



FACTUAL REPORT OF INVESTIGATION ATTACHMENT

2014 Tesla Driver Interview Transcript

Culver City, CA

HWY18FH004

(34 pages)

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

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TESLA MODEL S CRASH *

CULVER CITY, CALIFORNIA * Accident No.: HWY18FH004

JANUARY 22, 2018 *

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Interview of: ROBIN GEOULLA

Friday,
January 26, 2018

APPEARANCES:

KENNETH BRAGG, Human Performance Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

DANIEL GEOULLA
(On behalf of Robin Geoulla)

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I N T E R V I E W

(10:30 a.m.)

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2
3 MR. BRAGG: Today is Friday, January 26, 2018, the time is
4 10:30 a.m., and my name is Kenneth Bragg, human performance
5 investigator with the National Transportation Safety Board, Office
6 of Highway Safety.

INTERVIEW OF ROBIN GEOULLA

BY MR. BRAGG:

8
9 Q. Sir, please state your first name and state and spell your
10 last name, please?

11 A. Robin Geoulla, R-O-B-I-N, G-E-O-O-L-A [sic].

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. And my name is Daniel Geoulla, D-A-N-I-E-L; last name is
14 G-E-O-U-L-L-A.

15 Q. Okay. Since you both have the last -- the same last name,
16 I'm going to refer to you by first names, Robin, so there's no
17 confusion.

18 A. Okay.

19 Q. Okay. So, Robin, is this the first vehicle with this type of
20 technology that you've owned?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. And how long have you owned the vehicle?

23 A. About 5 or 6 months.

24 Q. So it wasn't new when you bought it?

25 A. No, used.

1 Q. Okay. And who did you buy it from?

2 A. A private owner.

3 Q. A private owner. When you bought the vehicle did you have it
4 inspected by a dealership?

5 A. I had it -- I paid for it for a full inspection, full service
6 at the Tesla dealer.

7 Q. Okay. And what kind of things did they look at on the
8 inspection?

9 A. They checked everything and -- they checked from tire
10 pressure to all the fluid, all the -- everything that they're
11 supposed to check, they checked, to tell me, you know, if the car
12 is in good shape, if it needs anything.

13 Q. Okay. And how would you rate the vehicle?

14 A. Very good.

15 Q. Very good. And how about the technology specifically, how
16 would you rate the use of that? Prior to this crash, how did you
17 think about the technology?

18 A. What technology? What part of the technology? The whole car
19 itself or individual technologies?

20 Q. I'm talking specifically with the driver, the driver assist
21 program?

22 A. Oh, the pilot, the autopilot. I think it does have flaws,
23 but for -- I think it was named wrong. For the purpose of helping
24 a driver, it's a very good technology.

25 Q. Okay. And by -- when you say it's named wrong, what do you

1 mean?

2 A. Because it's not an autopilot. It's a very good cruise
3 control with a little bit more advanced technology in it.

4 Q. Okay. So let's talk about that, because I want to get a good
5 understanding what technology it has and how you use it in
6 particular. So does it have steering assist?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. And tell me how that works.

9 A. So the steering assist work -- I guess, it finds the two line
10 in the freeway, in the street.

11 MR. D. GEOULLA: Are you asking him his understanding of how
12 it works or --

13 MR. BRAGG: Yes. His understanding, his understanding.

14 MR. D. GEOULLA: -- from a functional perspective or from the
15 technology perspective?

16 MR. BRAGG: From understanding -- from a functional.

17 MR. R. GEOULLA: So functional, the way I saw it, it would
18 find the two line and it would keep you between the two line.

19 BY MR. BRAGG:

20 Q. Okay. And have you used this technology?

21 A. Yeah, from the day 1 that I got the car I used the
22 technology.

23 Q. And did you find it to be reliable?

24 A. At the beginning I had my doubts and it was a little scary
25 to, you know, rely on it and to just, you know, sit back and let

1 it drive. But as I used it, I sort of found out where the flaws
2 were, when I need to be in control of and when I can just relax
3 and just let it drive.

4 Q. So describe an instance in which you felt like it was
5 lacking?

6 A. I think more sensors and more -- it needs more view. It
7 needs to have more, more of the surrounding, not just like one
8 laser looking at the front -- one thing looking front. It needs
9 like maybe two more cameras on the side too, to be able to see the
10 sides forward.

