

EIDorado National

— a **THOR** company —

April 22, 2004

**VIA FACSIMILE AND
CERTIFIED U.S. MAIL,
RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED**

Mr. Richard Boyd, Chief
Medium & Heavy Duty Vehicle Division
Office of Defects Investigation
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
400 Seventh Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

Re: NHTSA File PE04-008

Dear Mr. Boyd:

This letter is being sent in response to your letter dated March 26, 2004, in which you requested EIDorado National to investigate its records regarding whether there have been any incidents of engine compartment fires in 2000 through 2002 model year EIDorado National buses built on General Motors and Ford cutaway chassis in connection with the above-referenced Preliminary Evaluation. The response of EIDorado National with respect to each of the five requests for information follows:

1. Furnish the total number of EIDorado buses built on General Motors and Ford cutaway chassis manufactured for sale or lease in the United States.

Response: The total number of 2000 through 2002 model year EIDorado National buses built on General Motors and Ford cutaway chassis is 7,280. The breakdown of these buses by model year and by chassis manufacturer is set forth below.

<u>2000 Model Year</u>	<u>2001 Model Year</u>	<u>2002 Model Year</u>
Ford Chassis 1,755	Ford Chassis 2,088	Ford Chassis 2,391
GM Chassis 453	GM Chassis 427	GM Chassis 166

The foregoing information was provided on April 20, 2004 by Brent Sadler, _____
for EIDorado National.

2. Furnish the number of/and copies of all owner complaints and field reports, studies, surveys, or investigations from all sources which have been received or authorized by EIDorado, or of which EIDorado is aware, pertaining to the alleged defect in the subject vehicles. This should include information pertaining to the report included with this letter. Separate the number and copies of owner complaints from other sources. Also, if EIDorado has issued any service or technical bulletins, advisories, or other communications to dealers pertaining to the alleged defect in the subject vehicles, provide a copy of each document. If no such documents have been issued, so state.

Response: EIDorado National has received only one complaint of an engine compartment fire involving 2000 through 2002 model year EIDorado National buses. This incident involved a 2000 model year Aerotech 240 bus built on a Ford cutaway chassis that was owned by [REDACTED]. A copy of EIDorado National's file relating to this incident is attached hereto. This file includes the correspondence with [REDACTED] regarding this incident, as well as an investigative report dated April 25, 2003, that was prepared by Crawford Investigation Services for EIDorado National in connection with this incident. After the initial correspondence in March and April, 2003, and the completion of the investigative report, EIDorado National has not had any further communication with [REDACTED] regarding this incident.

EIDorado National has not issued any service or technical bulletins, advisories, or other communications to dealers pertaining to any alleged defect that may result in engine compartment fires.

The foregoing information was provided on April 13, 2004, by [REDACTED] Support Manager for EIDorado National.

3. Identify and describe all accidents, subrogation claims, or lawsuits known to EIDorado pertaining to the alleged defect (where EIDorado is or was a defendant or codefendant). Provide EIDorado analysis of each item, clearly identifying the vehicle (model year and VIN), the vehicle owner, and any injuries or property damage which may have occurred.

Response: The only engine compartment fire involving a 2000 through 2002 model year EIDorado National bus is the incident with the [REDACTED] bus set forth in the response to Item 2 above. To the knowledge of EIDorado National, there have been no subrogation claims or lawsuits pertaining to the above-referenced incident at Bloomsburg University or to any other incident involving engine compartment fires on 2000 through 2002 model year EIDorado National buses.

There were no personal injuries as a result of the incident at [REDACTED]. However, the EIDorado National bus was destroyed and there was also property damage to an adjacent bus and to a maintenance building that were next to the location of the EIDorado National bus at the time of the fire.

Mr. Richard Boyd

April 22, 2004

Page 3

The foregoing information was provided by Bernie Regnier, Product Support Manager for EIDorado National, on April 20, 2004.

4. Identify and describe all significant modifications or changes that could relate to the alleged defect in the manufacture of the subject vehicles. The following information must be included for each modification or change:
 - a. the reason for modification or change;
 - b. a description of the modification or change;
 - c. the approximate calendar date on which the modification or change was incorporated into production; and
 - d. state whether the modified or changed components could be interchanged with earlier production components.

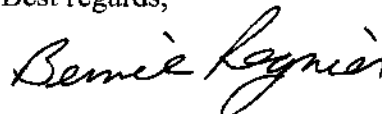
Response: EIDorado National has made no significant modifications or changes in the manufacture of its buses that would relate to the engine compartment fire referred to in the response to Item 2 above. This information was provided by Bernie Regnier, Product Support Manager for EIDorado National, on April 20, 2004.

5. Furnish the number of warranty claims related to the alleged defect on the subject vehicles by model series code, calendar month, and problem code. Each problem claim code must be identified.

Response: EIDorado National has not received any warranty claims with respect to any engine compartment fires in any 2000 through 2002 model year EIDorado National buses. [REDACTED] has not filed any warranty claim with respect to the incident referred to in Item 2 above. The foregoing information was provided by Bernie Regnier, Product Support Manager for EIDorado National, on April 20, 2004.

The foregoing information should be responsive to your request for information. If you need any additional information with respect to this preliminary evaluation, please feel free to contact the undersigned.

Best regards,



Bernie Regnier
Product Support Manager

dja

Enclosures

G:\Thor\EID-KS\NHTSA InvEngCompFire\Boyd, Richard-resp

3:30pm 3/27/03



60651

Mileage - 55,000 Approx (54,000+)

Electrical - Engine Comp
Parked for 20 hours

- Nobody hurt
- maintenance Chg.
- \$5,000 Int'l 40 ft bus

SAT. Morning / MAR. 22

Friday 10:20 pm
Jet run

12:20 AM

Fire Marshall - plugged in for the
water tank blackwater

From: Bernie Regnier [mailto:bernie@encominc.com]
Sent: Thursday, March 27, 2003 4:46 PM
To: John Garmhausen
Cc: Sheldon Waile; John Resnik; Ken Huser; Andy Imanse; Richard Coffman; Kermit Shipley; Cathy Smith
Subject: [REDACTED], PA ENC# 68651

John Garmhausen,

Received a call late this afternoon regarding the above-identified unit. The attachment has all the details I have at this time. [REDACTED] told me they are self-insured and that would be filing a legal (request/suit/notification or something) to both FORD and us regarding this. He asked whom they should send the notification letter to and I suggested they send it to you John. If you would like to discuss further or I have advised them incorrectly I can be reached at [REDACTED]. Off the cuff he made the remark that it would probably all come to naught, but that if they did not try they would be in trouble for not making the effort to recoup their losses. (pleasant fellow, just doing his job)

