1	SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK COUNTY OF ORANGE
2	X
3	LETITIA BECKLES, et al, Plaintiffs,
4	-against-
5	INDEX NO. 1460/14 ERIK FRED, et al,
6	Defendants.
. 7	Jury Trial - Testimony of Gregory Witte
8	HELD AT: Orange County Courthouse
9	285 Main Street Goshen, New York 10924 September 25, 2018
10	HELD BEFORE:
11	APPEARANCES: HON CRAIG STEPHEN BROWN, AJSC
12	
13	LAW OFFICES OF BRUCE W. SLANE, PC Attorneys for Plaintiffs 188 East Post Road - Suite 205
14	White Plains, New York 10601 BY: BRUCE W. SLANE, ESQ.
15	
16	PICCIANO & SCAHILL, P.C. Attorneys for Defendants FREDS
17	900 Merchants Concourse, Suite 310 Westbury, New York 11590
18	BY: CHARLES MAILLOUX, ESQ.
19	CHANEL BATTEY
20	Senior Court Reporter
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- 1 DIRECT EXAMINATION BY MR. SLANE:
- Q. Mr. Witte, what do you do for a
- 3 living?
- A. Accident reconstructionist.
- 5 Q. Is that with a particular group
- 6 or?
- 7 A. Currently I have my own company,
- 8 Forensic Crash Specialist.
- 9 Q. How long have you been an accident
- 10 reconstruction specialist?
- 11 A. I obtained the title advanced
- 12 accident investigator with the police
- department back in 1998 I believe. At that
- 14 point they kind of thrush you into the field
- of accident reconstruction. I actually
- obtained my reconstruction certification in
- 17 2000.
- 18 Q. What is entailed to get a
- 19 certification in that area?
- 20 A. It's a series of three courses
- 21 that you have to take, two weeks each. The
- 22 hours comprise first one is basic accident
- 23 investigations. The next series is the
- 24 advanced class. Then you have your accident
- 25 reconstruction course.

- 1 Q. Did you take any tests as part of
- 2 that certification?
- 3 A. Yes, to proceed from one to the
- 4 next, you have to take a test at the end.
- 5 Q. Aside from being an accident
- 6 reconstruction specialist with your own
- 7 company, do you have any other jobs currently?
- 8 A. Yes, I am also -- well, I am a
- 9 retired police officer. I retired back in
- 10 2009. I still work part time for Suffern
- 11 Police Department doing their accident
- 12 investigations.
- Q. Currently you are a police officer
- 14 with Suffern Police Department?
- 15 A. Correct.
- 16 Q. As part of your current job with
- 17 the Suffern Police Department, you do accident
- 18 reconstruction?
- 19 A. Yes, that is my sole job with
- 20 them. I come out for accidents.
- 21 Q. What type of accidents?
- 22 A. Anything that will be considered
- 23 serious personal injury with the possibility
- of death or extreme property damage of
- 25 government vehicles.

- Q. When did you first become a police
- 2 officer?
- 3 A. 1989.
- 4 O. When did you become a detective?
- 5 A. 1999.
- 6 Q. Once you became a detective, what
- 7 were your responsibilities?
- 8 A. Well, with my agency I worked out
- 9 of Monroe. They really wanted the detective
- 10 there to work on criminal matters. So I was
- 11 doing that for a year. I kind of knew what I
- 12 wanted to do. I was really interested in
- 13 accident reconstruction. We had a highway
- 14 unit. I just really wanted to do that.
- 15 So I kind of was put in a position
- 16 where I had no choice. I went off and became
- 17 the accident investigator for my agency.
- 18 Q. How long were you doing that in
- 19 that particular role?
- 20 A. I started doing that from 2000 to
- 21 my retirement in 2009.
- Q. At any point in time, were you an
- 23 accident reconstruction specialist instructor?
- 24 A. I teach now. I get hired to go
- out to like trucking companies and teach their

- drivers the aspects of accident
- 2 investigations, how they are done, how they
- 3 can aid themselves in the investigation.
- I was also retained by back then
- 5 it was ARAS 360. I was one of their
- 6 instructors for their software of the use of
- 7 computer aided diagram software that applies
- 8 all of the physics that we use in accident
- 9 investigations, put into the software for
- 10 accident investigators use and I also taught
- 11 how to use a total station, because a total
- 12 station you take that data and put it in the
- 13 accident software.
- 14 So I would go out. I would go to
- 15 the police department and teach officers how
- 16 to use that equipment.
- Q. Other than what you testified to,
- did you have other training and courses?
- 19 A. Yes, I have a host of training.
- One of the things that we are required to do
- 21 is maintain CEUs, continuing education units.
- I have a list of them here, if I may.
- Q. If you can.
- 24 A. Again back in '96 is when I
- 25 decided to do accident investigations. So I

- did a class in '96, '98 the advanced accident,
- 2 interview interrogations. In '99, accident
- 3 reconstruction. I completed that in 2000.
- I then went on to forensic mapping
- 5 and diagramming, bicycle accident
- 6 investigations, critical curve in roadways,
- 7 court preparation, energy methods and damage
- 8 analysis.
- 9 You may have heard the term crush
- 10 analysis. That is what that class is where
- 11 you are able to obtain speed through crush,
- 12 commercial motor vehicles, motorcycle crash
- investigations, advanced animation and
- 14 drawing, spin analysis, crash data.
- 15 You might hear of black box. We
- 16 get crash data and do the analysis on that.
- 17 Photo investigation class. We take photos and
- apply the prints of the photograph to that
- where you convert 2D photograph into the 3D
- 20 environment.
- 21 I became the crash animated
- 22 instructor, accident reconstruction in the
- 23 first class I took. Human factors, another
- 24 accident reconstruction refresher class I
- 25 took, another accident reconstruction class,

- 1 HD version of the ARAS 360 crash animations,
- 2 traffic signal design and operations.
- 3 Part of our CEU is to go to crash
- 4 conferences around the country. We attended
- 5 one in Jacksonville, Florida in 2012. In
- 6 there it contains many units of construction,
- 7 occupants kinematics, GPS, forensics
- 8 investigations, boating accidents, event data
- 9 recorder update, night and low light digital
- 10 photography, high speed pedestrian fatalities
- 11 with EDR data, alternate fuel vehicles.
- 12 You may have heard 3D scanner.
- 13 Those are devices we put into a room and goes
- 14 around and created this environment in 3D for
- 15 us. I took that class down in Florida.
- 16 Another special problems class is 37 hours of
- instruction there. I became 360 reality
- instructor back in 2014.
- 19 THE COURT: Just try to keep your
- 20 voice up.
- 21 THE WITNESS: Yes, sir.
- 22 A. Heavy vehicle ECM download and
- 23 analysis, the same thing as crash data in cars
- 24 but for trucks. PC crash analysis training
- 25 course. This is a physics based simulation

- 1 software that we use. I have taken two class
- 2 in that; distracted driving, roadside
- 3 barriers, another update with events crash
- 4 data, another one with crash data utilizing
- 5 human factors, crash trauma and bio mechanics,
- 6 post crash forensic mechanical inspections.
- 7 We would go into cars and try to figure out
- 8 what happened.
- 9 Then excel spreadsheets. These
- 10 are advanced to help calculate calculations.
- 11 It does millions of calculation to try to weed
- out the things that can't be and help identify
- 13 what is the most probable. That is where I am
- 14 at now.
- 15 CEU now becomes very important to
- 16 us much like attorneys. We have to maintain
- 17 for ACTAR certification which I obtained in
- 18 2016. ACTAR is a federal standard. It was
- 19 first introduced had by NHTSA.
- 20 It was a committee formed back in
- '85 consisting of engineers, accident
- 22 reconstructionist, police officers, civilians.
- 23 In 1991, it was instituted. They set the
- 24 standard for accident reconstructionists. So
- 25 I guess if you think the way it is, we

- 1 maintain ACTAR kind of like the PhD of
- 2 accident reconstruction now as set by the
- 3 Feds.
- 4 Q. When did you obtain that?
- 5 A. It's been in existence for a
- 6 while. It wasn't dominant in that area; but
- 7 2016.
- 8 Q. For the past 27 years, you have
- 9 been investigating traffic collisions,
- 10 correct?
- 11 A. Yes, I actually been working crash
- scenes since I was 16 with the fire department
- and ambulance corp where I volunteered.
- Q. At some point in time, my office
- 15 reached out to you and you began an
- 16 investigation?
- 17 A. Yes.
- 18 Q. What did you review as part of
- 19 that investigation?
- 20 A. Your office sent several documents
- 21 and photos. We had transcripts, one from
- 22 D W , one from Erik Fred, another
- one from Erik Fred, one from Officer McKenna,
- New York State incident report prepared by
- 25 Officer McKenna, affidavit from D

- 1 W , the accident investigation report
- from Robert McKenna, the blog report from the
- 3 Town of Newburgh police department and several
- 4 photos.
- 5 Q. Did you also conduct an on-site
- 6 inspection?
- 7 A. Yes, we did.
- 8 O. What did that entail?
- 9 A. We go to the scene. We walk
- 10 around the scene. We took out the total
- 11 station which you may have seen surveyors
- 12 using on the side of the road. It allows us
- to measure angles left or right, up and down.
- 14 It allows us to capture the topography,
- anything that we find of interest to us; so
- the curves of the roads, the slopes of the
- 17 road, the radius of the roads, the house, the
- driveway in this case, curb cuts. We are able
- 19 to shoot those with a very high degree of
- 20 accuracy, take that data into that ARAS 360
- 21 software and create a 3D scale diagrams to
- 22 work with.
- Q. During that site inspection, is
- 24 that what you did?
- 25 A. That is what we did, along with

- 1 taking a series of photos.
- Q. Did you take measurements?
- A. Yes, the measurements are coming
- 4 from the total station work.
- 5 Q. Did you examine the roadways?
- 6 A. Yes.
- 7 Q. Did you come to an opinion to a
- 8 reasonable degree of scientific certainty
- 9 regarding the causes of this accident?
- 10 A. Yes.
- 11 Q. What is that opinion?
- 12 A. When we got done walking around
- 13 the scene and we realized where everything
- 14 was. We are actually seeing, looking at it.
- 15 Right away we kind suspected a phenomenon
- 16 called target fixation.
- 17 Q. Can you explain that.
- 18 A. You guys probably all experience
- 19 this or have witnessed it not even realizing
- 20 that you did. It's very common with children
- 21 only because they lack life lessons. So you
- 22 see it a lot. Examples of it are seen on TV
- 23 or reality TV shows like America's Funniest
- 24 Video. It's simply a person sees something
- 25 and they identify that it as a hazard or

- 1 overly obsessed with whatever that may be.
- 2 It's more susceptible to people riding two
- 3 wheel vehicles, such as bikes or motorcycles,
- 4 because they can lean and change your
- 5 direction on a motorcycle or bicycle where in
- a car it's actually putting your hands to the
- 7 steering wheel. We see it more often there.
- 8 These example you can watch a little boy going
- 9 down the road and he sees a tree or something
- 10 and there is nothing else out there and he
- 11 crashes right into that tree. My own son did
- 12 it, crashed right into a mailbox. He had a
- whole thirty foot wide open road, found the
- 14 mailbox. Laws have been enacted now because
- 15 of this phenomenon. You may have seen it
- 16 recently, the move over law. That law is
- 17 simply -- all it is people are so obsessed
- 18 with what they are seeing that when they are
- 19 looking, they don't realize that their eyes
- 20 are steering to they are looking at which is a
- 21 natural human response. We are not picking up
- 22 that what we are doing that. The next thing
- you know they go off the road and crash right
- into the police car. Across the country
- 25 hundreds of these accidents have occurred

- 1 resulting in the death of many officers. That
- 2 law has been expanded now because of what it
- 3 is to protect the fire department, tow
- 4 operators, police vehicles, anybody who is
- 5 operating on the side of the road to make you
- 6 think you should move over and give them
- 7 space. Back in my days with the fire
- 8 department when I was working on a crash on
- 9 Interstate 87 in the Town of Tuxedo --
- 10 MR. MAILLOUX: Objection.
- 11 THE COURT: Sustained.
- Do you ever another question?
- 13 Q. What about target fixation causes
- someone to steer into an object?
- 15 A. Could you phrase the.
- 16 Question: Again.
- 17 Q. Can you explain target fixation
- 18 relative to this occurrence?
- 19 A. Yes, in this occurrence the
- 20 bicycle operator, she is coming down a hill.
- 21 She is looking to make a right-hand turn. She
- 22 sees this Jeep sticking out into the roadway.
- 23 She becomes fixated. It's not supposed to be
- 24 there. She perceives this as a hazard. Just
- 25 like that little boy we watch crash into a

