THE OFFICIALS NEWSLETTER
UNITED STATES GRAND PRIX

MEKIES



With Herbie Blash retiring at the end of this F1 season from his role as FIA Deputy Race Director at F1 races, who will be working alongside Race Director, Charlie Whiting? It will be Laurent Mekies, currently is the FIA F1 Safety Director.

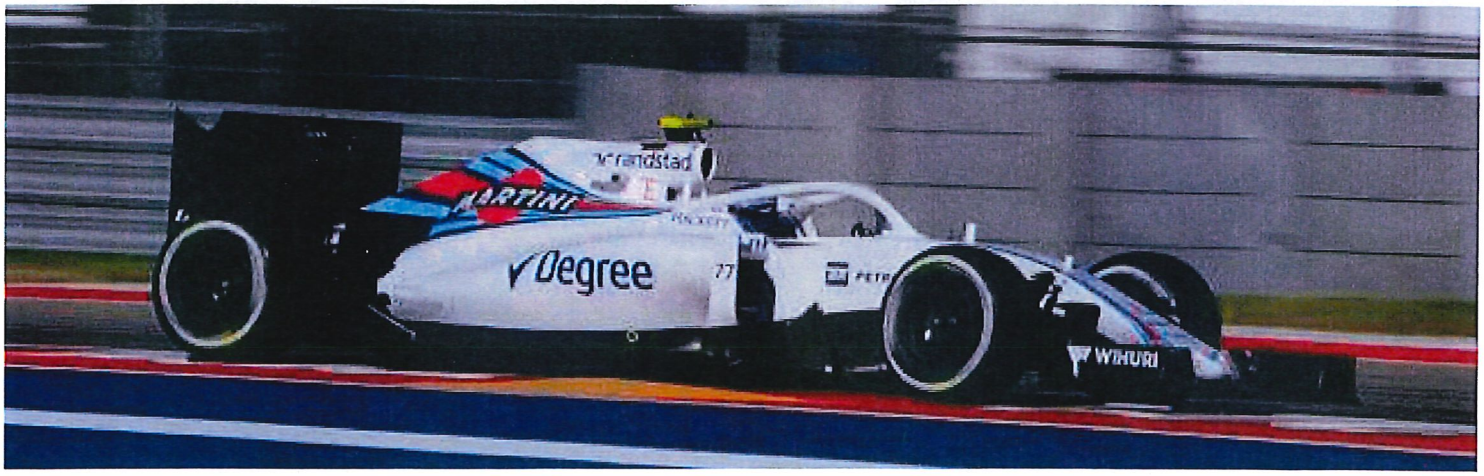
Charlie Whiting said "Of course Herbie will be hard to replace but, with Laurent's extensive experience in F1, I'm sure he will be a worthy replacement; he will also be able to bring a new dimension of experience to our team of F1 officials."

Laurent been with FIA since 2014, as F1 Safety Director. Charlie (Whiting) is the Safety Delegate. He looks after all the safety regulations. "I work with a whole force of very good people in Geneva. We try to make good safety regulations and come up with the best possible safety equipment to be used in all our categories. I'm not meant to be a one-man show. We have a whole force of very good people in Geneva and I will continue to work with them."