Bernie Regnier

ENC serial # EFRMA2406 [REDACTED]

FORD VIN # 1FDXE45F6 [REDACTED]

Aerotech/Aero
XT/Signature

MFG. Date: 01 / 2000
Mileage: 54,000 plus
Dealer: Leibensperger Transportation



Contact: [REDACTED]
Telephone: [REDACTED]

Jim [REDACTED]. Jim called to report the unit identified above "[REDACTED]" burned up due to a fire they believe started in the engine compartment. Jim [REDACTED] The bus (unit) last run was concluded at 10:20 pm on Friday night March 21, 2003 the unit had the block heater plugged in before the driver left. Student of the university while crossing campus noticed the fire approximately 2 hours later around 12:20 AM March 22, 2003. The unit burned completely, also fire damage a parked unit (40' bus / International) on the front end [paint and windshield etc....] and the fire damaged a maintenance building the units were parked next too.

There were no injuries. Jim [REDACTED] estimated approximately \$150,000 damage to all property combined. The local fire marshal has already reviewed the bus (March 22nd). Jim did not know whether [REDACTED] had a copy yet or not.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 27, 2003 4:53 PM
To: John Garmhausen
Cc: Sheldon Walle; John Resnik; Ken Huser; Andy Imanse; Richard Coffman; Kermit Shipley; Cathy Smith
Subject: RE: [REDACTED] ENC# 68651

Sorry, the first email sent I copied down one digit off on the serial number (sister unit) the attachment on this one is corrected.

Bernie

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 27, 2003 4:46 PM
To: John Garmhausen
Cc: Sheldon Walle; John Resnik; Ken Huser; Andy Imanse; Richard Coffman; Kermit Shipley; Cathy Smith
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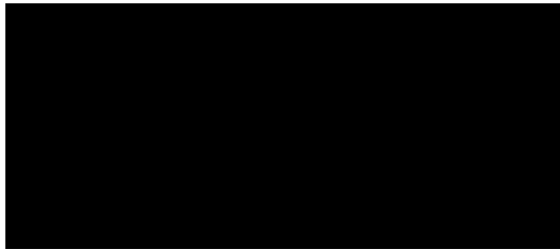
Bernie Regnier

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MFG. Date: 01 / 2000
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There were no injuries. Jim [REDACTED] estimated approximately \$150,000 damage to all property combined. The local fire marshal has already reviewed the bus (March 22nd). Jim did not know whether [REDACTED] had a copy yet or not.

From: John Garmhausen [mailto:jgarmhausen@fgks-law.com]
Sent: Friday, March 28, 2003 12:28 PM
To: 'bernier@enconline.com'
Cc: Sheldon Walle; John Resnik; Ken Huser; Andy Imanse; Walt Bennett (E-mail)
Subject: RE: [REDACTED] ENC# 68651

Gentlemen,

Please see attached.

John

-----Original Message-----

From: Bernie Regnier [mailto:bernier@enconline.com]
Sent: Thursday, March 27, 2003 5:53 PM
To: John Garmhausen
Cc: Sheldon Walle; John Resnik; Ken Huser; Andy Imanse; Richard Coffman; Kermit Shipley; Cathy Smith
Subject: RE: [REDACTED] ENC# 68651

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Sent: Thursday, March 27, 2003 4:46 PM
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Bernie Regnier

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 28, 2003 1:30 PM
To: John Garmhausen
Subject: RE: [REDACTED] ENC# 68651

John,

We also recognized his comments as such, however as you already know it is our job to document all comments whether they may be offhand or not. I take every call along these lines as if they will end up in court someday. My documenting these comments do not reflect how we personally feel or characterize how the situation may ultimately end up.

On a personal note I was surprised he even made such a comment. (But in the grand scheme of things my personal feelings play no role in what posture they are going to take in this matter) The attachment is John Resnik's advisement to me of what & how we have started acting on this concern.

Best regards,

Bernie

-----Original Message-----

From: John Garmhausen [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 28, 2003 12:28 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Sheldon Walle; John Resnik; Ken Huser; Andy Imanse; Walt Bennett (E-mail)
Subject: RE: [REDACTED] ENC# 68651

Gentlemen,

Please see attached.

John

-----Original Message-----

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Sent: Thursday, March 27, 2003 5:53 PM
To: John Garmhausen
Cc: Sheldon Walle; John Resnik; Ken Huser; Andy Imanse; Richard Coffman; Kermit Shipley; Cathy Smith
Subject: RE: [REDACTED] A ENC# 68651

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Bernie

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Cc: Sheldon Walle; John Resnik; Ken Huser; Andy Imanse; Richard Coffman; Kermit Shipley; Cathy Smith
Subject: [REDACTED] ENC# 68651

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Received a call late this afternoon regarding the above-identified unit. The attachment has all the details I have at this time. Jim [REDACTED] told me they are self-insured and that would be filing a legal (request/suit/notification or something) to both FORD and us regarding this. He asked whom they should send the notification letter to and I suggested they send it to you John. If you would like to discuss further or I have advised them incorrectly I can be reached at 800-955-9086. Off the cuff he made the remark that it would probably all come to naught, but that if they did not try they would be in trouble for not making the effort to recoup their losses. (pleasant fellow, just doing his job)

Bernie Regnier

-----Original Message-----

From: John Resnik [REDACTED]

Sent: Friday, March 28, 2003 10:39 AM

To: [REDACTED]

Cc: 'Sheldon Walle'; 'Andy Imanse'; 'Gary Gragg'

Subject: RE: Picture on the front of [REDACTED] student paper

Bernie -

Sheldon is calling the guy who did the Dulles Airport inspection and asking him to investigate. He is asking him to contact you for details. I'll contact Alan Hunter at our insurance company and Walt Bennett.

- John

[REDACTED]

March 28, 2003

ElDorado National
Bernie Regnier
1655 Wall Street
Salina, KA. 67401

Re: Bus fire

Vehicle: 2000 El Dorado National with a ford chassis and motor
VIN: 1FDXE45F8 [REDACTED]
Owner: [REDACTED]
Date of Loss: March 22, 2003
Claim number: 031024

Dear Mr. Regnier,

The above vehicle was destroyed by a fire on March 22, 2003. The fire occurred while the vehicle was parked on the campus of [REDACTED]

In order to determine the cause of the fire, including a determination as to whether any defect in the vehicle was in existence at the time of the fire, an inspection and testing of the vehicle will be conducted by North Eastern Technical Services, Inc. This inspection will take place at Minuteman Towing and Repair. Minuteman is located at Exit 242 of Interstate 80, Mifflinville, PA. 18631.

