you know, translate for everybody  
25 that was on scene.

1 A. So there was another -- so I was, I was up there on scene for  
2 a bit, and then I went down and translated at the hospital. There  
3 was another lady who just happened to be passing by who had some  
4 medical -- or EMT training or something from Washington state, is  
5 what I've heard. Again, I didn't see this person or talk to them.  
6 But they were doing translating up on the -- at the scene. And so  
7 as I -- when I left, then this person arrived or had already  
8 arrived. I just, I didn't know about them until after the fact.  
9 And so that was the person that was doing that translating up  
10 there.

11 Q. Okay. You probably don't know if anybody got her name or  
12 anything? I guess I'd have to talk to Sergeant Cox about that.

13 A. I don't, and I think they were trying to figure that out the  
14 other night when we were -- we had a debrief or whatever meeting  
15 with some folks to help us feel better in case we were feeling  
16 bad. And I'm not, and I feel great, by the way. I think it was  
17 amazing how it all worked. But I don't know if they have that  
18 person's name. I think they were trying to figure it out, but I  
19 don't know if they have it. So I would check with Sergeant Cox.  
20 So yeah, I --

21 Q. Can you, can you hold on one second?

22 A. Sure. No problem.

23 Q. I've got something here. Hold on.

24 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

25

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD


IN THE MATTER OF:            TOUR BUS CRASH  
                                      BRYCE CANYON CITY, UTAH  
                                      SEPTEMBER 20, 2019  
                                      Interview of Mike Sarles

ACCIDENT NO.:                HWY19MH012

PLACE:                         Via Telephone

DATE:                         September 24, 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.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Eileen Gonzalez  
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

\* \* \* \* \*

Investigation of: \*

\*

TOUR BUS CRASH \*

BRYCE CANYON CITY, UTAH \* Accident No.: HWY19MH012

SEPTEMBER 20, 2019 \*

\*

\* \* \* \* \*

Interview of: JAMES D. PERKINS  
Sheriff, Garfield County

Thursday,  
September 26, 2019

## APPEARANCES:

RONALD KAMINSKI, Senior Survival Factors Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board



<u>ITEM</u>	<u>I N D E X</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Interview of James D. Perkins:		
By Mr. Kaminski		4

I N T E R V I E W

## INTERVIEW OF JAMES PERKINS

BY MR. KAMINSKI:

1 Q. So why don't you start off, spell your name and spell your  
2 last name, please.

3 A. My last name is spelled P-E-R-K-I-N-S.

4 Q. Okay, and you're the sheriff for the Garfield County  
5 Sheriff's Department?

6 A. Right.

7 Q. Okay. So, I guess, tell me what you remember when -- you got  
8 the call. You got out there. What'd you see, what'd you do?

9 A. Well, I got the call, I was actually in Panguitch on another  
10 little project we was doing, so I run right out, just as quick as  
11 I could get there,

12 By the time I get there, except that the first responders,  
13 some of them was already there. Ron Harris is one of our EMTs, was  
14 there. I noticed him and kind of walked through, think, a quick  
15 assessment. I seen several bodies. I believe there was three  
16 bodies laying, that were obviously folks who'd passed away, laying  
17 up by the door of the bus, just kind of north of the door entrance  
18 of the bus.

19 There was another body back a-ways to that left at the bus.

20 Q. Right, near the guardrail.

21 A. Well, it was -- yeah, kind of on the side of the road. It  
22 was actually past the guardrail just a little bit.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. I walked up the road to see if I could see kind of what had  
3 happened because I was told that the bus was the only one involved  
4 in the accident. And I could see where he had -- looked like, to  
5 me, he'd overcorrected and flipped the bus.

6 I seen where the bus had hit the road. I also noticed that  
7 they had an initial impact on the side of the bus. Looked like  
8 there was blood and a scrape mark down the road for -- well, I'll  
9 bet there was scrap mark for close to 30, 40 feet, maybe more than  
10 that.

11 Q. Forty feet. Exactly. Here you go.

12 A. Was it 40 feet?

13 Q. Yes. Yeah.

14 A. That was a pretty good guess then.

15 Q. Yeah.

16 A. And then I just, my role was to -- I mean, the emergency, but  
17 by this time, there was other officers. In fact, when I got  
18 there, one of our highway patrolmen had just rolled in also.  
19 There was a gentleman that said that he had witnessed some things.  
20 I pointed him towards Trooper Cox, Sergeant Cox. I started to ask  
21 questions like where the landing zone was going to be.

22 And they were starting to set up the landing zone up by that  
23 rest area, but I decided to meet one of my deputies, cleared the  
24 roadway from traffic and we left the helicopter right next to the  
25 bus instead of -- because we was going to have to carry the bodies

1 or the injured people to the helicopter, so.

