

Driver in fiery crash that killed 10 faces homicide charge

Published: Wednesday, September 22, 2004

http://lubbockonline.com/stories/092204/sta_092204076.shtml

SHERMAN (AP) — A tractor-trailer driver accused of causing a multi-vehicle pileup that killed 10 people was charged Tuesday with criminally negligent homicide.

Miroslav Janusz Jozwiak, 45, was being held in the Grayson County Jail on \$200,000 bond on each of 10 counts of the homicide charge.

Jozwiak, a Polish national from Daytona Beach, Fla., was arraigned Tuesday after court officials found a Polish interpreter, Justice of the Peace Greg Middents said. Authorities had tried to arraign Jozwiak late Monday, but he could not understand the proceedings, Middents said.

Five members of a McKinney family and five people traveling in a pickup truck were killed Monday afternoon when Jozwiak's truck crossed a grassy median on U.S. Highway 75 and struck the pickup and a sport utility vehicle. The wreck occurred on the southern edge of Sherman, about 60 miles north of Dallas.

The victims in the SUV included three McKinney children, identified by police as Chance Martin, 4, Brock Martin, 2, and Reid Martin, 6 weeks. Their mother Lisa Wood Martin, 32, and grandmother, Betsy Wood, 72, also died in the fiery crash.

"It was a horrible scene," Middents said. "It was probably the worst wreck that I have seen. ... The SUV was totally engulfed and basically destroyed."

The five killed in the pickup truck were identified as: Manuel Esparza, 39; J. Marcos Esparza, 41; Hector Zapata, 33; Joel Mendoza Ruiz, 36; and German Esparza Velazquez, 19. Their hometowns were not immediately available.

Middents said two others in the pickup were taken to Parkland Hospital. Candelario Esparza was in fair condition there Tuesday, but the condition of the other passenger, Javier Esparza, was unavailable.

At least some of the pickup truck's occupants appeared to be Mexican nationals, Sherman Fire Capt. Doug Blackburn said.

Jozwiak was briefly hospitalized with broken teeth and bruises. Authorities did not know why his truck crossed the median.

Jozwiak almost broke down when he heard the charges, Middents said. "Basically he kept saying over and over he was not guilty," he said.

The Rev. Bryan Sharp of High Pointe Church of Christ in McKinney spent time this morning with Lisa Martin's husband, Michael. "This young man lost his entire family instantly. He's in

shock. He's devastated," Sharp said in Tuesday's online edition of The Dallas Morning News. "I didn't see any indication of anger this morning; they're just dealing with their loss right now. If there is anger, that will come later."

A memorial service for the Martins was scheduled for Thursday morning at the High Pointe Church of Christ. A memorial service for Wood was scheduled for Thursday afternoon at the church.

No funeral information was immediately available for the occupants of the pickup truck.

Trucker sentenced in fatal collision

<http://www.chron.com/news/houston-texas/article/AROUND-THE-STATE-1495715.php>

A truck driver has been sentenced to 10 years in prison for killing 10 people when he fell asleep and his tractor-trailer crossed a median into oncoming traffic on a busy North Texas highway. Mirosław Janusz Jozwiak, a Polish immigrant, pleaded guilty to 10 counts of manslaughter in the 2004 crash that also injured two others. He will serve the sentences concurrently as part of his plea agreement.