As you may have an interest in this matter, from both a safety precaution standpoint and as potential defendants in litigation, you are invited to have an expert attend and participate in the inspection and testing procedures.

To coordinate the inspection date and time, please contact North Eastern Technical Services, Inc. at (508) 675-0999. Should you have any questions pertaining to this matter, or wish to discuss the same in further detail, you may contact Robert Klinger at (570) 389-4775. Failure to respond to this notification within ten business days from the date of this letter will be construed as forfeiture of your right to be present at this examination.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

John Resnik

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, March 31, 2003 9:30 AM
To: johnr@enconline.com
Cc: wbennett@bright.net
Subject: RE: FW: Picture on the front of [REDACTED] student paper

John,

In order to keep things consistent, I suggest you go through John Talley at Crawford in Cleveland. He coordinates all the inspections and cause & origin assignments. His number is (440-243-8636). It would probably be a good idea to let John know about Frank, as long as you thought Frank did a good job for you. Call me should you have any questions.

Allen

John [REDACTED]

<<< Memo from [REDACTED] on 31 March, 2003, 11:22 Monday
>>>

[REDACTED] on 31 Mar 2003, 11:22 Monday

To: Allen M Hunter
cc:
Subject: RE: FW: Picture on the front of [REDACTED] student paper

Allen -

The only name we had was the guy who inspected our last incident, in D.C.

Frank Rauschenberg
Emmitsburg, MD
410-756-5444

- John

-----Original Message-----

From: Allen.M.Hunter@marsh.com [mailto:Allen.M.Hunter@marsh.com]
Sent: Friday, March 28, 2003 5:32 PM
To: johnr@enconline.com
Cc: wbennett@thorindustries.com
Subject: Re: FW: Picture on the front of [REDACTED] student paper

John,

Have you made contact directly with Crawford?? If so, did you go through John Talley in the Crawford Cleveland, OH office??

Regards,

Allen

*** TX REPORT ***

TRANSMISSION OK

TX/RX NO 3507
CONNECTION TEL [REDACTED]
CONNECTION ID [REDACTED]
ST. TIME 03/31 13:24
USAGE T 02'38
PGS. 6
RESULT OK

Post-it
Fax Note R7873 3/31/03 6
To FRANK ROUSHENBERG
Fax#
From Bernie / ENC
Phone#

ENC serial # EFRMA240 [REDACTED]
FORD VIN # 1FDXE45F8 [REDACTED]

Aerotech/Aero
XT/Signature

MFG. Date: 01 / 2000
Mileage: 54,000 plus
Dealer: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Contact: [REDACTED]
Telephone: [REDACTED]

Jim [REDACTED] Jim called to report the unit identified above [REDACTED] burned up due to a fire they believe started in the engine compartment. Jim [REDACTED] The bus (unit) last run was concluded at 10:20 pm on Friday night March 21, 2003 the unit had the block heater plugged in before the driver left. Student of the university while crossing campus noticed the fire approximately 2 hours later around 12:20 AM March 22, 2003. The unit burned completely, also fire damage a parked unit (40' bus / International) on the front end [paint and windshield etc....] and the fire damaged a maintenance building the units were parked next too.

There were no injuries. Jim [REDACTED] estimated approximately \$150,000 damage to all property combined. The local fire marshal has already reviewed the bus (March 22nd). Jim did not know whether [REDACTED] had a copy yet or not.

Post-it[®] Date # of pages
Fax Note R7673 3/31/03 6
To FRANK Raishenberg
Fax#
From Bernie / ENC
Phone#

ENC serial # EFRMA2406 [REDACTED]

FORD VIN # 1FDXE45F8Y [REDACTED]

Aerotech/Aero
XT/Signature

MFG. Date: 01 / 2000
Mileage: 54,000 plus
Dealer: Leibensperger Transportation

[REDACTED]

Jim [REDACTED] is with the [REDACTED]. Jim called to report the unit identified above [REDACTED] burned up due to a fire they believe started in the engine compartment. Jim [REDACTED]. The bus (unit) last run was concluded at 10:20 pm on Friday night March 21, 2003 the unit had the block heater plugged in before the driver left. Student of the university while crossing campus noticed the fire approximately 2 hours later around 12:20 AM March 22, 2003. The unit burned completely, also fire damage a parked unit (40' bus / International) on the front end [paint and windshield etc....] and the fire damaged a maintenance building the units were parked next too.

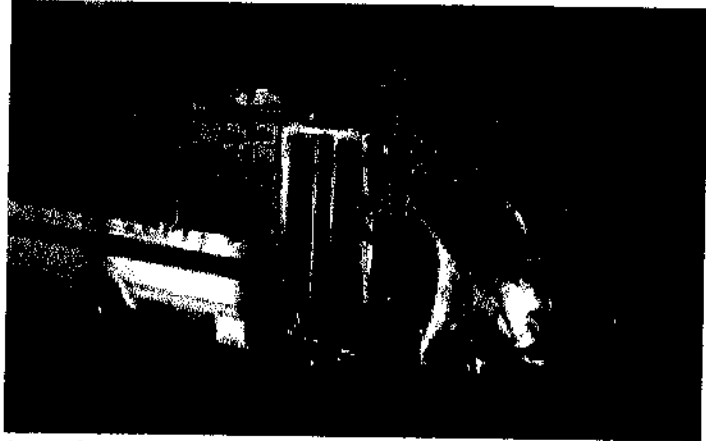
There were no injuries. Jim [REDACTED] estimated approximately \$150,000 damage to all property combined. The local fire marshal has already reviewed the bus (March 22nd). Jim did not know whether [REDACTED] had a copy yet or not.

Campus shuttle ignites in flames

By Steve Hughes

On Saturday, at 12:15 a.m., one of Bloomsburg University's shuttle buses caught on fire next to the Boyd F. Buckingham Maintenance Center, near the tennis courts. No one was injured during the blaze, damages are expected to exceed \$100,000.

"I drove up fast and sirens were going off, we drove up a little farther and smoke and flames were everywhere. We didn't know what it was,"



The frame of the El Dorado shuttle is only part of the damages created after a fire broke out early Saturday morning. Damages to this shuttle will cost around \$60,000.



Damages occurred inside the maintenance center, as well as to the shuttle busses.

said eyewitness Aaron Peers.

Along with [REDACTED] Fire Department, companies from Catawissa and Espy were called in to help battle the fire. The fire was announced under control shortly after 1 a.m.

