

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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UP AND BNSF TRAIN COLLISION  
MAY 25, 2013  
NEAR CHAFFEE, MISSOURI

\* Docket No.: DCA-13-MR-004

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Interview of: RANDALL BLANCHARD

Sunday  
May 26, 2013

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice,  
at 11:39 a.m.

BEFORE: MICHAEL FLANIGON  
Investigator-in-Charge

## APPEARANCES:

MIKE FLANIGON, Investigator-in-Charge  
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Washington, D.C. 20594

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National Transportation Safety Board

FRED PRINGLE, Chief Inspector  
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BRYAN ALDRIDGE  
RANDY DUMEY  
Safety Task Force  
Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers  
and Trainmen (BLET)

CORY REYNOLDS, Senior Railroad Safety Inspector  
Missouri Department of Transportation

KENNETH EDWARDS, Safety Team  
United Transportation Union (UTU)

RANCE RANDLE, Operating  
Burlington Northern-Santa Fe Railroad (BNSF)

RANDY EARDENSOHN  
Union Pacific Railroad (UP)

ROBY BROWN, Safety  
UP Railroad

JOSEPH BERRY, Motive Power and Equipment Inspector  
FRA Region VI

GABE NEAL, Deputy Regional Administrator  
FRA Region VI

JASON TAULLIE, Operating  
Union Pacific

JACOB MUROV, Attorney  
Schlicker, Bogard & Denton

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(11:39 a.m.)

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MR. FLANIGON: My name is Mike Flanigon,

F-l-a-n-i-g-o-n. I'm with the National Transportation Safety Board. I'm the Investigator-in-Charge of an accident involving a UP freight train and a BNSF freight train that occurred on May 25th about 2:30 in the morning. We are interviewing Mr. Randall Blanchard, B-l-a-n-c-h-a-r-d -- did I get that right --

MR. BLANCHARD: That's correct.

MR. FLANIGON: -- who was the engineer on the Union Pacific freight train. And I'm going to go around the room and ask the other folks here to identify themselves and spell their last name.

MR. NARVELL: This is Rick Narvell. It's N-a-r-v-e-l-l, Human Performance Investigator for the NTSB, Washington, D.C.

MR. DUMEY: Randy Dumey, D-u-m-e-y, BLET Safety Taskforce.

MR. EARDENSOHN: Randy Eardensohn, E-a-r-d-e-n-s-o-h-n, Operating Practices, Union Pacific Railroad.

MR. RANDLE: Rance Randle, R-a-n-d-l-e, BNSF Operating.

MR. BERRY: Joseph Berry, J-o-s-e-p-h, B-e-r-r-y, Motive Power and Equipment Safety Inspector, Federal Railroad Administration.

MR. REYNOLDS: Corey Reynolds, R-e-y-n-o-l-d-s, Missouri Department of Transportation, Senior Railroad Safety Inspector.

1 MR. EDWARDS: Kenneth Edwards, UTU Safety.

2 MR. MUROV: Jacob Murov, M-u-r-o-v. I'm an attorney  
3 here with Schlichter, Bogard & Denton on behalf of Mr. Blanchard.

4 MR. BLANCHARD: I don't have to?

5 MR. FLANIGON: I identified you.

6 MR. BLANCHARD: Oh, you did. Okay.

7 MR. ALDRIDGE: Bryan Aldridge, A-l-d-r-i-d-g-e, BLET  
8 Safety Task Force.

9 MR. PRINGLE: Fred Pringle, P-r-i-n-g-l-e, FRA,  
10 St. Louis.

11 MR. NEAL: Gabe Neal, N-e-a-l, Deputy Regional  
12 Administrator for the Federal Railroad Administration, Region VI.

13 MR. TAULLIE: Jason Taullie, T-a-u-l-l-i-e, Union  
14 Pacific, Operating, St. Louis.

15 MR. BROWN: Roby Brown, R-o-b-y, B-r-o-w-n, Union  
16 Pacific.

17 MR. FLANIGON: Okay. Thank you everybody. And let me  
18 start with just one administrative thing and ask you,  
19 Mr. Blanchard, that you're aware that we're going to tape record  
20 or record the interview and we'll provide you with a transcript --

21 MR. BLANCHARD: Yes.

22 MR. FLANIGON: -- and get it vetted by you before it's  
23 finalized.

24 INTERVIEW OF RANDALL BLANCHARD

25 BY MR. FLANIGON:

1 Q. What I would like to do is start with a very general  
2 question.

3 A. Yes, sir.

4 Q. And ask you to walk us through what happened the early  
5 morning of the accident, and start at the point in your day where  
6 you think it makes the most sense to tell the story. Take your  
7 time.

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. And in your own words just tell us what happened, in  
10 your -- and in own way.

11 A. Yes, sir. In my memory, I remember getting called for  
12 work, getting ready for work, showing up at the railroad depot,  
13 getting my paperwork, going through the paperwork with my  
14 conductor, getting the supplies for the locomotive, heading down  
15 to the locomotive, getting on the engines, looking them over,  
16 calling up the dispatcher and letting the dispatcher know that we  
17 were ready to head south. The conductor had done that. And we  
18 received a signal and proceeded south.

19 Now, in my memory I remember riding on the train,  
20 calling out signals, and then after a while my memory fades out.  
21 And the next thing that I remember is the conductor leaning over  
22 me asking me if I'm all right. And I remember looking up at him  
23 and going, yeah. And I'm wondering why I'm laying down. And he  
24 had said that we'd been in an accident. And I said, oh. He  
25 helped me up.

