

## Tillery, Michael Blake Redacted

Transcribed by [TurboScribe.ai](#). [Go Unlimited](#) to remove this message.

This is Georgia State Patrol Specialized Collision Reconstruction Team tape recorded interview statement by Mr. Michael Blake Tillery. Date of birth is 1983, license Georgia 051-369-362. Social security numbers, cell phone number is 912-245-9915.

Highest levels of education completed as a post graduate. Today's date is 4-19-2016. Current time is 1025 AM.

We're located at Mr. Tillery's office here at 404 Durden Street, Vidalia, Georgia. My name is Chuck Hardy of the Georgia State Patrol. This statement that we are prepared to take is to be recorded.

For the purpose of voice identification, I will ask that all others present identify themselves at this time and state your affiliation. I'm Blake Tillery. I'm Dan Snipes and I'm counsel for Blake Tillery.

Mr. Tillery, do you understand this statement is being recorded? Yes, sir. Would you state your full name and spell it for me? Michael Blake Tillery, M-I-C-H-A-E-L, B-L-A-K-E-T-I-L-L-E-R-Y. Please state your address.

Where we are currently, 404 Durden Street. That's in Vidalia. All right, social security number.

Please give your home telephone number. I don't have a home telephone. So you use a cell? Yes, sir.

All right, what is it? 912-245-9915. Please state your employer's name, location, and telephone number. Smith & Tillery PC.

Same address as before, 404 Durden Street, and the phone number is 912-537-3030. All right, please give the name, address, and phone number of the nearest relative not living with you. My parents, they'd be Mike and Vicki Tillery.

They live at 2536 Highway 130 West. What was the number again? 2536 Highway 130 West, and that's also in Vidalia. State your date of birth and presentation.

I'm 33. I'm 32 years old. Are you presently under the influence of any alcohol or drugs that would render you capable of giving a good statement at this time? No, sir.

All right, before we get into questions, I want to make sure you understand your constitutional rights. You have the right to remain silent. Anything you say can and will be used against you as evidence in the court of law.

You have the right to have an attorney present and have them present with you now or at any

time during the questioning. If you cannot afford an attorney, one will be appointed to you without cost. You may decide at any time to exercise these rights and not answer any questions or make any statements.

Do you understand these rights are relevant? Yes, sir. All right, are you willing to waive these rights at this time to make a statement? Yes. All right, understanding these rights, are you making this statement freely and voluntarily without threats or promises of any kind? Yes, sir.

Get you right there for me. It's 1028. I'll just start off with these questions on my sheet here.

Oh, what age did you start driving? My actual driver's license? I got my learner's license at 15, started driving at 16. Okay. Any temporary conditions or illnesses at the time, maybe under doctor's care for anything? At the time of the accident on the 4th? No, sir.

The 11th, excuse me. No, sir. Okay, taking no medications? I was taking Mucinex that morning.

Nothing prescribed by a doctor? I have asthma, so I took asthma medication, which would have been every morning since, as long as I can remember. I take Simplocort and sometimes I take Albuterol, but that doesn't affect, I don't believe that that affects the way that I think or operate. Any handicaps, deformities on your hands, legs, nothing? No, sir.

Okay. All right. Wasn't drinking anything, any kind of alcohol, nothing like that? No, sir.

All right. Let's start from the night before. Okay.

That would have been a Sunday night, right? It would have been. Did you go to bed at a normal time? I actually just returned from my honeymoon. All right.

My wife is in medical school, so we had to plan our wedding and honeymoon around the master schedule that they give you off at MCG. So we did, and we just landed in Atlanta that day, probably around 5 o'clock. It may have been 3 o'clock.

I don't remember exactly. I drove her back to Athens, and then I drove home. I probably got to Vidalia around 11.

Did you go to sleep then? No, sir. As you know, I'm in the middle of a campaign, and I also run a small business, so I probably sat up looking at the walls for a while. I don't remember watching anything in particular, but I probably went to bed midnight to 1 a.m., but that's not terribly uncommon for me.

It's a busy life right now. So you think it was somewhere between midnight and 1 a.m.? Yeah, but that would not have been incredibly uncommon. It's about something that happens on a regular basis.

Yes, sir. Monday mornings, I have meetings here at the office to make sure staff's ready to roll, so that's pretty common. All right.

What time did you get up that morning? I got up at 6 a.m. on the dot because being out of town for a week and going back into the campaign, I knew, hey, it's time. I got to get up and get back to the coffee shops and get ready to roll. Is that pretty normal here lately, getting up at that time? Yeah.

I hate getting up early in the morning, I'll tell you the truth, but once I'm up, I'm up. So I got up at 6 and was at Chatters by probably 6.30, 6.20, 6.30, something in that time period. Maybe 6.40. Okay, so 6.30 to 6.40, something like that.