11 Q. So does it --

12 MR. D. GEOULLA: He means from a situation like where it
13 wouldn't work, like where you would have to --

14 MR. R. GEOULLA: Oh, when it wouldn't work? If the road is a
15 lot of turns -- it's not a straight road, it's not a good idea to
16 use it. Because if the turn is sharp, it does malfunction. It
17 does -- you know, it makes the turn, but sometimes it jumps. It
18 can't make that soft turn that a human hand can make.

19 MR. BRAGG: Okay. And --

20 MR. D. GEOULLA: Is that what you were looking for?

21 MR. BRAGG: Yes.

22 MR. D. GEOULLA: Okay.

23 MR. BRAGG: Thank you.

24 BY MR. BRAGG:

25 Q. And does it interact with the other technologies? Does it

1 interact with the traffic aware cruise control?

2 A. Yes, it does.

3 Q. It does?

4 A. It does.

5 Q. How about the automatic emergency braking, does it interact
6 with that?

7 A. I have experienced that maybe once or twice that it actually
8 stopped, so --

9 Q. Okay. And describe those circumstances which it -- when it
10 stopped?

11 A. The car that was in the front -- like the traffic all of a
12 sudden stopped and this did the same thing, it stopped.

13 Q. Okay. So prior to this particular incident you're referring
14 to, you're driving along, traffic stopped short and the vehicle
15 stopped --

16 A. Right.

17 Q. -- before you were aware?

18 A. No, I was aware. I stopped too, but I want to say maybe the
19 car stopped a second sooner than I stopped.

20 Q. Okay. So how about the traffic aware cruise control, how
21 does that work?

22 A. The cruise control you can set it what the distance you want
23 next -- what speed you want and what distance you want to the next
24 car ahead of you.

25 MR. D. GEOULLA: Following distance.

1 MR. R. GEOULLA: Following distance. So -- and I always set
2 it at the maximum amount of distance that's possible with the --
3 which is three cars, I think.

4 BY MR. BRAGG:

5 Q. Three cars, okay. And have you found that to be reliable?

6 A. Pretty reliable, yes.

7 Q. Pretty reliable. What do you mean by pretty reliable?

8 A. I have never seen it like do some -- you know, get like too
9 close or stay too far.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. And it goes by how fast -- I have noticed like if I -- if you
12 are going fast, the distance is longer, and if you are going
13 slower, the distance is the three car.

14 Q. What influence, if any, does cars changing lanes, either in
15 front of your vehicle or out from -- or from in front of your
16 vehicle, does that have any influence on the system, how it works?

17 MR. D. GEOULLA: Are you talking other than this crash?

18 MR. BRAGG: Yeah, other than this crash, yeah.

19 MR. R. GEOULLA: When -- well, when it senses that there is
20 no car -- either the car in front of you is gone, then it speeds
21 up. But sometime I have had it that it actually slows -- the car
22 in front of you leaves and the car actually slows down, because I
23 think it gets confused at what just happened and it confused. It
24 slows down and then it speed up again.

25 BY MR. BRAGG:

1 Q. And so what conditions would you most likely use these
2 technologies? And I'm talking about all of them.

3 A. Stop and go traffic, normal traffic, not open freeway, fast.
4 And straight lines, mostly like freeways that you're going from --
5 you don't need to exit, you don't need to change lanes, nothing.
6 Like carpooling, it's one of the best places to use it because not
7 many cars are coming in front of you and not many cars are leaving
8 your lane. So pretty much you follow the car in front of you.

9 Q. Is there anything or any type of condition in which you
10 absolutely would not use it?

11 A. Yes. When the sun hits you in the face, when the sun is
12 right directly at you that you can't actually -- you have a hard
13 time looking forward, at that time I have noticed that it doesn't
14 work well either.

15 Q. Okay. Do you have -- when the guy sold you the car did he
16 give you a manual?

17 A. Did they have the manual? There was a manual, yes.

18 MR. D. GEOULLA: Yeah.

19 BY MR. BRAGG:

20 Q. And how thoroughly, if at all, did you read it?

21 A. I didn't read the manual. I asked -- when I went to the
22 dealer, I asked the dealer, one of the technicians there to
23 explain it to me.