"There's smoke damage through the whole building," said [REDACTED] Fire Chief Hugh Gross. Most of the building's damage was a result of this.

"A generator exhaust fan was used to clear building of smoke," said Bob Stackhouse, safety officer.

"We will re-assess the building as there might be some electrical damage to it," said Jim Hollister, assistant vice president for University Relations.

The shuttle was parked less than 10 feet from the building at the time it caught on fire, the outside of the building had damage to the roof and two of the garage doors.

Most of the damage was to the 2000 El Dorado shuttle, which is one of five 25-person shuttles that [REDACTED] owns.

"Damage to this shuttle will be around \$60,000," said Hollister.

owns another El Dorado shuttle, but it was recently inspected.

One of new 44-person shuttles was also damaged in the blaze. Hollister estimates damages to this shuttle are to be around \$5,000. The shuttle was taken into the garage Wednesday and is expected to be back in operation soon.

Money for the cost of repairs, damages and cleanup will come from a combination of insurance and building funds.

"All these details will be worked out later," said Hollister.

Smoke and red flames filled the night sky and were visible from upper campus. Students reported hearing an explosion during the fire.

"We were driving by and we looked over and first thought the building was on fire, but then as we looked closer we saw just the frame of the bus with flames all around it," said junior Beth Bortz.

Chief Hugh Gross of the [REDACTED] Fire Department first thought the gas tank had exploded, but it was later confirmed that it was the fire extinguisher that had exploded. The shuttle buses run on diesel fuel. Diesel fuel isn't as combustible as regular gasoline.

At room temperature, diesel fuel doesn't have high vapor pressure. The vapor is what burns, and to get diesel to burn, it must have a very high temperature. In order to start a diesel engine right away, glow sticks are kept hot throughout the night, according to Larry Mack, Ph.D., professor of Chemistry. They are kept hot by plugging in an extension cord through the front grill of the shuttle.

Though a cause has yet to be determined, most of the attention has been focused on a possible electrical problem.

"We are confident buses are safe," said Jim Michael, senior operations manager.

Crews started cleaning up shortly after 3 a.m. when the fire was under control. The El Dorado shuttle was towed away early Saturday morning by Minute Man Towing. [REDACTED] hosted an open house on Saturday, but Hollister said that was far from their minds when having

the shuttle towed. The maintenance building was open for regular work by Monday morning.

"Building clean-up costs will be about \$26,000," said Hollister.

The state fire marshal arrived on the scene and focused most of his attention on the dashboard of the El Dorado. With the damage so heavy to the shuttle, a possible cause may not be determined. The fire does not seem suspicious at this point.

██████████ owns eight shuttle buses total, five of these are 25 passenger shuttles, while the other three hold 44 people. Bloomsburg runs five buses at a time, and rotates them periodically throughout the day. Shuttle service will not be affected by the loss of the two shuttles, according to Michael.

LEIBENSPERGER TRANSPORTATION SALES INC
3096 Route 100
Macungie, PA 18062

Telephones: (610) 966-5444 Fax: (610) 966-2139

ATT Bernie - Sheldon's not here

Fax

Did you get a copy of this?

From

To: *(Kathy Smith)*

From: Jodi Casanek

Fax:

Date: April 2, 2003

Phone:

Pages: 4

Re:

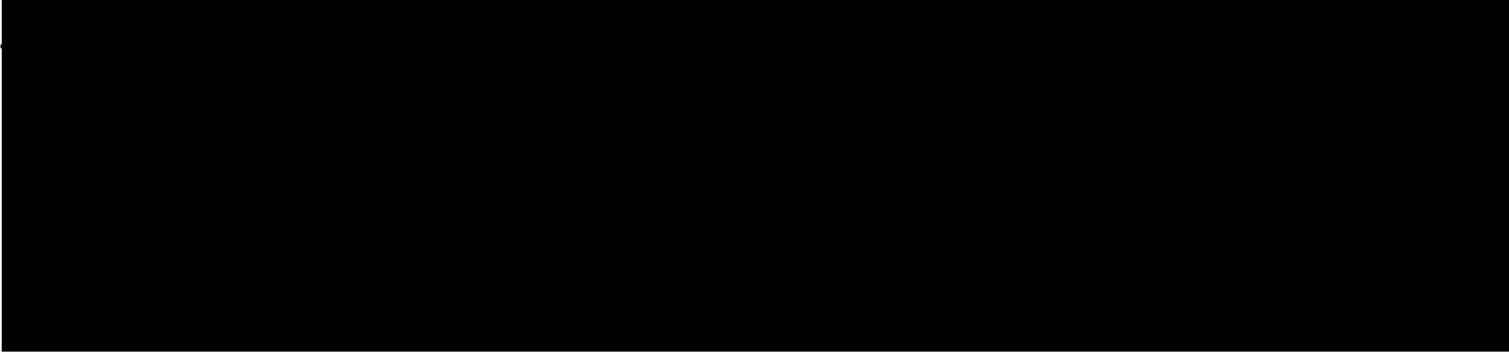
CC:

- Urgent
- For Review
- Please Comment
- Please Reply
- Please Recycle

•Comments:

Attached is a copy of information we just received regarding the recent fire at





March 28, 2003

Transportation Sales, Inc.
Ray Leibensperger
3096 Route 100
Macungie, PA. 18062-9325

Re: Bus fire

Vehicle: 2000 El Dorado National with a ford chassis and motor
VIN: 1FDXE45P8 [redacted]
Owner: [redacted]
Date of Loss: March 22, 2003
Claim number: 031024

Dear Mr. Leibensperger,

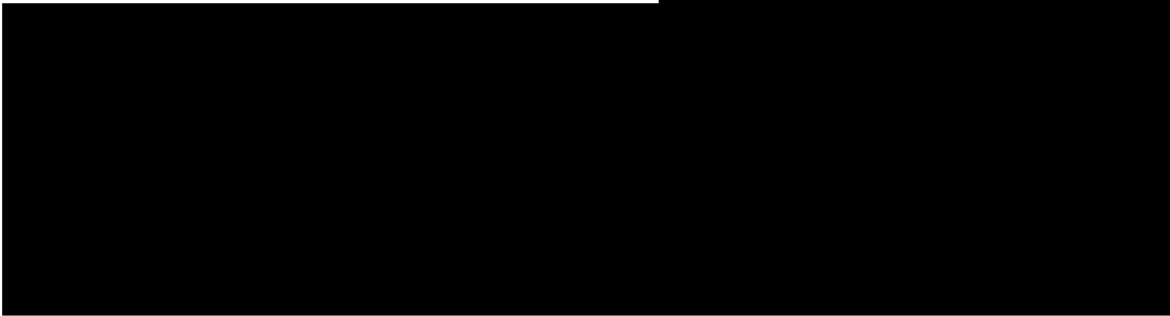
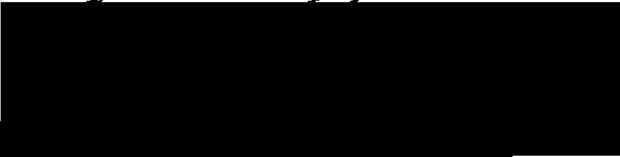
The above vehicle was destroyed by a fire on March 22, 2003. The fire occurred while the vehicle was parked on the campus of [redacted]

