

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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IN RE: :
   
:
   
THE ACCIDENT INVOLVING TWO : NTSB Accident No.
   
UNION PACIFIC FREIGHT : DCA16FR005
   
TRAINS THAT OCCURRED NEAR :
   
GRANGER, WYOMING ON :
   
MARCH 14, 2016 :
   
:
   
-----:

INTERVIEW OF: JEFFREY SMITH

Tuesday,
   
March 15, 2016

Little America Travel Center
   
Granger, Wyoming

BEFORE

TED TURPIN, NTSB
   
RAYMOND LINDSEY, Federal Railroad Administration
   
JOHN MAYSER, Federal Railroad Administration
   
KIRK SMITH, Smart Transportation Division
   
STEVE LORD, Union Pacific

This transcript was produced from audio
   
provided by the National Transportation Safety Board.

P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

(Time not disclosed)

1  
2  
3 MR. TURPIN: My name's Ted Turpin. Today is  
4 March 15, 2016, and we're at Little America Travel  
5 Center near Granger, Wyoming, interviewing the engineer  
6 from the local train in connection with an accident  
7 that occurred on, near Granger on March 14, 2015, or  
8 '16, I'm sorry. The NTSB accident number is  
9 DCA16FR005.

10 The purpose of this investigation is to  
11 increase safety, not to assign fault and blame or  
12 liability.

13 We cannot offer a guarantee of  
14 confidentiality or immunity from legal or certificate  
15 actions, such as pulling a card. For, the main reason,  
16 we don't do that. That's under FRA.

17 Transcript or summary of the interview will  
18 be made available in a public docket. You're allowed  
19 one representative, which I see you've brought a  
20 representative. Do you understand that this interview  
21 is being recorded?

22 MR. J. SMITH: Yes.

23 MR. TURPIN: All right. Now, please state  
24 your name, spell it, and tell me what your title is.

25 MR. J. SMITH: My name is Jeffrey Wesley

1 Smith. J-E-F-F-R-E-Y, W-E-S-L-E-Y, S-M-I-T-H.

2 MR. TURPIN: All right.

3 MR. J. SMITH: And I'm a locomotive engineer  
4 on the LCK41.

5 MR. TURPIN: Great. And we'll go around the  
6 room.

7 MR. K. SMITH: Kirk Smith, SMART  
8 consultation union, local (inaudible), local chairman.

9 MR. LORD: Steve Lord. L-O-R-D. General  
10 Director, operating practices, northern region for the  
11 Pacific Railroad.

12 MR. LINDSEY: Raymond Lindsey. L-I-N-D-S-E-  
13 Y. Federal Railroad Administration, operating  
14 practices.

15 MR. MAYSER: John Mayser. M-A-Y-S-E-R.  
16 Operating practices, Pocatello.

17 MR. TURPIN: All right. And this is Ted  
18 Turpin. T-U-R-P-I-N. Okay. Mind if I call you Jeff?

19 MR. J. SMITH: That's fine.

20 MR. TURPIN: All right. Just tell us what  
21 happened.

22 MR. J. SMITH: Well, if you got, the  
23 suspended block between CP G002 and 8, and CP G844, and  
24 we got a flag man at 002. Talked with the dispatcher  
25 and she talked to the flag man. They job briefed where

1 we were going. Flag man talked to them, said we'd be  
2 stopping at 847, or 844, excuse me.

3 And so we proceeded, we done our talk by,  
4 and went down to 844 and stopped. And we were waiting  
5 and we heard the dispatcher. I don't recall her  
6 initials. It was a female dispatcher.

7 And she job briefed with the flag man at 844  
8 about a, she was going to hold us in the long siding  
9 and run a westbound. Don't recall the unit number on  
10 it, but a westbound train, Main 1 to Main 1, westward  
11 from 844, and I think it was up to 850.

12 So I don't recall where the ending limit of  
13 where they were going was. But I know they were going  
14 through 844, Main 1 to Main 1. And so we're sitting  
15 there at the 844 and set our brakes, and waiting for  
16 the train, and we, I see the train coming.

17 The flag man job briefed with the train,  
18 told him what they were doing. They had their job  
19 briefing. And I was watching the train as it  
20 approached and I noticed it made a right hand turn into  
21 the track that we were sitting in, and then it made a  
22 right hand turn, then come straight at us.

23 And it was an almost instantaneously, me and  
24 the conductor both said, they're coming down our track.  
25 We've got to go. Get off this train.