- 1 tree, rational thought is not there through
- due to lack of life experience where you are
- 3 supposed to be looking out ahead of you. She
- 4 is focused on it. As hard as she tries, she
- 5 is just looking at it and steers right into it
- and that is exactly what happened in this
- 7 crash.
- 8 O. Were there studies relative to
- 9 this phenomenon?
- 10 A. Yes, if you look it up, there are
- 11 many, many articles about it. Wikipedia has a
- 12 great reference about it, Dr. Mark Green who I
- 13 researched his paperwork discusses it.
- 14 Actually he ties it into target fixation and
- 15 the incident with the move over law in police
- 16 vehicles. I cite three references, but there
- are many, many out there. Idrivesafely.com
- has a great article about it. Glenn Edmond's
- 19 performance driving school, he discusses it.
- 20 Target fixation actually became really
- 21 recognized back in World War II I believe it
- 22 was. It was when fights were coming in doing
- 23 safety runs, they are firing at something.
- 24 They get so fixated at the target that they
- 25 actually crash into it because their fixation

- 1 overrides what the rational thought should be.
- 2 Q. In relative to the experience of
- 3 the operator, how does target fixation play in
- 4 if at all?
- 5 A. I am sorry.
- Q. Relative to the experience of the
- 7 driver, how does target fixation play in at
- 8 all into a given circumstance?
- 9 A. Again, it's just irrational
- 10 obsession with the thing that you are focused
- on. In this case a vehicle obstructing her.
- 12 It's a hazard. She is concerned about this.
- 13 She is so focused on trying to avoid it
- 14 actually her hands or steering, it's a two
- 15 wheel bicycle. Her body movement is just
- 16 taking her right at it. Again, it's a life
- 17 experience thing. She is very young. She
- doesn't have life experience. So she is
- 19 focused at it instead of looking where you
- 20 want to go. In fact, instructors talk about
- 21 look to where you want to go, not where you
- 22 are at. Otherwise you drive right into it.
- 23 It's also taught in motorcycle schools about
- 24 target fixation.
- 25 O. Is that something that you learn

- 1 as time goes by?
- 2 A. It's something that you get better
- 3 at. It still happens to adults. As we see
- 4 people drift over to the shoulder and crash
- 5 into the police cars, everyone is susceptible
- 6 to it. You just get better with age
- 7 experience.
- 8 O. I am going to show you what has
- 9 been marked for identification as Plaintiffs
- 10 Exhibits 21 through 27.
- 11 Let me direct your attention to
- 12 Plaintiff's Exhibit 21. Is that a rendering
- 13 -- what is in Plaintiff's Exhibit 21?
- 14 A. This is a rendering of what we
- 15 created with our 3D software utilizing total
- 16 station data. We compile that with the
- deposition testimony. There is a rendering
- 18 showing the bicyclist heading down the road
- and preparing to make the right-hand turn.
- 20 Q. In Plaintiff's Exhibit 21, how did
- 21 you create this rendering?
- 22 A. It's inside that ARAS 360 SOFTWARE
- 23 that I discussed earlier.
- Q. How does that software work?
- 25 A. It's a 3D cad software designed

- for reconstructionists. In this case we took
- 2 out our total station. We surveyed a whole
- 3 bunch of points out there. The best way to
- 4 describe the point, you remember when you are
- 5 a kid you had connect the dots. Picture that
- in a 3D environment. Then we take all those
- 7 points and put it to the software. It
- 8 essentially connects the dots matching it with
- 9 the descriptions. In this image here, it's a
- 10 curb. So we have several dots we measure to
- 11 create that curb and all the curbs around. We
- 12 shot the location at the driveway at the
- 13 house, everything there we see, location of
- 14 trees and rocks and lampposts. We use the
- 15 software to recreate that in 3D.
- 16 O. If you look at Plaintiff's
- 17 Exhibits 21, 22, 23, 24, 26 and 27, were those
- 18 renderings created during that process?
- 19 A. Yes.
- Q. Were they done to scale?
- 21 A. Yes, by initially being out there
- 22 with the total station, that process alone has
- 23 to set the scale.
- Q. Are these rendering a fair and
- 25 accurate depiction of the area of the

- 1 accident?
- 2 A. Yes, they are.
- 3 Q. Are these depictions a fair and
- 4 accurate representation of the accident area
- 5 itself?
- 6 A. Yes.
- 7 MR. SLANE: Your Honor, at this
- 8 time, we move to admit Plaintiff's 21, 22,
- 9 23, 24, 36 and 27 into evidence.
- 10 THE COURT: Counsel?
- MR. MAILLOUX: May I voir dire.
- 12 THE COURT: You may.
- 13 VOIR DIRE BY MR. MAILLOUX:
- 14 Q. Good afternoon, Mr. Witte.
- 15 A. Good afternoon.
- 16 Q. When you are taking the photos
- 17 with the hardware at the location, what
- 18 hardware do you bring with you?
- 19 A. I believe you are referring to the
- 20 Nikon MPR 352 total station. It's not
- 21 actually taking photographs. The way you are
- 22 referencing is, it's simply sending out -- if
- 23 this microphone is a total station and I want
- 24 to hit that corner of the room over there, it
- 25 sends a laser out, hits that, reflects back

- 1 and depending where I hit that corner, it will
- tell me the height that I am shooting at and
- 3 the angles. If I were to keep spinning around
- 4 that corner this one that one, I have the
- 5 exact length of this room; heights, widths.
- 6 Q. Does it operate in a similar way
- 7 to sonar?
- 8 A. No, using laser.
- 9 Q. Using laser, the laser is
- 10 measuring how far the laser goes?
- 11 A. Yes.
- 12 Q. Do you bring one of those devices
- or multiple devices?
- A. Just one.
- 15 Q. So you are using that device at
- 16 various locations and it's measuring what you
- 17 are pointing it at?
- 18 A. The way our devices work, our
- 19 device has the ability to shoot laserless or
- 20 with a prism. So we set the units up.
- 21 Hopefully we are able to it in one setting.
- 22 In this case, we were able to. Whatever I can
- 23 shoot prismless where I don't need my partner
- 24 out there, we are trying to do it that way
- 25 when we can. A lot of surfaces won't reflect

- 1 very well. In those cases we have a prism
- pole. My associate will go out there and
- 3 literally put that pole on the point we are
- 4 trying to measure. He has a mirror about that
- 5 big. We shoot that and that takes the place
- 6 of it and sends that beam back to the total
- 7 station and records that measurement.
- Q. When this is happening, are you
- 9 actually with the machine operating it or did
- 10 you set the machine on a stand and leave it or
- 11 something else?
- 12 A. My machine, I am actually with it.
- 13 There are actually newer versions that do what
- 14 you are talking about.
- 15 Q. Does it have to be done in one
- 16 shot?
- 17 A. You try if you can. In this case
- we were able to. Depending on crash scenes
- involved, there may be corners we can't see
- 20 around. So we will have to take the total
- 21 station down, put it in another spot so we can
- get around that corner, but we didn't have
- 23 that problem here.
- Q. Did you inspect the machine the
- 25 morning you went up to do the inspection of

- 1 the action location?
- 2 A. Do a visual inspection of it, if
- 3 that is what you are referring to.
- Q. Did you check to make sure it was
- 5 operating correctly?
- 6 A. Yes.
- 7 Q. Do you remember where you placed
- 8 the machine at that location?
- 9 A. I think I do actually. I think we
- 10 had it on the corner. I think it is Exhibit
- 11 26.
- 12 Q. I am just asking you do you have a
- 13 recollection of where you placed it?
- 14 A. I am pretty sure we are in this
- 15 corner here where the right hand turn is,
- inside of that. We had it sitting in here.
- We could see everything from here.
- 18 Q. You did this shoot in one take?
- 19 A. Yes.
- 20 O. Does the machine register colors?
- 21 A. No.
- Q. Does it take photos?
- 23 A. No.
- Q. It's merely measuring the distance
- 25 from the laser?

- 1 A. Yes, measures height and distance.
- 2 Q. Those photographs are depictions
- 3 that are as a result of the device that you
- 4 used that day?
- 5 A. Yes, I don't call these photos.
- 6 It's not a photograph. It's a computer
- 7 generated diagram of what we created that day.
- Q. That is using the information
- 9 received in the device?
- 10 A. Yes, correct.
- 11 Q. But the device doesn't register
- 12 colors?
- 13 A. No.
- 14 O. How are the colors inputted on
- 15 that?
- 16 A. We took tons of photos. I think
- for the most part there are some things that
- 18 we know what they are. Asphalt would be some
- 19 shades of gray. Grass is usually green unless
- 20 it's burnt out brown. The colors really came
- 21 from samples we took in our photos and just
- 22 common knowledge.
- Q. Those are entered by you and
- someone that you work with afterwards?
- 25 A. Entered by me.

- 1 Q. The points indicating the path of
- 2 those were entered by you as well?
- 3 A. What do you mean by path?
- 4 Q. Indicating some of those
- 5 animations or some of those images indicate
- 6 the path of the bicycle?
- 7 A. The path, no. The path is not
- 8 from the points. The path is from testimony.
- 9 Q. But you are the one who enters
- 10 that into the animation?
- 11 A. Yes.
- 12 Q. So you use the images done on the
- devices sort of the base then you fill it in
- 14 with other information?
- 15 A. Yes, I guess that will be
- 16 accurate.
- 17 O. These were done in connection with
- 18 your investigation for this case?
- 19 A. Yes.
- MR. MAILLOUX: No further
- 21 questions; no objection.
- 22 THE COURT: Received into evidence
- on consent without objection.
- 24 (LUNCHEON RECESS.)
- MR. SLANE: Based on the prior

- 1 witness' testimony, plaintiffs move to
- 2 have the witness recognized as an expert
- 3 in accident reconstruction.
- 4 THE COURT: Counsel, any voir dire?
- 5 Let's start with that.
- 6 MR. MAILLOUX: I will start with
- 7 voir dire, Your Honor.
- 8 THE COURT: Okay.
- 9 VOIR DIRE BY MR. MAILLOUX:
- 10 O. Good afternoon, Mr. Witte. You
- 11 don't have any degrees in the field of
- 12 forensic science, correct?
- 13 A. Actual reconstruction would be my
- 14 degree if you want to call it that, not in the
- 15 college level; if that is what you are
- 16 referring to.
- 17 Q. What is your degree in?
- 18 A. Degree in what field?
- 19 Q. In any field.
- 20 A. I am an accident reconstructionist
- 21 ACTAR accredited.
- 22 Q. You have an accredited degree from
- 23 a college in the field of accident
- 24 reconstruction?
- 25 A. Well, the accreditation comes

- 1 through the National Highway Traffic and
- 2 Safety Administration. Reconstruction came
- 3 through the Institute of Police Technology and
- 4 Management out of the University of North
- 5 Florida.
- 6 Q. So you don't have a master's in
- 7 the field of accident reconstruction, correct?
- 8 A. No, sir.
- 9 Q. You don't have a college degree in
- the field of accident reconstruction, correct?
- 11 A. I don't believe that exists.
- 12 O. You don't have a master's in the
- 13 field of forensic science, correct?
- 14 A. No.
- 15 Q. You don't have a college degree in
- the field of forensic science, correct?
- 17 A. No.
- 18 Q. In terms of your certifications in
- 19 accident reconstruction, there are
- 20 certifications that you receive through taking
- 21 training classes after you were admitted into
- the police department; is that correct?
- 23 A. Correct.
- Q. Have you written any studies in
- 25 the field of accident reconstruction?

- 1 A. No studies, no.
- Q. In terms of your curriculum vitae,
- 3 what is the organization that has accredited
- 4 you in the field as an accident reconstruction
- 5 expert?
- 6 A. ACTAR.
- 7 Q. What is the name of that?
- 8 A. ACTAR.
- 9 O. A-C-T-A-A-R?
- 10 A. I think it's one "A," A-C-T-A-R.
- 11 Q. That is not referenced in your CV;
- 12 is that correct?
- 13 A. What version do you have there,
- 14 sir?
- 15 Q. I have the version -- well, let me
- 16 ask you this; you place your credentials on
- 17 your website?
- 18 A. I think it's on there, yes.
- 19 Q. You place your CV on the website?
- 20 A. Yes, I couldn't tell you if it's
- 21 updated or not, but yes.
- Q. Do you have a copy of the CV which
- 23 has an accreditation in the field of accident
- 24 reconstruction?
- 25 A. I do.