2 Q. So they did set up the landing zone in that rest area?

3 A. Well, they -- that's where they was going to set it up.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. But that was -- happened to carry these folks. That was a  
6 little bit further than what I wanted to do. And then there were  
7 some wire issues and tree issues in there that I didn't really  
8 like. So --

9 Q. Sure.

10 A. -- we switched that around. And then --

11 Q. So what did it end up -- I guess -- I talked to Chief Harris,  
12 and I guess I forgot to ask him that question. But he's -- I'm  
13 waiting for a call back from him now, in fact. But so did they  
14 just land it there on the road near the bus?

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. Yeah, just on the east side of the bus. We cleared the  
18 traffic back quite a-ways. And we just used the road right there,  
19 just barely the other side of the bus, on the east side of the  
20 bus.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. That's with a copter that --

23 Q. And there was only -- there was one that landed or two?

24 A. You know, I don't really remember what.

25 Q. Lose track? Sure.

1 A. It could have been two.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. There was a fixed wing that come in. That was after the  
4 helicopter, that I remember.

5 Q. Right.

6 A. It was a -- but I basically just kind of coordinated things  
7 with Ron. I was getting phone calls from other sheriffs, other  
8 agencies offering resources, officers, ambulances, this kind of  
9 stuff. So, I kept getting with Ron and see if we needed them and  
10 then I would either tell the people to bring him or get a hold of  
11 my dispatch.

12 I also was a direct line to our dispatch. Like Ron was, any  
13 -- the people on the scene would have questions, like, do you know  
14 how or where the plane is at; how far is at? So, I would check  
15 with dispatch and find out where the resources were and let them  
16 know.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. So, my job was basically to see those first responders had  
19 everything that they needed as far as information.

20 Q. Okay. Okay, yeah. Again, so I guess I have some follow-up  
21 questions for Chief Harris. Like I said, I'm waiting for a call  
22 from him. But -- okay. Sheriff, I --

23 A. There's another EMT that you need to talk to, and I know I  
24 don't have her name, and she told me her name. But there was a --  
25 and you probably know about her. She was a -- I don't know if she

1 was a fireman, an EMT, a paramedic out of Washington State, I  
2 think.

3 Q. Yeah, Sergeant Cox gave me her contact number. I need to  
4 reach out to her yet as well. I heard she was really helpful.

5 A. Well, she was right there with Ron, all men. And she also  
6 spoke some Chinese. That's another thing I did, is I got one of  
7 my -- he's actually a fireman. He's on the search and rescue, but  
8 he's -- I knew that he spoke Chinese. So we got him hooked up --  
9 we actually took him off the scene and sent him to the hospital.

10 Q. Right. Yeah, I have talked to him. That was -- Mike --

11 A. Sarles.

12 Q. Sarles, yeah.

13 A. Right.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. So that's -- you know, and then I helped with traffic a  
16 little bit and just whatever I could do.

17 Q. Sure, sure.

18 A. Down in the hospital, my emergency manager and my PIO lady  
19 were getting completely overwhelmed with their duties, so I  
20 actually ended up down in the hospital where they were set up to  
21 help them.

22 Q. Okay. Yeah, I got a -- I guess, was her name Denise Bastrop,  
23 that's --

24 A. That's the lady. Yeah.

25 Q. Right. I guess she's out today, but I was -- if you could

1 connect me back with Chris. She says she'll met me. I can leave  
2 a voicemail for her.

3 A. Okay, hold on just a minute and I'll transfer you. Okay?

4 Q. Okay, thank you very much, Sheriff. Appreciate your help.

5 SHERIFF PERKINS: You done with me?

6 MR. KAMINSKI: I'm done with you, sir. Yes, sir.

7 SHERIFF PERKINS: All right. Thank you.

8 MR. KAMINSKI: Thank you.

9 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

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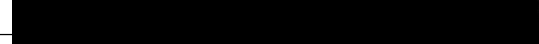
IN THE MATTER OF:            TOUR BUS CRASH  
                                      BRYCE CANYON CITY, UTAH  
                                      SEPTEMBER 20, 2019  
                                      Interview of James Perkins

ACCIDENT NO.:                HWY19MH012

PLACE:                         Via Telephone

DATE:                          September 26, 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.