1           And me and the brakeman scrambled out the  
2 back door and leaped off the edge. And the conductor  
3 headed out the front door.

4           And that's, and we got to the edge of the,  
5 scrambled over the rail and was headed down the steep  
6 bank and that's when I heard the collision.

7           I turned to look to see, you know, just to  
8 see what was going on. See what was coming at us. And  
9 I see containers coming up in the air and I remember  
10 telling my brother, the brakeman, I says, we got to  
11 keep going. We ain't far enough away from this.

12           And then everything just kind of settled.  
13 Everything stopped. And waited a second, and I looked  
14 up and there was, I don't know if it was smoke or dust  
15 or debris, what, you know, but I headed back up towards  
16 the wreckage and I see the conductor of the oncoming  
17 train pop up.

18           His window was open and I said, are you  
19 okay? And he says, yes. And we yelled for the, our  
20 conductor, conductor Shirley, you all right? And he  
21 come back to the other side of the locomotive and he  
22 says, yes. Everybody seemed to be all right, you know.  
23 As good as we could be.

24           And then that's kind of a blur from there to  
25 me. Everything's going real, we got together and

1 talked about what happened and the conductor on the  
2 train that collided with us, he had talked, he was  
3 talking to the dispatcher at the time, and I don't know  
4 what he was saying. I couldn't hear. I was outside.

5 But we got over in a safe position. There  
6 was a lot of oil and diesel and so we got them in a  
7 safe position and waited.

8 And they, it seemed like a long time, but  
9 people started showing up and the ambulance showed up,  
10 police officers, fire trucks, and they kind of just  
11 started taking care of things.

12 MR. TURPIN: Did you check your watch?

13 MR. J. SMITH: I did not.

14 MR. TURPIN: Okay. That's fine. Okay.  
15 Let's back up. I want to get a little more detail. As  
16 you were approaching CP G002 there, do you remember the  
17 conversations and the content in some of the  
18 conversations you were, you were hearing?

19 MR. J. SMITH: As far as my conductor with -  
20 -

21 MR. TURPIN: Or even before that. Did you  
22 hear the pilot talking before you got there?

23 MR. J. SMITH: No.

24 MR. TURPIN: You couldn't hear any  
25 conversation from him before you got to the, got there?

1 MR. J. SMITH: Not until my conductor called

2 --

3 MR. TURPIN: Okay.

4 MR. J. SMITH: -- for him.

5 MR. TURPIN: And then what was that

6 conversation?

7 MR. J. SMITH: It was just a, he called to  
8 ask about the suspended block system and --

9 MR. TURPIN: Okay.

10 MR. J. SMITH: -- and we were approaching  
11 the suspended block system, and our instructions.

12 MR. TURPIN: Okay. And the instructions  
13 were specifically what?

14 MR. J. SMITH: We could enter the limits,  
15 pass the red board located at CP G002.

16 MR. TURPIN: Okay.

17 MR. J. SMITH: At a maximum speed of 49  
18 miles an hour. To go down and not go by CP G844.

19 MR. TURPIN: All right.

20 MR. J. SMITH: We had clearance to 844.

21 MR. TURPIN: Okay. So how many, how many  
22 signals do you go, I mean, you got a bunch of cross  
23 overs here. Are there signals at all those cross  
24 overs?

25 MR. J. SMITH: Yes.

1 MR. TURPIN: And they were all red?

2 MR. J. SMITH: I believe the signals were  
3 dark.

4 MR. TURPIN: Okay. And were you on the OSL?

5 MR. J. SMITH: On the OSL Main, yes.

6 MR. TURPIN: Okay.

7 MR. J. SMITH: OSL Main to the long siding.

8 MR. TURPIN: Okay. How about 844? Was that  
9 red?

10 MR. J. SMITH: It was red, yes.

11 MR. TURPIN: Okay. How far back did you  
12 stop?

13 MR. J. SMITH: From what I remember, it's  
14 about a quarter of a mile.

15 MR. TURPIN: Okay.

16 MR. J. SMITH: Roughly a quarter of a mile.

17 MR. TURPIN: How big a train do you have?

18 MR. J. SMITH: It is 2,600 feet.

19 MR. TURPIN: Okay.

20 MR. J. SMITH: It's around 60, 6,000 tons.  
21 Two locomotives.

22 MR. TURPIN: Okay, 2,600. So about 55 cars  
23 or so, 60 cars?

24 MR. J. SMITH: It's 45.

25 MR. TURPIN: Forty-five?



1 MR. J. SMITH: Forty-five loads.

2 MR. TURPIN: Okay. All right. So what time  
3 do you think you stopped on the siding, long siding?

4 MR. J. SMITH: I'm thinking it was around 9,  
5 21:10 to 21:15, 21:00 to 21:30.

6 MR. TURPIN: Okay.

7 MR. J. SMITH: Roughly.

8 MR. TURPIN: That's fine. And then you  
9 heard the pilots at CP 844, you heard a discussion with  
10 the dispatcher, and it was that pilot, CP 844?