- 1 Q. That is from the institution
- 2 ACTAR?
- 3 A. Yes.
- Q. ACTAR is a private institution?
- 5 A. Yes, again it's created by NHTSA,
- 6 but it now operates as a private entity.
- 7 Q. It's not affiliated with any
- 8 university?
- 9 A. I don't think so.
- 10 O. You received that accreditation
- once again in connection with continuing
- 12 education classes in connection with your
- 13 police work?
- 14 A. Well, ACTAR sets the standards for
- 15 accident reconstruction and we have to take
- 16 all these classes to maintain that standard
- 17 similarly to like attorneys have to take
- 18 continuing education credits.
- MR. MAILLOUX: I will offer an
- 20 objection.
- 21 THE COURT: Okay. So actually what
- I will do is I will excuse the jury for a
- 23 moment. We have some legal discussions.
- 24 (Legal discussions held).
- 25 CONTINUED DIRECT EXAMINATION BY MR. SLANE:

- 1 Q. Mr. Witte, during the course of
- your career, have you worked on accident cases
- 3 that involve target fixation?
- 4 A. Not directly the way it has
- 5 happened in this case, but other accident
- 6 involve drifting over and striking things that
- 7 they get focused on, but not specific as to
- 8 what we have in this case.
- 9 Q. In other cases in the past, have
- 10 you worked on cases that involved the concept
- 11 of target fixation?
- 12 A. Yes.
- 13 Q. In what capacity did you work on
- 14 those cases?
- 15 A. Those are very common to happen in
- 16 rear end accidents where people see the
- vehicle slowing in front of them, but they do
- not get the concept of depth that they are
- 19 closing in on it. They think it's still
- 20 rolling. They do not realize it stopped.
- 21 That's an area of fixation that occurs as
- 22 well.
- Q. Is that an area of target
- 24 fixation?
- 25 A. Yes.

- 2 have you worked on through the years?
- 3 A. I don't even know. It would be a
- 4 guess thirty or so, forty maybe.
- 5 Q. I don't want to you guess. Can
- 6 you give an approximation?
- 7 A. I really can't. I don't
- 8 categorize in that way. It's hundreds of
- 9 accidents that we work on.
- 10 Q. Is it more than five?
- 11 A. Yes.
- 12 Q. Was it a sum more than ten?
- 13 A. Yes, I would think so.
- 14 O. Did you work on other cases
- 15 involving target fixation?
- 16 A. Those are the ones that stand out.
- 17 That is a very common thing that happen in
- 18 those accidents. There is perception of
- 19 what's happening in front of them.
- Q. As an accident reconstructionist,
- 21 when have you come across this phenomenon
- 22 aside from what you just mentioned regarding
- 23 target fixation?
- A. Human factors, it's one of the
- 25 topics that was covered, human factors. In

- 1 the human factors class, it's one of the
- 2 topics that they cover.
- 3 Q. So this is a course that you took
- 4 relative to target fixation?
- 5 A. I mean not specifically that.
- 6 That is one of the many things that deal with
- 7 human factors. The whole visual acuity,
- 8 contrast, all these things dealing with depth
- 9 perception is all part of that.
- 10 Q. Did it fully cover the concept of
- 11 target fixation?
- 12 A. Yes, I guess. I don't know how to
- 13 explain. It's kind of a simple thing, to be
- 14 honest with you.
- 15 Q. Has your role as a police officer
- 16 in the past in relation to target fixation
- 17 other than those accident cases that you
- mentioned, did they come across in your field?
- 19 A. I would have to think so, but I
- 20 can't specifically remember one. That is
- 21 going back a long time.
- Q. I don't want you to guess; but as
- you sit here right now, you don't have a
- 24 specific instance other than the ones that you
- 25 testified, but you are aware that you came

- 1 across it in your accident reconstruction in
- 2 the past?
- 3 A. Yes.
- 4 Q. What are some things other than
- 5 that course that enables you to testify here
- today about the phenomenon of target fixation?
- 7 A. Well, besides just in that class
- 8 alone, accident reconstruction is really a
- 9 field we get involved in many, many topics;
- 10 surveying, mapping, photographs.
- 11 We explained the whole list of
- 12 stuff that I gave you. One of the big tests
- is perception and reaction, which is commonly
- 14 covered in that class. We talk about the
- things that slow down a person's ability to
- 16 identify what's going on in front of them,
- 17 take appropriate response of what's going on
- in front of them.
- 19 It could be alcohol. I am sure
- you heard of that. There are different human
- factors, how the lighting is, how many things
- 22 are moving around in their field of view,
- 23 contrast of different ratios of lighting.
- 24 So it all just kind of boils down
- 25 to visual acuity. You will identify and

- 1 react. So we are kind of hit with this whole
- 2 visual thing repeatedly throughout training in
- 3 human factors class which covers many
- 4 different aspects of how human beings trigger
- 5 to their own accident.
- 6 It's just one of those things we
- 7 talk about.
- Q. Aside from what you testified, you
- 9 received other training in the concept of
- 10 target fixation?
- 11 A. Yeah, I guess that would be fair
- 12 to say.
- 13 O. You testified about numerous
- 14 courses that you took. Were there concepts of
- 15 target fixation in those courses?
- 16 A. Yes, again it's just what I was
- 17 discussing. Some of these courses are always
- 18 going back to perception and reaction. One
- 19 class, specifically a human factors class
- 20 taught by Dr. Jeff Mutard (phonetic), he's one
- of the leading doctors in the field of
- 22 everything to deal with visual.
- 23 He produces a program called IDOR.
- 24 Again, it takes in all these concepts, things
- 25 that people see, how they react, how they

- don't react. So it's just kind of a renewing
- 2 topic throughout the years of training.
- Q. Is it fair to say that you have
- 4 extensive experience in the field of target
- 5 fixation?
- A. Yes, I would say so, yes, I think
- 7 so.
- 8 MR. SLANE: At this time, Your
- 9 Honor, plaintiff would like to make a
- 10 motion.
- 11 THE COURT: Counsel, any further
- 12 voir dire.
- MR. MAILLOUX: On the issue of
- 14 target fixation, yes, Your Honor.
- 15 THE COURT: Okay.
- 16 VOIR DIRE BY MR. MAILLOUX:
- Q. Mr. Witte, isn't it true that the
- 18 concept of target fixation affecting the
- 19 operator of a vehicle in motion is actually in
- 20 dispute?
- 21 A. As I believe you guys were arguing
- 22 here, I think so.
- Q. So it's not generally accepted
- 24 science, correct?
- 25 A. I don't know. I read a lot of

- 1 material on it. It's taught in my class. So
- 2 I think it's accepted science. The military
- 3 has acknowledged it.
- Q. You referenced Mark Green before?
- 5 A. Yes.
- 6 Q. In fact, you referenced one of
- 7 Mark Green's writings in your report that you
- 8 generated for this case?
- 9 A. Yes, sir.
- 10 Q. The report that you reference for
- 11 Mark Green indicates in numerous places that
- 12 the concept of target fixation is not settled,
- 13 correct?
- 14 A. I know that is of his opinion,
- 15 yes.
- 16 MR. MAILLOUX: Your Honor, I would
- object to certifying anyone in the field
- 18 of target fixation.
- 19 THE COURT: Counsel?
- 20 MR. SLANE: I have some more
- 21 questions for the witness.
- 22 CONTINUED DIRECT EXAMINATION BY MR. SLANE;
- Q. What are some of the things in
- 24 relation to your testimony where some of the
- 25 concepts of target fixation might be

- 1 unsettled? What are you referring to?
- 2 A. I know that there are people that
- 3 argue the issue whether or not this is a true
- 4 and involuntary reaction. If I am staring at
- 5 the gentleman there with the black shirt, if I
- am worried about hitting him, I know there is
- 7 a dispute whether or not there is an
- 8 involuntary reaction to steer directly into it
- 9 or it's a cognitive just like a lockup and the
- 10 car goes right into it.
- I am doing the best I can of what
- 12 I know. As I understand, it's an involuntary
- 13 response action, rational response to a threat
- of some type of a hazard that the person
- 15 perceives and I know in the science world they
- 16 dispute this involuntary thing, but I know
- 17 there are just so many examples out there.
- 18 Military research, they are the
- 19 first ones to identify and give the term.
- 20 Q. In relation to when you say this
- 21 dispute whether it's involuntary, can you
- 22 explain that further?
- 23 A. Again, the way that I understand
- 24 it, me as an adult if I am heading right
- 25 toward that gentleman, I will say he's in my

- 1 way. I will turn.
- 2 Younger people when they see that,
- 3 they get so worried about that that the
- 4 thinking process of looking beyond him isn't
- 5 matured yet. So they don't look past to steer
- 6 it towards corrective action and they get so
- 7 fixated on it that they rationally drive right
- 8 into it.
- 9 You have probably all seen it,
- 10 experienced it, watch your own kids do it as I
- 11 did. It happens all the time.
- 12 Q. What you are saying might be at
- dispute is that what's going on in the child's
- 14 mind or the individual's mind at the time of
- 15 this happening?
- 16 A. That is my understanding what the
- 17 dispute is over. It just depends on what you
- 18 read. I would think there has to be a very
- 19 scientific finding conclusion for states to
- 20 pass a law called Move Over law based on this
- 21 phenomenon.
- 22 O. In relation to whether or not
- 23 target fixation causes accidents or not, is
- 24 that in dispute?
- 25 A. No.

- 1 MR. SLANE: I renew my application.
- MR. MAILLOUX: Same objection, Your
- 3 Honor.
- 4 THE COURT: So I will allow him to
- 5 continue. I will note your objection and
- 6 exception for the record. You can
- 7 continue at this point.
- I have noted defense attorney's
- 9 objection for the record.
- 10 MR. SLANE: Thank you, Your Honor.
- 11 CONTINUED DIRECT EXAMINATION BY MR. SLANE:
- 12 Q. Let me direct your attention to
- what's been marked as Plaintiff's Exhibit 1.
- 14 For the record, it's being displayed on the
- 15 screen as well.
- Do you recognize that photograph?
- 17 A. I do.
- 18 Q. What is your understanding of how
- 19 that photograph was obtained?
- 20 A. The police department took this
- 21 photograph I believe and it came well after
- the accident had actually occurred.
- Q. I will go through some photos with
- 24 you. I will direct your attention to what's
- 25 been marked as Plaintiff's Exhibit 18. Before

- 1 I ask you questions relative to that
- 2 photograph -- well, actually what do you see
- 3 in that photo?
- A. Can I get up?
- 5 THE COURT: You can just speak from
- 6 there if you want.
- 7 Counsel, are you asking permission?
- 8 MR. SLANE: Yes, with permission of
- 9 course.
- 10 THE COURT: Okay. He can get down.
- 11 A. In this photograph, you can see
- the debris from the front reflector or bicycle
- is white and mounted where the handlebar goes
- down to the frame. There is a piece here,
- 15 piece right in there. There is a little piece
- 16 right there. There is some bloodstains right
- 17 here dripping down. This whole area here is
- 18 full of blood.
- 19 The reflector backing is usually
- 20 like a black plastic or something. That is
- 21 this piece right there and those are the
- 22 notable things that I see in that one.
- Q. I would like to show the witness
- 24 what's been marked for identification as
- 25 Plaintiff's Exhibit 25. That is just for

- 1 identification. So if you want to take your
- 2 seat, I will ask you some questions about
- 3 that.
- 4 A. Okay.
- 5 Q. What do you recognize that photo
- 6 to be?
- 7 A. It's the same photo, just the
- 8 photo that I had in my report where I put a
- 9 label identifying where everything was.
- 10 Q. Those labels, those are the labels
- 11 that you created?
- 12 A. Yes.
- 13 Q. That would be the same photo as in
- 14 Plaintiff's 18?
- 15 A. I believe so, yes, the one we just
- 16 had up.
- 17 Q. Other than those labels that you
- put on it, is anything different about that?
- 19 A. Not that I am aware of, no.
- Q. Those labels that you put on that
- 21 photograph, would that be helpful in
- 22 explaining to the jury about the accident?
- 23 A. Yes.
- MR. SLANE: At this point in time,
- Your Honor, we move to admit what's been

- 1 marked as Plaintiff's Exhibit 25 into
- 2 evidence as Plaintiff's Exhibit 25.
- 3 THE COURT: Any voir dire?
- 4 MR. MAILLOUX: No, Your Honor, no
- 5 objection.
- 6 THE COURT: Okay, received in
- 7 evidence on consent without objection.
- Plaintiff's 25 is now in evidence.
- 9 COURT OFFICER: So marked.
- 10 Q. On Plaintiff's Exhibit 25, you
- 11 have that in front of you?
- MR. SLANE: For the record, it is
- depicted on the screen as well.
- 14 Your Honor, may I ask the witness
- to come down to the screen?
- THE COURT: He can.
- 17 Q. You made several markings on that
- 18 photograph?
- 19 A. Yes.
- Q. What did you mark?
- 21 A. Again, this photograph, you have
- 22 the blood marking. So again we have the big
- 23 blood pool here with streaks of blood here. I
- 24 labeled that reflector.
- Then again, I don't believe it is

- 1 labeled, but we have the pieces of the front
- 2 reflector.
- Q. What does this photo tell you
- 4 about the accident?
- 5 A. This photograph is kind of key in
- 6 that the big thing was where the blood was
- 7 pooled. It's kind of a considerable distance
- 8 from where the Jeep is; but most importantly
- 9 these little pieces of the reflector are on
- 10 the backside of the curb.
- 11 Like if this is my car, the Jeep
- 12 is over here. They are sitting back here
- 13 almost in the shadow of the Jeep if you are
- 14 looking at it from the Jeep. When I am
- 15 looking at that, the Jeep had to have been
- this way further out in order for those pieces
- 17 to get there. It wouldn't have happened if
- 18 the Jeep is back up here.
- 19 This is a very important thing we
- 20 saw in the photos.
- Q. Based on your experience, if the
- Jeep was parked in that manner, where would
- the blood be?
- A. If the Jeep was parked here?
- 25 Q. Yes.