Yeah, and it could have been later, honestly, but it was before 7. I mean, it was well before 7 because you got to catch the farmers before they get in the field. Yeah, you've been normally, since you're doing the campaign, you've been normally going there pretty early? I've been going, doing everything early. Everything? So that's not uncommon though.

No, that's pretty common. But moving that early has been common lately? Yes, sir. Okay, all right.

Once you got there, you ate breakfast? Yes, sir. All right, and you said you took your asthma medicine? I took it before I left the house. Before you left.

All right, and while you were there, did you eat with somebody in particular or you just never talked to everybody? I talked to everybody. I can remember who sat with me. I think Wallace Gordy was there.

I think Mike McKinley was there. Not Mike McKinley, Terry Collins, who's Mike McKinley's farm partner. They were there.

Roger Morris, John Morris. They were at breakfast. Once you left, do you remember about what time that was? Tommy Williams was at breakfast, too.

Actually, I hung around there a little bit later to meet with Tommy, and we talked very briefly. Then I left probably 7.40, 7.40ish, and I headed back to my office for an 8 a.m. meeting. Oh, right there on 292.

Is that where the Chatters is at? Yes, sir. You don't happen to know that address at all, do you? I don't. All right.

I'll go by there and look at it. It's probably a mile or less from where everything happened. All right.

But that's your normal route? Once you leave there, you go 292 or you go back across the Chatters? No, no, no. I don't usually. Usually, if I get there that early in the morning, my normal route is usually to go on to the courthouse because I'm chairman of the county commission.

I usually stop by there and talk first and just make sure everything's good, and then head to the office by 8.30 or so. On Mondays, I have an 8 a.m. meeting, so I had to come back that way

instead. I've driven that route at that time, I'm sure, several times in my 15 years of living in this community.

It wouldn't have been my common route. I would have gone to the courthouse and then come back instead of going straight from Chatters to the office. Let's back up to where y'all were sitting there eating.

Were you sitting where you could see out the window toward the road by any chance? I was sitting sideways. Actually, I would have been at a 90-degree angle to the windows in Chatters. I don't know that you can see out the windows to the road anyway.

I was just wondering, maybe you've seen the guy on the bicycle come by prior to or anything? Yes, sir. When you left, I noticed on the map. I looked at it on Google.

Did you pull out of their driveway or the road right here next to it? I pulled out of their parking lot onto the road that's in between the health department and Chatters. Then from there on to 292. You made a ride on 292? Yes, sir.

All right. Was there a lot of traffic that morning? We don't ever have a whole lot of traffic, but there were cars. There was traffic there.

When you pulled out, did you get behind the car? I got pretty well behind the car, actually. It was a log truck, I believe. When you say it was a log truck, was he loaded? Yes, sir.

How close behind him did you stay as you approached and went down 292? I ended up getting closer. Some cars turned. I think the first road you come to is probably HD right road to the left.

I remember seeing some cars go left there. Other cars were coming against them, but it wasn't so bad that I had to slow down. Does that make sense? Y'all were traveling westbound, right? We were traveling westbound and the cars were turning to the left on HD right, but I was able to... I never had to slow my speed or hit my brakes or anything.

Does that make sense? They're getting tired before you get in there. Right. There was a pretty good bit of space when I pulled out behind me in the log truck.

I wasn't right on his bumper. Yeah. All right.

When y'all come around that little curve there that starts into the straightaway, how close was the log truck then? Closer. It may have been a couple of car lengths. He could have been a little bit further, but we had closed space then.

And that was after you passed that Sakoko? I'm trying to find what name that road is. Simcoe Road? Simcoe Road, yeah. Were you still behind him then? But I was far enough away that I remember, and I know this is going to sound weird to you, I remember seeing the shadows of the trees on the road.

There was not a cloud in the sky there. And I remember thinking of how beautiful it was because our wedding day there wasn't a cloud in the sky. I remember thinking how pretty that... I don't know why my mind recalls this thing, but I remember seeing the shadows on the roadway were like crystal clear.

You know how sometimes it'll be sort of foggy looking? No, they were just like perfect lines. And I remember seeing that. So I couldn't have been close enough to not see the shadows, but he wasn't half a mile ahead either.

He was close enough in that period. So I remember noticing if he was toward the center of the road or toward the fog line or anything like that. I don't remember.

I know it would help me to tell you that he was in the fog line, but I don't remember. Okay. I just want to say he was loaded if he was close to the fog line or if he was toward the center.

If he might've seen him or maybe he didn't see him. I'm just wondering where he was riding. All right.

And when you got to that point and you noticed the trees, were you using a telephone at all? Yes, sir. No talking, no texting, no pictures, no nothing? Nothing. Okay.

