# Fatal Bus Crash in Florida Involving Migrant Workers Leads to Manslaughter Charges



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**Ocala, FL** – On May 14, 2024, a tragic bus accident near Ocala, Florida, claimed the lives of eight migrant farmworkers and injured at least 40 others. The incident occurred around 6:40 a.m. when a bus carrying 53 workers was sideswiped by a 2001 Ford Ranger driven by Bryan Maclean Howard, 41, causing the bus to veer off State Road 40, hit a tree, and overturn.

The bus was transporting workers to Cannon Farms in Dunnellon, where they were employed to harvest watermelons. The deceased, all of whom were Mexican citizens on H-2A farmworker visas, have been identified as Evarado Ventura Hernández, 30; Cristian Salazar Villeda, 24; Alfredo Tovar Sánchez, 20; Isaías Miranda Pascal, 21; José Heriberto Fraga Acosta, 27; and Manuel Pérez Ríos, 46. Florida farms utilize around 50,000 H-2A workers annually, the highest in the U.S.

Howard has been charged with eight counts of DUI manslaughter and remains jailed without bond. He has a significant history of driving offenses, including previous DUI charges, driving with a suspended license, and other violations dating back to 2003. Court documents indicate Howard was en route to a methadone clinic at the time of the crash and had consumed marijuana oil and prescribed medications the previous night.

The Florida Highway Patrol is conducting a comprehensive investigation into the crash. A memorial service for the victims is scheduled in Apopka, FL, on June 18, 2024.

**Sources**: Florida Highway Patrol, Marion County Sheriff’s Office, and Mexican Consulate.