

# Floor Covering Media

Your Gateway to the Floor Covering Industry

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## A tragedy in Tampa Bay Florida



Richard Thomas Parnell sat in his wheelchair alongside a dark stretch of W Hillsborough Avenue for about a half an hour. It was at approximately 4:30 am. He was waving at the early morning traffic headed east toward the Veterans Expressway entrance ramp. Then the 68-year-old started moving across the six-lane street, in between two crosswalks.

Traffic slowed. A truck stopped in the center lane and let the wheelchair pass by. Seconds later, a 2019 Acura MDX slammed into Bell, according to the Florida Highway Patrol. He was pronounced dead at the scene. Eddie Gonzalez, 21, said he saw the incident unfold on video recorded by the surveillance camera at the business where he works, [U.S. Floor Covering at 6802 W Hillsborough Ave.](#)

*"It was strange because the guy was just sitting there for like 30 minutes,"* according to Gonzalez. *"It was really dark and he didn't have lights or reflective clothes."* The Acura driver, Pedro Moleiro Diaz, 28, will not face charges, said FHP Sgt. Steven Gaskins. That's because Parnell violated the driver's right-of-way, the sergeant said, entering a darkened roadway that had no lighting.

Parnell is believed to be the fourth pedestrian killed along a five-mile stretch of W Hillsborough Avenue since October. Addy Prince-Failde, 56, was killed Oct. 10 by a hit-and-run driver on the north side of Tampa International Airport, authorities said. The driver has not been found. On March 17, Felix De la Uz, 80, was struck and killed by a hit-and-run driver in the 4000 block of W Hillsborough Avenue after pushing his wife out of the way of the car. Then on March 27, Wilbert W. Williams, 94, was fatally struck as he tried to cross from the center median near Webb Road.

Parnell was struck at W Hillsborough Avenue near Blue Springs Drive, which resident Edwin Figueroa said is a dangerous place for pedestrians after the sun goes down. Figueroa, 32, lives in the nearby 5 West Apartment complex. The closest light source is from a car dealership. There are no street lights at the intersection. "I jog or walk the dog down this road often," Figueroa said, "and I'm always careful because I know how brutal it can be out here."

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future press release (Flooring Update).

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