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THE COURT: By "here," indicating
1
          where the Jeep is parked appears in the
2
          photograph, Plaintiff's 25 in evidence.
3
                 MR. SLANE: Yes, Your Honor.
4
          you very much.
5
                 In this photograph, the Jeep is
6
      fully into the driveway, the curb-cut. As the
7
      curb-cut recesses down the driveway, that goes
8
      on an angle, on a curve and the back tire is
9
      also into the paved area.
10
                 In accident reconstruction, one of
11
      the things we look for is debris field.
12
      is where cars hit and they drop all of the
13
      debris on the ground. It's one thing we look
14
      for to help identify where impact occurred.
15
                 If you have like a head-on
16
      collision where the forces are fairly equal,
17
      the vehicle hits and comes to a mutual share
18
      of energy right there before they separate.
19
      Then debris drops down on to the ground. One
20
21
      thing you look for here up here.
                 If the Jeep was up here, I would
2.2
      have expected to find this debris especially
23
      these pieces behind the curb to be in this
24
      area up where the Jeep is. Because the Jeep
25
```

- is not moving, there is nothing to send debris
- 2 anywhere else. They should hit. As those
- 3 pieces break, they should fall down where
- 4 impact occurred.
- 5 We don't have that in this case.
- 6 The debris is back here on the road. To me
- 7 that did not make sense when computing. This
- 8 Jeep had to be further out in order for this
- 9 debris to get where it is, especially with
- 10 these pieces behind the curb over here.
- 11 Q. When you have two children on a
- 12 bicycle as what occurred in the incident in
- 13 question, in your experience as an accident
- 14 reconstruction specialist, what happened at
- 15 the point of impact?
- 16 A. Well, in this case, we have the
- 17 little boy sitting on the front pegs. If you
- 18 are not familiar with the front pegs, you see
- 19 a lot of kids that do freestyle biking. They
- 20 have the big pegs that stick out that far on
- 21 each side coming off out the axle of the front
- 22 wheel.
- 23 He is sitting there according to
- the testimony. He is standing on those pegs
- 25 and sitting up on the handlebar frame. Then

- when they go into this, the front tire goes
- 2 right there. Actually there are other photos
- 3 you see where the tire goes underneath the
- 4 rear bumper of the Jeep.
- 5 So that is telling me okay this
- 6 bicycle was able to penetrate and get
- 7 underneath and it will come to a pretty rapid
- 8 stop right there. It's just where this spare
- 9 tire is.
- 10 So the boy is going to hit and
- 11 since his energy is getting matched or
- 12 everything is equaling out, all of a sudden
- 13 his sister will come in and squish him there.
- 14 So he's going to more or less drop right
- 15 there.
- 16 Anything that he would bring as
- far as rebounds will get cancelled out by his
- 18 sister coming in hitting him. I should expect
- 19 to find him dropping and this blood I would
- 20 expect to be here, but it's not. It's right
- 21 out here.
- Q. Let me direct your attention to
- what has been marked as Plaintiff's 8.
- THE COURT: This is in evidence?
- 25 MR. SLANE: In evidence.

- 1 For the record, it's also displayed
- 2 on the screen.
- 3 Q. What do you see in that picture?
- 4 A. Can I go up again?
- 5 THE COURT: Why don't we see if he
- 6 can talk from where he is.
- 7 A. If you look about center of the
- 8 photograph, there is just off to the right
- 9 center there is a tire scrub mark you will see
- 10 at the very bottom edge. That is the gray
- 11 rear bumper there.
- What's unique about this is there
- is a taller left front tire wall and almost a
- 14 nonexistence right side tire wall. You can
- see the tread which is curving across the top
- 16 of this.
- 17 So we know that just prior to
- impact, either they were bailing off the
- 19 bicycle or letting go, but the bicycle leaned
- 20 a little bit of an angle. You can also see
- 21 just to the left right along the edge there is
- 22 a chip in the paint.
- Then I don't know if you could see
- it on the screen or not. I know it exists,
- 25 but I don't see it well on my photo which is

- 1 also impact marks. If you are familiar with
- the brakes on a bicycle, the cable comes down
- 3 from the handlebar and pulls on the arms that
- 4 the cable ties into. When you pull that up,
- 5 it makes the brakes squeeze. You see that
- 6 impact on the left side.
- 7 So again, it could raise the fact
- 8 that you have the left side tire wall with the
- 9 left side brake arm.
- 10 Q. Let me direct your attention to
- 11 Plaintiff's Exhibit 12.
- 12 THE COURT: Again, this is in
- 13 evidence?
- 14 MR. SLANE: Yes, Your Honor. For
- the record, Plaintiff's Exhibit 12 is also
- 16 displayed on the screen.
- 17 O. What do you see in that
- 18 photograph?
- 19 A. This is a photograph that
- 20 underside of the bumper, so that the silver
- 21 part where you first see in the top right we
- 22 actually call the bumper cover. It's the part
- of the car that makes your bumper look nice.
- 24 Then it goes underneath and
- 25 actually strikes the bumper rail. That is the

- 1 square black structure you see underneath
- there. So it shows the direction you could
- 3 see the bicycle coming in. It's heavier on
- 4 the left side. It goes in and puts a big mark
- 5 underneath the bumper rail itself.
- So it's telling us how deep the
- 7 front wheel of the bicycle was able to
- 8 penetrate straight under the back of the Jeep.
- 9 Q. What, if any, significance is
- 10 that?
- 11 A. Just showing us that it goes
- 12 underneath there. So I will not expect that
- 13 bicycle to really go anywhere else. It will
- 14 hit, get stuck, then fall down.
- 15 Q. I will direct your attention to
- 16 what's been received in evidence as
- 17 Plaintiff's Exhibit 24.
- 18 MR. SLANE: For the record, it's
- 19 also displayed on the screen.
- 20 O. What's depicted in Plaintiff's 24?
- 21 A. Again, from testimony and from the
- 22 evidence that we were able to see and the
- 23 photos we just looked at, this is a rendering
- 24 showing how this debris field would lineup to
- 25 the Jeep being parked in the position it's at

- 1 in this photograph and the bicycle striking
- 2 it.
- 3 Q. You created that rendering based
- 4 on the photos in your accident site visit?
- 5 A. Yes, a combination of that.
- 6 Q. Let me direct your attention to
- 7 what's in evidence as Plaintiffs' 22. For the
- 8 record, it's also displayed on the screen.
- 9 What does that image show?
- 10 A. Again, a combination of testimony
- 11 or scene work created this diagram depicting a
- 12 path that the bicycle was taking to make a
- 13 right-hand turn and impact into the Jeep.
- 14 Q. That's based on your
- 15 investigations and your review and the EBT
- 16 transcripts; is that correct?
- 17 A. Yes, correct.
- 18 Q. Is there anything of note in this
- 19 photograph?
- 20 A. From my view in looking at this,
- 21 you can't really -- you can't see the depth of
- 22 where the Jeep is pertaining to it's
- 23 surroundings. So at this point where we are
- looking at it, I don't know if you could in
- 25 fact, say that the Jeep would be received as a

- 1 hazard just yet.
- 2 They will come along a few seconds
- 3 as you are going down the road.
- Q. Let me direct your attention to
- 5 what's in evidence as Plaintiff's 21; what
- 6 does that show?
- 7 A. Again it's the same view. We are
- 8 just pulled back a little bit further in the
- 9 diagram. I am just going to show the
- 10 perspective as it's coming down the road.
- 11 We have visual noise. There is a
- tree, a rock, things there that will take
- definition away from the other objects, in
- 14 this case being the Jeep.
- 15 Q. In reference to that tree, what,
- if any, significance does that tree hold?
- 17 A. It just obstructs the view a
- 18 little bit. Again it would play a role in the
- 19 operator of the bicycle being able to see past
- that tree and see there is a possible issue
- 21 for her as she comes around the curve.
- 22 Q. Let me direct your attention to
- what's in evidence as Plaintiff's 3.
- 24 A. Okay.
- 25 Q. In that photograph, Plaintiff's 3,

- 1 do you see the tree?
- 2 A. Yes.
- 3 Q. If you were up the hill further on
- West Meadow Wind Lane, based on your version,
- 5 what, if any, significance would that tree
- 6 have?
- 7 A. Again, as printed in the previous
- 8 diagram we did, that tree would become an area
- 9 of focus to whoever is coming down the road
- and take away from the details of the Jeep
- 11 that would be sitting behind it.
- 12 Q. I would like to direct your
- 13 attention to what's been marked into evidence
- 14 as Plaintiff's 26; what do you recognize in
- 15 that photograph?
- 16 A. Again, this is the software we can
- spin around, take a screen shot or captures
- 18 from any angle. This is a top-down view of
- 19 the same diagram that we saw before.
- 20 Q. Is that a recreation of a path
- 21 based on the testimony?
- 22 A. Yes, it is.
- 23 Q. That is the path of how D
- 24 W: went on the day in question?
- 25 A. Yes.

- 1 Q. Anything significant about that
- 2 other than what you testified to?
- 3 A. Just again, we are matching the
- 4 Jeep location to where the debris field is.
- 5 So we have the Jeep backed up to lineup with
- the blood, the debris, where I would expect
- 7 the debris to fall and that is how we came to
- 8 the position of the Jeep.
- 9 Q. Let me direct your attention to
- 10 what's in evidence as Plaintiff's 11; what do
- 11 you recognize in that photograph?
- 12 A. This is one of the police
- department photographs and it's showing a
- 14 single piece of bike reflector, front
- 15 reflector on the driveway near the curb-cut.
- 16 O. Do you see anything else in that
- 17 photograph?
- 18 A. Well, one of the things that we
- 19 look for when we look for evidence is the
- 20 physical evidence stuff that we see. We also
- look for things that aren't there in this case
- 22 where I am expecting to find debris. I don't
- 23 see debris besides one little piece in there.
- Q. Do you see any blood?
- A. No, no blood.

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- 1 THE COURT: Plaintiff's 28 now in
- 2 evidence.
- 3 Let the record reflect Plaintiff's
- 4 28 has been given to the witness.
- 5 Q. You reviewed that accident report
- 6 as part of your investigation?
- 7 A. Yes, this is a Town of Newburgh
- 8 police department what they call incident
- 9 report.
- 10 Q. That was part of your
- 11 investigation?
- 12 A. Yes.
- 13 Q. Anything significant about that
- 14 incident report?
- 15 A. Here it discusses a delay in how
- 16 the photos finally came to be. Initially the
- 17 police responded to the location where the
- 18 children were brought after the accident. It
- 19 was guite a bit of time that elapsed from the
- 20 time from where the accident occurred and
- 21 where the car was, then responded back to the
- 22 police station to get the camera and come
- 23 back.
- 24 As I recall, I think it was
- 25 somewhere near an hour and nothing was done

- about maintaining the continuity of where the
- 2 Jeep was. So there was a big window here
- 3 about where we are finding it, where it could
- 4 have been and where it's actually captured in
- 5 the photograph.
- 6 Q. What is your opinion as to what
- 7 the substantial factors of the cause of this
- 8 accident were?
- 9 MR. MAILLOUX: Objection.
- 10 THE COURT: Sustained.
- 11 Q. What's your opinion as to the
- 12 cause of the accident?
- MR. MAILLOUX: Objection.
- 14 THE COURT: Sustained.
- 15 O. Did you have an opinion, did you
- develop an opinion as to the cause of the
- 17 accident on June 2nd, 2013?
- 18 A. Yes.
- 19 O. What is that opinion?
- 20 A. There are several factors. Target
- 21 fixation, young mind is a big one. That is
- 22 brought on by the issue of this vehicle being
- 23 parked the way it was protruding onto the
- 24 roadway.
- 25 That is an issue because that

- 1 community has a rule that you are not allowed
- 2 to be parked on the roadway. There was an
- 3 issue with the brakes. They weren't able to
