

## Paul-Michael Foster Disappeared Then Found In 24 Feet of Water

I noted a story this morning (October 15th, 2010) in the Hamilton Spectator newspaper discussing the death of Paul-Michael Foster. Reportedly Foster went missing in January of 2010. Last month divers accidentally came upon his truck with Foster inside, in 24 feet of water in the Hamilton harbour. The police investigation concluded that "...his right wheel bumped the metal guard rail used to secure boats to the pier, the truck went airborne, and the roof crushed under the weight of the impact". It was stated that Foster "...had his seatbelt fastened when the collision occurred , but it was undone when divers accidentally discovered the truck in nearly 24 feet of water last month...the information apparently came from the truck's black box...". It was also reported that "...the circumstances that led to his death are still not clear.." and "...Police would not discuss the case further since the coroner's office is the lead investigator".

It is an intriguing set of facts. First, how does a right-front wheel of the truck make contact with something that is used to "secure boats to the pier" yet the "metal rail...wasn't damaged"? If this rail is really a "guard rail" then normally such barriers are placed parallel to the road and protect a vehicle from entering the water. So my first concern is: How does the truck get by this rail without causing any damage to the rail? Guard rails are normally positioned at a height that they are supposed to arrest the vehicle's mass and redirect it away from the hazard. In doing so the guard rail is damaged and permanently deformed. No damage to the rail means no real interaction with the barrier that should be protecting the vehicle from entering the hazard (water). So why not? No explanation.

The fact that this rail is used to secure boats sounds like it is not a typical roadside barrier but something erected in the harbour area. But that fact is also intriguing. Areas around secured boats are ones where vehicle speeds are very slow. They are typically where boaters might park there towing vehicles. But the facts suggest that the truck had to be going at a substantial speed. For example, they talk about the roof being crushed by the vehicle's weight. Well, that description is not quite correct. Although the roofs of vehicles are quite soft a roof does not crush to any degree simply because a vehicle falls onto its side. A contact by an narrow object in the unprotected centre of a roof can produce a lot of crush in the narrow area where the direct contact occurs but there is no mention of anything like that. The fact that the truck went airborne and then came down could cause an impact that could crush a roof, but think about it, when does the vehicle become airborne and how do the police know it became airborne if there is supposedly no other physical evidence except this minor damage to a guard rail? There has to be some other physical evidence that the police are not talking about that demonstrates to them that the vehicle went airborne and that the roof crush is not illogical. If the truck went airborne after striking the guard rail and then flew into the water then I would say the roof "crush" is not logical. A roof does not crush from striking water...even at tremendous speeds. So where did the roof crush come from and why is there no mention of other physical evidence except this minimal contact to a guard rail?

The family is reported to be happy with the progress of the investigation and feel that nothing could have been done better. To me there are a number of nagging questions that do not leave me satisfied.