11 MR. J. SMITH: Yes.

12 MR. TURPIN: And that discussion, the  
13 details of that were what?

14 MR. J. SMITH: That he, they were to proceed  
15 past the red board located at 844 westward. Proceed  
16 past 844, Main 1 to Main 1. And I don't recall the end  
17 milepost where he told them they could go to. Their --

18 MR. TURPIN: Okay. The other limits.

19 MR. J. SMITH: But he did clear them to go  
20 by 844, and he did say another number, but I don't  
21 recall what it was.

22 MR. TURPIN: Okay. Is the dispatcher to say  
23 the speed to the pilot as well?

24 MR. J. SMITH: The dispatcher?

25 MR. TURPIN: Yes.

1 MR. J. SMITH: Say the speed to the pilot?

2 MR. TURPIN: Yes. Do they include what  
3 speed they want them to go?

4 MR. J. SMITH: No. Not that I recall.

5 MR. TURPIN: Okay. He just said to move.  
6 He was going to authorize him by 844, 1 to 1.

7 MR. J. SMITH: Yes.

8 MR. TURPIN: Basically.

9 MR. J. SMITH: Yes.

10 MR. TURPIN: Okay.

11 MR. J. SMITH: The pilot may have said the  
12 speed. I don't recall that.

13 MR. TURPIN: Okay. Then a little later, you  
14 heard the pilot call the westbound. What were the  
15 details of that?

16 MR. J. SMITH: Pilot that called the  
17 westbound. Oh, to pass the 844?

18 MR. TURPIN: Right.

19 MR. J. SMITH: Okay. He, I think that's  
20 what I was just saying, is he, that's the conversation.

21 MR. TURPIN: Oh, he had --

22 MR. J. SMITH: The first one was the  
23 dispatcher contacting the pilot.

24 MR. TURPIN: Right.

25 MR. J. SMITH: Telling, they job briefed

1 with him where they were going to go.

2 MR. TURPIN: Got it.

3 MR. J. SMITH: Then the, then the pilot  
4 contacts the crew and they decide that, they relay that  
5 information from what the dispatcher told him.

6 MR. TURPIN: Okay. Okay. I got it. I  
7 think I'm done with that part of it. Steve?

8 MR. LORD: Jeff, I'm going to follow up too  
9 with what Ted was just talking about, what you just  
10 talked about. The conversation the dispatcher had with  
11 the EIC, was it more a planning type of conversation,  
12 or do you think it was actually I'm ready to run this  
13 westbound?

14 MR. J. SMITH: I believe it was a, this is  
15 the next west, this is the next train that's going to  
16 be coming through the limits. If I recall, this is the  
17 next train coming. This is where it's going.

18 MR. LORD: This is where I want it to go?

19 MR. J. SMITH: Yes. This is, they job  
20 briefed with where, I just recall the Main 1 to Main 1  
21 westward, and --

22 MR. LORD: So the conversation of the pilot,  
23 was it, I authorize you to go to 1 to 1, (inaudible)  
24 stop?

25 MR. J. SMITH: I don't recall that.

1 MR. LORD: It's just that you're going 1 to  
2 1?

3 MR. J. SMITH: Yes, I don't recall the  
4 exact, if it's I authorize, or, I don't recall.

5 MR. LORD: Then it would say, all switches  
6 are lined for you.

7 MR. J. SMITH: I don't, I don't recall that  
8 either.

9 MR. LORD: In your conversation with the  
10 pilot at 844 at G002, was his instruction to you that  
11 you pass the red boards into the long siding, 49 mph.  
12 Did he say anything about authorizing you to that, to  
13 that move?

14 MR. J. SMITH: Yes, he --

15 MR. LORD: What was the conversation?

16 MR. J. SMITH: It was that the, our switches  
17 are lined.

18 MR. LORD: Switches are lined?

19 MR. J. SMITH: Switches are lined.

20 MR. LORD: And locked?

21 MR. J. SMITH: And locked. And authorized  
22 us to go by the red board.

23 MR. LORD: So was that conversation at 844  
24 with the westbound, was it the same? Did he say  
25 switches are lined and locked?