1           The dispatcher -- I remember hearing the dispatcher  
2 wanting to talk to me to see if I was all right. The conductor  
3 handed me the microphone and I then said, yes, sir, this is  
4 Engineer Blanchard and apparently right now I'm okay. And from  
5 there, we were looking for ways out of the locomotive. I didn't  
6 realize it was on its side at the time. And Jimmy found a way out  
7 -- that's the conductor -- and he had started talking to firemen  
8 that were telling us to get the heck out of there because a fire  
9 had started. And Jimmy was able to climb up and out. I was not  
10 able to do that, my weight.

11           So Jimmy and the one fireman -- I do not know who he was  
12 -- managed to get a door open and I got high enough to where I  
13 could roll myself out. And they picked me up and we headed up for  
14 what was left of the bridge, and they took us to the back of an  
15 ambulance. And from there, I remember getting put on a backboard,  
16 a neck brace put on, and transported to the hospital where they  
17 checked me out.

18           Sir, that's all I remember. That -- to the best of my  
19 ability, that is what memory I have.

20           Q.    On the trip -- you started the trip where? In what  
21 location?

22           A.    I started out of Salem, Illinois.

23           Q.    Salem --

24           A.    I was called I believe for 9:45 at night, which is 2145.

25           Q.    And once you left Salem, what would be the last point of

1 actually operating the train on the track that you can recall?

2 Say, a location, a siding, a signal, a detector, or --

3 A. Well, I remember --

4 Q. -- any geographic --

5 A. Yeah. I remember going by Gorham and talking to the  
6 conductor that I had remembered seeing on the computer that that  
7 night was supposed to have a partial eclipse of the moon. And I  
8 don't remember anything after that. That's -- and where I did  
9 that at, I don't remember. But I do remember that conversation  
10 and that's it. That's as far as I can -- I remember. I've truly  
11 tried to search my memory and that's it.

12 Q. And I know I can look it up in a timetable, but Gorham  
13 is about how far from the accident site, if you recall?

14 A. Let's see, Gorham is milepost -- consider it 85, and  
15 Rockview is milepost 131. So, do the math, that'll tell you.

16 Q. Okay. Just generally, can you talk a little bit about  
17 your railroad experience? When did you start railroading?

18 A. Yes, sir. I hired out in 1976 as a brakeman for the  
19 then-L&NC -- I mean, excuse me -- no, for the C&EI, Chicago and  
20 Eastern Illinois. We were a part of the MOPAC system. I started  
21 out as a brakeman and I got promoted as a conductor within four  
22 years. And about six months after that they were needing  
23 engineers and I put my application in to be an engineer. And I  
24 believe I became an engineer 1980, May of 1980, and I've been a  
25 locomotive engineer since.

1 Q. And how long have you worked out of Salem?

2 A. Well, seniority-wise the first two years of working on  
3 the railroad I would work sometimes in Salem, sometimes in Villa  
4 Grove, Illinois. That was two areas where I could take my  
5 seniority. And the first two years it was kind of bounce back and  
6 forth, back and forth, as a brakeman. And then once I was an  
7 engineer I wasn't able to hold on at Salem, and I worked from  
8 Salem -- I mean, I worked from St. Louis -- I mean, Villa Grove in  
9 to St. Louis.

10 Q. And --

11 A. And then back to Villa Grove.

12 Q. Okay. And so --

13 A. But I worked the most part of my life Salem. Now, Salem  
14 has several directions. You can go from Salem to Villa Grove.  
15 That's the short run, 107 miles. Salem to Chicago -- boy, it's  
16 been a while since I've been up there -- I believe 235 miles, and  
17 then Salem down to Dexter, which is 174.

18 Q. And this run was Salem to Dexter?

19 A. Yes, sir.

20 Q. And I'm trying to get at, you know, your familiarity  
21 with that track.

22 A. I'm very familiar with that track, sir, very. I worked  
23 the engineer's extra board most of my locomotive engineer's  
24 experience. I like the extra board because of just the experience  
25 of working other places, you know, so it's not the same mundane

1 thing every time. And I was -- we had two -- we have two extra  
2 boards: Salem South and Salem North. I worked the Salem South. I  
3 had the seniority to be able to do that. I just didn't care to  
4 work the train up to Chicago. I didn't like that route.

5 Q. And that's how you caught this job was off the --

6 A. Now, I am a regular engineer Salem to Dexter. That is  
7 the RE-12 board.

8 Q. So it's like a pool or a --

9 A. Yes, sir.

10 Q. -- regular run?

11 A. Yes, sir. Regular run for me, and I've held onto it for  
12 a year and a half, two years, something like that.

13 Q. When you reported for work on -- this would be the night  
14 before the accident --

15 A. Yes, sir.

16 Q. -- you were teamed up with a conductor who we'll talk to  
17 later today. Had you worked with that individual before?

18 A. Yes. Jimmy Hawkins, yes, sir.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. Quite a bit. He's a really good conductor.

21 Q. Okay. And when you met him at the crew change or yard  
22 office or wherever it is where you go to work --

23 A. Yes, sir.

24 Q. -- did he seem the way he always seems to you?

25 A. Yes, sir.

1 Q. He was normal?

2 A. Very alert. Very attentive. We went over the -- all  
3 the slow orders and talked about them, and got ourselves ready to  
4 go. Yes, sir. He was alert, ready to go.

5 Q. And from that point until the point that you can't  
6 recall much of the trip, did you take any exception to any  
7 behaviors or actions on the part of the conductor? Did he seem --

8 A. No, no.

9 Q. -- doing his job?

10 A. Yes, sir. We called out signals. Anything that needed  
11 to be done -- I guess his job, I suppose he did it. I wasn't  
12 standing over his shoulder, but I suppose he filled out his  
13 conductor's book.

