DCA-12-MR-009

CSX Transportation Freight Train Derailment with Non-railroad Fatalities

Ellicott City, MD

August 21, 2012

Interview of CSX Track Inspector on October 4, 2012

24 pages, including cover

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:	*	
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CSX TRAIN DERAILMENT	*	
AUGUST 20, 2012	*	Docket No.: DCA-12-MR-009
ELLICOTT CITY, MARYLAND	*	
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Interview of: DANIEL GLASS
Track Inspector, CSX Transportation

Ellicott City, Maryland

Thursday,
October 4, 2012

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice.

BEFORE: JAMES SOUTHWORTH
Investigator-in-Charge

APPEARANCES:

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I N D E X

I N T E R V I E W

MR. SOUTHWORTH: Okay. My name is James Southworth. I'm the Investigator-in-Charge for the NTSB for this accident. We are here today on October the 4th, 2012 to conduct an interview with, Mr. Daniel Glass, Track Inspector; Mr. Owen Smith, Roadmaster; Mr. Randy Daniels, Division Engineer; Mr. Steve Frazier, Training Instructor who works for CSX Transportation; Mr. Frank Crowther, Track Safety Inspector for the Federal Railroad Administration. This interview is in conjunction with the NTSB's investigation of a train derailment with non-railroad fatalities on CSX's Old Main Line Subdivision in Ellicott City, Maryland on August the 20th, 2012. The NTSB accident reference number is DCA-12-MR-009.

Before we begin our interview and questions, let's go around the table and introduce ourselves. Please spell your last name and please identify who you are representing and your title. I would remind everybody to speak clearly so we can get an accurate recording. I'll lead off and then pass off to my right. Again, my name is James Southworth. The spelling of my last name is S-o-u-t-h-w-o-r-t-h. I'm the investigator in charge for the NTSB in this accident. Okay, go ahead.

MR. HIPSKIND: My name is Richard Hipskind. And I work for the National Transportation Safety Board. I am the Track Group Chairman on this accident. And the correct spelling of my last name is H-i-p-s-k-i-n-d.

MR. CROWTHER: My name is Frank Crowther. I am an FRA Track Safety Inspector working for Region 2 out of Baltimore, Maryland. My last name is C-r-o-w-t-h-e-r.

MR. DANIELS: Randy Daniels, Division Engineer, CSX Transportation, Baltimore Division. Spelling of the last name is D-a-n-i-e-l-s.

MR. ROSE: And I'm Bruce Rose, that's R-o-s-e. I am the Director of Train Accident Prevention and Investigation for CSX Transportation. And I am here as an observer.

MR. INCLIMA: My name is Rick Inclima, I-n-c-l-i-m-a. I'm the Director of Safety for the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employee Division.

MR. SOUTHWORTH: Okay, thank you all. Danny, do we have your permission to record our discussion and our interview with you today?

MR. GLASS: Yes.

MR. SOUTHWORTH: Okay. And do you wish to have any representatives with you for this interview?

MR. GLASS: No.

MR. SOUTHWORTH: Okay. All righty. I'm going to proceed by having Mr. Hipskind begin our discussion and interview today. Go ahead, Dick.

INTERVIEW OF DANIEL GLASS

BY MR. HIPSKIND:

Q. Good morning, Danny. How are you today?

A. Good, how about you?

Q. Thanks for coming back in. I know you've got some things you want to do today, so we'll try and make this thorough, but as brief as possible, okay?

In our original interview back in August we talked about many subjects. One of the subjects was your training and the times that you've gone down to the REDI Center at Atlanta, Georgia. Do you recall --

A. Yeah.

Q. -- kind of pretty much all that?

A. Yes, I --

Q. When you're down there, I'm sure that they cover a lot of topics, maybe about gauge, track surface, and I'm going to ask you do they talk in terms of the CSX instructions standards or do they talk about FRA Track Safety Standards? Kind of characterize that for me. Is it a mixture of both or one more than the other?

A. From what I recall, it was most of a mixture of both. They would give you both, let you know what the FRA standards were and then let you know what -- like certain things like gauge, that CSX actually had a less -- actually a higher standard, which would be -- allow less gauge than what, you know, the FRA standard was. So what I recall, they go through both of them.

Q. Okay, and I take from your explanation there, CSX standards in some cases are more restrictive?

A. That's correct.

Q. Okay, and let's just get to the nub of it. Do you recall if a topic of -- about fouled ballast or saturated ballast, was that one of the areas that was talked about in the width and breadth of the training when you attended it?