1 MR. J. SMITH: I don't recall the exact. I  
2 wish I did, but I don't recall exactly if he said the  
3 switches are lined and locked or if he did not.

4 MR. LORD: That's okay. Good.

5 MR. TURPIN: Okay.

6 MR. LINDSEY: I have nothing.

7 MR. TURPIN: Okay. All right. I jump all  
8 over the place, but let's start out with, when did you  
9 hire out with the railroad?

10 MR. J. SMITH: March of '04.

11 MR. TURPIN: Beat your brother by a year,  
12 huh?

13 MR. J. SMITH: Yes.

14 MR. TURPIN: He had to follow you.

15 MR. J. SMITH: Yes.

16 MR. TURPIN: All right. Where at?

17 MR. J. SMITH: Pocatello, Idaho.

18 MR. TURPIN: And where did you work, just  
19 kind of give me a brief overview from then until now.

20 MR. J. SMITH: I worked in Montpelier.

21 MR. TURPIN: Okay.

22 MR. J. SMITH: For on and off, when I could  
23 hold. Bounced from Montpelier to Pocatello. I'd go  
24 from Pocatello to Napa, Pocatello to Green River.

25 MR. TURPIN: Okay.

1 MR. J. SMITH: And then I bounced back and  
2 forth from, just where my seniority would allow me,  
3 from local jobs to, pulled freight.

4 MR. TURPIN: Okay. And how long you been  
5 working on this job?

6 MR. J. SMITH: I've been on it for roughly  
7 nine months.

8 MR. TURPIN: Okay. And you talked your  
9 brother into coming over, huh?

10 MR. J. SMITH: Yes.

11 MR. TURPIN: Has it always been Monday  
12 through Friday for the nine months?

13 MR. J. SMITH: Yes.

14 MR. TURPIN: Okay. Three days to Westvaco?

15 MR. J. SMITH: Yes.

16 MR. TURPIN: Has it, nothing's really  
17 changed in the job then?

18 MR. J. SMITH: No. It's pretty much been  
19 that way the whole, off days are the same.

20 MR. TURPIN: Okay. Have you worked through  
21 a suspended territory before?

22 MR. J. SMITH: Yes.

23 MR. TURPIN: Where at?

24 MR. J. SMITH: It was, I don't recall the  
25 exact date, but it was on the Pocatello Subdivision.

1 MR. TURPIN: So it was like one time we're  
2 talking about?

3 MR. J. SMITH: Yes.

4 MR. TURPIN: Yes.

5 MR. J. SMITH: One --

6 MR. TURPIN: Do you remember --

7 MR. J. SMITH: One, yes, I mean, I've  
8 probably done it twice in my career.

9 MR. TURPIN: Okay. Do you remember if you  
10 always went through it at speed, at 49, or were they  
11 restricted speed?

12 MR. J. SMITH: I don't recall.

13 MR. TURPIN: Okay.

14 MR. J. SMITH: You know, it's been years and  
15 I don't recall exactly the circumstances, but --

16 MR. TURPIN: Do you remember going by red  
17 signals without stopping?

18 MR. J. SMITH: Yes.

19 MR. TURPIN: You remember that part, right?

20 MR. J. SMITH: Yes.

21 MR. TURPIN: Okay. All right. Let's get  
22 the details on your rest, sleep and rest cycle since  
23 last Friday. Did you work the job Friday?

24 MR. J. SMITH: No.

25 MR. TURPIN: All right.

1 MR. J. SMITH: I was off.

2 MR. TURPIN: Okay. So start with, let's  
3 start with Friday night. Your regular, when did you go  
4 to bed Friday night?

