

Scanner audio sheds light on fatal 7-vehicle wreck

Corryn Brock, Editor-in-Chief

October 18, 2021

Editor's note: The following story is based on scanner audio from Sept. 19. Timestamps next to subheadings correspond with the attached audio clip.

The scanner audio from Sept. 19 shows what led up to the seven-vehicle wreck that **resulted in a fatality** and multiple injuries.

Eleven minutes passed from the time the initial call came in reporting an erratic driver in Mattoon to **when the wreck occurred in Charleston.**

The Daily Eastern News · Scanner Audio – Sept. 19, 2021 – Car wreck

The initial call (4:00)

The Coles-Moultrie County Emergency Communications first received a call regarding an erratic driver, later identified as 33-year-old Cordell Carter on Lake Land Boulevard in Mattoon at 4:47 p.m.

The caller stated the driver was speeding and nearly caused multiple wrecks.

Three officers stated they would be on the lookout for the vehicle.

At that time, CECOM advised police the vehicle was either a grey Dodge Charger or a grey Dodge Challenger that the driver of the vehicle was a Black male and that he was headed north towards Charleston Avenue.

Mattoon police spot the vehicle (6:45)

Mattoon Police Department officers attempted to initiate a traffic stop, according to the Illinois State Police, but the vehicle did not stop and fled the area.

Shortly after, a MPD officer radioed into CECOM and said “Guys, he’s running. He just ran through the red light here.”

Officers then updated their location and stated the vehicle was on Charleston Avenue near its intersection with Ninth Street, headed east towards Charleston.

Less than a minute after they began pursuit, MPD officers called it off saying there was “too much traffic.”

Vehicle heads towards Charleston (8:25)

Officers and CECOM confirmed the driver of the vehicle was a Black male and that the vehicle was a grey 2016 Dodge Challenger. They stated there were no passengers in the car.

The Charleston Police Department, Coles County Sheriff’s Office and Illinois State Police were then made aware of the vehicle. Charleston police began to set up a perimeter in anticipation of the vehicle headed towards Charleston.

Vehicle spotted in Charleston (13:20)

The vehicle was spotted in Charleston as it made its way down Reynolds Drive and past Carl Sandburg Elementary School at a high speed.

The car continued southbound onto Lovers Lane, then northbound onto Courtland Drive and Seneca Drive, all residential areas.

After the wreck had happened, dispatchers received a call stating a civilian had seen the driver throw a bottle of alcohol out of his vehicle as he drove past their residence on Cortland Drive.

The driver then turned onto University Drive and drove north towards Lincoln Avenue.

The collision (14:47)

Police continued the chase on University Drive as the vehicle drove toward Lincoln Avenue.

Seven seconds after informing dispatch the chase had made its way to University Drive, officers said they were calling off the chase.

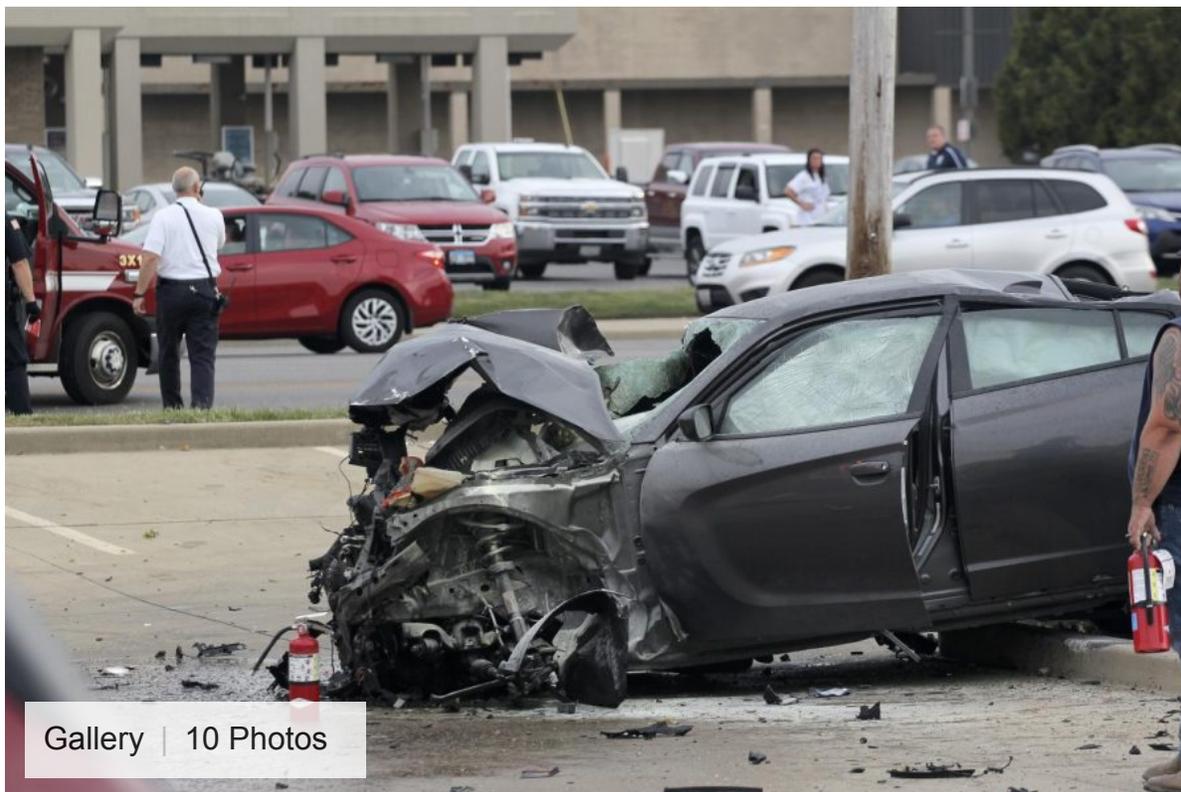
The aftermath (15:22)

Dispatchers call for the Charleston Fire Department to respond to the scene of the wreck, advising it “resulted from a chase.”

CFD was informed they would need to extricate a person from a vehicle and that the suspect was unresponsive. Police began to perform CPR on Carter.

Police reported fire under the hood of Carter's vehicle as members of CFD arrived on the scene. Bystanders put out the fire with extinguishers and dispatchers were asked to line up helicopters to transport patients. Two helicopters responded to transport patients.

Dispatch was informed one person may be pronounced dead on the scene.



Gallery | 10 Photos

Rob Le Cates

Debris from the deceased man's car who drove into oncoming traffic causing the five-car accident at the intersection of Lincoln Aveune and University Drive on Sept. 19, 2021.

Corryn Brock can be reached at 581-2812 or at deneic@gmail.com.