- 4 stop and they were able to arrest their speed.
- 5 They stopped going faster and faster. They
- 6 were able to control it, but wasn't able to
- 7 stop. So I think in totality, this kind of
- 8 came together and created this accident.
- 9 O. In relation to the evidence in
- 10 which you testified about in relation to where
- 11 the Jeep was parked in relation to the manner
- 12 it was out of the driveway, was that a trivial
- 13 factor of this accident?
- 14 A. I wouldn't call it trivial. The
- issue of fixation, that vehicle is perceived
- 16 to have become a threat. It was something
- 17 that the child worried about. If it was
- 18 recessed into the driveway, I think it would
- 19 make sense to conclude it wouldn't be seen as
- 20 such. I think if you go out there and you see
- in the photos such as I explained the child
- 22 hitting the only tree in the yard, they had
- this huge front yard they could have steered
- 24 into.
- They were truly out of control.

- 1 They could have steered in the yard and fell
- 2 into the grass, but this fixation was right on
- 3 the Jeep and because of it's position, it
- 4 became a problem for them.
- 5 Q. Was that portion of the Jeep a
- 6 substantial factor in the accident?
- 7 A. I would say a substantial one. If
- 8 it wasn't there, it won't have happened.
- 9 Q. Was it in your opinion a proximate
- 10 cause of the accident?
- 11 A. Yeah.
- 12 Q. As an accident reconstructionist,
- do you get paid to be here?
- 14 A. Yes.
- 15 Q. How much are you earning today?
- 16 A. I don't know what time is it.
- 17 It's going up. I get paid by the hour.
- 18 Q. How much would that be?
- 19 A. \$215 an hour.
- 20 Q. You have done some work on this
- 21 case before today, correct?
- 22 A. Yes.
- Q. You went to the scene of the
- 24 accident. You spent a while at the scene of
- 25 the accident, correct?

- 1 A. Yes.
- 2 Q. You got compensated for that?
- 3 A. I did.
- 4 Q. That would be at your going rate?
- 5 A. I believe so, yes.
- 6 MR. SLANE: I have no further
- 7 questions at this time.
- THE COURT: You may inquire.
- 9 MR. MAILLOUX: Thank you, Your
- 10 Honor.
- 11 CROSS EXAMINATION BY MR. MAILLOUX:
- 12 Q. Good afternoon, Mr. Witte.
- 13 A. Good afternoon.
- 14 Q. I would like to start off by
- 15 turning your attention to what was marked as
- 16 Plaintiff's Exhibit 28. Your Honor, may I
- 17 approach and take a look at it?
- THE COURT: You may.
- 19 Q. I would like you refer to that
- 20 report, Mr. Witte. Your testimony on direct
- 21 you had indicated that the report had a
- 22 discussion with regard to the time of the
- 23 photos.
- 24 Could you please tell me where in
- 25 that report it discusses the time?

- 1 A. On this report it talks about they
- 2 arrived at 1:47 when the female was sitting at
- 3 13:03 hours. Then they talk about how they
- found the vehicle at 156 Delafield Lane
- 5 sometime afterwards. So my conclusion is this
- 6 is one tool that was used.
- 7 There is other paperwork that lays
- 8 out the full timeline, but this has the
- 9 beginning of it.
- 10 Q. Mr. Witte, you just told this jury
- ten minutes ago that this report has a full
- 12 discussion of the alleged delay in the photos.
- 13 Could you point where in that report the delay
- 14 taking the photos is?
- 15 A. I don't believe I used the word
- 16 "full." I just said it approaches it.
- 17 O. Isn't it true there is no
- discussion of when the photos were taken in
- 19 that report?
- 20 A. If you are talking, I think I
- 21 understand the problem you are talking about
- 22 natural verbal communication. That is not
- 23 what I was referring to. What I am referring
- to is what I use is typed or reported in here
- 25 as beginning time 13:03 hours or 1:03.

- 1 Q. 13:03 hours is when the incident
- 2 occurred, correct?
- 3 A. It says when officer responded to
- 4 the call, to the events.
- 5 Q. The time of the incident is about
- 6 that time, correct?
- 7 A. Yeah, pretty close.
- 8 O. The one notation of 147 is an
- 9 address, not a time, correct?
- 10 A. Correct.
- 11 Q. So would it be fair to say that
- nowhere in that report is there any discussion
- 13 as to when the photos were taken?
- 14 A. Not in this report, no.
- 15 Q. Now, you indicated before that you
- 16 are being compensated at \$250 an hour for your
- 17 time here today.
- 18 A. 215.
- 19 O. 215; is that correct?
- 20 A. That's correct.
- Q. What time did you arrive today?
- A. Ten o'clock.
- Q. In terms of the time that it took
- 24 you to prepare this report, how many hours did
- 25 it take to you prepare this report?

- 1 A. Off the top of my head, I don't
- 2 know.
- 3 Q. Would it be fair to say that in
- 4 connection with preparing this report, you
- 5 went down to the scene or the location of 156
- 6 Delafield; is that correct?
- 7 A. Yes.
- Q. It took sometime when you were
- 9 there to gather the information that you
- 10 needed, correct?
- 11 A. A few hours, yes.
- 12 Q. You also had to put time into
- 13 preparing the materials you would need to go
- there that day, correct?
- 15 A. Correct.
- 16 Q. Then after that it indicates that
- 17 you read the deposition transcript for
- 18 D w , correct?
- 19 A. Yes.
- 20 Q. Then you read a deposition
- 21 transcript for Mr. Fred, correct?
- 22 A. Yes.
- 23 Q. You read another deposition
- 24 transcript for Mr. Fred?
- 25 A. Correct.

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1 Q. Did you read the actual deposition
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- 2 or someone else's summary?
- 3 A. No, I actually read it.
- 4 Q. So in your report, it indicates
- 5 the word "summary"?
- A. Yes.
- 7 Q. What is that a reference to?
- 8 A. That is something that I learned
- 9 over the years. Crafty attorneys will try to
- jam you up because I didn't quote it exactly
- as it is in the deposition. So that is my
- 12 note to myself. I am reading the deposition
- and I am taking what they are saying there and
- have a little bit of freedom of wording so it
- 15 makes sense.
- 16 Q. You also read the deposition
- 17 transcript for officer McKenna?
- 18 A. Yes.
- 19 Q. And you read the deposition
- 20 transcripts -- I am sorry. You read the
- 21 incident report as well as another affidavit
- 22 that was generated for Ms. W:
- 23 A. Yes.
- Q. You read the report that was
- 25 prepared by an expert on behalf of the

- 1 defendants?
- 2 A. Yes.
- 3 Q. How much time did it take to you
- 4 review those reports?
- 5 A. I honestly don't really know. I
- 6 would have to look at my log; at least several
- 7 hours.
- Q. The time that you put into those
- 9 reports would also be \$215 an hour?
- 10 A. I was trying to remember. We had
- 11 a rate increase a little while ago. I don't
- 12 know where it applied. It was only a few
- 13 dollars different.
- 14 Q. Roughly the same rate at that
- 15 time?
- 16 A. Pretty close.
- 17 Q. Would you say that you put ten
- 18 hours into review for your report?
- 19 A. Honestly I would be guessing.
- Q. Could it be less than ten?
- 21 A. I am being honest. I would be
- 22 quessing if I give you a time.
- 23 O. Did you put five hours into your
- 24 review in preparing the report?
- 25 A. The same answer. I would be

- 1 guessing. I would think it's more than that,
- 2 but I would be guessing.
- 3 Q. So somewhere between five and ten
- 4 hours?
- 5 A. I'm not saying that.
- Q. Was it a hundred hours?
- 7 A. No.
- 8 Q. You generate reports in connection
- 9 with litigation?
- 10 A. Yes.
- 11 Q. The reconstructionist work that
- 12 you do is solely aimed at litigation?
- 13 A. For the most part. Every once in
- 14 a while I will get a private entity that just
- 15 wants an answer to a question, but not going
- 16 to court. It happens a lot with private
- 17 people.
- 18 Q. Now, in terms of target fixation,
- in your report you review some of the academic
- 20 literature regarding target fixation, correct?
- 21 A. Correct.
- 22 Q. In fact, you presented three
- 23 sources of academic discussion of the issue,
- 24 correct?
- 25 A. Yes.

- 1 Q. The first one that you printed was
- 2 Wikipedia, correct?
- 3 A. Yes.
- Q. In fact, you cited the entire
- 5 Wikipedia article on the issue of target
- 6 fixation, correct?
- 7 A. Correct.
- 8 Q. You are aware that anyone can edit
- 9 any Wikipedia entry?
- 10 A. That is not true.
- 11 Q. So when you are viewing Wikipedia,
- 12 they have a button that says "edit" next to a
- line. It's your testimony that doesn't mean
- 14 that someone can edit that?
- 15 A. I know you can submit edits to it
- 16 so it gets reviewed. I cannot just make an
- 17 edit to Wikipedia. It's actually a pretty
- 18 good screening process for it.
- 19 O. Is Wikipedia considered an
- 20 academic source?
- 21 A. Yes, I have personally used it
- 22 myself widely in courts.
- O. When you attend the classes that
- you attend, do they cite to Wikipedia?
- 25 A. Yes, again one of the things we

- 1 use Wikipedia a lot is for is determining
- 2 generation of vehicles when they are produced,
- 3 like a Jeep first generation, second
- 4 generation. So we will use it to help us
- 5 identify that information.
- 6 Q. That is not why you were using
- 7 Wikipedia with your investigation in this
- 8 case, correct?
- 9 A. I don't think so, no.
- 10 Q. You were citing it to define what
- 11 target fixation is?
- 12 A. Yes.
- 13 Q. The second source, academic source
- 14 regarding target fixation you cited was an
- 15 article by Glenn Edmonds from the Performance
- 16 Driving School?
- 17 A. Correct.
- 18 Q. But that article was referenced in
- the Wikipedia page, correct?
- 20 A. Yes, it is.
- 21 Q. So the only citation on theory of
- 22 target fixation that you submitted was an
- 23 article by Mark Green that you discussed
- 24 before, correct?
- 25 A. That is one, yes.

- 1 O. That article's title is the MOTH
- 2 effects real, correct?
- 3 A. That's correct.
- Q. You can correct me if I am wrong,
- 5 but it was your testimony before to this jury
- 6 that that article discusses the connection
- 7 between the Move-Over laws and the theory of
- 8 target fixation, correct?
- 9 A. Correct.
- 10 Q. If I were to tell you that the
- 11 Move-Over laws are not referenced anywhere in
- that article, would that surprise you?
- 13 A. The actual law, no; because I
- 14 believe it predates that.
- 15 Q. His article predated the laws?
- 16 A. I believe so.
- 17 O. So it would have been impossible
- for his article to discuss the Move-Over laws,
- 19 correct?
- 20 A. I think so.
- Q. In fact, the idea of target
- 22 fixation is most closely associated with
- 23 pilots or motorcycles, correct?
- 24 A. Yes, a lot of the stuff that I
- 25 have read, those are the big things.

- 1 Q. The theory goes back to World War
- 2 II with fighter pilots, correct?
- 3 A. Correct.
- 4 Q. The article that you cite for
- 5 Mr. Green discussed the effects of a light
- drawing a vehicle to that light, correct?
- 7 A. Exactly, yes.
- Q. In fact, it discusses whether or
- 9 not emergency lights could draw someone to
- 10 them, correct?
- 11 A. Correct.
- Q. Or lights at night that a plane
- 13 could see, correct?
- 14 A. Correct.
- 15 Q. So we are not dealing with a
- 16 situation where there was a light that was
- 17 activated on the Fred's Jeep on the date of
- this incident, correct?
- 19 A. No.
- 20 Q. So aside from the two articles
- 21 related to Wikipedia that you cited and the
- 22 article on MOTH effects, you didn't cite other
- 23 academic information on the theory of target
- 24 fixation, correct?
- 25 A. Correct.

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1 Q. Now, in terms of your preparation
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- for this matter, you had indicated in your
- 3 report that the bicycle in question was a
- 4 Mongoose style bicycle?
- 5 A. I believe that is what came from
- 6 testimony, yes.
- 7 Q. That would be a BMX bicycle?
- 8 A. Yes, like the off-road type.
- 9 Q. What investigation did you do to
- 10 figure out what type of Mongoose BMX?
- 11 A. I think it just came from
- 12 testimony. I know we made an effort to try to
- identify it better. It escapes me how we
- 14 actually came to the model.
- 15 Q. Do you know if the bicycle
- 16 involved in this incident was a BMX Legion