A. I mean, I'm sure it came up. I don't think that -- a whole lot in detail was covered then. I think that's something you more or less learn as you go into track inspector school. And the REDI Center there is to prepare you to come out here and start working.

Q. Okay.

A. And you get more into detail to that into like track inspector school or actually out here working on the job.

Q. Well, fair to say that when it comes to fouled ballast and saturated ballast, some of those conditions that you might see in the real world, those become a little bit trickier to know what to do with?

A. I mean, I wouldn't say trickier. I mean, there's times when you go over a spot that's fouled and, you know, you don't see a whole lot to it. I mean, it's just -- if you got a fouled spot, eventually it's going to -- something is going to come there, some type of warp, some type cross-level, something to it. You know, you don't have any drainage there, so -- I mean, I wouldn't say -- I wouldn't use the word trickier. I mean, you just have to -- may get a little experience as you go to know what to do with it.

Q. Okay, fair enough. When you're down at the REDI Center

and whether you're taking track inspector training or FRA training or CWR training, in that discussion does the instructor use terms like risk assessment, hazard assessment? Do they try to broaden the activities that you engage in in the real world when you're back on your territory, do they talk about them in those kinds of terms?

A. Yes, those terms are used as far as, you know, as far as, like you say, assessing what you see. Then after that, you have to apply what you see. You have to do something to it, you know, as far as -- like I've talked about before, applying a slow order to it. You know, you have to assess it first and then you have to take an action as to what you do with what you assess. So there's where it's come up.

Q. Okay. Do you feel comfortable that when you're out here back on your territory and you're hi-railing, whether we use those terms or not, you have a method whereby you assess the track conditions either to CSX standards or FRA standards?

A. Yes, that's correct.

Q. Okay. On an occasion, anytime since you've been track inspector, have you ever slow ordered a fouled ballast condition?

A. Yes.

Q. Tell me a little bit more, please.

A. All right, so I'll just give an example. The most recent one would be at a road crossing. Where the ballast is fouled, you know, fouled you got -- a lot of times the road

crossing, it's hard for the, you know, pumps going over the crossing, so it's hard for the water to drain out of there and then you get a mud spot. Most recent one was actually was sitting there at the crossing, waiting to get on and saw a train go over and actually dipped and actually scraped the crossing. So right there, I applied -- went out there and looked at it, applied a slow order to it, watched the next train go off; he didn't scrape the crossing.

Q. Okay. Well, let's --

A. There's been -- you know, there's been quite a few times where --

Q. Okay.

A. It's usually -- usually, you have to have a warp or something to -- get what I'm saying?

Q. Yes. And a couple times there, I kind of interrupted you, so I apologize, but give me just a little bit more detail. For example, was it single track, was it double track, what was the operational speed prior to you putting the slow order on and what was the slow order speed that you applied?

A. Okay, this was a single track. Speed was 45 passenger, 40 freight. And I put down to 25, 25 for passenger and freight.

Q. Okay, thank you. The last couple of days we've been out with Mr. Daniels and other members of the Track Group and we've been hi-railing an awful lot of the Old Main Line and I think we went a little over onto the Capital Subdivision and we saw some of

that too and we saw a lot of where the coal train route is that starts back up around Grafton and comes down to the coal pier. And in the course of our couple days together we were assessing some of the curves and a topic of conversation came up that I was not aware about, and that was a requirement for curves to be walked. So why don't you take it from there and tell me a little bit more about what that expectation is and how you get involved in it, the documentation, or just how that process works?

A. Yeah, it goes by -- usually it goes by the degree of curve. The higher degree the curve is, of course the more frequent -- you know, the higher degree of curve, the sharper the curve is, so that -- you know, more frequently you're supposed to walk. You got curves that a lesser degree might require to walk it once every 3 months. There's actually nothing you put into the -- I covered before, the ITIS system?

Q. Yes.

A. There's nothing you actually put into the ITIS system for that. But, you know, the roadmaster can give you a curve chart that tells you basically, say, the Old Main Line, every degree of the curve on there and how often it requires to be walked. Higher degree of the curve, might require you to walk it monthly. I mean, there's no -- as far as I know, there's no -- nothing in the ITIS that, you know, the FRA tells you to do it, not by a (indiscernible). But CSX has a curve chart that they give you that tells you, you know like I said, a higher degree,

walk more frequently. It might be a smaller curve. You might have to only walk that every 3 months. You know, it just depends on the degree of the curve.