24 Q. Yeah.

25 A. To show me how the -- how it works.

1 Q. How much time did he spend doing that?

2 A. Because I'm a very tech savvy person myself, not that much.
3 Because he would say -- he was -- he would explain, you know, you
4 have to press this and do this, but -- so the first time that he
5 said whatever it was, I got it.

6 Q. So you felt pretty comfortable?

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. Okay. And what was your decision that made you buy
9 specifically this particular vehicle? Was it for the technology
10 or was it just --

11 A. It was the technology.

12 Q. And by that, by the technology do you mean was it the
13 electric or just this -- the driver assist technology?

14 A. Both.

15 Q. Both, okay. And what kind of research did you look into when
16 you decided to buy it?

17 A. Well, I knew a few people who had them, so I talked to them.
18 Before this I had a Prius plug-in, so that was sort of an electric
19 car too. So I had it and I was very happy with that car too,
20 so --

21 Q. Okay. Let's talk about the day of the crash. Where were you
22 coming from?

23 A. I was coming from home. I dropped off my daughter at school.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. Got into the freeway and drove.

1 Q. Sure. And about how far from the beginning of the trip did
2 the crash occur?

3 A. I dropped her off at 7:45 and the accident was at 8:30,
4 around 8:30.

5 Q. All right. And is this beginning -- I mean, towards ending
6 your trip, midway --

7 A. Right about half.

8 Q. About halfway. And it happened on Interstate --

9 A. 405 South.

10 Q. -- 405 South. And how long had you been on 405?

11 A. Thirty minutes.

12 Q. And where did you get on 405 at?

13 A. 101, from 101 South.

14 Q. 101. And at what point did you engage the technology, the
15 driver assist technology?

16 A. When I got into the carpool lane.

17 Q. When you got into the carpool lane. And where was that at?

18 A. If I'm not mistaking, Getty Center. Where is the entrance to
19 the carpool lane when you come 405 North -- where you come to 405
20 South? I think it's literally about half a mile after you get
21 into the 405.

22 Q. Okay. And what technology did you activate?

23 A. I turned on the autopilot.

24 Q. The autopilot, and that includes what?

25 A. The steering and the braking system and the gas.

1 Q. And the gas, okay.

2 A. So it's cruise control, you turn on -- it turns on -- when
3 you click it once it's the cruise control.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. If you click it twice is the cruise control plus the
6 autopilot, plus the steering and the braking system.

7 Q. Now do you have to turn on the automated braking?

8 A. No, that's automatic.

9 Q. That's automatic.

10 A. So when you turn on the cruise control, the braking
11 automatically get activated.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. So the cruise control worked the same thing except the
14 steering part doesn't work.

15 Q. Okay. So if you don't have the cruise control and you don't
16 have the autopilot, does the emergency braking still work?

17 A. I haven't had experience with it to know if it has worked or
18 not.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. I'm assuming it should.

21 Q. Okay. So -- and I'm sorry. So let's continue. You were in
22 the HOV lane?

23 A. HOV lane. So HOV lane, when you're coming down the 405
24 South, at the beginning of it the speed is usually around 30 --
25 25, 30, no more than that, until you go on top of the hill and you

1 start coming down toward right here, Freeway 10.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. And by the time you get to Freeway 10 is when it opens up.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. Which -- because everybody either go to 10 East, 10 West or
6 they exit right here to come to the area of Westwood, this area.

7 Q. Okay. So I understand you to say the traffic lightens,
8 becomes lighter because of --

9 A. The carpool lane.

10 Q. Yes.

11 A. Everybody get out of it to go to where they want to go. The
12 carpool actually start moving at almost a full speed around when
13 you get to this area, when you get to 10 freeway.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. And it -- I might -- I don't remember the exact. Maybe a few
16 times the autopilot turned off; I turned it back on. That does
17 happen once in a while, and that's because when you're holding the
18 steering wheel, if you put a little bit more than -- if you put
19 force on it a little bit, it will shut off and it becomes your
20 control.

21 Q. So if I understand what you're saying, if the vehicle senses
22 that you're giving input --

23 A. It would turn off.

24 Q. -- it disengages so it doesn't fight you?

25 A. Right.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. It does (indiscernible) --

3 Q. And is that what happened the day of the crash?

4 A. No.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. The day of crash, no, it was on full autopilot all the way to
7 the end.