In order to determine the cause of the fire, including a determination as to whether any defect in the vehicle was in existence at the time of the fire, an inspection and testing of the vehicle will be conducted by North Eastern Technical Services, Inc. This inspection will take place at Minuteman Towing and Repair. Minuteman is located at Exit 242 of Interstate 80, Mifflinville, PA. 18631.

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Sincerely,



BU shuttle buses catch fire



FIREFIGHTERS work to put out a Bloomsburg University shuttle bus that caught fire early Saturday morning at the Buckingham Maintenance Center. The fire extended into the building and damaged a portion of the roof and several garage doors. Another photo, page 1.



BU SHUTTLE GUTTED

Press Enterprise/M.J. McDonald

Bloomsburg Fire Chief Hugh Gross, at right in white hat, talks to other firefighters after extinguishing a Bloomsburg University shuttle bus that burned up around 12:15 Saturday morning. A second shuttle was also damaged, as was the garage area of the Buckingham Maintenance Center on Lightstreet Road. Story, more photos, page 3.

Garage area of maintenance center also damaged in blaze

By CHRIS KREPICH
and LEON BOGDAN
Press Enterprise Writers

BLOOMSBURG — One Bloomsburg University shuttle bus was destroyed and another badly damaged by a fire early Saturday.

The garage area of BU's Buckingham Maintenance Center along Lightstreet Road was also damaged by the blaze.

Faulty wiring in a dashboard or an engine problem are the suspected causes, a BU official said.

Damages to the two buses alone were estimated at \$80,000 to \$90,000, said BU spokesman Jim Hollister.

The shuttles, one a 25-passenger bus and the other a 44-passenger unit, are used to transport students between the upper and lower campuses and around town. They had been left parked overnight facing each other at the rear garage doors of the maintenance building, at the corner of Lightstreet Road and Country Club Road.

The roof and a garage door of the maintenance building were damaged by flames that spread from the smaller shuttle bus, which was parked about six feet from the garage door. The larger bus sustained fire damage to its front end, Hollister said.

Cause investigated

A state police fire marshal was called to investigate the blaze not long after the alarm for the fire sounded at 12:13 a.m. Saturday. Several Bloomsburg fire trucks raced to the scene, enabling firefighters to prevent further damage to the building.

Fire was raging through the burning bus as firemen arrived, reducing it to a charred metal shell. The fires melted off the chassis as large plumes of thick black smoke poured from the fiery shuttle.

A portion of the maintenance building roof and some

underlying insulation was damaged.

A state police fire marshal told university officials that the cause of the fire could not immediately be determined due to the heavy damage.

But Hollister said the fire investigation was focusing on the dashboard wiring or the engine compartment as possible origins of the blaze in the smaller shuttle bus.

Bus cost \$60,000

The 2000 El Dorado 25-passenger shuttle bus had been parked at 10:30 p.m. Friday after making its last run, Hollister said. The university bought it for \$60,000 and it was still under manufacturer's warranty, he said.

The larger 44-passenger International bus was a newer 2002 model. That bus sustained about \$20,000 to \$30,000 damages, university officials estimated.

Clean-up crews were called to the maintenance building on Saturday. The interior of the building had filled with smoke; tools and equipment were covered in soot. A heavy acrid odor still hung inside the center at midday.

Firefighters had used a power saw to cut an access hole in the roof to ventilate the flames and help suppress the fire from spreading further into the brick-faced building.

Neighbor's call

Reports from the scene indicated that it was a neighbor along Lightstreet Road who noticed the fire and called 911.



THE BACK of a Bloomsburg University shuttle bus is shown melted with wires and other parts showing after it caught fire at the Buckingham Maintenance Center early Saturday morning.

PHOTOS BY M.J. McDONALD

Firefighters used absorbent pads to soak up diesel fuel leaking from the burned bus to keep it from running into a storm drain.

Service continues

Jim Michael, BU senior operations manager, said shuttle service won't be interrupted, despite the loss of two buses.

The university purchased larger buses to accommodate the growing number of students it moves around both on and off campus, Michael said.

Last semester alone, the BU shuttles moved more than 207,000 students on campus and into town and along parking loops, he said.

Michael noted that smoking is not allowed on BU buses; the hard floor has rubber mats while the seats are cloth.

Fire crews from Bloomsburg were joined by firefighters from both Espy and Catawissa. The fire was brought under control within an hour before a state police fire marshal arrived around 2:30 a.m.

QUEEN OF CLUBS:
Get your club news
into print. Call Judy
Hill, 784-2121,
extension 1309.

Chinese Auction

Nescopceck Firehall
Station 250
Warren St., Nescopceck
Sunday, March 23rd
11 A.M. - 2 P.M.
Food Available
Thank You To Everyone Who
Helped Make This A Success.

St. Matthew Preschool

123 North Market St., Bloomsburg
"A Total Learning Experience"
3 - 4 - 5 year olds
(9:30 - 11:30)
Phone 387-0634 or 784-9060
OPEN HOUSE
March 27, 6:30pm
Licensed by PA Department of Education

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(937) 295-2983
FAX: (937) 295-3633

SENDER'S E-MAIL:
jgarmhausen@fgks-law.com

*ALSO ADMITTED IN FLORIDA
**ALSO ADMITTED IN INDIANA

TELECOPIER INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

DATE: April 2, 2003
TO: Bernie Regnier
FIRM OR COMPANY: ElDorado National (KS)
FAX NUMBER: 785-827-0965
FROM: John M. Garmhausen
SUBJECT: [REDACTED] Bus Fire
MESSAGE:

There are 4 pages, including this cover page.

Please advise Nikki at 937/492-1271 if you are having trouble receiving this document.