  
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Kimberlee Kondrat  
Transcriber



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

\* \* \* \* \*

Investigation of: \*

\*

TOUR BUS CRASH \*

BRYCE CANYON CITY, UTAH \* Accident No.: HWY19MH012

SEPTEMBER 20, 2019 \*

\*

\* \* \* \* \*

Interview of: ERIC HOUSTON  
Deputy

Via Telephone

Friday,  
September 27, 2019

## APPEARANCES:

RONALD KAMINSKI, Senior Survival Factors Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>I N D E X</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Interview of Eric Houston:		
By Mr. Kaminski		4

1 I N T E R V I E W

2 MR. KAMINSKI: Ron Kaminski, Safety Board.

3 MR. HOUSTON: This is Deputy Houston.

4 MR. KAMINSKI: Yes.

5 MR. HOUSTON: Just calling you back.

6 MR. KAMINSKI: Okay.

7 INTERVIEW OF ERIC HOUSTON

8 BY MR. KAMINSKI:

9 Q. So Deputy Houston, what's your first name?

10 A. Eric.

11 Q. Eric?

12 A. E-R-I-C.

13 Q. Okay. And you spell your last name H-O-U-S-T-O-N?

14 A. Yes, sir.

15 Q. Okay, great. So yeah, if you could just give me a general  
16 description of what you got, when you got there, what all you saw,  
17 what all you did.

18 A. Okay. So got on scene, walking towards it. Chief Harris  
19 threw me the incident commander vest. Got there. You could see  
20 several bodies on the west side of the bus. Still piled up,  
21 actually. Very few people able to sit up or walk around. You  
22 know, the walking wounded, there wasn't a lot of those. Ron,  
23 Chief Harris -- can I -- I'm going to call him Ron.

24 Q. Sure.

25 A. Ron started assessing the patients, and I started working

1 towards finding ambulances and helicopters, figuring out  
2 transportation, where we were going. First ambulance arrived  
3 probably within 2 or 3, 4 minutes of when I got there. Another  
4 quick assessment: who was the worst? We got a couple loaded on  
5 that ambulance. They headed out. Then we started to get  
6 ambulances stacked up and moving people faster.

7 Q. So that first ambulance, is that the one you -- did you send  
8 that -- where did you send the first ambulance?

9 A. First ambulance would have went to Panguitch.

10 Q. Garfield Hospital.

11 A. Garfield, yeah.

12 Q. Right. Okay.

13 A. So all of the reds and, I think, all of the yellows were  
14 transported to Garfield Memorial. There may have been one yellow,  
15 the best yellow, and maybe five or six greens transported, I  
16 think, to the other hospitals. But I -- they might have stopped  
17 off at Garfield, too. I don't -- once I got them off the scene, I  
18 felt like I had them taken care of, so --

19 Q. Okay. And so you had a medevac helicopter land there at the  
20 scene?

21 A. We did.

22 Q. Okay. And where did they land? Where was the landing zone  
23 set up?

24 A. On the east side of the bus accident, right on Highway 12.

25 Q. East side. So that was on the -- say, the driver's side of

1 the bus. That would have been on the driver's side of the bus.

2 A. Yeah. Yeah.

3 Q. Towards Bryce Canyon.

4 A. Towards Bryce Canyon. Yeah.

5 Q. Right. Right.

6 A. And Brooks Wiseman was in charge of the helispot or the  
7 heliport, whatever you want to call it.

8 Q. The landing zone?

9 A. The landing zone.

10 Q. What's his last name?

11 A. Wiseman. W-I-S-E-M-A-N, I believe. First name is Brooks, B-  
12 R-O-O-K-S.

13 Q. Okay. And so he only had one -- was that -- is that the one  
14 that Chief Harris mentioned was initially yellow, but then he  
15 upgraded her to red? Or was that a different one? Do you know?  
16 Or can't be sure.

17 A. I can't be sure. She was -- both patients that flew out were  
18 red. As we were making the -- I shouldn't say "we." Ron was  
19 assessing the needs and telling us who was going where. I just  
20 made sure which bodies he said were going where went there. I  
21 didn't have to -- I wasn't doing the medical side. Just  
22 transportation, maybe.

23 Q. Sure. And what would you guesstimate -- I guess you don't  
24 have to guess. I can look. I was wondering what -- how long  
25 before the helicopter arrived. Now you went -- there was two

1 people that went on that helicopter, or was it one on the  
2 helicopter, one on the fixed-wing?

3 A. One on the helicopter, one on the fixed-wing. And due to our  
4 distance from -- I mean, it's 40 minutes if the helicopter's ready  
5 to go, right?