14 Q. Okay.

15 MR. FLANIGON: I'm going to turn it over to my  
16 colleague, Rick.

17 MR. NARVELL: Sure.

18 BY MR. NARVELL:

19 Q. Again, a little --

20 A. Yes, sir.

21 Q. -- more background type questions here.

22 A. Sure.

23 Q. And if you don't know, again, no's an acceptable answer,  
24 Mr. Blanchard.

25 A. All right.

1 Q. First off, how'd you become interested in being a  
2 railroader?

3 A. I'm a third generation railroader. My grandfather,  
4 Harold Eugene Blanchard, was a conductor out of Council Grove,  
5 Kansas.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. Then my dad, Donald S. Blanchard, was a regional traffic  
8 manager for the Southeastern Region.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. Railroading has just been in my blood.

11 Q. Okay. So it was easy for you to --

12 A. Yes, sir.

13 Q. -- enter this profession since you had your father and  
14 grandfather?

15 A. Yes, sir.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. And uncle and cousin and brother.

18 Q. Okay. And you've been an engineer for quite a long  
19 time, 33 years in May?

20 A. Yes, since May of 1980, sir.

21 Q. Okay, great. Is it Randall or Randy? O

22 A. Well, Randall is --

23 Q. Randall works?

24 A. Yeah, I --

25 Q. Okay.

1           A.    Well, I earned the nickname Doc Blanchard.  That's what  
2 everybody calls me on the railroad is Doc.

3           Q.    Okay.  Doc?

4           A.    Yeah, I go by many names.

5           Q.    Okay.  In the last year or so has there been anything in  
6 your life that's maybe been a distraction or, you know, a  
7 preoccupation?  And let me give you just a couple examples --

8           A.    Sure.

9           Q.    -- since I've been doing this job a long time, so just  
10 examples.

11          A.    Yeah.

12          Q.    For example, you know, a recent death in the family or,  
13 you know, bad financial news, bad medical news, something that  
14 might have been a preoccupation or a distraction?

15          A.    Oh, no, no, nothing.  Nothing.

16          Q.    Okay, great.  Prior to this any prior accidents or any  
17 previous accident history that you -- rail accidents that you've  
18 been involved in or with?

19          A.    Well, let's see.  I tore my knee up when I was braking.  
20 Shit -- shoot.

21          Q.    That's okay.  That's all right.

22          A.    Back '77 or '78, I tore the -- my right knee up getting  
23 down off a tank car.

24          Q.    Okay.  But as far as any actual accidents other than  
25 that --

1 A. No.

2 Q. -- anything since -- up till this past weekend? Okay,  
3 good.

4 A few questions about your health. How would you  
5 describe your health just in general?

6 A. Well, I am a diabetic. I have been diabetic since 1997,  
7 and I do my best to keep my health up.

8 Q. Okay. When we get your work/rest history --

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. -- when we get done here, I'm going to pursue this a  
11 little further --

12 A. That's fine.

13 Q. -- with you.

14 A. Yes, sir.

15 Q. Get some information from you on that. When was your  
16 last physical?

17 A. January.

18 Q. Of this year?

19 A. Yes, sir.

20 Q. Was this for your Part 240?

21 A. Oh, I'm sorry. Explain physical.

22 Q. Well --

23 A. I thought you meant meeting --

24 Q. -- physical examination.

25 A. Oh -- damn.

1 Q. I'm sorry. Physical exam.

2 A. Did I -- yeah, I believe I did that last year. You  
3 know, the engineer's --

4 Q. Yes.

5 A. -- physical?

6 Q. Part 240?

7 A. Yeah. Yes, sir.

8 Q. Okay. And that's your vision and hearing?

9 A. Vision and hearing. Yes, sir.

10 Q. So that would have been in 2012?

11 A. Yes, sir, I believe so.

12 Q. Do you remember the month by any chance? I mean, I can  
13 get the --

14 A. No. I always have to do my stuff on the summertime, so  
15 it would have been --

16 Q. During the summer?

17 A. Yeah, June, July.

18 Q. Okay. And, of course, everything went well --

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. -- obviously?

21 A. Oh, yes.

22 Q. All right. Now, how about the last physical exam for a  
23 personal, if any, in the last few years?

24 A. Well, I every -- twice a year, my diabetic doctor  
25 requires me to come in and she draws blood checking out how I have

1 been doing, if I've been, you know, doing things as correctly as  
2 possible. And every time I, I -- it's not that I get a glowing  
3 report; it's that I'm doing good.

4 Q. Okay. All right.

5 A. So, you know, they can tell by -- you know, what you  
6 eat.

7 Q. Right.

8 A. You know, your blood sugar, the count, all that.

9 Q. Hemoglobin A1C, are you familiar with that term?

10 A. Yes, sir. I believe that's on the --

11 Q. Okay. Again, we'll talk more about this.

12 A. Yes, sir. Okay. All right.

13 Q. So when was your most recent visit to your personal --

14 A. That was January.

15 Q. Okay. So that was the January one?

16 A. Yes, sir.

17 Q. And again, we'll talk more about this.

18 A. Sure.

19 Q. Any other issues, ailments, or problems?

20 A. Just old age. You know, minor, you know --

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. -- aches, you know. If you sit in a chair too long, you  
23 know --

24 Q. Right. Okay.

25 A. -- some things go to sleep, other things start to ache.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. But that's it.