What were you doing besides noticing that it was the trees? I remember traffic coming against us and I say noticing the trees. I wasn't noticing the trees. The shadow on the ground.

I wasn't noticing. There was a log truck in front of me and I remember cars coming against us. I'm not 100% certain on this one, but it's in my mind.

I think I remember a blue, probably like Oldsmobile, 80s-ish model, older, that was coming against us going to what would be my left, but I don't remember the log truck. Does that make sense? I don't remember. I know it helps me to tell you that the log truck swerved, but I can't tell you that.

I can tell you that the blue Oldsmobile, I believe, went to the to the left, which would have been, I guess, to their right, but I don't remember seeing the, but also I remember the log truck swale a lot. I don't know that I would have paid wouldn't noticed that much attention to it. I know that I was in the shadows area when I hit.

The radio, when I checked the car, when I crunk it up or turned the key on, it was on. Did you turn it on or does it stay on? It stays on. It honestly just stays on in the background, usually to 97.7, and just, you know, so whatever local news is on, I'll hear it as it goes, and it's sort of just honestly background noise.

I knew it was kind of low, but it didn't sound like it was turned up because the car had been actually crunk up. I don't know that I heard it that well. It's just background noise.

All right. The GPS on the dash, does all that stuff still work? As far as I know, yes, sir. I know it

was on.

I didn't know if you used it. No, sir. Not around here.

You wouldn't need it. I wouldn't need it around here. I do use it when I'm in Atlanta or somewhere like that.

But it just stays on too? It is. It's not that accurate, honestly, so I've learned that. So I don't use it as much, I've had to say.

In Atlanta, it'll take you and tell you the quickest way to get to, you know, Buckhead is to take 575 and weave up, what is it, the road that kind of runs by Emory. That's not the quickest way. Moreland Avenue? Yeah.

I don't think that's the quickest way to get there. Maybe three in the morning. That might be the most direct shot, but it isn't the quickest way.

What's the first thing you remember after the impact that you noticed? I remember we were coming out of the shadow, and the gentleman's back and all sort of seemed like he was trying to be accurate. I don't know if he was trying to go away from me, if that makes sense, because the way his body was turned would have been like he was trying to go not straight forward. Does that make sense? Like he was sort of maybe trying to go away from me.

Yeah. I remember hearing the sound and immediately thinking, what was that? Hoping that it was anything other than what it would be. I remember hearing the sound of my bumper dragging.

It was really quick, just getting off the road. I noticed later on I didn't get all the way off the road. A purple car came flying by me and kept going.

I noticed that because that was before I even got out of the car. I jumped out of the car and immediately turned to run back to check on the individual. Did you call 9-1-1 at that point? No.

I started to take two or three steps. I was running towards him, and I then thought, somebody's got to call 9-1-1. I turned to go back to my car to think, well, I've got to grab my cell phone to call 9-1-1, I guess is what my thought was.

A lady had already called. She had to be calling within seconds. My job was to be with him, so I ran straight to him.

By that time, cars started coming off the side of the road and almost hitting each other. It was bad at that point. I never really worried.

They never worried about me at that point in time, but I did worry that other cars were going to hit each other. They started pulling off in the grass at more than just pulling off in grass speed, if that makes sense. Road speed, running off the edge of the road? Yes, sir.

Several of them. Did you look at the speedometer at any time? No, sir. I know I was going with the flow of traffic.

I didn't pass anybody. Do you remember what the speed limit is right through there? I couldn't. I think it's 55.

We probably weren't going. I wouldn't be shocked if we were going a little under the speed limit, but we might have been going, I'd say, probably 50 to 55. You can't pass anybody there.

There were too many cars to be jetting off, if that makes sense. Too many cars going both directions? Yes, sir. At that same time, it wasn't bumper to bumper.

We were all moving. We were all getting there. When you got out and went back there, did anybody say anything to you or ask you anything? I ran.

I ran there. Did anybody try to stop me? No, did anybody try to talk to you? Before I got there. Once you got there.

Once I got there, there was a gentleman that ran up. The lady stepped out and she was on her cell phone with no one already. People started pulling up and checking somebody.

I can't tell you who he was, but he must have some type of first responder medical training, maybe a volunteer fireman or something, ran up. I was talking to the man. Sir, sir, sir, no response.

Are you okay? I started to roll him over, but then thought you're not supposed to move anybody. I was like, well, I'll just, I'll just talk to him and pray for him and talk to him and see what happened. Someone came up and tried to check his pulse.

This couldn't have been, I mean, we're there quick. This is probably 20 seconds, 30 seconds after the accident, if maybe even quicker than that. They thought they found a pulse and then they checked again.

They didn't have a pulse. I just sat there on my knees beside him. Then people started trying to get and pick me up and get me away.