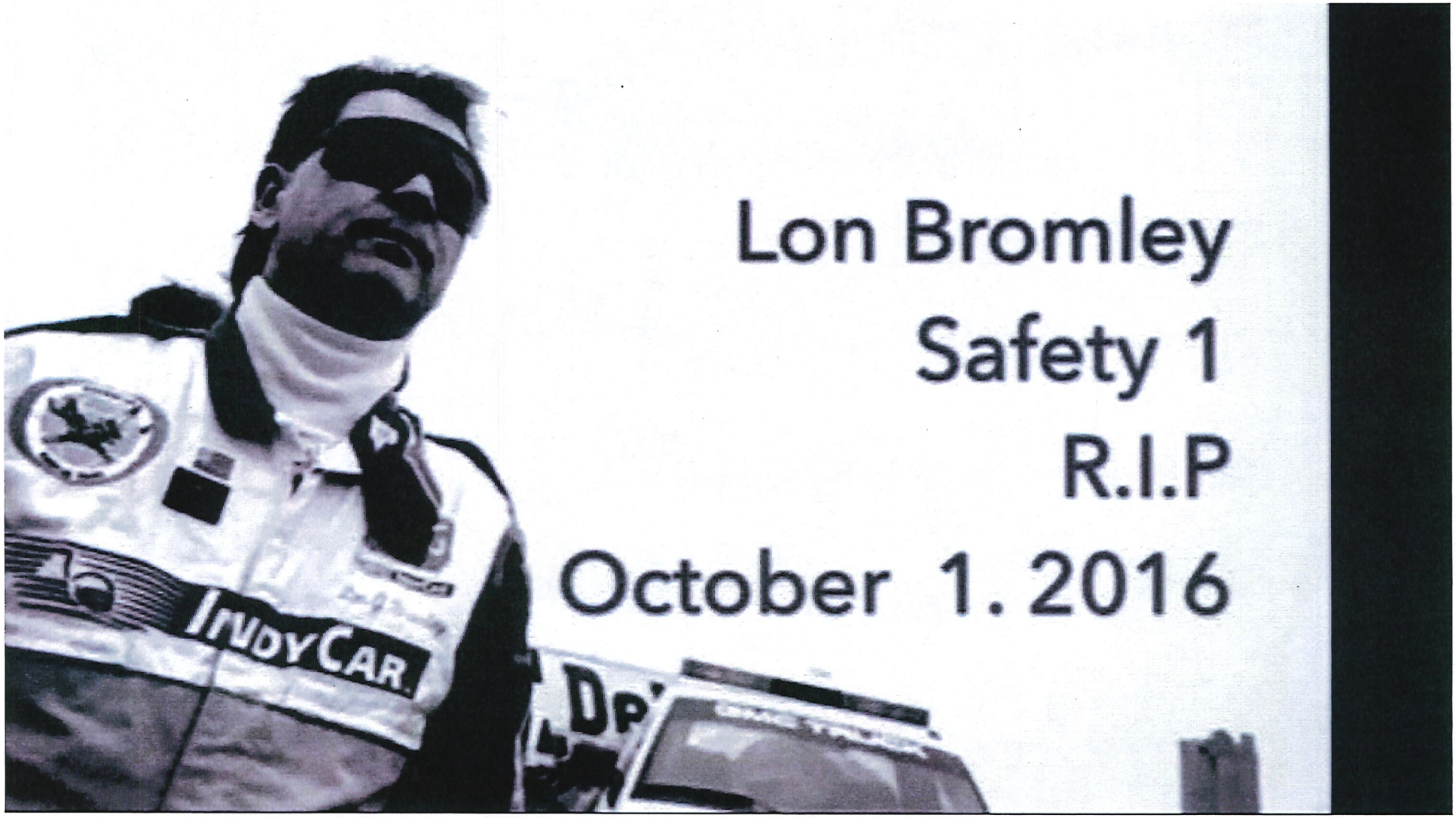
One of things under Laurent's purview is the halo device. "It is coming from the research part of the Safety group; so a group of researchers are working with the teams and with Charlie. There are homologation meetings with each team. It was an original idea developed with Mercedes, but it was further advanced by Ferrari and we are familiar with them. And to the further end now, we have a small working group trying to come up with something we can produce for the race. We are working with the technical directors hand in hand with them to develop additional head protection. We're trying to develop something that can be used in a race. This weekend in Friday morning practice halos were on Valtteri Bottas/Williams, Esteban Ocon/Manor, Dannil Kvyat/Toro Rosso. Every race we have two or three guys running it, and now about 15 drivers have tried it. So by the end of the season we should pretty much have 100 percent of the drivers trying it. So far it's been very, very positive. But so far it's more running than done. Visibility is one of the concerns. Egress is another."

Herbie was the Ambassador to the FIA Commission on Volunteers and Officials. Laurent was also part of that commission and will continue to do so. He thinks its important to raise the awareness of the importance of marshals, there's work to be done in that area, and we all will be trying to increase recognition of their work. The Commission did one important thing last year was the publishing of a new Appendix to the FIA International Sporting Code - Appendix V for Volunteers and Officials.