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SENDER'S E-MAIL:
 garmhausen@fgks-law.com

April 2, 2003

VIA FAX

Mr. Bernie Regnier
 Eldorado National
 1655 Wall St.
 Box 6260
 Salina, KS 67401-6260

VIA FAX

Mr. John Resnik
 Eldorado National
 1655 Wall St.
 Box 6260
 Salina, KS 67401-6260

Re: [REDACTED] Bus Fire

Dear Bernie and John:

I have received from Bernie and reviewed the March 28, 2003 letter from Eric [REDACTED] at [REDACTED] regarding the bus fire involving an Eldorado vehicle. I just want to make sure that we are all on the same page in connection with the handling of this matter.

Enclosed is a copy of my response to Mr. [REDACTED] letter.

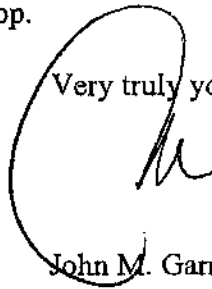
It is my understanding that John has notified Allen [REDACTED] with respect to this claim. I would appreciate your forwarding to me, John, a copy of your correspondence to Allen.

It is my further understanding that Sheldon [REDACTED] is contacting a fire investigator to participate in the inspection of this unit. Again, I would appreciate a copy of the correspondence with Crawford Investigation. Please notify me when a specific investigator has been assigned.

Mr. Bernie Regnier
Mr. John Resnik
April 2, 2003
Page 2

Please keep me advised as matters develop.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. Garmhausen', is written over a large, hand-drawn oval. The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized.

John M. Garmhausen

nas

Enclosure

cc: Walter L. Bennett (via fax)

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SENDER'S E-MAIL:
 jgarmhausen@fgks-law.com

April 2, 2003

VIA FAX and U.S. MAIL

Mr. Eric Milner
 Assistant Vice President of Administration
 Bloomsburg University
 400 East Second Street
 Bloomsburg, PA 17815-1301

Re: Vehicle: 2000 ElDorado National with a ford chassis and motor
 VIN 1FDXE45F8 [REDACTED]
 Owner: [REDACTED]
 Date of Loss: March 22, 2003
 Claim Number: 031024

Dear Mr. Milner:

Our firm is counsel to ElDorado National (Kansas), Inc., Salina, Kansas. I am in receipt of your letter of March 28, 2003.

We are in the process of opening a file in connection with the investigation of the March 22, 2003 fire claim and will be retaining the services of an insurance investigator in that regard.

Please be advised that we do desire to participate in the inspection and testing of the vehicle. Please direct further communication regarding the inspection date and time to my attention.

Very truly yours,

John M. Garmhausen

nas

cc: ElDorado National (Kansas), Inc.

G:\Thor\ElDorado -KS\Bloomsburg U\Milner, Eric.doc

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, April 03, 2003 2:14 PM
To: John Garmhausen
Subject: [REDACTED], inspection visit request.

John,

We would like to schedule a visit to coordinate with North Eastern Technical Services to inspect and review the [REDACTED] unit during North Eastern Technical Services review. We would like to bring Dale Reed our Electrical Engineer and myself (Bernie Regnier) the Product Support Manager to review/inspect in conjunction with their effort.

Please let us know what can be coordinated as soon as you can.

Bernie Regnier

From: Bernie Regnier [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, April 07, 2003 1:24 PM
To: John Garmhausen
Subject: Any word on inspection opportunity for the [REDACTED] y Bus?

John,

We have several potential trips that are upcoming we would like to avoid as much conflict date wise as possible. Any heads up would be most helpful to our staff. Next week we anticipate a training seminar in Toronto for a couple of days.

Thanks in advance,

Bernie Regnier
EIDorado National

From: John Garmhausen [mailto:jgarmhausen@fgks-law.com]
Sent: Monday, April 07, 2003 8:38 PM
To: 'bernier@enconline.com'
Cc: 'johnr@enconline.com'
Subject: RE: Any word on inspection opportunity for the Bloomsburg University Bus?

Bernie,

Forgive me for my confusion, but before I was able to respond to your email (I was out of the office much of the day), I received copies of several emails from John [REDACTED] evidencing the fact that he had previously corresponded with [REDACTED] of Crawford Investigation regarding an inspection of this unit. I think we all need to get on the same page. Perhaps you could inquire of John as to the status of his communication with John [REDACTED] and let me know where that stands. I would not be surprised if John R. has not heard from John T. as I have found John T. to be rather unresponsive in my dealings with him. At any rate, please check with John R., to whom I am sending a copy of this email, and then give me a call. Walt generally prefers that these reports be sent to my attention by Crawford to enable us to maintain the confidentiality of the report until we are ready to release it, if at all, as well as protecting the discoverability of the report. I will wait to hear from you.

John

-----Original Message-----

From: Bernie Regnier [mailto:bernier@enconline.com]
Sent: Monday, April 07, 2003 2:24 PM
To: John Garmhausen
Subject: Any word on inspection opportunity for the Bloomsburg University Bus?

John,

We have several potential trips that are upcoming we would like to avoid as much conflict date wise as possible. Any heads up would be most helpful to our staff. Next week we anticipate a training seminar in Toronto for a couple of days.

Thanks in advance,

Bernie Regnier
EIDorado National

-----Original Message-----

From: John Garmhausen [mailto:jgarmhausen@fgks-law.com]
Sent: Thursday, April 10, 2003 8:09 AM
To: 'johnr@enconline.com'
Cc: 'bernier@enconline.com'; Andy Imanse (E-mail); Walt Bennett (E-mail)
Subject: [REDACTED]

John,

I spoke with John Talley at Crawford Investigation this morning. It is my understanding that John has been in communication with you and he understands that we want to have a representative present when the inspection of this unit is scheduled. I also advised John that the report is to be forwarded only to my attention for review in order to maintain the attorney-client privilege until we have evaluated the report.

Please keep me advised as to developments and I will do likewise.

John

John M. Garmhausen
Faulkner, Garmhausen, Keister & Shenk
Telephone: (937) 492-1271
Facsimile: (937) 498-1306
jgarmhausen@fgks-law.com

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THANK YOU.

**PRIVILEGED AND CONFIDENTIAL**

REPORT DATE: April 25, 2003

REPORT RECIPIENT:

Thor Industries
C/O Faulkner, Garmhausen, Keister & Shenk
100 South Main Avenue, Suite 300
Sidney, OH 45365

ATTENTION: John Garmhausen, Esq.

INSURED: Thor Industries, Inc.

DATE OF LOSS: Saturday, March 22, 2003 **Time:** 12:14 a.m.