5 MR. J. SMITH: Friday night? Oh, 9:00,  
6 roughly.

7 MR. TURPIN: Okay. Got up Saturday morning  
8 --

9 MR. J. SMITH: Probably around 6:00.

10 MR. TURPIN: Okay. And then, anything  
11 special happen Saturday?

12 MR. J. SMITH: No. Just hung out with the  
13 family.

14 MR. TURPIN: And when did you go to bed  
15 Saturday night?

16 MR. J. SMITH: I would say between 9:00 and  
17 10:00.

18 MR. TURPIN: Okay.

19 MR. J. SMITH: That's about my average.

20 MR. TURPIN: And Sunday morning?

21 MR. J. SMITH: Sunday morning I got up at  
22 roughly 7:00.

23 MR. TURPIN: Okay. The new 7:00 or the old  
24 7:00?

25 MR. J. SMITH: Yes, the new 7:00.



1 MR. TURPIN: All right. And then anything  
2 special Sunday?

3 MR. J. SMITH: No. Just didn't do too much,  
4 nothing real special. Hung out with the kids and the  
5 wife.

6 MR. TURPIN: Sunday night, go to bed?

7 MR. J. SMITH: Sunday night was probably  
8 around, between 9:00 and 10:00.

9 MR. TURPIN: Okay. And then Monday morning.

10 MR. J. SMITH: Monday morning I got up at  
11 roughly 8:00.

12 MR. TURPIN: Okay. And then I understand  
13 from your brother, if you leave about noon, 12:30 for  
14 the hour and a half drive.

15 MR. J. SMITH: Yes. Yes.

16 MR. TURPIN: Okay. Feel rested?

17 MR. J. SMITH: Yes.

18 MR. TURPIN: Any fatigue during the job at  
19 all?

20 MR. J. SMITH: No.

21 MR. TURPIN: How about during the week? You  
22 pretty well able to get rest?

23 MR. J. SMITH: Yes. I pretty much got it  
24 figured out to where I --

25 MR. TURPIN: Okay. Okay. Use any

1 prescription drugs?

2 MR. J. SMITH: No.

3 MR. TURPIN: Any nonprescription drugs?

4 MR. J. SMITH: No.

5 MR. TURPIN: Wear glasses?

6 MR. J. SMITH: No.

7 MR. TURPIN: When's the last time a  
8 supervisor rode with you?

9 MR. J. SMITH: It was probably about four  
10 months ago. Four or five months.

11 MR. TURPIN: Okay. On this job?

12 MR. J. SMITH: Yes.

13 MR. TURPIN: Okay. Okay. What's the cell  
14 phone policy?

15 MR. J. SMITH: Turned off and stowed.

16 MR. TURPIN: Okay. Do you ever need it to  
17 call the dispatcher?

18 MR. J. SMITH: I don't, I don't get my phone  
19 out.

20 MR. TURPIN: Okay. Do you ever have the  
21 conductor do that?

22 MR. J. SMITH: I don't.

23 MR. TURPIN: Or do they ever?

24 MR. J. SMITH: Not that I'm aware of.

25 MR. TURPIN: Okay. I mean, you do have an

1 exception, right? If you're stopped and the crew all  
2 agrees, and you know, if --

3 MR. J. SMITH: Yes, there's a certain job  
4 briefing.

5 MR. TURPIN: Yes. Okay. This a safe place  
6 to work?

7 MR. J. SMITH: Yes. It's safe.

8 MR. TURPIN: Okay.

9 MR. J. SMITH: It can be safe. Yes.

10 MR. TURPIN: If we exclude last night. Go  
11 around the room one more time if anybody has any follow  
12 ups.

13 MR. K. SMITH: I have nothing else.

14 MR. LINDSEY: I have nothing else.

15 MR. MAYSER: I just have a little something  
16 here. On your form C, I haven't read it. Did it  
17 specify or did you just use that you would, it says on  
18 the GCOR, 49 mph maximum, suspended block?

19 MR. J. SMITH: It specified in the form C.

20 MR. MAYSER: It said, so if it, so it's in  
21 the GCOR and the forms?

22 MR. J. SMITH: Yes.

23 MR. MAYSER: And in the form C? Okay.

24 MR. TURPIN: Okay.

25 MR. MAYSER: Thank you.

1 MR. TURPIN: Have anything to add?

2 MR. J. SMITH: I don't think so.

3 MR. TURPIN: All right. I'll shut this off  
4 and I need just a little bit more of your time.

5 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went  
6 off the record at an undisclosed time.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

MATTER: Union Pacific Freight Train Accident  
Granger, WY March 14, 2016  
Accident No. DCA16FR005  
Interview of Jeremy Smith

DATE: 03-15-16

I hereby certify that the attached transcription of page 1 to 21 inclusive are to the best of my professional ability a true, accurate, and complete record of the above referenced proceedings as contained on the provided audio recording; further that I am neither counsel for, nor related to, nor employed by any of the parties to this action in which this proceeding has taken place; and further that I am not financially nor otherwise interested in the outcome of the action.



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