

APRIL 6, 2018

The driver of a truck pulling a Canadian “Super-B Combination” of two trailers laden with bales of peat moss traveled drove past four warning signs and then ran an oversized stop sign at highway speed just before it was struck by a bus carrying Saskatchewan junior hockey team the Humboldt Broncos who were headed to playoffs last April.

The CMV driver failed to recognize that his vehicle was approaching an intersection and did not heed the stop sign. Reports estimate the truck was traveling at about 60 miles an hour through the intersection.

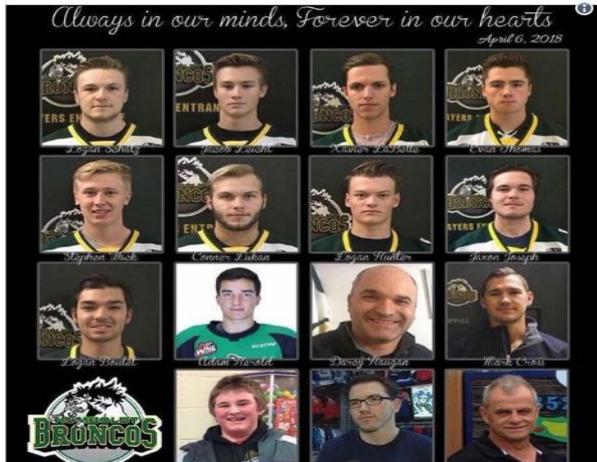


16 PEOPLE KILLED; 13 PEOPLE INJURED

Twenty-nine people were on the bus. Fourteen died at the scene and two more succumbed to their injuries in the hospital. Most of the dead were players on the team, ages 16-21, but that also included the team's coach, an athletic therapist, two employees of a radio station, and the bus driver.

The driver escaped uninjured.

The 30 year old driver was charged with 16 counts of dangerous driving causing death and 13 counts of dangerous driving causing bodily harm.



COULD THE BUS DRIVER HAVE AVOIDED THE COLLISION ?

According to the RCMP investigation, the driver of the bus recognized the hazard as early as possible and took the evasive action of hard braking; the actions of the bus driver did not contribute to the collision, nor could he have avoided it.

A review was conducted on Mr. Doekerson's daily log. No violations were found.

The bus skidded nearly 80 feet before striking the truck's trailers. There were no skid marks from the truck.

Mr. Doerksen was among the dead from the crash, which left both vehicles well off the road and showered the intersection with peat moss and debris.

HOW WAS THE WEATHER?

The road was dry and clear, and weather did not impair the Driver's vision of the intersection. It was daylight and the sun was not in the driver's eyes.

WAS THE DRIVER FATIGUED?

NO. Examination showed that the driver was not impaired by fatigue.

WERE DRUGS OR ALCOHOL INVOLVED?

NO. The driver of the CMV was not impaired by drugs or alcohol.

WAS THE DRIVER ON HIS PHONE?

NO. The driver of the CMV was not on his phone.

HOW WAS HIS PAPERWORK?

It was reported that his logbook and vehicle inspection reports – three weeks' worth – contained 70 violations, most of them form and manner errors. However, a document signed by two senior Saskatchewan government officials and included in the RCMP's forensic collision reconstruction report determined the following: **"If the driver had been stopped and inspected on April 6, 2018, prior to the incident he would have been placed under a 72-hour out-of-service declaration ... preventing him from operating a commercial vehicle."**



WHAT ABOUT THE MOTOR CARRIER?

Officials with Alberta Transportation said eight charges have now been laid against the trucking company owner relating to non-compliance with federal and provincial safety regulations in the months before the crash.

They include seven federal charges: two counts of failing to maintain logs for drivers hours of service, three counts of failing to monitor the compliance of a driver under safety regulations, and two counts of having more than one daily log for any day. The eighth charge under provincial regulations alleges failure to have or follow a written safety program.

The maximum penalty for a federal hours of service failing is \$5,000 per offense, while the provincial charge carries a \$310 penalty. A court can, however, use discretion to impose a penalty up to \$2,000.

The Calgary Motor Carrier is looking at a potential maximum fine of \$42,000.

The Calgary Motor Carrier remains suspended.

TRAINING

At the time of the accident, Mr. Sidhu was driving an 8 axle 140,000 pound Canadian “Super-B” combination - two trailers - 92 feet long on a road he had never driven before.

He had taken a one week truck driver training course in August 2017 - was tested, passed, and granted his CDL.

He left Canada for India, his native country to get married; he returned to Canada in March 2018, where he was hired by his friend at a small Calgary, Alberta based trucking company on March 17, 2018.

Reports say that the secondary highways were unfamiliar to him. He had earlier in the day been lost and had to pull over to use his GPS.

He had reportedly run for two weeks with another driver; the week of the crash was his first week on his own.

FIVE SIGNS WARNED OF THE INTERSECTION THE DRIVER MISSED THEM ALL



The stop sign is “oversized”...4 feet in diameter.

WAS HE DISTRACTED?

Published reports indicate Sidhu was stressing over the billowing tarps on his load of peat moss bales and was concerned they posed a hazard to drivers in oncoming traffic. Reports say he had stopped and adjusted his tarps just 15 minutes prior to the accident, but was unsuccessful in properly securing them and they continued to flap and distract him. The driver's lawyer said his client was completely distracted by the flapping tarp. So focused was he on that hazard that he failed to notice four warning signs of the approaching intersection, and then failed to notice an oversized lighted stop sign as he blew through the intersection and caused the crash.



NO EXCUSES FROM THE DRIVER

In a prepared statement read by his lawyer, Sidhu said, “I just want to plead guilty. I don't want a plea bargain, I don't want a trial. I don't want to make things any worse. I can't make things any better, but I certainly won't want to make them worse by having a trial.”

“I can't even imagine what you are going through, what you have been through. I've taken the most valuable things of your life,” he said.



SENTENCING:

On March 22, 2019 the driver was sentenced to 8 years in prison - the longest sentence in Canada for a driver in an accident that didn't involve alcohol.

Sidhu wanted the victims' parents to know that he was "devastated" and that he's been "overwhelmed by the expressions of sympathy and kindness that some of the families and players have expressed to him, in spite of the fact that grief is entirely his fault."

At the sentencing hearing, Judge Inez Cardinal stated:

This collision was avoidable. Mr. Sidhu was solely responsible for this collision as evidenced by the forensic accident report. He missed key indicators of an approaching intersection, and his prolonged inattention resulted in the deaths of sixteen people and caused bodily harm to thirteen others.

The semi-tractor unit with its "Super B" configuration was a huge, heavy, and deadly vehicle. It was made even more so by an inexperienced operator in unfamiliar territory who was not giving his full attention to the road ahead of him. He continued past the stop sign without any attempt at braking or evasive action. His large unit straddled both lanes of the highway and left no avenue of escape for the bus.