LOSS LOCATION: [REDACTED]

CITY / STATE OF LOSS: [REDACTED]

C&C FILE NUMBER: 112-97850

POLICY NUMBER: Unknown

CIS FILE NUMBER: 7217-000030

PREPARED BY: John Pflanz, Certified Fire and Explosion Investigator
Northeast Regional Manager

File Status:

- First and Final Report
- Initial Report
- Interim Report
- Final Report - File Closed

THIS REPORT IS FURNISHED AS PRIVILEGED AND CONFIDENTIAL TO ADDRESSEE
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THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ADDRESSEE.

Insured: Thor Industries
File No.: 7217-000030

4

ASSIGNMENT:

This assignment was received from John Talley of Crawford & Company on April 7, 2003. The vehicle investigation had been scheduled with all interested parties for 11:00 AM on Tuesday, April 15, 2003, at the Minute Man Towing facility, Route 487, Mifflandville, PA (800) 905-7788. The instructions were to conduct an origin and cause investigation into the fire loss involving the El Dorado shuttle bus, which was owned and operated by [REDACTED]

On April 15, 2003, a verbal report of the findings of this investigation were presented to Mr. Talley of Crawford & Company and on his instructions a verbal report was also given to John Garmhausen, Esq. A full written report was requested at that time. The single report is to be forwarded to John Garmhausen, Esq.

RISK:

The property involved in this fire loss is an El Dorado shuttle bus, white in color, Ford E450 Super Duty, Delivery date 7 Jan 2000, VIN - 1FDXE45F8[REDACTED]

ORIGIN AND CAUSE SYNOPSIS:

Upon completion of the fire origin and cause investigation and based on all the information presently available, gained through the vehicle examination, records review and the interview(s) conducted, it is the following opinion of the investigator.

The fire involving the El Dorado shuttle bus extended throughout the engine compartment, dash area, and entire passenger compartment, causing extensive damage to all combustible and light metal components before being extinguished. Due to this severe widespread damage, an exact origin or cause could not be determined.

OFFICIAL INVESTIGATION: [REDACTED] P.D.

[REDACTED] P.D., and [REDACTED], advised that the official report had not been completed and was not available at this time for dissemination. Instructions were to submit a written request to his office for report.

The [REDACTED] was in charge of the extinguishment efforts, under the direction of Fire Chief Hugh Gross.

Bob [REDACTED] summed up the details of events on the night of this fire as:

On Friday, March 21, 2003, the driver of this bus, Dave [REDACTED], had completed his shift and parked the bus alongside the Boyd F. Buckingham Maintenance Center at approximately 10:15 p.m. He plugged the electrical extension cord from the exterior wall mounted duplex receptacle into the auxiliary connection on the side of the bus and left.

A resident from across the street from the Maintenance Center observed the fire and called 911. This call was logged in at 12:14 a.m. The Bloomsburg Volunteer Fire Department responded and found the vehicle fully involved. Also burning were 3 stacks of used tires, which were stored outside the Maintenance Center between the front of the parked bus and overhead bay door.

The State Police Fire Marshal from the Bloomsburg Barracks, 6850 Hilday Church Rd., Bloomsburg, PA 17815, (717) 367-4701 was assigned to conduct an investigation of the bus fire. A reply to our request for information regarding that investigation is still pending.

Insured: Thor Industries
File No.: 7217-000030

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VEHICLE EXAMINATION:

The following were present during the vehicle examination:

- Bob Klinger, Jr., Director, University Safety & Police, 400 East Second St., Bloomsburg, PA 17815, (570) 389-4775
- Lt. John Pollard, Bloomsburg University P.D.
- Paul Reiche, E A Associates, 30700 Telegraph Road, Suite 4566, Bingham Farms, Michigan 48025
- Greg L. Houseknecht, Claims Rep., Cincinnati Insurance Companies, P.O. Box 192, Hughesville, PA 17737, (570) 584-4882
- Dennis Mignogno, North Eastern Technical Services, 1680 No. Main St., Fall River, MA 02720 (302) 424-7876
- Edmund G. Knight, Robson Lapina, 350 New Holland Ave., Lancaster, PA 17602 (717) 293-9050 - Ext. 225

EXTERIOR EXAMINATION:

The fire damage to the exterior of the vehicle was extensive to the entire front of the unit, from the bottom of the front chrome bumper up to the top of the windshield and roof area. All of the combustible materials were consumed by the fire and the light metal components were found in varying stages of melting. This extensive fire damage extended back both on the driver's side and passenger's side of the vehicle. The damage on the passenger's side went just past the rear of the front double door, and the damage to the driver's side extended back slightly further than on the passenger's side. The fire consumed the entire roof assembly. The metal window framing was the only remains of the passenger's side and driver's side, upper vehicle section. This metal framing was still upright on the passenger's side but had dropped down into the passenger compartment on the driver's side.

The rear dual tires were unaffected by the fire while the front two tires were burned from the rims.

The exterior driver's side of the vehicle sustained slightly more damage than passenger's side. As the driver's side was parked closest to the building and stored used tires, this slightly greater damage could be a result of the parked position at the time of the fire and not related to the cause.

There was no forensic evidence found during the exterior examination that would indicate an origin area of this fire or eliminate an area of origin of this fire.

UNDERCARRIAGE EXAMINATION:

The examination of the undercarriage showed extensive damage from the front engine back to just behind the starter. The damage was most severe from the front engine area, with lessening damage in the rear of the engine. The fire affected all of the combustible materials as well as the fuel lines. The main electrical cables from the battery compartment on the passenger's side to the starter and forward were affected with the insulation burned of the length of the cables. There was no sign of excessive leaking or mechanical pre-fire damage observed.

There was no forensic evidence found during the undercarriage examination that would indicate an origin area of this fire or eliminate an area of origin of this fire.

Insured: Thor Industries
File No.: 7217-000030

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ENGINE COMPARTMENT EXAMINATION:

The examination of the vehicle engine compartment revealed severe fire damage throughout, with the fire consuming most all of the combustible materials, as well as melting the lighter metal components. This fire damage extended from the front radiator back through to the interior separation wall. As the fire damage was so severe, most of the remaining copper electrical wiring was not continuous and could not be traced from source to termination. The severity of the fire damage also precluded the possibility of identifying any possible clamp or gasket failures.

There was no forensic evidence found during the engine compartment examination that would indicate an origin area of this fire or eliminate an area of origin of this fire.

PASSENGER COMPARTMENT EXAMINATION:

The entire passenger compartment of the shuttle bus was examined starting in the forward most dash area. The fire damage was so severe that much of the remaining copper electrical wiring both in the wiring harness on the passenger's side windshield post and across the full length of the dash was not continuous and could not be traced from source to termination. There were sections of the copper wiring that showed melted globular ends; however, it could not be definitively determined if the cause of this melting was a result of an electrical heating or due to direct flame impingement during the fire progression.