People did walk up and talk to me. The lady who was on the cell phone, she walked up and said that she saw everything, but we didn't talk. Does that make sense? I honestly can't recall any, I know Teresa Meadows was there, but I called her by her maiden name, Teresa McLean.

She's been married longer than I've been alive. I can't tell you how many conversation I had. You were saying roll him over and you may not want to explain this, but I need to know where he was laying because nobody else can tell me.

He was laying on his right side. He had darker clothes on. Does that make sense? He had on a brown boomer bag.

You know what I remember for true, Marty? He had on a wedding ring. It mattered a lot to me because I just got one. I sat there and thought that was it.

He had long black hair. At first, I didn't know. I could tell from his hands he was a man, but when I first got there, I didn't know.

His head was down. He was laying on his right side shoulder over, if that makes sense. I could see his torso, but I couldn't.

His hair covered his face. On his right side facing back toward the road? Yes, sir. Towards the wood line? Towards the fence.

Yes, sir. This would have been the road. He would have been like this.

I don't know what else you need to ask me, sir. No, we're done with that part of it. What point did you get up and go back? Did somebody get you moved back or did you move back? I don't remember if it was the volunteer fireman.

I'm calling him the volunteer fireman. I can tell you that on a gray t-shirt. I don't know if he was a volunteer fireman or not, but he was checking for holes.

He left, I think. Teresa Meadows-McClain, I started talking to her, and she was pulling me back. I was like, look, we're going to pray.

We're going to do these things. There were a lot of people there then. It wasn't just two of us.

As weird as this sounds, it felt like I was there by myself, but you weren't. Does that make sense? So did you go back to your car or did they take you back and talk to you? Who? Ms. McClain, is that her name? She pulled me back a little bit. I think I may have stayed on my knees until EMS showed up, stayed there with him.

I may have jumped down and jumped back up. I don't remember how long that took. Then eventually, I went back to my car.

You start thinking where things are. Teresa's like, you need to call your wife. I was like, well, thank you for reminding me of that.

Again, I'm new to this. I needed to call. I remember telling her, I was like, no, I know I need to call my office because I'm supposed to be there at eight o'clock.

Worried about business? Well, I don't know what I was, but I was like, hey, I need to make sure they know I'm not, they need to go on and do their thing. Yeah. Who was the first law enforcement that you remember showing up? Any of them talk to you? About APD.

APD. Did you talk to any of them at all? Well, the first people I remember getting there was EMS. Vitae APD may have beaten them there, but I don't think so.

I remember the EMS folks, because obviously, I signed their checks, and I know them. We didn't say a word. We didn't say, hey, they didn't speak.

The only thing they did was cut the boomer bag off and put them on a stretcher and get out of there, which is what they're supposed to do. Officer-wise, there was a, I know that I, I know I probably talked to him before, but I can't remember his name right now, but there was a Vidalia officer, and then, and there were several, and then I remember them saying that, I guess because of, I don't know if it's because of my position with the county or whatever, but that, hey, we need to call, the Georgia State Patrol needs to work this, not us, just so that everything is above, that there's no even perceptions of conflicts. But I know Vidalia APD, I think, was there first.

But you actually never left the scene until we got there, and you went with the officer. He carried me to have my, he said, you know, they can draw your blood with EMS, or they can take you to Meadows, and because, again, I signed the checks of EMS to avoid any conflict. It's like, well, we need to go to Meadows now.

So they took me to Meadows, and he stayed with me the whole, I did not go anywhere else. I mean, I was there. Yeah, you never left.

I know you were there when I got there. Yes, sir. All right.

Can you think of anything else that you might remember that you didn't tell me or I didn't ask? I don't know. I hadn't really thought about it until now when we started talking about that, but I do remember us being in the shadows when I hit, and I don't, I'm not trying to say that's the reason, but I do recall that as we sat here and talked about it. It's honestly not something I've tried to visit back in my mind a lot.

Did you have on your seatbelt? I forgot to ask you that. Yes, sir. You did say something, but I forgot to ask you while ago.

The bag was still on his back. They actually took it off? They cut it off on him. They did? Yes, sir.

They cut it off him. That was the other question I was going to ask, but I forgot about it. I'm glad you brought it up.

Anything else you can think of? All right. I'm going to ask you questions like that. That's fine.

Do you have anything else that you want to add to the statement? I don't think so. Okay. All right.

Have any threats or promises been made during this interview? No, sir. All right. Did you request to stop the interview or question at any time? No, sir.

All right. Have you read or have we discussed anything during this interview that you do not understand? No, sir.

This file is longer than 30 minutes.

[Go Unlimited](#) at [TurboScribe.ai](#) to transcribe files up to 10 hours long.

[www.TheGeorgiaVirtue.com](http://www.TheGeorgiaVirtue.com)