3 Q. Okay. How about -- a question on your vision. I see  
4 you're wearing your glasses?

5 A. Yes, sir. I wear glasses.

6 Q. Do you know what your rating is?

7 A. No.

8 Q. And did you have your -- these are prescription glasses?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Okay. Did you have your glasses on the night of -- the  
11 morning of the incident?

12 A. Yes. And I was really surprised that they survived  
13 through the crash.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. I do have one scratch on them, but that's about it.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. A scratch right here.

18 Q. All right.

19 A. But they were still on my face.

20 Q. So you're still wearing them?

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. But you don't know what your rating -- you know, 20/40,  
23 or you don't know what that is off the top of your head?

24 A. No, I don't.

25 Q. If you don't know, that's fine. That's okay. How about

1 -- the same question on your hearing? Any problems with your  
2 hearing?

3 A. No.

4 Q. No problems?

5 A. Well, you know what? I had been detected one time of a  
6 certain loss of hearing. How much that is I don't know. That was  
7 determined on the, on the hearing truck that UP used to have come  
8 around --

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. -- that I had partial -- very minor.

11 Q. Okay. Was that part of -- was that brought up in the  
12 last engineer certification about your hearing or was this back?  
13 About the partial loss?

14 A. Well, she never asked me. I just -- I passed the test.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. I mean, she didn't give me any numbers that I remember.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. She said that she had to send everything in, so okay.

19 Q. Okay, good. Medications, do you take medications?

20 A. Well, I take over-the-counter Advil Liqui-Gels for lower  
21 lumbar pain.

22 Q. Okay. Is this a routine thing? A daily --

23 A. No. No, no, no. It -- just once in a while it aches  
24 me.

25 Q. All right. And did you take any that night or morning?

- 1 A. Yeah, I had.
- 2 Q. Okay.
- 3 A. Yes, sir.
- 4 Q. Do you remember what time of day? And was it on Friday  
5 night?
- 6 A. Well, I took it when I ate.
- 7 Q. Okay.
- 8 A. And I ate about 7:30.
- 9 Q. 1930?
- 10 A. Yeah.
- 11 Q. Okay. And how many were those, Randy?
- 12 A. Two.
- 13 Q. Two? Okay.
- 14 A. I'm a big person.
- 15 Q. All right. Any other medications?
- 16 A. No, not at that time, no.
- 17 Q. Okay. What about prescription medications?
- 18 A. The only prescription I have is my insulin.
- 19 Q. Okay. Again, we'll talk more about that.
- 20 A. Yeah, okay, sir.
- 21 Q. Any other medications whatsoever --
- 22 A. No.
- 23 Q. -- over-the-counter or prescription?
- 24 A. No.
- 25 Q. Okay. All right. After the incident did you provide

1 specimens for drug and alcohol testing?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Okay. Can you recall any specifics in terms of the  
4 time, where, and --

5 A. Well, I had talked to this lady. I was shaking and I  
6 asked her -- she just stayed with me the whole time. From when I  
7 got into the hospital this elderly woman just stayed with me. And  
8 I came out of the -- I believe it was -- I came out of the CTC  
9 [sic] scan. They were checking me for broken bones and internal  
10 injuries and everything, and she had gotten back with me. And I  
11 told her that I was shaking uncontrollably, and she -- she asked  
12 if I was cold. And I said not that I know of.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. And she gave me a shot of morphine. And not only did it  
15 help me with the pain -- because I was in a great deal of pain at  
16 that time -- things were starting to show up. And she gave me a  
17 shot of morphine and that calmed me down. And then they -- the  
18 doctor came in and told me that I had no broken bones, and that --  
19 no internal injuries.

20 Q. Okay. But as far as the drug and alcohol testing --

21 A. Oh, I'm sorry, I'm sorry, yeah.

22 Q. That's all right.

23 A. And then, I was wheeled into a room that -- I stayed  
24 there for a while. And then, they come and took the backboard out  
25 from underneath me, thank God. That ached. And then the claim

1 agent came in and told me she was going to take care of all the  
2 bills. And then after that the drug and alcohol test lady came  
3 in, and I provided -- you know, my ribs were really killing me on  
4 my left side. And she said, we'll get through this. And I said,  
5 okay. So I did the alcohol testing and it all came up zero, zero,  
6 zero. I did the -- then they had to draw blood. She said it was  
7 done in this certain order.

8 Q. Right.

9 A. And I said, okay. They did the blood test, and then she  
10 handed me a cup and I went in and did the urine test.

11 Q. Do you happen to remember what time of day that would  
12 have been?

13 A. Between 7 and 8 because they had -- you know, shortly --  
14 they released me, and my daughter drove over -- my daughter had  
15 drove down to pick me up from St. Louis. They wheeled me out and  
16 I got in her car and we went to the nearest place to go eat  
17 because it was time for me to eat. You know, I do a shot twice a  
18 day, and it was time for me to eat. And I stopped in at a Burger  
19 King and got breakfast and did my shot, and then we drove home.

20 Q. Okay. Let me --

21 A. Yes, sir.

22 Q. Okay. Thank you. So between 7 and 8?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Let me go back to the insulin real quick.

25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. When was your most recent insulin shot before the  
2 incident?

3 A. When I ate dinner at 7:30 that night.

4 Q. Okay. So it was 1930?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. And then, is there -- you're on a regular routine where  
7 you take it twice, so --

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. It would have been in the morning?

10 A. Yeah, I generally get up around 7:30-8:00 in the morning  
11 at home and away from home to do my shot and eat. I try to --

12 Q. Keep it regular?

13 A. Yeah, as best I can. It's not always easy on the  
14 railroad, but I do the best I can.

15 Q. Okay. So on this day it would have been, it would have  
16 been Friday morning about 0700-0730 and then again at 1930?