- 17 L-10?
- 18 A. I don't know.
- 19 Q. Do you know if it's a BMX Legion
- 20 L-16?
- 21 A. Again, sir, I couldn't tell you
- 22 which one it is.
- Q. What about BMX Legion L-18?
- A. I don't know.
- Q. BMX Legion LSS?

- 1 A. Same answer.
- 2 Q. Legion L-20?
- 3 A. Same answer.
- 4 Q. You didn't take any effort to find
- 5 out which type of bicycle was actually
- 6 involved in this matter?
- 7 A. We did try to make an effort.
- 8 Going back several years now, I don't remember
- 9 what the actual issues were. We routinely try
- 10 to inspect every vehicle involved in an
- 11 accident.
- 12 Q. You would agree with me that the
- different types of BMX Mongooses could have
- 14 different measurements?
- 15 A. Yes.
- Q. Different lengths?
- 17 A. Yes.
- 18 Q. Would you agree with me different
- 19 heights?
- 20 A. Yes.
- Q. Would you agree they would have
- 22 different wheel sizes?
- 23 A. Yes.
- Q. Would you agree with me that the
- 25 opinion that you gave would be better informed

- if you had known the actual make and model of
- 2 the Mongoose involved in this incident?
- 3 A. No, I don't think so. I don't
- 4 think the model makes a difference. As we
- 5 know, motorcycles are subjected to these
- 6 issues.
- 7 Q. In your investigation in this
- 8 matter, did you learn the height of D
- 9 W at the time of this incident?
- 10 A. I don't think so.
- 11 Q. Is there anything in your report
- that would refresh your recollection?
- 13 A. I don't believe that I cited his
- 14 height. I would take a look if you like.
- No, I don't see a citation unless
- 16 you are aware of something.
- 17 Q. Isn't it true that you formed an
- 18 of opinion on the question as to whether or
- 19 not D 's presence on the bicycle, on the
- 20 front of the bicycle contributed to the crash?
- 21 A. Yes.
- Q. What was that opinion?
- 23 A. That it did not based on
- 24 D 's testimony.
- Q. Now, you also didn't perform an

- 1 investigation into D 's height at the
- 2 time of the incident, correct?
- 3 A. Correct.
- 4 Q. Wouldn't your opinion as to
- 5 whether or not D 's presence on the front
- 6 pegs of the bicycle contributed to the crash
- 7 had been better informed if you had
- 8 investigated and found out the heights of both
- 9 D and D ?
- 10 A. Again, going by their testimony,
- she demonstrated she was able to successfully
- 12 negotiate turns prior to this accident. So I
- 13 didn't have any reason to believe it was
- 14 causing her a problem.
- 15 Q. Do you operate in the field of
- 16 accident reconstruction?
- 17 A. Yes.
- 18 Q. It's your job to take a look at a
- 19 number of factors and determine what happened,
- 20 correct?
- 21 A. Correct.
- 22 Q. In connection with the field of
- 23 accident reconstruction, you look for physical
- 24 signs in order to draw your conclusion,
- 25 correct?

- 1 A. Largely, yes.
- Q. Would it be fair to say that just
- 3 because an individual says something doesn't
- 4 necessarily mean that is how it was?
- 5 A. Everything we look at, we
- 6 scrutinize.
- 7 Q. So when you read the transcript of
- 8 Ms. W and she said it didn't affect her,
- 9 you didn't perform any followup investigation
- 10 to determine whether or not that was a cause
- 11 of this accident?
- 12 A. Well, what we did is we took her
- 13 statement. We actually went up and drove her
- 14 route. So we now the turns she made and she
- 15 did this all with D on the front. So it
- 16 wasn't a reason to inspect it that it was good
- 17 here, here, here then bad there.
- We all drive cars. We have these
- 19 "A" pillars that separate the windshield from
- the side windows. The way we drive is we look
- 21 around the "A" pillar when we are making our
- 22 turns. I would suspect she is doing the same
- 23 thing with Donovan in the front. She does a
- head bob so she can see where she is going.
- Q. She said she could see over the

- top of his head, correct?
- 2 A. I can't recall that statement, but
- 3 I will accept it.
- 4 Q. So you replicated the route that
- 5 Ms. W: _ took on the date of the accident?
- A. Yes, we drove it.
- 7 Q. You went to the lengths to
- 8 replicate that, correct?
- 9 A. Again, we drove it.
- 10 Q. Did you purchase a BMX Mongoose
- 11 bicycle?
- 12 A. No.
- 13 Q. Did you do anything to replicate
- 14 the seating conditions of both Do and
- 15 her brother D_{i} at the time of the
- 16 incident?
- 17 A. No.
- 18 Q. You accepted D 's testimony
- 19 without question?
- 20 A. In regards to her operation, it
- 21 appeared credible. We drove the route and she
- 22 negotiated like two considerable turns with no
- 23 trouble.
- Q. You drove the route in a car,
- 25 correct?

- 1 A. Yes.
- Q. On the basis of driving that route
- 3 in a car, you determined that D 's
- 4 statement that she rode a bike with her
- 5 brother on the front handlebar in front of
- 6 her, but it didn't affect her ability to steer
- 7 the bicycle was credible?
- A. Again, the vehicle makes no
- 9 difference.
- 10 Q. It's a "yes" or "no".
- 11 A. I can't answer it "yes" or "no."
- 12 Q. Now, you prepared these electronic
- animations to show her path up to the contact,
- 14 correct?
- 15 A. Correct.
- 16 Q. The purpose of those animations is
- 17 to provide almost a reconstructed view of the
- incident itself, correct?
- 19 A. Yes, visual representation, an
- 20 accurate visual representation, yes.
- 21 Q. As we discussed earlier, you are
- the one who puts in the relevant points; the
- path, the location of the Jeep, everything
- 24 like that?
- A. Well, we are just copying what's

- 1 in the scene. Her path was generated from her
- 2 statement.
- 3 Q. So you are taking her statement
- 4 and then you are putting it in there. Then
- 5 that is how you determine the animation?
- 6 A. The path, yes, correct.
- 7 Q. Now, Mr. Fred, you read his
- 8 deposition testimony?
- 9 A. Yes, I did.
- 10 Q. When reading Erik's testimony, he
- indicated that the vehicle was parked within
- 12 the driveway and you are aware of that claim,
- 13 correct?
- 14 A. Yes.
- 15 Q. Did you prepare an animation with
- 16 the Jeep in the driveway?
- 17 A. No, I don't think so.
- 18 Q. So you prepared a reconstruction
- on the basis of what Ms. W stated, but
- 20 you didn't prepare an alternate reconstruction
- 21 on the basis of what Erik Fred stated,
- 22 correct?
- 23 A. No.
- O. No, that is correct?
- 25 A. That is not correct. It was

- 1 generated on the evidence that we saw in
- 2 photos in combination with the statements.
- 3 Again, all things is a combination of
- 4 everything that we know.
- 5 Q. You ignored Mr. Fred's testimony
- 6 because when you generated this report, you
- 7 put the Jeep in the roadway, correct?
- 8 A. No.
- 9 Q. You might not agree with it, but
- 10 you ignored his testimony. You would agree
- 11 with me on that?
- 12 A. No, I considered his testimony
- very seriously. I looked at it, but it's not
- 14 consistent with the evidence.
- 15 Q. You didn't prepare an alternate
- 16 model with a vehicle in the driveway to say
- 17 what the path would have been in that
- 18 instance?
- 19 A. No, because it's not consistent
- 20 with the evidence.
- 21 O. You didn't think it would be
- 22 helpful to compare the two versions and look
- 23 at them to come to a better opinion in
- 24 connection with this matter?
- 25 A. Not at all. I already know what

- 1 the issue is.
- 2 Q. Did you make your determination
- 3 before you started preparing this report?
- A. Determination to what?
- 5 Q. As to what your opinion would be?
- A. No, we went to the scene first.
- 7 Q. Then you made your determination?
- 8 A. We had a very strong idea what
- 9 might have happened at this point once we were
- 10 able to put our eyes on the area.
- 11 Q. Now, looking at the theory of
- 12 target fixation, the theory of target fixation
- is predicated I think you would agree with me
- on an idea that the hands follow the eyes;
- 15 correct?
- 16 A. Exactly.
- 17 Q. That's in one of the writings that
- 18 you referenced in your report, right?
- 19 A. Correct.
- 20 Q. The reason why the theorist of
- 21 target fixation draws that theory is because
- 22 it indicates it will be susceptible in
- 23 motorcycles and planes because in those type
- 24 of vehicles, the hand controls is a little bit
- 25 more significant than a car which has power

- 1 steering and things like that, correct?
- 2 A. Well, it's more significant
- 3 because the body plays a large role into it as
- 4 well.
- 5 Q. That is fair.
- 6 So in order for an individual to
- 7 be subject to target fixation, you would agree
- 8 with me that the individual would have to have
- 9 control over the operation of the bicycle, the
- 10 car, plane or something else?
- 11 A. Yeah, I have to start out that
- 12 way.
- 13 Q. You have to have control because
- 14 when your eyes look at something, the hands
- 15 are in total control to steer the item to that
- 16 location, correct?
- 17 A. Yes.
- 18 Q. If there was a problem with the
- 19 vehicle, bicycle, car, plane or something else
- and they couldn't properly steer it, then
- 21 target fixation would not apply; would you
- 22 agree with me?
- 23 A. Yes, if you have something like a
- 24 plane for example and all of a sudden the
- 25 aileron acted up and you had a voluntarily

- 1 mechanical failure happened that would put a
- 2 permanent steer to it, yes, that would be an
- 3 issue for them.
- 4 O. You are aware in this instance
- 5 that the brakes were not working on the
- 6 bicycle that the children were riding,
- 7 correct?
- A. The brakes were working, just were
- 9 not sufficient as they should have been.
- 10 Q. It's your testimony to this jury
- that on the day of this accident, the brakes
- on that Mongoose were working?
- 13 A. I said they were working, just not
- 14 as effective as they should have been.
- 15 O. I just want to know; it's your
- 16 testimony that the brakes were working?
- 17 A. They were operational. They were
- not applying the pressure that they should
- 19 have been.
- 20 O. You made that statement being
- 21 aware that various individuals over the course
- of testimony given in connection with this
- 23 case testified that the brakes were not
- 24 working at the time of the incident?
- 25 A. Yes, I am aware of that; but

- 1 again, these investigators missed some key
- 2 statements that were made and that was they
- 3 didn't pick up any speed. They were at a
- 4 speed and couldn't slow it down anymore, but
- 5 wasn't picking up any speed either.
- If you were at the scene, this
- 7 hill is pretty steep. So I would expect them
- 8 to be picking up continuous speed and they
- 9 didn't. They were able to hold the speed, but
- 10 couldn't bring it to a stop.
- 11 Q. I want you to assume that there
- 12 has been testimony that the bicycle
- 13 accelerated only when it was going down the
- 14 hill and not when it came to level surface. I
- 15 want you to further assume that the bicycle in
- 16 guestion did not have brakes that were
- 17 working.
- 18 Would it be consistent with the
- 19 bicycle that did not have brakes working that
- 20 it would pick up speed as it went down the
- 21 hill and then maintain the same speed when it
- 22 reached a level area?
- 23 A. Well, once it hit the level area,
- 24 it will begin slowing down, because the force
- 25 would change. The angle would change. You

- 1 are on level ground. So it will start slowing
- 2 down on a level area all by itself.
- 3 Q. If we were to assume that the
- 4 bicycle accelerated downhill and that it
- 5 maintained the same speed or leveled out when
- 6 it got to level ground, that would be
- 7 consistent with a bicycle whose brakes didn't
- 8 work if we assume all of the factors are
- 9 equal?
- 10 A. If I understand your question,
- 11 what you are asking me is the same bicycle
- that is going down the hill hits a level area.
- 13 It starts slowing down after it hits that
- level area, yes, that would be consistent with
- the laws of physics, absolutely.
- 16 Q. The bicycle, the Mongoose in
- 17 question would have front brakes and rear
- 18 brakes, correct?
- 19 A. It should, yes.
- 20 Q. Did you do any investigation as to
- 21 which brakes were allegedly affected?
- 22 A. It's discussed in the deposition.
- 23 I don't remember, but I know that the uncle if