8 Q. Okay. So go ahead and explain that to me.

9 A. So we -- I passed the 10. I remember I passed the 10 and the
10 speed was on a 65, following a car. It was a bigger car. I think
11 it was an SUV or a pickup truck or something. It was a little bit
12 taller.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. And we were just following each other. He would -- if the
15 traffic would slow down, I would slow down. I don't remember if
16 it did slow down and went back up again and slowed down, because,
17 again, this is a routine that I do every single day, so that
18 specific day I don't remember exactly. But how I drive it, like
19 this, I put my hand on my knee and hold the bottom of the steering
20 wheel.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. Not hold it. I just touch it because, you know, my hand is
23 right there, and my other hand is free. And if it asks me --
24 because it does ask you -- not when you're going in straight
25 lines, but when the car feel like you need to control the car, it

1 does ask you to put your hand on the wheel, which my hand is right
2 there. I hold the wheel and it notice that I'm holding the wheel,
3 the light goes off.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. So I remember that day it didn't ask me to hold the wheels.
6 My hand was right there under it but it didn't ask me. And I was
7 just sit -- I wasn't on my phone. I wasn't -- nothing is special.
8 There was nothing special about that day. My coffee was next to
9 me; my bagel was next to me. I was having a coffee and a bagel.
10 And all I remember, that truck, and then I just saw the boom in my
11 face, and that was it.

12 Q. You saw what truck?

13 A. No, the car that was in front of me.

14 Q. Yeah.

15 A. All I remember was that. And I think that car, at the last
16 second when it got to the firetruck, it speeded up and went away,
17 and the reaction -- my -- it wasn't fast enough for me to even see
18 the firetruck. It just went inside of it and it was -- it was
19 just like that.

20 Q. Okay. So when this happened, when the crash happened, where
21 were you looking?

22 A. Forward. Just -- nothing is special. Either -- maybe I was
23 changing the radio, maybe not. You know, nothing specific. I
24 don't remember. Maybe I was drinking my coffee.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. I remember my coffee splattered all over the place and
2 spilled and my bagel was smashed. So I don't know if my bagel was
3 in my hand, my coffee was in my hand or I had the bagel in my
4 hand. I honestly don't know what it was, but it was -- nothing,
5 nothing out of ordinary. It wasn't like I was, you know, I was
6 sleeping or nothing -- you know, nothing like -- just normal.

7 Q. Were you using the vehicle control at all, like the --

8 A. It could be. I don't -- you know, I honestly, that second I
9 don't remember what it was. All I remember just the airbag
10 popping and that was it.

11 Q. And you said you weren't on the phone at all?

12 A. No.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. The last text that I got that day -- I have it if you want to
15 see. The last text I got that day was at 8:07 in the morning my
16 wife text me and that was it.

17 Q. Okay. And no conversations while you're driving?

18 A. No, no.

19 Q. No, okay.

20 A. I usually avoid having phone calls in the car.

21 Q. Yeah. What were the traffic conditions around you?

22 A. In the morning, at the beginning, heavy when I was coming up
23 the 405. But when we start going down, it was like every other
24 day, almost a full speed in a carpool lane.

25 Q. As you reached the firetruck, what was traffic like?

1 A. Pretty -- pretty okay. Not full speed, but it was just going
2 without any stop and go kind of thing. It was actually --

3 Q. And about how fast were you going?

4 A. Around 65.

5 Q. Okay. Okay.

6 MR. D. GEOULLA: Wait. You had it set at 65.

7 MR. R. GEOULLA: 65. So I'm assuming if the traffic was
8 going around 65, I was going around 65.

9 BY MR. BRAGG:

10 Q. So, but at that point the vehicle was controlling speed?

11 A. Yes. The vehicle was controlled the speed according to what
12 the car in front of me is going.

13 MR. D. GEOULLA: So -- sorry to interrupt.

14 MR. BRAGG: Sure.

15 MR. D. GEOULLA: You set it to 65, it'll go as high as 65 but
16 it won't go higher?

17 MR. R. GEOULLA: No, it won't go higher. It wouldn't --

18 MR. D. GEOULLA: But it could go lower based on traffic?

19 MR. R. GEOULLA: Yes, based on whoever is in front of you.

20 BY MR. BRAGG:

21 Q. And were you facing the sun? Were you driving into the sun?

22 A. Yes. Yes, it was facing -- and that was one of the things, I
23 was facing the sun.

24 Q. Yeah.

25 A. I think I have a picture showing you where the sun was at the

1 time.