Laurent is looking forward to next year, with all the new rules. "You will see the fastest F1 in history and we are expecting a lot of existing lap records to be broken. It will be very exciting; and from a safety person we are expecting safety to be even higher."



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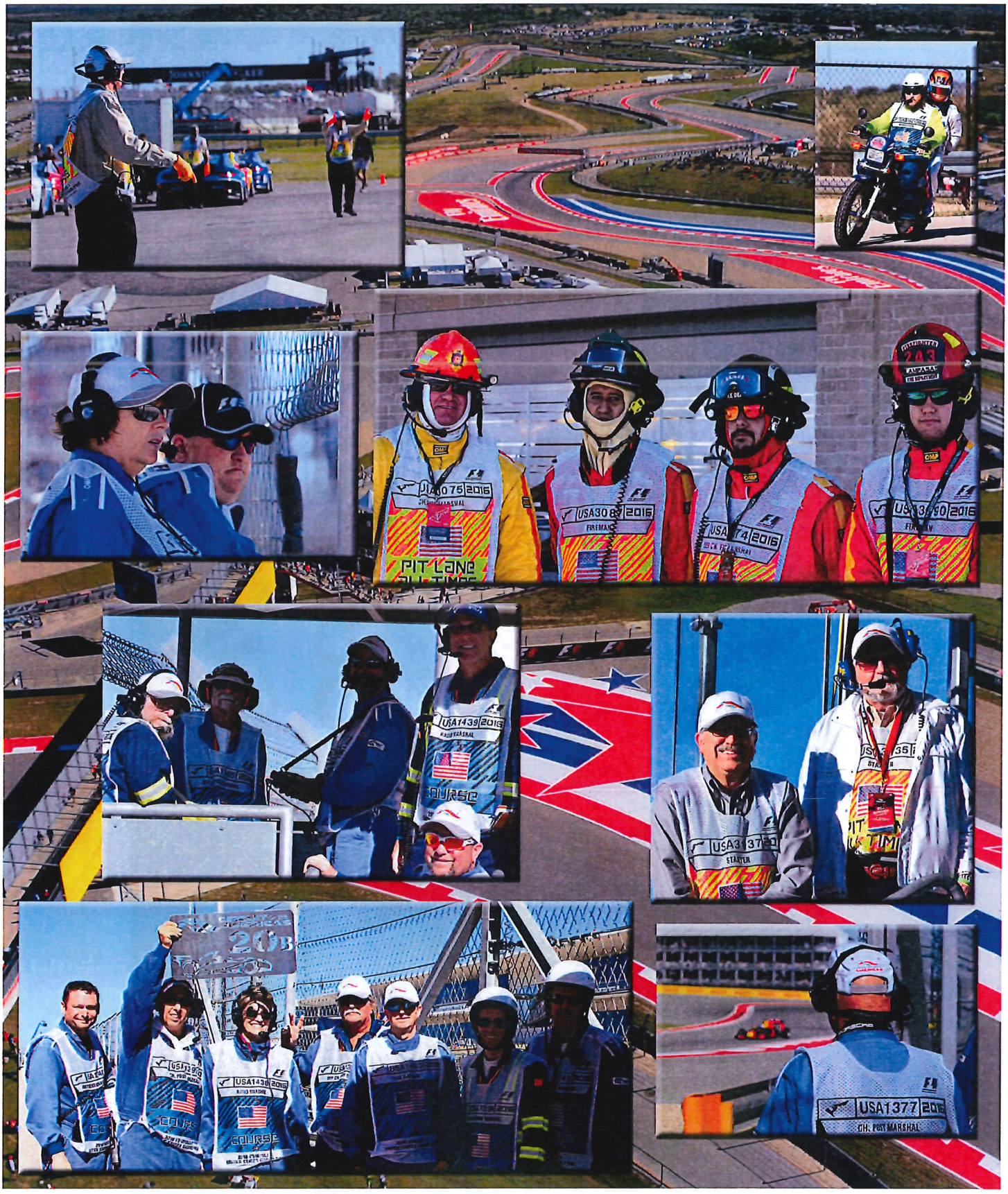
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