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. And that's routine for you?

19 A. Yes, sir.

20 Q. Okay. Good. All right. Just asking the question here.

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. Any alcohol or drug use prior to the incident?

23 A. No, sir.

24 Q. Illegal drug use?

25 A. No.

1 Q. Okay. Okay. All right. Randall, can you give us kind  
2 of an idea of -- like, when you got on -- what time did you  
3 markup? You got a call at 2145?

4 A. Yes, sir.

5 Q. To the best of your --

6 A. Twenty-four hours, you know, you -- I was reset at 2135  
7 through the federal rest.

8 Q. All right.

9 A. If I hadn't have been, you know, I would have been on my  
10 fourth -- no, fifth, fifth and sixth trip. You know, fifth going  
11 down to Dexter and sixth coming back, which I would have been  
12 FR'd, federal rested.

13 Q. Gotcha. And again, we'll get your work/rest when we  
14 wrap up here later.

15 A. Okay, sir.

16 Q. What I was getting at is, can you give us a sense, when  
17 you got going, of your workload, you know, that night into the  
18 early morning? In other words, was it a high workload? Was it  
19 normal? Was it low? Just a general characterization.

20 A. Well, I really don't understand --

21 Q. Were you really busy?

22 A. -- your question.

23 Q. Were you real busy out there? Was it normal or was it  
24 just kind of quiet?

25 A. Well, it was -- yeah, you didn't hear too much of the

1 dispatcher on the radio. And we had -- we were doing pretty good  
2 on the trip.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. You know, not sitting in the siding much.

5 Q. And on the other side was it real, real busy? I mean a  
6 lot of stuff going or not?

7 A. No.

8 Q. So would it be normal?

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. Okay. All right. Just trying to get an idea.

11 A. Sure.

12 Q. Okay. Any problems with your equipment when you left?  
13 Any problems with radio, horn, bell, light?

14 A. No, no. Everything worked --

15 Q. Everything was good?

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. And any problems with the weather, you know, too hot,  
18 too cold?

19 A. No. It was a nice night. Jimmy and I ran with the  
20 windows open for a little bit. Now, I can't remember if we ever  
21 closed the windows and went to air conditioning or not. I can't  
22 remember that.

23 Q. Okay. That's fine.

24 A. But it was a nice, nice night.

25 Q. A pleasant night?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Okay. You also had mentioned that there was an eclipse  
3 of the moon, a partial eclipse that was supposed to be happening?

4 A. Yeah, I had read that on the Internet.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. Just occasionally, you know, I would poke my head up to  
7 see if it started.

8 Q. Right. Okay. The last question right now for me --

9 A. Yes, sir.

10 Q. -- cell phones. You have a cell phone?

11 A. Yes, I do.

12 Q. Okay. When you went on duty was there any use of your  
13 cell phone?

14 A. No.

15 Q. Okay. Texting, phone call, anything else?

16 A. No, no, no. Now, something that I do to help me  
17 remember this -- because I don't want to give the FRA \$25,000 out  
18 of my pocket -- is I take my phone out of my pocket and I turn it  
19 off, put it in my grip, and then I pull my vest out like  
20 Mr. Taullie is wearing. And I pull that up and I put that on.  
21 That is just a ritual I do when I go to work. That just helps me,  
22 you know, stow it.

23 Q. All right. So your phone is --

24 A. Turn it off and stow it.

25 Q. All right. So you just took the words out of my mouth

1 here on this one.

2 A. Yes, sir.

3 Q. They wrote the phone was off and was stowed in your  
4 grip?

5 A. Yes, sir.

6 Q. (indiscernible).

7 A. Yeah (indiscernible).

8 Q. Okay. Great.

9 MR. NARVELL: Okay. I think that's all I have for now.  
10 Thank you.

11 MR. BLANCHARD: All right, sir.

12 MR. FLANIGON: You doing okay? Need a -- any time you  
13 want a break, remember --

14 MR. BLANCHARD: Well, I'm doing okay right now.

15 MR. FLANIGON: Okay. Okay. We can just go around the  
16 table on this side and then back the other.

17 BY UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

18 Q. Randall, you said there wasn't any delays prior to that?  
19 Like you didn't get stuck somewhere for an hour or two prior to  
20 this?

21 A. I don't remember being -- we might have met somebody at  
22 Mount Vernon. I believe we did have one meet at Mount Vernon.  
23 But it wasn't going from siding to siding to siding to siding and  
24 sitting for long periods of time. No, it was not like that.

25 Q. And you say you don't remember anything prior to this

1 accident? Like, do you remember going through Scott City or  
2 (indiscernible)?

3 A. I don't remember going through Scott City. I have no  
4 memory of that.

5 Q. Okay.

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: That's about all I have.

7 BY MR. EARDENSOHN:

8 Q. Randy Eardensohn, again.

9 A. Yes, sir.

10 Q. How were you notified to go to work?

11 A. By a telephone call. We call it Robocaller. That is  
12 the computer-generated voice from Omaha.

13 Q. Okay. Were you notified in the standard timeframe that  
14 you typically --

15 A. Yes. My job gets a three-hour call. And at -- around  
16 6:45 I was called for 9:45. I believe that's when I was called.  
17 I write all that stuff down, and I don't put it to memory.

18 Q. Okay. So a three-hour call, is that longer than --

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. -- a typical call?

21 A. Well, yeah, but it is set up because on that run you may  
22 have somebody come up from Dexter that lives in Dexter, but their  
23 seniority only allows them to work that job at Salem, or from St.  
24 Louis or, you know, from the surrounding areas, you know. A  
25 three-hour call gives them a chance to clean up, eat, you know,

1 get something to eat for the road and then make it to work on  
2 time.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. But you live right in St. Louis?