2 MR. D. GEOULLA: You can just give it to him after.

3 MR. BRAGG: Yeah. You can text it to me if you want.

4 MR. D. GEOULLA: Yeah.

5 MR. BRAGG: That's fine.

6 MR. D. GEOULLA: Just show him the picture after.

7 MR. R. GEOULLA: Okay.

8 MR. BRAGG: Okay. Well, since you've got your phone --

9 MR. R. GEOULLA: Well, if you see, the sun is hitting
10 right --

11 MR. BRAGG: Yeah. I can, I can where you're --

12 MR. R. GEOULLA: It's right there.

13 MR. BRAGG: Yeah, I can see what you're saying. You're
14 driving towards it, towards the sun.

15 MR. R. GEOULLA: Yeah, toward the sun.

16 MR. BRAGG: All right.

17 BY MR. BRAGG:

18 Q. And at the time of the crash your hand's still --

19 A. On my lap under the steering.

20 Q. And your right hand was --

21 A. Right hand --

22 Q. -- you had coffee --

23 A. I think I had the coffee cup in my hand.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. I think I had the coffee cup in my hand.

1 Q. Right. So when the crash occurred, then what happened?

2 A. I felt a boom, and something popped. I didn't know what
3 happened, so I was trying to figure out sort of like where am I,
4 you know, what just happened? I touched my -- you know, I moved
5 my hand; it was moving. I touched my leg; I felt it. I didn't
6 see anything, you know, that was -- everything was crashed up and
7 the smell of, you know, smoke and smell of the airbag was in my
8 face. And so I opened the door and I came out and saw what's
9 going on. And the first question they asked me, you didn't see
10 the firetruck? No, I didn't. If I would see the firetruck, I
11 wouldn't have hit the firetruck.

12 Q. So when -- so you first became aware of the firetruck, when?

13 A. When I came out of the car.

14 Q. When you came out of the car. And, but as you approached
15 where the firetruck was, were you aware that there was an accident
16 on the other side?

17 A. No. No, I was not.

18 Q. No. So you had no, no indication?

19 A. At all. At all. Zero.

20 MR. BRAGG: Okay.

21 MR. D. GEOULLA: And there were no cones, there were no
22 flares.

23 MR. R. GEOULLA: There was no cones, there was no flares,
24 there was --

25 BY MR. BRAGG:

1 Q. There was no sign?

2 A. Nothing. Nothing.

3 Q. No sign up warning of a crash ahead? Okay. And just to
4 clarify, leading up to the crash in the seconds before the crash,
5 you didn't drive and you didn't give any driver, manual driver
6 input?

7 A. Any -- no, I don't believe I did, because it didn't ask me.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. Especially because that lane of the 405, that carpool lane is
10 just a straight lane, and when you are in that kind of straight
11 lane it doesn't ask you.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. It won't ask you because it's pretty solid.

14 Q. And just to kind of go back over your experience with the
15 vehicle, you said you've been in the vehicle previously?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. And when you -- the emergency braking came on, and did the
18 system warn you of a pending crash when it happened or tell me --

19 A. Yes, it did. It did.

20 Q. So explain to me what did it do?

21 A. I think a car pulled in front of me.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. I think one of the instants it was on autopilot and a car
24 pulled, came in front of me and --

25 Q. Was the car going the same direction and he just cut in your

1 lane?