Q. Okay. So that would be an example of where you're going over and above FRA minimum track safety standards?

A. I believe so as far as my knowledge.

MR. HIPSKIND: Okay, thank you very much, Danny. Let me pass this off to Mr. Inclima.

BY MR. INCLIMA:

Q. Great. Thank you and thank you, Danny, for being here. And as you recall, the last day you inspected the area of Ellicott City, was that the Sunday --

A. Yeah.

Q. -- prior to?

A. Sunday morning.

Q. Okay. And at that time, did you observe any unusual conditions with regard to ballast or mud in that area?

A. There was one spot that I believe the geometry had walked -- ran over before and it picked up a (indiscernible). I mean, there was a little mud spot there but it was actually okay for the 25-mile speed through there.

Q. Okay. Could you give me, again, just a little bit of -- what is the CSX guidance for, you know, for mud? I mean, if you encounter a mud spot, I mean, are you looking at the mud, are you looking at only a cross-level or profile situation? I mean, how

do you relate the -- what you observed to a track standard?

A. I mean, generally, I'll get out and look at mud because, I mean, even -- I'm looking for cross-level warps, something that they -- you know, sometimes you might have a small mud spot to start and you don't have anything there as far as cross-level warp.

Q. Right.

A. So what we'll do, we have a pick that we can get out and actually maybe open up the ties. Open it up so the water can start to drain out. And as far as that goes, I mean, if something is getting bad where you're starting to see warp cross-level, going to slow order it, you know, let the roadmaster know that you have a spot. I mean, even if it's starting there, like I say, if you -- sometimes if you open the ties up --

Q. Right.

A. -- you might be able to take care of it before it turns into a cross-level and warp situation.

Q. Okay. Now, do you normally -- you have a mud spot even in the absence of, you know, warp or profile or some geometry condition, do you notate that mud spot in ITIS or is that only done when you have a geometry?

A. As far as I can tell you, what I do -- as far as what I do, usually I only put it in -- I mean, if it's a bad spot and getting cross-level warp, I'll note it in ITIS. Generally, if it's just a small spot, like I say, I'll try and do something

right there to open up the ends of the ties, maybe next time go over to see if it's grown, see if it's expanding. Sometimes it might be (indiscernible) there to get the water to drain out.

Q. Okay, great. And just for my understanding, I mean, generally speaking, there's -- you'll note it in your mind, if you will, and you'll try to adjust some of the drainage if you can, but you won't normally notate that in ITIS or take any kind of remedial action unless you have a corollary geometry defect. Is that -- that's fair enough?

A. That's right.

Q. Okay, thanks. You know, we rode the area out along the Old Main, Dan and I. You know, quite frankly, I was pleasantly surprised. It's a pretty good stretch of railroad, you know, for the track class. I mean, it looks good. Do you have -- outside of the mud spot you had at the grade crossing you talked about, I mean, do you see a lot of mud or just it depends?

A. I mean, it really depends as far as -- after the wintertime, I mean everything is frozen and then everything -- say it gets to springtime, everything starts opening up. You'll probably see more than usual and that's when you really need to start addressing them and maybe have the back (indiscernible) go out start doing some cribbing and -- but I mean, if you take care of it, usually, you know, usually it's pretty much under control.

Q. In your training, Danny, down in -- at the REDI Center or any follow-up training, how is non-class specific defects

addressed in training? In other words like fouled ballast, you can have fouled ballast on Class II track or Class V track. Do they go into any detail at all with you as an inspector on how you might address that non-class specific --

A. You go into it a little bit as far as the REDI Center, but that's something, like I say, more or less when you go for your FRA training, that you get a lot more into, a lot more into inspector training.

MR. INCLIMA: Okay, good. Well, that's all I have for now. Thank you, Danny.

MR. HIPSKIND: Frank?

MR. CROWTHER: Yes, sir.

MR. HIPSKIND: Rick and I have completed our questions and we'd like to pass it over to you now.

BY MR. CROWTHER:

Q. Okay. I just have one question, Dan, and that would be, Mr. Hipskind touched on it earlier with your training, about, you know, the FRA rules and regs and the information that CSX gives you about their new construction and their standards. And then he touched on fouled ballast and saturated subgrade. When you're hi-railing along and you come across fouled ballast, what is your idea of fouled ballast?