6 A. Yes, I live right in town.

7 Q. So did you choose to have the three-hour notification or  
8 is that just the standard?

9 A. That's the standard call.

10 Q. Okay. Do you remember what the max speed of your train  
11 was that day?

12 A. Yes, sir. That was -- well, it was -- I believe it was  
13 a 60 mile an hour train, but for fuel conversation 50 mile an hour  
14 in throttle 5. Now, if it could go faster in throttle 5, that was  
15 acceptable.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. You know, up to 60, I believe.

18 Q. All right. You mentioned earlier about, you know, the  
19 conductor and you guys did a job briefing basically before you  
20 went to work?

21 A. Yes, sir.

22 Q. And then as you were, you know, moving the train across  
23 the territory you mentioned that the conductor was doing his  
24 duties and logging, you know -- is it signal indications?

25 A. Well, yeah, I have a console to look over. Excuse me.

1 I should move like that.

2 Q. Do you need to take a break?

3 A. No. No I'm fine. I just -- I talk with my hands.

4 Q. Take your time, too.

5 A. Yeah, I just -- you know, we called out signals and  
6 there's just some things Jim is supposed to record for the  
7 conductor. But I've never filled out a conductor's book. I don't  
8 know.

9 Q. Okay. But everything seemed normal --

10 A. Oh, yeah.

11 Q. -- as far as your communication in the cab? What is the  
12 requirement on the communication between the two of you when  
13 you're in the cab?

14 A. Well, we call out signals, we --

15 Q. To each other?

16 A. Yes. You know, you look for people coming up to the  
17 road crossing, you know. If he was to see somebody like they're  
18 going to go across, you know, he would warn me of that. Just  
19 everyday normal railroad stuff, sir.

20 Q. Do you remember what you did just prior to like getting  
21 your call -- and Ricky might cover that too -- I don't want to  
22 double bill necessarily. But, just generally speaking was it a  
23 normal day before you got called?

24 A. Yeah, yeah. It was just a normal day.

25 Q. (indiscernible) you go about when you knew you were

1 going to work?

2 A. I knew I was going to get called. I have a computer at  
3 home and I look up the boards and I'd seen approximately when I  
4 was going to get called. And I was hoping I was going to get  
5 called after 9:35, 2135, so that I could get reset, and didn't  
6 have to worry about getting FR'd. Now, I'm a year and a half from  
7 being retired, and I work to just put money away, you know, for  
8 retirement.

9 Q. Sure.

10 A. You know, I'd like to do the things after I retire.

11 Q. Since you mentioned the reset process --

12 A. Yes, sir.

13 Q. -- can you kind of explain that a little bit? Because  
14 I'm not sure everybody here understands what you're talking about.

15 A. Well, it's -- federal guidelines on rest is if you have  
16 six days or more you are to be off to get rested. And it --

17 Q. You've worked six days or more, right?

18 A. Yeah, six days or more. All right? And with me leaving  
19 Salem down to Dexter is one trip, and then Dexter back makes two  
20 trips. And I don't -- I was back on my fourth trip. Now, if I  
21 would have been called before 9:35, I would have been going down  
22 on my fifth trip and then come back on my sixth trip, in which I  
23 would have been federal rested for two days.

24 Q. So that means that it would require you to be off for  
25 two days?

1 A. Yes, sir.

2 Q. When you say federal rested?

3 A. Yes, sir. Yes, sir, off for two days mandatory.

4 Q. So being called when you did at 9:45 you didn't have --  
5 you weren't going to have to do that when you got back?

6 A. Right. I was reset. Start at run number one.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. Yes, sir.

9 Q. So nothing unusual that day? Pretty typical day? You  
10 knew you were going to get called and --

11 A. Yes, sir. I even, you know, took a short nap before so  
12 that I'd be, you know, alert to go to work.

13 Q. Okay. Thanks, Mr. Blanchard.

14 A. Yes, sir.

15 BY UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

16 Q. Hi Randall.

17 A. Hi, sir.

18 Q. Do you interact with any BNSF crews at -- I mean at the  
19 interlocker? I know in this example you didn't recall. I'm just  
20 I guess asking if --

21 A. In the past years, you know -- when I was a brakeman --  
22 now that was the first four years of my career -- yeah, I had met  
23 a couple BN gentlemen down there at the box. You know, you'd both  
24 arrive at the same time and you're trying to talk amongst  
25 yourselves about who's going to go first. And, you know -- yeah,

1 I've interacted with BN there. When I was taking coal trains down  
2 to Joppa, Illinois and Cook, Illinois -- well, that's locations on  
3 the railroad. Okay? Occasionally I would meet up with a BN crew  
4 there and at the motel. Sometimes we'd stay at the same motel.

5 Q. Okay. Any --

6 A. We got along.

7 Q. Okay. Any radio communication at Rockview? I mean, so  
8 a normal trip through Rockview, do you -- would you have reason to  
9 communicate in the railroad radio back and forth? In other words,  
10 change over to the BNSF channel or they change over to your  
11 channel?

12 A. Now, there's -- in the past -- I hope I remember this  
13 right. In the past the BN -- they're at Chaffee. They'd have an  
14 engine -- while they were switching in the yards they would  
15 somehow gain control of the interlocking, you know, by what's  
16 considered the short approach. And you would call them up on -- I  
17 believe their channel was 6666 -- and ask them if they were going  
18 to use the interlocking. And they would then tell us, no we're  
19 just switching here, and -- okay. And then the brakeman or the  
20 conductor would go up and work the box. But for -- say Joe,  
21 what's happening? No, sir.