- 24 I'm not mistaken I forget which relative it
- 25 was did some brake work on it. I quess he

- felt he had done it significantly well and
- 2 sent it out, but obviously it wasn't working
- 3 as well as it should have been.
- 4 Q. You are indicating the plaintiff's
- 5 uncle?
- A. I am trying to memorize to speed
- 7 this up. I don't remember exactly who that
- 8 person was, but I believe it was a relative.
- 9 Q. Does it indicate in your report
- 10 that you reviewed anything relating to
- 11 testimony from the plaintiff's uncle?
- 12 A. Again, do not pin me to uncle. I
- 13 am taking a stab at that. But yes, I have it
- 14 here in my notes believe it's covered.
- 15 Q. Could you please point that out to
- 16 me?
- 17 A. I will try.
- 18 THE COURT: In terms of the
- 19 question that you just asked, the document
- 20 he is looking at isn't in evidence, right?
- MR. MAILLOUX: Correct.
- 22 THE COURT: So you are just asking
- whether or not he did review that, not
- 24 whether or not he was pointing something
- out in the document?

- 1 MR. MAILLOUX: Yes, Your Honor.
- THE COURT: Thank you.
- A. Page 4, transcript of D. ,
- 4 she states on Page 10 J 's dad fixed the
- 5 brakes. I'm not sure what the relationship
- 6 is.
- 7 Q. My question to you is whether or
- 8 not you reviewed anything in relation to the
- 9 plaintiff's uncle, his testimony?
- 10 A. Again, counselor, I already took
- 11 that back. I am not actually certain it was
- an uncle. I was trying to remember real
- 13 quick. Whoever J 's dad is, that is the
- 14 person.
- 15 Q. You are referring to testimony of
- 16 D W. , correct?
- 17 A. Yes.
- 18 O. I want to know if you reviewed the
- 19 testimony of another relative who inspected
- the brakes of the bicycle?
- 21 A. I don't know of anything else. I
- 22 don't know it.
- 23 Q. I want you to assume that a
- 24 bicycle BMX Mongoose was proceeding downhill
- 25 with brakes that did not work in the rear but

- 1 brakes that worked for the front of the
- 2 bicycle. I want you to further assume that
- 3 the driver of the bicycle would attempt to
- 4 activate the brakes as it was proceeding
- 5 downhill.
- In your professional opinion and
- 7 expertise, how would a bicycle in those
- 8 circumstances respond?
- 9 A. It's going to brake. It's not
- 10 going to brake as well as it should. If it
- 11 was just a rear brake that was being applied,
- 12 the bicycle will start fishtailing and
- eventually go out of control. If the front
- 14 brake is applied and working well, it could
- 15 stop the bike and cause the person to flip
- 16 over the handlebar.
- 17 O. Would it be fair to say that if
- the front brakes only was working, it's
- 19 possible depending on the speed of the bicycle
- 20 that if the front brake was activated, the
- 21 individuals would be thrown forward and the
- 22 rear of the bicycle would potentially be
- 23 kicked up over the front of the bicycle?
- A. Depending on the scenario, yes, of
- 25 course.

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1 O. Now, I want you to assume that
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- 2 there was testimony that the day before this
- 3 incident one of the users of the bicycle was
- 4 spotted using the bicycle and only able to
- 5 brake while putting their feet on the ground.
- 6 Assuming that scenario, would you agree with
- 7 me that the brakes would not have been in
- 8 operation the day prior?
- 9 A. Was it on a hill or flat ground?
- 10 Do we know where that was occurring?
- 11 Q. In any area. I want you to assume
- that the only way the brakes could be
- 13 activated is if the driver put their feet on
- 14 to the ground as opposed to using the brakes
- 15 on the handle.
- 16 A. Again, I think it depends on the
- force that is involved here. If he's coming
- down the hill doing all that, yes, it's
- 19 telling me that the brakes aren't working so
- 20 well. If he's on flat ground doing that, then
- 21 I would say okay the brakes probably are not
- 22 working; but I don't know that scenario the
- 23 way you are putting it out there.
- Q. Other than the testimony of
- 25 D W that you reviewed, did you

- 1 review anything else in your investigation
- 2 about the repair of the bicycle?
- 3 A. I believe that is all that I had.
- 4 I know there was work done to it. He worked
- 5 on the brakes and the kids took it out and
- 6 went for a ride.
- 7 Q. When you were presented with
- 8 preparing an opinion in this case, you knew
- 9 that the condition of the bicycle would be a
- 10 key issue; is that correct?
- 11 A. Well, I know it's a contributing
- 12 factor to the crash of course. If they could
- 13 stop, they could stop. So obviously it's
- 14 involved.
- 15 Q. You knew there was an allegation
- 16 that the brakes had been broken, then an
- 17 allegation they may have been repaired,
- 18 correct?
- 19 A. I just know they were fixed.
- 20 O. You knew that there was an
- 21 allegation that the brakes were broken. Then
- 22 at some point in time they were repaired,
- 23 correct?
- 24 A. I assume, yes. Otherwise you will
- 25 not fix them for no reason. Yes, they were

- 1 repaired.
- Q. What steps did you take to verify
- 3 that the bicycle was repaired?
- 4 A. Again, all I have is coming
- 5 through deposition statement. No material was
- 6 given.
- 7 Q. Did you ask for material regarding
- 8 the repair of the bicycle?
- 9 A. I don't think so, no.
- 10 Q. Would it be important to you in
- 11 your investigation to know which part of the
- 12 bicycle was repaired?
- 13 A. I know he worked on the brakes.
- 14 Q. How do you know that?
- 15 A. It's in the statement.
- 16 O. You know that someone claimed that
- 17 the bicycle was repaired, correct?
- 18 A. Counselor, I don't know how to
- 19 answer this.
- 20 My understanding is there was work
- 21 done on the bicycle. They tried repairing the
- 22 brakes. Apparently they didn't repair them
- 23 very well.
- Q. I want you to assume that there
- 25 has been testimony that the individual who was

- 1 responsible for repairing the brakes never
- 2 repaired the brakes. Would that affect the
- 3 conclusions that you came to in this case?
- A. Not really, because we know that
- 5 she was able to maintain her speed. She said
- 6 herself that she was slowing -- not slowing.
- 7 She was holding her speed. Then they tried
- 8 making this turn.
- 9 Like I laid out before, she had
- 10 many places to go. She could have gone right
- in the front yard and didn't.
- 12 Q. I want you to assume there has
- 13 been testimony that the point where D
- 14 began to maintain speed at the bicycle was the
- 15 point where the ground leveled.
- 16 Knowing that, would your opinion
- 17 be affected in any way in connection with this
- 18 manner?
- 19 A. If I understand your question, if
- 20 she stated that she was at a level location
- 21 where she was maintaining speed, yes, it's
- just telling me that the brakes aren't working
- 23 all that great, but it doesn't change all the
- 24 other issues involved here.
- 25 Q. One of the conclusions that you

- drew in connection with this matter is that
- the brakes weren't a factor when the accident
- 3 happened; is that correct?
- A. I mean, not the sole factor, no.
- 5 I think I said this earlier. It was a
- 6 combination of the brakes, the issue with the
- 7 Jeep sticking out, fixation issues. All of
- 8 them is like the perfect storm for this to
- 9 happen.
- 10 Q. It's your professional opinion
- 11 that the primary cause of this accident was
- 12 how Mr. Fred parked his vehicle?
- 13 A. I would say it's significant if
- 14 you look at the whole thing. If you take one
- of the issues out, the accident doesn't
- 16 happen; but put it all together, I think it's
- 17 a fair statement.
- 18 O. Using your report, would that
- 19 refresh your recollection as to whether or not
- 20 you formed an opinion as to whether or not
- 21 Mr. Fred's parking was the primary cause of
- 22 this accident?
- 23 A. Okay.
- Looking again, I will say again a
- very significant part of it. If it wasn't

- there, the accident would not have happened.
- 2 I would backtrack a little bit and say it's
- 3 really a combination of things.
- 4 Q. So you are changing the opinion
- 5 that you gave at the time that you rendered
- 6 this report, correct?
- 7 A. Yes, I think the word "primary" is
- 8 a little severe. Substantial would be a
- 9 better word.
- 10 Q. Would your opinion had been better
- informed if you had more information as to
- 12 whether or not the brakes were repaired at the
- 13 time of this incident?
- 14 A. No, if they were actually working,
- 15 again as I said the accident wouldn't happen.
- 16 She could have stopped. They were dragged
- 17 maintaining the speed and we have the Jeep in
- 18 the wrong location. Then we have fixation
- 19 taking over.
- 20 Again if you were there, if you
- 21 look at it, gosh, she could have gone
- 22 anywhere. She crashed into the one thing that
- 23 was a problem and that is the location of the
- 24 Jeep.
- 25 Q. In the course of your

- 1 investigation, were you able to identify the
- 2 location where plaintiff was when the fixation
- 3 began?
- 4 A. I know about. That is why we use
- 5 those diagrams here. We can start to see the
- 6 Jeep even in the pictures you are losing depth
- 7 in the computer screen. You could see depth
- 8 because it's a 3D environment. Those are
- 9 trying to tell us about here is where the
- 10 fixation would occur. It could have been a
- 11 little further, little back, but somewhere in
- 12 that general area.
- 13 Q. So you know where the fixation
- 14 occurred?
- 15 A. In the general area. I couldn't
- 16 tell you exactly.
- 17 Q. Where would that be?
- 18 A. I need a diagram to show you.
- MR. MAILLOUX: May I approach the
- 20 witness with the exhibits that were
- 21 marked?
- THE COURT: You may.
- Q. Mr. Witte, I am going to show you
- 24 what has been marked as Plaintiff's Exhibits
- 25 22, 24, 26.

- 1 Those are the exhibits relating to
- 2 the animations that you generated in
- 3 connection with this matter?
- 4 A. Yes.
- 5 Q. I am going to ask that you take a
- 6 look at those exhibits and if you could tell
- 7 me which one best shows the location where the
- 8 plaintiff would have been when the fixation
- 9 came into play?
- 10 A. I would use 22. I think that is
- 11 26; any of these.
- 12 Q. Can you show me, because I have
- 13 them?
- 14 A. Again, counselor, that is
- 15 generally. I can't enter her mind to see what
- she was seeing. The reason we pick this spot
- 17 is because it gets her past the visual
- 18 obstruction created by the tree.
- 19 Q. Which one is that?
- 20 A. 22.
- 21 Q. Looking at Plaintiff's Exhibit 22,
- where on that image would you note where the
- 23 fixation started?
- 24 A. Exactly where this bicyclist is.
- 25 Again counselor, this is an approximation. I

- 1 can't tell you exactly where she was looking
- 2 at this moment, but we are picking this spot
- 3 because it gets us past that tree. So there
- 4 is nothing obstructing her view of the Jeep.
- 5 She would be able to see it, identify it,
- 6 decide whatever issues it is for her.
- 7 Could she have done this earlier,
- 8 maybe. I don't know, but we decided that
- 9 there is a tree in the way. Let's get past
- 10 the tree. So we are only dealing with the one
- 11 hazard and that's the Jeep.
- 12 Q. I am not clear. Do you know where
- 13 the fixation started or didn't?
- 14 A. Sir, I will answer exactly the
- 15 same way. This is an approximation. We are
- 16 reasonably picking this area because it gets
- 17 us past the visual obstruction.
- 18 O. Can you point to me what's your
- 19 estimation or approximation as to where
- 20 Ms. W] was when the fixation started?
- 21 A. Again, it's an approximation. If
- 22 you look right at this image here, this here
- 23 looks like a pretty good spot. We cleared
- this tree here. We are past it. So now she
- 25 can see the Jeep with no obstruction in the

- 1 way.
- Q. In your professional experience,
- 3 what would you estimate the distance where she
- 4 was in this photo to where the Jeep was?
- 5 A. It looks like about 85, 90 feet
- 6 away.
- 7 Q. Now, would you agree with me --
- 8 let me ask you this, Mr. Witte, you used the