2 A. Same direction. He just cut me.

3 Q. And this was on the interstate?

4 A. Yeah, one of the freeways. I don't use it in the street. I
5 never use it in a regular street. It's always only -- and even on
6 the freeway, only when I'm on the lane that I'm just going to
7 continue that lane for a long time. Not if like I'm in a regular
8 lane and I have to keep switching lane between lane, I don't use
9 it, because there is no point to it.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. Only when I'm in a lane that I know I'm just going to stay
12 here for like half an hour straight down, that's when I use it.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. And on that instant, yeah, the car cut me and I sort of
15 remembered the lights blinked and stopped. A few days before --
16 maybe a week before, a technician for Tesla came to my house to
17 change something on the door handle. The door handle was broken.
18 I called them. They said they send a technician to come and fix
19 it.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. They came over, and this is a specific -- this issue was one
22 of the things that I actually told him. I said, look, when the
23 sun hits the camera inside -- you know, when you're driving and
24 the sun is hitting you in the face, it's hitting the camera too,
25 and I have noticed it does malfunction when you do that. And he

1 said, first of all, this is a Beta version of the software.
2 Second of all, this system has -- we have a system that these cars
3 already drove -- we have these cars actually on a self-driving,
4 not even -- so we have perfected the system. It's not out yet but
5 it will.

6 And so I did -- the issue about the -- and I think they
7 changed my camera twice. They changed my radar, you know, that
8 sonar -- whatever it has in the front of the car, they changed
9 that once because I told -- for a few days the autopilot wouldn't
10 engage and I took the car and they changed the camera. Once they
11 changed the camera, one they said they had to calibrate the
12 camera, and once they had to change the radar in the front of it.

13 Q. And where do you get your car serviced at?

14 A. Tesla Service Station in Van Ness.

15 Q. In Van Ness?

16 A. Van Ness.

17 Q. Would you be willing to share with me the pre-purchase
18 inspection that you had done?

19 A. I might have it in the car. I can check.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. I might have it, I mean, right now in my car downstairs. I
22 can go check.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. Sure.

25 Q. And then that's -- and that's just for us. That's not to be

1 seen --

2 A. Yeah. I paid how much? I think I paid about -- oh, and I
3 changed another -- at that -- at the same time when I did that
4 inspection, I paid, I think, \$500 for them to change -- it was a
5 3G -- the system was a 3G. I thought I paid an extra 500 to
6 change them to LTE.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. To the newer --

9 MR. D. GEOULLA: 4G

10 MR. R. GEOULLA: 4G.

11 MR. BRAGG: Yeah, 4G for the --

12 MR. R. GEOULLA: It's an LTE right now, but it was --

13 MR. BRAGG: Yeah, for the cellular.

14 MR. R. GEOULLA: Yeah, which didn't make that much of a
15 difference.

16 MR. BRAGG: Yeah.

17 MR. R. GEOULLA: And, oh, when I did this -- oh, another
18 thing that was right when I was buying the car, when I -- you
19 know, I told them I want an inspection, I'm buying this car, I
20 want to make sure everything is okay, they said, oh, okay, well,
21 while it's here it's due for the service too, which is 900 bucks
22 to do the service. I said, okay, yeah, do the service too at the
23 same time, the car is there.

24 So I think I dropped the car on Friday and Monday morning
25 they text me the car is ready. I said, okay, I'm going to come

1 later to pick it up. And then they called and said, oh, your -- I
2 don't know what under the car, something that hold the tires or
3 whatever, it's broken. There is a rope around it; it's broken.
4 We have to change it, \$3,000.

5 And I said, wait, you guys said the car is ready. If you
6 guys done the inspection and the car is ready, what do you mean
7 there is a rope around the thing and it's broken and we have to
8 change it? You were supposed to check the car. Oh, yeah, we
9 checked it but this was hidden inside; we didn't see it. I said,
10 how can you not see it and now you see it, you know? So they end
11 up fixing the whole thing and without charging me, I mean --

12 MR. BRAGG: Okay.

13 MR. R. GEOULLA: -- as a courtesy. I'm just saying, and then
14 they said come and pick up the car.

15 BY MR. BRAGG:

16 Q. Okay. All right. So anything else you can think about
17 telling me, you feel like, about the car? Anything you think that
18 would be useful?

19 A. About the car. I think, the car, it's just the name that
20 they put on that technology is giving people a false sense of --
21 autopilot. Because when they tell you it's autopilot, you're
22 saying, okay, it's autopilot. It's not. It will help you and --
23 but you have to be aware of your surrounding and everything.

24 Q. Now, did you -- did this crash help you come to that
25 conclusion or --

1 A. No, no. I always knew that and I always take -- I always
2 drive that car very careful. I always -- and like, whenever I
3 felt like I'm in a place that I shouldn't be on autopilot because
4 the road is turning and it's -- because I didn't like the way it
5 turns in sharp turns in the freeway. So I would always turn it
6 off and just drive it.