22 Q. Okay. Do you call the BNSF dispatcher?

23 A. No. I've never talked to the BNSF dispatcher. Not down  
24 there at Rockview. Is that what you're --

25 Q. Yes, sir. I should have -- yeah, at Rockview.

1 A. Okay. No never.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. I have -- going down to Joppa and Cook because we then  
4 -- we go down to West Vienna and then we get off the UP onto the  
5 Burlington. And I would have to talk to the Burlington dispatcher  
6 then because we're on their track.

7 Q. Okay. Can you get clear signals all the way through the  
8 Rockview interlocking or is there a signal sequence that you will  
9 typically see as you go through the interlocking?

10 A. Oh, yeah. I've gotten signals through Rockview and not  
11 have to stop at all.

12 Q. Okay. Thank you.

13 A. Yes, sir.

14 MR. FLANIGON: Okay. Still good or you need a break?

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah, do you need to take a  
16 break?

17 MR. BLANCHARD: I'm okay. I'm okay.

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And if you want just --

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Let us know if you need --

20 MR. BLANCHARD: Yes, sir. Okay.

21 MR. FLANIGON: Joe?

22 MR. BERRY: I would like to defer and then come up last.

23 MR. FLANIGON: Okay. All right.

24 Corey?

25 MR. BLANCHARD: Yes, sir.

1 MR. REYNOLDS: Just a few questions.

2 MR. FLANIGON: And I should have mentioned that to  
3 others. State your name when we start so that --

4 MR. REYNOLDS: Okay. Sorry. Corey Reynolds, Missouri  
5 Department of Transportation, Railroad Safety.

6 MR. BLANCHARD: Yes, sir.

7 BY MR. REYNOLDS:

8 Q. Can you tell me if you've ever had any efficiency test  
9 conducted on you there at the interlocker?

10 A. Oh, yes. Yes, I have.

11 Q. Okay. Can you tell me about the latest one or --

12 A. I can't remember when.

13 Q. Okay. That's fine.

14 A. It's been I'd say within the last year, year and a half.

15 Q. Okay. How about your last rules exam?

16 A. Last rules exam was last year.

17 Q. The three or four signals prior to the interlocker have  
18 you ever had any troubles, issues, as far as the aspects or  
19 obstructions?

20 A. No.

21 Q. And, of course, you've been already tested on the  
22 communication in the cab?

23 A. Yes, sir.

24 Q. What is standard procedure on your normal trips, I mean  
25 as far as --

1           A.    For communication? Well, you know, like I said we call  
2 out signals. And anytime something comes up -- say the dispatcher  
3 might call us for a slow order or something like that -- the  
4 conductor will copy that down. And then, you know, he knew - he  
5 would know that I'm distracted from running -- because I have to  
6 concentrate on running the train. He would then give me the  
7 coordinates of where a slow order would be. This is normal  
8 procedure on our locomotive.

9           Q.    Okay. Conductor usually do most of the talking on the  
10 radio?

11          A.    Yes, he does.

12          Q.    Okay. All right. I have nothing else right now.

13          A.    Okay.

14               MR. EDWARDS: Kenny Edwards, UTU.

15               BY MR. EDWARDS:

16          Q.    Good afternoon, Doc.

17          A.    Hello, sir.

18          Q.    I'm a Type II diabetic, so I think I understand a lot of  
19 what you're going through. You're a Type II diabetic?

20          A.    Well, I -- yeah, insulin twice a day. You know, I'm not  
21 sure if that's -- yeah, I'm diabetic.

22          Q.    Anyway, did you happen to test your glucose before  
23 you --

24          A.    No, sir

25          Q.    -- went on duty?

1 A. No. I do not.

2 Q. How about when you went off duty?

3 A. No.

4 Q. And they didn't tell you at the hospital? Did they test  
5 it?

6 A. No, but I told -- I had reached into my grip after I was  
7 told that we had to leave the locomotive. You know as well as I  
8 do a good diabetic grabs his insulin. So I grabbed my insulin pen  
9 -- I'm on NovoLog 70/40 -- and I grabbed my insulin pen and I  
10 grabbed my cell phone because, hell, I didn't know what was really  
11 going on, and I took them with me to the hospital. And I informed  
12 them -- you know, because they were trying to cut my shirt off and  
13 -- you know, and I said please don't cut my shirt off, or my  
14 pants. They were telling me they had scrubs for me to wear, but I  
15 didn't want them.

16 Anyway, I said don't lose my cell phone. Don't lose my  
17 insulin pen. I was very adamant about that, you know. Anything  
18 else?

19 Q. Yeah. I just wondered did you -- do you recall -- did  
20 you have food -- bring food with you on --

21 A. Yeah, I brought food with me.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. Yes, sir. And --

24 Q. Life Savers.

25 A. -- sugars.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. A good diabetic brings sugar with him. Yes, sir.

3 Q. I think that's --

4 A. Just in case.

5 Q. I think that's it. I appreciate it. Thank you so much.

6 A. You're welcome, sir.

7 BY MR. FLANIGON:

8 Q. Okay. I just had a couple follow-ups here to --

9 A. Yes, sir.

10 Q. -- help me maybe better understand what may have  
11 happened or could have happened.

12 A. All right.

13 Q. Have you had any previous incidents where you have  
14 passed out, blacked out, lost consciousness?

15 A. I had one when I first started becoming -- you know,  
16 when I first a diabetic. You go through the honeymoon process and  
17 it's where your body is going through the change. You're -- the  
18 way my doctor explained it to me is that your body quits producing  
19 insulin. It just slowly quits producing it. And you have to keep  
20 changing the amount of insulin that you take. And I had one time  
21 taken too much insulin. And I didn't know what an insulin low  
22 was. I recognize it now, but I didn't recognize an insulin low  
23 there. And, yeah, I passed out behind the wheel of a truck.