The fire consumed all of the combustible seat coverings and padding. The metal frames of the seats were still in place and showed an even heating throughout the interior of the passenger compartment. The debris from the floor area of the bus in the driver's seat section was reportedly removed from the bus during the State Fire Marshal investigation and thrown back into the bus upon his scene examination completion. As all of the debris had been removed prior to my examination and returned, the debris condition was of no value at this time.

There was no forensic evidence found during the passenger compartment examination that would indicate an origin area of this fire or eliminate an area of origin of this fire.

ADDITIONAL EXAMINATION:

The electrical power cord used to connect the vehicle to the AC current at the Maintenance Center was examined and photographed. There were no direct signs of any cord malfunction during the surface examination; however, the insulation was burned off approximately one quarter of the length of the cord.

The duplex receptacle and associated wiring and protection devices at the Maintenance Center were examined and showed no signs of malfunction or improper installation.

Insured: Thor Industries
File No.: 7217-000030

4

INTERVIEW: Bob [REDACTED]

Mr. [REDACTED] advised that on Friday, March 21, 2003, the driver of this bus, Dave [REDACTED] had completed his shift and parked the bus alongside the Boyd F [REDACTED] at approximately 10:15 p.m. He plugged the electrical extension cord from the exterior wall mounted duplex receptacle into the auxiliary connection on the side of the bus and left. He added that Mr. Hilliard was fighting a serious medical condition and was definitely not a smoker.

He added that a resident from across the street from the Maintenance Center observed the fire and called 911. This call was logged in at 12:14 a.m. The Bloomsburg Volunteer Fire Department responded and found the vehicle fully involved. Also burning were 3 stacks of used tires, which were stored outside the Maintenance Center between the front of the parked bus and overhead bay door. There were also several empty 55-gallon drums that had been full of used motor oil that were also next to the used tires, but he did not believe they were involved in the fire.

It was also learned that the vehicle was sent to Sunbury Motors, 943 N. 4th St., Sunbury, PA 17801, (717) 246-7746, on March 1, 2003, and the starter was replaced. The mileage listed for the vehicle at that time was 54085. The exact mileage at the time of the fire could not be determined.

Mr. [REDACTED] advised that the maintenance records for the vehicle were on file in the [REDACTED] but were not available to me at that time.

COMMENTS/CONCLUSIONS:

Upon completion of this fire origin and cause investigation, it is the following opinion of the investigator:

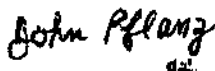
The fire involving the shuttle bus caused severe damage to much of the electrical wiring, fuel system, and other potential ignition sources. Due to this extensive damage, many possible ignition sources could not be eliminated. As more than one possible ignition sources exists, the cause of this fire must be listed as undetermined.

FILE STATUS:

As I have completed all investigative requests, this file will now be closed. This file can, however, be easily reopened at any future date upon request.

If you have any questions concerning this investigation, please feel free to contact me at the number listed below.

Respectfully,



John Pflanz
Certified Fire and Explosion Investigator
Northeast Regional Manager
600 Reed Rd.
Broomall, PA 19008
(610) 359-8518

(Address all correspondence concerning this file to the following address. Please include the CIS file number.)

Crawford Investigation Services
National Operations Center
285 W. Esplanade Ave., Suite 300
Kenner, LA 70065



P1010001



P1010002



P1010003



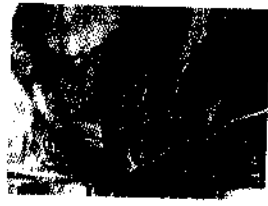
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P1010006



P1010007



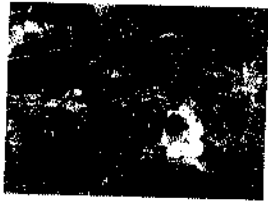
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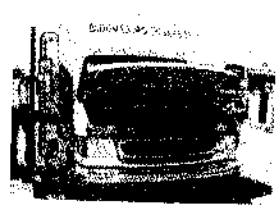
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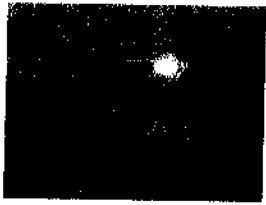
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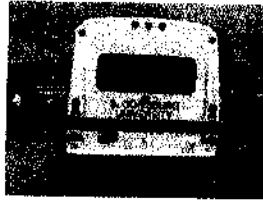
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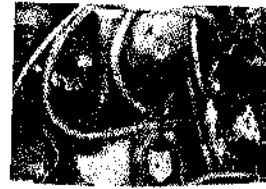
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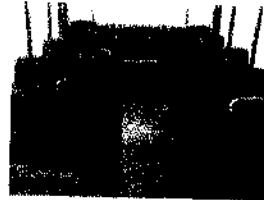
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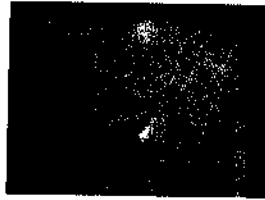
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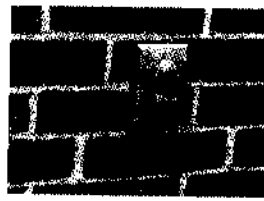
P1010045



P1010046



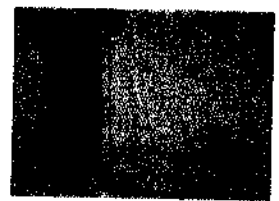
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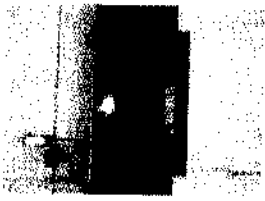
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P1010049



P1010050



P1010051



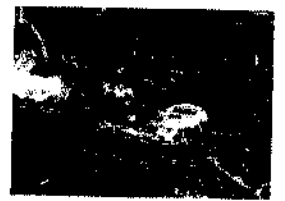
P1010052



P1010053



P1010054



P1010055



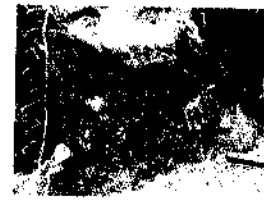
P1010056



P1010057



P1010058



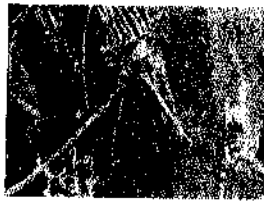
P1010059



P1010060



P1010061



P1010062