7 But this wasn't an instance of it because this was one of
8 those circumstances -- for example, if the fire department had
9 coned off the line from a little bit farther down and there was a
10 flare, it would be obvious the line is closed and I would be aware
11 of it. But because the car in front of me was a little bit taller
12 than regular cars, I didn't -- I just didn't see what's happening
13 in the front of it until it was too late and the car was gone.

14 Q. Okay. Just a little background about you. Married with
15 kids?

16 A. Married, two kids.

17 Q. Okay. And you live at home with your wife and kids?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. And this crash happened on Monday morning?

20 A. Monday morning.

21 Q. What did you do Sunday?

22 A. Sunday, Sunday. Let me see what we did on Sunday? Nothing
23 special. Home with the kids, unless we went -- what was on
24 Sunday? Oh, no, I was at the wedding.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. Sunday we were at the wedding.

2 Q. What time did you go to bed Sunday night?

3 A. Around 12.

4 Q. Around midnight. What time did you get up?

5 A. Seven.

6 Q. Seven. Did you drink anything at the wedding?

7 A. No.

8 Q. No.

9 A. I'm not a drinker.

10 Q. Okay. How about Saturday, what did you do?

11 A. Work.

12 Q. Work. And what time did you get up on Saturday?

13 A. Saturday I got up -- Saturdays I get up a little bit later,
14 so it was 7:30.

15 Q. Okay. And what time did you go to bed?

16 A. Saturday night, no later than 11, 10:30, 11.

17 Q. Generally speaking, how do you sleep at night?

18 A. Oh, perfect.

19 Q. Perfect?

20 A. I put my head down, one, two, three I'm gone. I wake up in
21 the morning, perfect.

22 MR. BRAGG: Okay, okay. I don't have any other questions.

23 MR. D. GEOULLA: Is it okay if I follow up on one or two
24 questions because it might be helpful?

25 MR. BRAGG: Sure. Absolutely.

1 BY MR. D. GEOULLA:

2 Q. You mentioned that you had -- it lets you set the parking
3 distance -- or following distance, and you said you -- I wanted to
4 make sure I heard it. You said you had it set on the -- which
5 setting?

6 A. For the maximum it usually has.

7 Q. Okay. So you set it on the maximum and you always set it for
8 the maximum?

9 A. It stays, it stays. Once you set it on whatever distance it
10 is, it always stays unless you change it.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. Unless you go back.

13 Q. And then you said that there was another instance where a car
14 changed in your lane so you -- and the car -- and the autopilot
15 automatically, the emergency braking stopped the car on its own?

16 A. It got activated but I stopped. It did get -- I saw the
17 light of it, but --

18 Q. So it gave you an alert?

19 A. It gave me the alert, but I was the one who stopped the car.

20 Q. Okay. And so you're able to rely on it giving you an alert?

21 A. The alert helped, yes, but I would have -- even if it wasn't,
22 I would have stopped because I had time to see it coming in front
23 of me.

24 MR. BRAGG: And this is a previous crash, correct, you're
25 talking about?

1 MR. D. GEOULLA: Yes. Yeah, the previous case.

2 MR. BRAGG: Yeah, yeah.

3 MR. D. GEOULLA: You said a previous -- well, not a crash but
4 the previous case.

5 MR. BRAGG: Yeah, the previous case. Yeah, I just want to --

6 BY MR. D. GEOULLA:

7 Q. And then this truck had no cones set up, you said?

8 A. The firetruck? No, there was no -- there was three cones
9 next to the firetruck, next to the firetruck by the lane, but, you
10 know, by the carpool lane, the double lane that both --

11 Q. Nothing behind?

12 A. Nothing behind it. And there was a highway patrol on the
13 shoulder right next to the firetruck and there was another
14 firetruck on the other side. I saw that when I got out the car.
15 But there was another firetruck on the other side.

16 Q. There's a center divider blocking?

17 A. Yeah, there was a center divider. And there was a
18 motorcycle, I guess, down on the ground but I didn't see the
19 motorcycle until, you know, I went outside and I saw the
20 motorcycle is on the ground.