A. My idea of fouled ballast is usually -- I mean, if you have your ties, usually -- basically, you know, of course, you have mud, and you might have a little mud and I don't really

consider that to be fouled ballast unless you have where water is not able to drain, basically water is not able to drain out from the road bed. And that's what I consider fouled -- it basically turns to concrete and starts pumping, and on the edge of your tire, you know, it turns basically rock hard and your water can't drain from the center of the track. That center (indiscernible) fouled ballast.

Q. And what's saturated subgrade?

A. Saturated subgrade, I honestly can't tell you.

Q. How would you repair -- how would you make the repair on a small area that was saturated subgrade/fouled track -- fouled ballast?

A. Well, like I said, usually what I would do is we have a pick on the truck, try to open up the ends of the ties and get the water to drain out, see if that -- see if next time when you go over, see if that helps you out. Still expanding, probably need to let the roadmaster know you need to get a backhoe in there and take your mud out and put new ballast, then tamp it up and see if that, you know, see if that will --

Q. Now, how would you let the roadmaster know?

A. Usually just in your morning -- you go in in the morning, let him know. Usually -- sometimes we'll write up a list of stuff we see, go in the office, give it to him, tell him, you know, this is what we saw out there and, you know, he goes out there and starts knocking them out one by one.

Q. So, let me make sure I understand this right. So if you find a spot that has fouled ballast and/or saturated subgrade, which you can't describe to me, what saturated subgrade is, but if you find either one of those, if there's no defect you'll give the roadmaster a friendly reminder that there's a spot out there that needs to be looked at. If you -- what would you do if you were to find a fouled ballast/saturated subgrade location that had a defect of geometry in it?

A. I'd get out and -- when I get out and do my examining of the area, get out, bring out the level board or the string line or -- sometimes you don't even need it. Sometimes, as I said, you might see a train go over a spot and it just don't look right. You get the two slow order boards if, you know, if it's something that's too bad at that time -- you know, I've never tooken anything out of service yet for a -- out of service for surface. Usually just slow order it, you know, knock the speed down.

Sometimes there -- like I say, if you see a train go over it, after that speed is lowered, watch the train go, okay, it looks a lot better. You know, but you go by your measurements, go by -- I'll get into the FRA books still all the time and make sure that I'm -- my measurements are right. You know, I don't have it all memorized in my head. But, you know, like I say, slow order; if it doesn't look right, I have power to slow order.

Q. Right. Now in conjunction with that, do you -- would you make a note on your report as -- that it was a defect?

A. Yeah, put in a track surface -- go into ITIS, click on track surface. You know, it'll tell you in ITIS too if you -- you know, say, you have whatever it is, how many inches warp, go in there, click, and it'll tell you right there, you know, as far as what to do with it too, as far as slow order-wise and all that. So go in there and I put it in there and say track surface defect.

Q. Okay. And once it's been recorded on a -- if there was a defect there and it was reported and it goes into ITIS, what transpires after that fact that you found the defect and now it's in the system, what goes on after that point? The track is slow ordered, you've taken the proper remedial action. What happens after that point after you're down with it?

A. After that, I -- it's got a slow order on it, so, I mean, anytime there's a slow order, it's going to -- you know, the roadmaster wants to assess it because, you know, you don't want a whole lot of slow orders out there slowing down trains. So after that, you know, you got a slow order on it, generally you get a backhoe out there, crib it, tamp it. After that get it back to where it's supposed to be and, you know, take the slow order off.

Q. Okay. So out there in Ellicott City, you had been across it pretty recent to the derailment, the date of the derailment. It was actually the day before. Had you found a defect or placed a slow order on the track at the -- we'll say between mile pole 13 and mile pole 12½?

A. No, I didn't. It was 25 through there and everything

was okay for the speed of the track through there.

Q. So when you went through there on the 19th, you didn't take any exception to any track surface geometry or saturated subgrade or fouled ballast?

A. Actually got out -- we was going through geometry defects that day. Actually that's main reason I wrote it that day, because I told them before I couldn't get time on the MET, planned a route on the MET. So I was following up on some geometry defects and there was a spot there. It had a little mud to it, little mud spot through there and then picked up a small warp so I got out and checked it out and it was still okay for the 25 speed through there. And I did notice a mud spot in there, yes.

Q. But no Class II, FRA Class II defect --

A. No, I didn't --

Q. -- that would drop the class of track down to Class I?

A. No, I noticed nothing to drop the class down through there.

MR. CROWTHER: That's all I got.