6 Q. Right.

7 A. So I mean, yeah, we're -- Ron's making the assessment, and I  
8 think he did an excellent job. Who's going to make it to this,  
9 and who needs the critical care, right? And so you know,  
10 that's -- I don't know what his criteria was, didn't second-guess  
11 him. I just knew these people had to go on whichever ride he told  
12 me, so --

13 Q. Okay. Okay. Yeah, no. Yeah, in fact, I talked to the one  
14 witness who was there who was helping people and speaking  
15 Mandarin. It was a female. And she had great things to say about  
16 you and Chief Harris, so --

17 A. The fireman that came from Redmond?

18 Q. No. This was the Good Samaritan that stopped. And she was  
19 also --

20 A. Yeah, that's --

21 Q. -- a nurse, I guess, or had some -- no, she was a firefighter  
22 as well, but she's from Washington state.

23 A. Right. She was fantastic. She was rock solid. I can't tell  
24 you how great she was. So I guess the feeling's mutual on that,  
25 so --

1 Q. Okay, yeah. That's what I've been hearing. So okay, so let  
2 me -- anything else?

3 A. No, not really. You know, I guess what I'd like to say is I  
4 think we've been practicing for this, and really, everybody did a  
5 good job. It was -- for real world, it was as good as, I think,  
6 we could hope it to go. Sure, we could improve a few places  
7 and -- but I thought all in all we did really well. And having  
8 extra nurses at the hospital, and I'm sure having that extra  
9 firefighter, paramedic, whatever from Washington right on scene,  
10 that stuff all played a role, and it certainly helped. But we had  
11 several other EMTs that they were just doing excellent work that  
12 day, you know? And that --

13 Q. Right. Yeah, I think I talked to another person that is a  
14 retired fireman that came and helped as well.

15 A. Yeah. I don't know who all -- honestly, the highway patrol,  
16 I think, tried to gather who all was there, but there was, there  
17 was a lady there that was a nurse somewhere retired that -- she  
18 didn't have any gloves, and I think she ended up wearing leather  
19 gloves trying to keep this lady's airway open, you know? And so  
20 yeah.

21 Q. Yeah, those -- it's awfully nice when just bystanders just  
22 kind of -- Good Samaritans just want to step up and help.

23 A. Yeah. And by the time I -- my son happened to show up quite  
24 early on. And the way I understand it, there was just people  
25 piled on each other. By the time I got there, there was still a



1 mess of people involved, but I think most of them had been  
2 somewhat separated out, at least to where they were semi-flat on  
3 their back. But anyway.

4 Q. Yeah, I know, I know it sounded like -- the description I got  
5 from Chief Harris, he kind of got things -- the ball rolling, and  
6 he kind of handed things off to you. So I think he -- it sounds  
7 like he did an awesome job just getting things all set up for you  
8 as well.

9 A. Yeah. Ron did an excellent job.

10 Q. Yeah. So you mention you guys practice. I'm still waiting  
11 to talk to your EOC manager. I think Balstrop? Belstrop?

12 A. Bastrop?

13 Q. Bastrop. Yeah.

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. Yeah, she hasn't returned my calls yet, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
16 [REDACTED].  
17 A. I think she is in training all this week, so she's out of the  
18 area.

19 Q. So what kind of -- you mentioned you guys have been trained  
20 for this. Have you had these mass casualty crash --

21 A. Yeah, we've had some mass casualty tabletops, and we've also  
22 had I think at least one full-scale bus accident --

23 Q. Great.

24 A. -- training, so --

25 Q. Well, being you guys are so close to the canyon and there's

1 so many busses that are coming in and out of that place, that  
2 makes perfect sense.

3 A. And we had another bus roll about 11 years ago, maybe, in Red  
4 Canyon. And it was a full-sized bus. It just happened to have  
5 all young kids on it. So everybody kind of walked away a little  
6 better from that one, but --

7 Q. Yeah, I talked to a sheriff's deputy during the week, and he  
8 mentioned that too. He said, why didn't you guys come out for  
9 that one? And so yeah, it's just kind of a crapshoot which ones  
10 we go to and which ones we don't, but it's kind of up to  
11 management. But yeah, I ended up -- I did that one out in Mexican  
12 Hat that was about 8 years ago as well. There was -- the whole  
13 bus rolled over, full-size, and the whole roof came off, and  
14 everybody was ejected except the driver and two passengers.

15 A. Yeah.

16 MR. KAMINSKI: But okay. Deputy, I appreciate your call back  
17 and stepping up to help out out there. Thank you very much.

18 MR. HOUSTON: Okay. Take care.

19 MR. KAMINSKI: You too, sir. Bye-bye.

20 MR. HOUSTON: Bye.

21 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)  
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23  
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CERTIFICATE

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NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD


IN THE MATTER OF:            TOUR BUS CRASH  
                                      BRYCE CANYON CITY, UTAH  
                                      SEPTEMBER 20, 2019  
                                      Interview of Eric Houston

ACCIDENT NO.:                HWY19MH012

PLACE:                         Via Telephone

DATE:                         September 27, 2019

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,  
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to the best of my skill and ability.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Eileen Sanchez  
Transcriber