- 9 example of kids going into trees, flagpoles,
- 10 mailboxes, correct?
- 11 A. No flagpoles.
- 12 O. Trees and mailboxes?
- 13 A. Point made, yes.
- 14 Q. So you would agree with me if
- 15 target fixation was in play at the time of
- this accident, it's possible that the target
- 17 could have been the tree; would that be
- 18 possible?
- 19 A. I don't think so, because we are
- 20 well past the tree. The tree is no longer in
- 21 play here. Just like I showed you in that
- 22 diagram, we are past it. It's out our field
- 23 of view. She is preparing to make her
- 24 right-hand turn. Then she comes across this
- 25 Jeep.

- 1 O. You-investigated the whole road
- 2 leading up to that incident, correct?
- 3 A. Correct.
- Q. You told us that you drove that
- 5 road?
- A. Correct.
- 7 O. So it would be possible -- I am
- 8 just asking if it's possible that as she was
- 9 coming down, she became fixated on the tree
- 10 coming from higher up on the hill; is that
- 11 possible?
- 12 A. I mean, I guess you could make the
- 13 argument. I don't think so, because she knows
- 14 she is driving on the road. She knows that
- 15 those trees are on the roadway.
- 16 Q. It's possible?
- 17 A. If you want to stretch a guess. I
- 18 wouldn't consider that.
- 19 O. You think it's impossible that she
- 20 was fixated on the tree?
- THE COURT: Objection sustained. I
- think he has answered that question.
- Q. You would agree with me that it's
- 24 possible that other items in that area could
- 25 have been the subject of any target fixation?

- 1 A. Well, there are some sign posts
- 2 that are there. Again, when she is past a
- 3 tree, yes, that is no longer an issue.
- 4 Remember target fixation, the one
- 5 thing about it you hit the things you are
- fixated on. She didn't hit the tree.
- 7 Q. Well, would it be possible someone
- 8 with target fixation may actually miss their
- 9 target?
- 10 A. Yes, sure.
- 11 O. I want you to assume
- 12 hypothetically that someone who is the subject
- of target fixation who was riding a vehicle
- 14 that was defective in some way, you would
- agree with me in this instance that they may
- 16 not come into contact with the subject of
- 17 their fixation, correct?
- 18 A. If we are going back to the idea
- of a pilot and the aileron takes off on them,
- 20 I am sure it would change your path.
- Q. So it's possible that the stop
- 22 sign that was at that location could have been
- the subject of any alleged target fixation?
- 24 A. I don't think so, because it's a
- 25 pretty good distance away from where the

- 1 collision occurred. It looks like it's
 - 2 roughly 35 feet away and that is a pretty big
 - 3 miss.
 - Q. Now, I want to draw your attention
 - 5 to Plaintiff's Exhibit 24.
 - 6 A. Yes.
 - 7 Q. In this exhibit which is in
 - 8 evidence, you have prepared a diagram of
 - 9 probably the moment right at impact; is that
 - 10 fair to say?
 - 11 A. Yes.
 - 12 Q. Now, if we were to assume
 - 13 hypothetically that the Jeep was in the
 - position as it's shown in the photos and we
 - assume that it's in that photograph, in this
 - 16 diagram that you prepared, you would agree
 - 17 with me that the accident still would have
 - 18 happened, correct?
 - 19 A. I am sorry. Can you say that one
 - 20 more time.
 - Q. If we were to assume using this
 - 22 diagram --
 - THE COURT: "This diagram" being?
 - MR. MAILLOUX: Plaintiff's Exhibit
 - 25 24.

- 1 Q. That the Jeep would have been in
- the same position as it is in the photos taken
- 3 by Lieutenant O'Connell as opposed to the
- 4 position that you have it in?
- 5 A. Okay. I understand your question
- 6 now.
- 7 Q. Based on the diagram that you
- 8 prepared with the trajectory of the
- 9 individuals, that the accident still would
- 10 have occurred, correct?
- 11 A. I think they probably still would
- 12 have collided. The bicyclist would now have
- time to keep going laterally across the
- 14 driver's side to the passenger's side. I
- think it maybe would have caught the bumper on
- 16 the passenger's side.
- 17 I couldn't say with any certainty,
- 18 but it looks like it.
- 19 Q. The contact occurred on the
- 20 driver's side of the mounted spare tire,
- 21 correct?
- 22 A. Correct.
- Q. So let me ask you this; let's talk
- 24 a little physics, because you use physics in
- 25 terms of your reconstruction, correct?

- 1 A. Yes.
- 2 Q. So in the course of your
- 3 expertise, if an individual is standing on the
- 4 ground, there is a force that is being exerted
- 5 down on the ground and a force that is exerted
- from the ground back up; is that correct?
- 7 A. Correct.
- Q. In the course of your expertise,
- 9 when accidents are reconstructed like for
- instance a car accident with test dummies,
- 11 based on Newton's first law of motion, an
- object moving into an object, there has to be
- some type of transfer of energy, correct?
- 14 A. Correct.
- 15 Q. If we were to have a contact with
- the transfer of energy and I am thinking of
- 17 like these tests with the cars that we see on
- the commercials where they test dummies, when
- 19 the contact happens, if the object that is
- 20 crashed into remains stationary --
- 21 A. Like a wall?
- 22 O. Like a wall.
- 23 -- you would agree with me that
- 24 the object that crashes into that would
- 25 eventually bounce back?

- 1 A. Yes, what you are referring to is
- 2 called restitution.
- 3 O. In this instance in your
- 4 professional opinion, did the bicycle push the
- 5 Jeep forward?
- 6 A. No.
- 7 Q. So based on your professional
- 8 opinion since the Jeep did not move following
- 9 the contact, the bicycle would have to be
- 10 pushed backwards due to restitution, correct?
- 11 A. I don't think any significant
- 12 restitution happened in this case.
- 13 Q. The force has to go somewhere,
- 14 correct?
- 15 A. It does.
- 16 Q. The force would be directed
- 17 backwards, correct?
- 18 A. It will try as long as there is no
- 19 other overcoming forces.
- 20 Q. Now, let's talk about turning
- 21 while operating a bicycle.
- 22 A. Okay.
- Q. As a bicycle is turning, the force
- or the velocity of the individual on the
- 25 bicycle is still projecting forward; is that

- 1 correct?
- 2 A. If I understand your question,
- 3 everything moves. If we were moving in one
- 4 direction, you will always keep going in that
- 5 direction until occupied by another force.
- 6 Q. That's Newton's first law of
- 7 motion?
- 8 A. Yes.
- 9 Q. Now, using hypotheticals.
- 10 If we are driving a car and we
- 11 suddenly turn the car to the left, the
- occupants inside the car would go in which
- 13 direction?
- 14 A. Initially they will continue going
- 15 straight.
- 16 Q. Eventually as the car turns?
- 17 A. They start turning with the car.
- 18 Q. Wouldn't the force push them to go
- 19 right?
- 20 A. Well, you are going to feel it. I
- 21 think we are getting to typical forces.
- 22 Everything is going at a relative speed. If
- you do a real hard left turn, anything on your
- 24 seat might go crashing into the door. That is
- 25 because your vehicle has now changed

- 1 direction.
- 2 Q. Typical force would be the force
- 3 directed towards the imaginary center of a
- 4 circle?
- 5 A. Yes.
- 6 Q. Centrifugal force would be the
- 7 force that exacts in the other way?
- 8 A. Yes.
- 9 O. In fact, centrifugal force we
- 10 would describe that through like an amusement
- 11 park ride with swings that go around and
- 12 around, correct?
- 13 A. Yes.
- 14 Q. As the ride goes around and
- 15 around, the swings go outward?
- 16 A. Correct.
- 17 Q. So it would be important for
- someone riding a bicycle as they were turning
- 19 the bicycle to lean into the turn to counter
- 20 centrifugal force?
- 21 A. Correct.
- 22 Q. So in this instance as D
- 23 W. was turning the bicycle to the right,
- it will be fair to say that there was a force
- 25 pushing both her and D to their left; is

- 1 that correct?
- 2 A. I would say more accurately said
- 3 as they are trying to turn right, the law says
- 4 I want the bodies to keep going straight until
- 5 they are overcome by tire friction and wheels
- 6 as they force them to go right.
- 7 Q. It would be possible in this
- 8 instance that in connection with those forces,
- 9 as D turned the bicycle, that D
- 10 may have been dislodged from the bicycle even
- 11 before they got to the Jeep. That is a
- 12 possibility, correct?
- 13 A. I don't think so, only because of
- where he landed and the injuries that he
- 15 sustained and everything pretty much points he
- 16 was intact with the bicycle when the collision
- 17 occurred.
- 18 Q. You would agree there was a force
- 19 pushing D in the opposite direction of
- 20 the turn that D was making at the time
- 21 of this incident?
- 22 A. Yes, but it's a very slighted
- 23 point. She is not taking a very sharp turn.
- Q. In your investigation, you didn't
- 25 conduct any type of inquiry into objects being

- displaced at the scene, correct?
- 2 A. How do you mean "displaced"? What
- 3 kind of objects?
- Q. Following the contact, the bicycle
- 5 would have been in a location, correct?
- A. Correct.
- 7 Q. In the photos that we have, the
- 8 bicycle is not in those photos, correct?
- 9 A. Correct.
- 10 Q. So at some point in time, someone
- 11 moved the bicycle. You would agree with me
- 12 with regard to that?
- 13 A. Yes.
- 14 Q. When the bicycle was moved, it
- 15 would be possible that some of the debris that
- 16 you pointed to was also moved; is that
- 17 correct?
- 18 A. Yes, I would say sure.
- 19 Q. You didn't conduct any
- 20 investigation as to whether or not anything
- 21 was moved at the scene just in the course of
- the normal moving of the bicycle?
- 23 A. No.
- Q. Now, in terms of the forces on the
- 25 bicycle, did you conduct any type of

- 1 investigation as to D 's posture?
- 2 A. I know that he was standing on the
- 3 front pegs and seated at the bottom of the
- 4 handlebar according to the testimony.
- 5 Q. Would it be significant to you if
- 6 there was testimony that at some point in time
- 7 D raised one of his legs off the pegs?
- A. I think I remember that just prior
- 9 to impact.
- 10 Q. I am just asking if it would be
- 11 significant to you.
- 12 A. No, not really. If he starts
- going off to the sides, he is going to start
- 14 to disrupt the balancing of the bicycle.
- 15 O. As they are coming downhill and
- 16 accelerating speed, would it be significant if
- 17 he removed one of his feet from the pegs at
- 18 that time?
- 19 A. Just removing it? Again, if he is
- 20 staying in line with the bike, it's not doing
- 21 anything.
- 22 O. What if he would not stay in line
- with the bicycle?
- 24 A. If he start flailing, then he
- 25 would start disrupting it.

- 1 Q. If D were to disrupt the
- bike, that would have an affect on the path of
- 3 the bike, correct?
- 4 A. Sure.
- 5 Q. That could affect everything that
- 6 you talked about; target fixation, the forces,
- 7 everything like that?
- 8 A. It could, yes.
- 9 MR. MAILLOUX: No further
- 10 questions.
- 11 THE COURT: Redirect?
- MR. SLANE: Yes.
- 13 REDIRECT EXAMINATION BY MR. SLANE:
- 14 Q. Let me direct your attention to
- 15 Plaintiff's Exhibit 18. Actually let me
- direct your attention to Plaintiffs Exhibit 25
- 17 and Plaintiffs Exhibit 24.
- 18 Taking a look at Plaintiff's
- 19 Exhibit 25. In that exhibit, you see where
- the blood is?
- 21 A. Yes.
- 22 O. You see in relation to where the
- car is parked?
- 24 A. Yes.
- Q. Based on what's depicted where the

1	blood is and the car is parked, does the laws
2	of physics support that the car was in that
3	spot at the time of the collision?
4	A. No, they don't.
5	Q. Based on Newton's Law of Physics,
6	could it be possible that the car is parked in
7	that spot at the time of the collision?
8	A. No.
9	MR. SLANE: I have no further
10	questions, Your Honor.
11	THE COURT: Any recross?
12	MR. MAILLOUX: No, Your Honor.
13	THE COURT: The witness is excused
14	with the thanks of the Court. Thank you
15	very much.
16	* * *
17	<u>CERTIFICATION</u>
18	
19	I hereby certify the foregoing to
20	be a true and correct transcript of the
21	within proceeding to the best of my
22	ability.
23	
24	Chanel Battey Chanel Battey
25	Senior Court Reporter

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