MR. HIPSKIND: Randy, would you care to --

BY MR. DANIELS:

Q. Just a couple clarifying questions. You know, you talked about -- you had questions about putting stuff into ITIS and then there was also questions about communication with the roadmaster. Defects go into ITIS; is that correct?

A. Yes, that's correct.

Q. And the stuff that you would communicate to the roadmaster would be conditions that weren't defects yet but you knew eventually would become defects and wanted him to help you with them before they became defects?

A. That's correct.

MR. HIPSKIND: Thanks, Randy.

Jim, do you have any questions?

BY MR. SOUTHWORTH:

Q. Couple small things. Just for the record, can you tell us what ITIS stands for?

A. Integrated Track Inspection System.

Q. Okay, and when you talk about opening up the tie, what I'm hearing is you take like a pick or a Maddox and move the ballast away from the ends of the ties in that area?

A. That's correct, pull it away.

Q. To allow gravity to go ahead and move the water?

A. That's correct.

MR. SOUTHWORTH: Okay. That's all I have. I just want to clarify those.

BY MR. HIPSKIND:

Q. Okay, Dick Hipskind again. And Frank brought up the point about that -- and I think we covered this in the previous interview, but you have the option, as Frank was saying, to -- let's talk about it in terms of a pre-fouled ballast condition.

In a fouled ballast condition you said it cemented out at the end of the ties and your qualifier was that it retains water; it won't let water drain from the track. Are we still on the same page with all that?

A. Yes, that's correct.

Q. Okay. And if we think of in terms of before it gets to that stage, you have the ability to enter certain conditions into the ITIS program in terms of under track inspector notes. Am I --

A. Yes, that's correct.

Q. I'm remembering that correctly, right?

A. Yes.

Q. But in terms of the -- as I recall our discussion about the sophistication of the program, one of the good things about it is that it wouldn't let something just go away. It was always constantly prompting you: did you enter it in on your report; did you assign the right code; did you take the proper remedial action? Am I remembering all that correctly?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay, but in -- and so here's where I'm going with this. But in terms of track inspector notes, that doesn't get to the level in the ITIS program that it constantly prompts you and says, hey, Danny, what did you do with this; you gave me a note last Wednesday about a little mud spot? But the point is, the ITIS program doesn't say to you a couple days later or a week later, what happened to that spot; is that correct?

A. You're talking about if you actually put the notes into ITIS under track inspector notes?

Q. Yes.

A. I've put that in before. No, I haven't seen anything that pops up and reminds you about it, no.

Q. Okay.

A. I do know if you put it, let's say, a condition report, put something -- it might not be a defect, you could click condition report and I believe within 30 days something is supposed to be done to that spot.

Q. Okay, and that's a nice segue to -- tell me why do you think there is that 30-day clock on the system? Can you --

A. Under condition report?

Q. Yes.

A. I believe because most likely within 30 days it'll be turning into a defect if you don't take care of it within those 30 days.

Q. Okay, that's all I got. Thank you, Danny.

A. Okay.

MR. HIPSKIND: Rick?

MR. INCLIMA: No further questions at this point.

MR. HIPSKIND: And, Frank, we're back to you.

MR. CROWTHER: No, I'm fine right now, thank you.

MR. DANIELS: I'm good.

MR. HIPSKIND: Any clarification?

MR. DANIELS: Nope, I'm good.

MR. HIPSKIND: And Mr. Southworth?

MR. SOUTHWORTH: I'm fine.

MR. HIPSKIND: Danny, I said it would be brief and I think we're to the end of it. And thank you for coming back in. I know we just had a few loose ends there and I just wanted to go over those with you and get them on the record, so --

MR. GLASS: Okay.

MR. HIPSKIND: And as before, we'll send you a little bit of a package with the hard copy of the transcript. And the same kind of instructions we had before with the envelope and if you'll take a look at that and go through it and make any corrections if there are any need for corrections, and send that back to us, that would be great.

MR. GLASS: Okay.

MR. HIPSKIND: So again, NTSB would like to extend our appreciation for you coming back in here a second time. It was very helpful.

(Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF:	CSX TRAIN DERAILMENT AUGUST 20, 2012 ELLICOTT CITY, MARYLAND Interview of Daniel Glass
DOCKET NUMBER:	DCA-12-MR-009
PLACE:	Ellicott City, Maryland
DATE:	October 4, 2012

was held according to the record, and that this is the original, complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed to the best of my skill and ability.

_____

Katie Leach
Transcriber