

Seven Die, 22 Injured In Greyhound Bus Wreck

By ROBERT W. WELLS
OAKLAND, 29—Seven persons were smashed to death and 22 others injured—most of them seriously—in an incredibly freakish bus disaster just before dawn Sunday.

A Greyhound bus careened off a ramp on the Oakland end of the bay bridge and plunged 40 feet to railroad tracks below.

It lay crumpled upside down with mangled and screaming passengers trapped inside for nearly two hours.

Of the 29 persons aboard only six were killed. John R. Haber, 24, of Camp Stoneman, Calif., was able to walk away from the hospital after treatment for minor cuts and bruises.

CRITICAL
Twelve of the injured were reported in critical condition.

In almost unbelievable sequence, started when a passenger car knocked a huge hunk of concrete onto the roadway less than three minutes before the ponderous bus dove into the darkness below.

The impact as the bus landed was so violent that its top was washed down to street level. And every seat was beaten to the floor, as it struck by a giant hammer.

People who reached the wreckage immediately afterward said it appeared that nearly all of the passengers were knocked unconscious. That those who died probably never knew what hit them.

The injured, trapped under the crumpled roof, moaned in pain. Then, as some passengers regained their senses, there was terror and screams.

RESULT
It took an hour and 40 minutes for rescuers to extricate the 28 passengers and the driver.

Bus driver Vane E. Elshire of Sacramento, Calif., was one of the dead.

Highway patrolmen here could recall no accident that ever had happened in just that way.

Early in the morning, buswoman Marie Orville Russell, 26, left his Richmond home to wake up the

navy cooks at Treasure Island—his first duty of the day.

He drove onto the MacArthur boulevard distribution ramp—the intricate cloverleaf at the east end of the San Francisco-Oakland bridge across the bay—and, for reasons still unexplained, his car struck a concrete dividing abutment.

Two big pieces of concrete were knocked into the adjacent traffic lanes as his car swerved along for 114 feet and turned over, pinning him under the wreckage. He was injured critically.

Passing motorists were trying to free Russell when the bus bore down on the scene three minutes later. Squared in its path lay one of the concrete blocks, a chunk nearly four feet long and a foot and a half thick.

Highway patrolmen said bus driver Elshire apparently tried to straddle the concrete block, but it was too high. The left front tire blew out. As the massive bus careened, it tore out 40 feet of heavy iron pipe railing before going off the ramp completely.

PANCAKED
It struck heavily in the key system rail yards 40 feet below, pancaking the bus top and pinning all of the passengers in the battered wreckage.

The engine continued to run as the bus lay on its broken top. Charles B. Taylor, one of the first to rush to the scene, crawled in and switched off the motor, reducing the danger that it would ignite the vehicle's fuel.

Some of the injured—once they gathered their consciousness—were able to climb out afterward through windows, but it was necessary to use hacksaws, crowbars and other rescue equipment to get the others out.

Grant W. Harshbarger of Reno, 16, said the accident occurred at 5:22 a.m. (PST).
"I was awake and was sitting a few seats back of the driver," the boy explained, "and I had a zigzag watch. I felt the bus hit something and then it felt as if a tire had blown. I said to myself that I wanted to make sure that the time was known because of this."

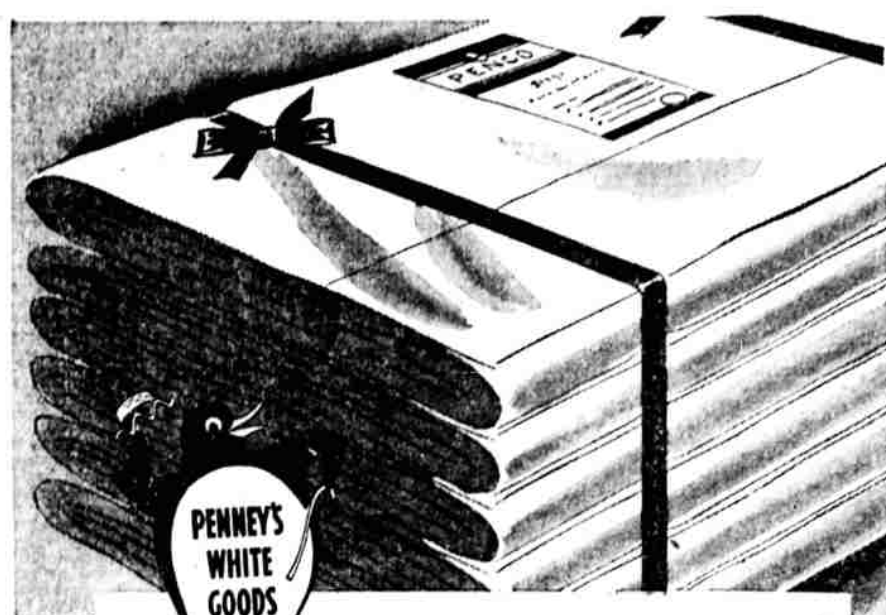
"It happened so fast that I did not know we were going through the air or anything else. Next thing I knew I found myself on my back with people on top of me. I squeezed through a window and a cop helped me out."

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Taft Charges U.N. Failure

CINCINNATI, 29—Sen. Robert A. Taft (R-Ohio) declared here yesterday the Korean war has "demonstrated that the United Nations is an utter failure as a means of preventing aggressions."

The Ohio senator, a candidate for the Republican nomination for president, made the statement in a television (NBC) Forum of the Air debate with Sen. Brian McMahon (D-Conn.).

Their arguments became heated and loud at times as they debated the source of Russia's present strength.

Taft said the Democratic administration built up Russia. McMahon called Taft's statement "absurd" and added that "the strength of Russia comes from inside Russia itself."

McMahon asserted Taft's bid for the Republican presidential nomination is based on an isolationist policy. The Ohioan countered with the statement that his policy is one of preventing a war "unless it is to protect the liberty of the United States."

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by Warren Goodrich



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