21 MR. BRAGG: Okay.

22 MR. R. GEOULLA: But there was -- behind the firetruck there
23 was absolutely no cone, no warning, no flares, nothing, nothing,
24 nothing.

25 MR. BRAGG: Did the vehicle give you the warning?

1 MR. R. GEOULLA: No, sir. No, don't remember any warning.

2 MR. BRAGG: Okay.

3 MR. R. GEOULLA: Zero warning. And I don't remember the
4 vehicle slowing down either. They're -- you know, if Tesla's
5 saying it did, it did, but I don't remember.

6 MR. D. GEOULLA: So Tesla told us some of the -- some info
7 about the data they have. I'm guessing you guys already have it
8 or do you have access to it?

9 MR. BRAGG: Yeah, we're in the process of getting it, yeah.

10 MR. D. GEOULLA: Okay.

11 BY MR. D. GEOULLA:

12 Q. And then, you did say that they had replaced sensors and
13 stuff on the car?

14 A. Yeah, they had replaced the camera, I think twice, and they
15 replaced the sonar in the front of it, I think once.

16 Q. Okay. When the truck or car in front of you moved out of the
17 way, do you know how close that truck was to the --

18 A. That -- I think that truck speeded up to cut the line out so
19 that's why, by the time I got there, it was -- the firetruck was
20 there already. I mean, he speeded up to go to the other line. He
21 didn't slow down to go to the other line. I guess he saw an
22 opening or something, so he speeded up to cut the double line and
23 go to the other line.

24 MR. BRAGG: Okay. All right.

25 MR. D. GEOULLA: And that's not -- he crossed the double

1 yellow line --

2 MR. R. GEOULLA: Of course.

3 MR. D. GEOULLA: -- to get out from behind.

4 MR. R. GEOULLA: Because there was no other way. We were in
5 a lane that, you know, there wasn't any cross-lane. It was just a
6 double lane going down.

7 BY MR. BRAGG:

8 Q. And the thing that prevented you to seeing -- from seeing the
9 firetruck ahead was?

10 A. This car in front of me.

11 Q. This car in front of you. So let me ask you this: Do you
12 feel like if you were driving your previous car without this
13 technology, do you think the crash still would have occurred?

14 A. If this big car was in front of me, probably.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. Because I didn't get enough time to -- this car crossed out
17 almost where the firetruck was and I couldn't see it until
18 practically it was out of my way, and the sun was in my eyes
19 anyway.

20 Q. And about how far behind the car were you?

21 A. Because of we -- I think we -- because of the traffic we
22 slowed down, probably I was only a three-car distance, not more
23 than that. Usually when you're going fast is the distance is
24 more, but when you are not going too fast, the distance only
25 whatever you set it as.

1 MR. BRAGG: Okay.

2 MR. D. GEOULLA: But when you're driving alone, if you can't
3 see the car -- if you can't see around the car in front of you --
4 and I know I usually do this -- do you not usually give yourself
5 more space, more room when you can't see around the car?

6 MR. R. GEOULLA: I think the distance is no more than two or
7 -- enough to stop, not enough to -- not be like, you know, not
8 half a mile away, no. I give myself --

9 MR. D. GEOULLA: But you give yourself enough room?

10 MR. R. GEOULLA: Enough room to just, you know --

11 MR. D. GEOULLA: In case something happens?

12 MR. R. GEOULLA: In case something happen, push the brake.
13 But this car, what happened is it was just going fast and switched
14 line. It wasn't like slowly putting his blinkers on to switch to
15 the next line. He just saw an opening and he just speeded up and
16 went to the -- went out, and I just went in right behind him.

17 MR. D. GEOULLA: Okay.

18 MR. BRAGG: Okay. So the time is 11:04 and I'm going to
19 conclude the interview. Thank you for participating.

20 MR. R. GEOULLA: Thank you.

21 (Whereupon, at 11:04 a.m., the interview was concluded.)
22
23
24
25

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: TESLA MODEL S CRASH
 CULVER CITY, CALIFORNIA
 JANUARY 22, 2018
 Interview of Robin Geoulla

ACCIDENT NO.: HWY18FH004

PLACE:

DATE: January 26, 2018

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.



Cheryl Farnel Donovan
Transcriber