24 Q. Not good.

25 A. I was damn lucky that a buddy of mine reached in and

1 turned the key off. And I don't have it on me right now because  
2 the ladies cut it off of me, but I always wear my --

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Bracelet.

4 MR. BLANCHARD: I need to go to Wal-Mart -- you know,  
5 the insulin necklace.

6 BY MR. FLANIGON:

7 Q. Yeah, sure.

8 A. I always wear that.

9 Q. And this other earlier incident with passing out in the  
10 truck, about when was that?

11 A. I became a diabetic in '97, so this --

12 Q. About?

13 A. '98, sir.

14 Q. '98.

15 A. A short period of time after.

16 Q. And none since then?

17 A. No. No, sir. That scared the heck out of me. And I  
18 never wanted that to happen to me again.

19 Q. Yeah, yeah. Sure.

20 A. I've got six kids and I had some living with me at the  
21 time. And I never wanted that to happen again, so I did what -- I  
22 do what I can so that that does not happen ever.

23 Q. You mentioned that you recognize symptoms?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Did you recognize any symptoms after the accident?

1           A.    Oh, after -- no.  That's, that's what really got me is  
2  -- my lips kind of -- you know, if you got a high your eyes feel  
3  like they're bulging.  If you have a low, my lips tingle.  And,  
4  you know, your skin kind of tingles, crawls a little bit.  I had  
5  no indication of that whatsoever.

6           Q.    Okay.  And kind of along those lines, did you express  
7  this at the hospital when you talked to the emergency folks that,  
8  you know, you didn't remember what happened?

9           A.    I told them that and they just talked about a bad  
10 experience.

11          Q.    Yeah.  They didn't --

12          A.    But, you know, they did draw blood.  They did draw blood  
13 on me.  And what happened with that, I have no idea.

14          Q.    Okay.

15          A.    I guess they were checking to make sure I wasn't low.  
16 And nobody offered me any sugar or anything, so -- and like I  
17 said, my lips weren't tingling, my skin wasn't tingling, so, no I  
18 -- as far as I know I was not low.

19          Q.    When you spoke with the physician or other personnel did  
20 anybody offer anything that might explain your not having memory  
21 other than, you know, trauma I guess?

22          A.    Not at the hospital.  Now, my --

23          Q.    Any medical reason?

24          A.    My ex-wife is an RN.  And she came by and did an  
25 assessment on me.  She's, you know, trained to do this.  And she

1 had found, you know, knots. And I don't think the hospital found  
2 it -- I had a great big knot right, right here behind my right  
3 ear. They never -- you know, they -- as far as I know they never,  
4 you know, found it or saw it. And Kelly, you know, checked me  
5 from head to toe, and she -- I wish I had that assessment in front  
6 of me. I don't have it in front of me, but she found, you know,  
7 bruises and bangs and, you know -- because it takes time sometimes  
8 for the bruises and stuff --

9 Q. To show up.

10 A. -- to show up. And I just knew I was just sore from  
11 head to toe. And for her to -- you know, me to lift my arms and  
12 everything for her to check me -- oh, God. Yeah, this still pains  
13 me terribly. I don't know how I banged on this one, but, ooh, bad  
14 in the ribs. And she says, Doc this might be the reason why you  
15 can't remember. And I said, yeah? So she goes to her computer  
16 pad and she's bringing up this thing to where it shows from, you  
17 know, here and on the side is your memory. And I had a damn big  
18 goose egg right here.

19 Now, the hospital as far as I know didn't see that.  
20 They had put that neck brace on me. And they didn't take that off  
21 until they took that backboard from underneath of me. Now, I  
22 don't know -- I, I don't really know if they even knew about that,  
23 sir.

24 Q. Okay. Two other things I wanted to clarify a little  
25 bit.

1 A. Yes, sir.

2 Q. You mentioned -- to the extent that you can remember  
3 anyway --

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. -- no issues with the mechanical condition of the  
6 equipment? The train? The brakes?

7 A. No, no, no. I was running with one locomotive. I have  
8 two locomotives. Fuel conversation we shut the rear one down and  
9 run with the lead unit. And, yeah, it's a little bit -- you know,  
10 every train is considered heavy then, you know, try to control it  
11 with one locomotive. But I always started early. I learned that  
12 from Terry Laurent (phonetic) on the simulator in St. Louis how  
13 to, you know, conserve fuel, and how to run a train like that.  
14 And I have incorporate that in my way of running, you know,  
15 starting early. And that's how I always do it.

16 Q. Okay. And the signal system on this trip or previous  
17 trips, any issues with the signal system in the area of Rockview?

18 A. Rockview? Not that I remember, sir.

19 Q. And visibility of signals going into Rockview?

20 A. Yeah, you can see the signals. Now, as you -- the north  
21 end signal you can see that.

22 Q. Now, the north end would be?

23 A. North end of -- what the hell's the name of that siding?

24 Q. Would that be at Rockview or --

25 A. No, sir. Rockview is the interlocking.

1 Q. All right.

2 A. Just before the interlocking there is a siding --  
3 Quarry.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. You can see the north end signal. Then you go around  
6 the curve, and then once you go around the curve you can then see  
7 the south end signal and then the interlocking signal. And the  
8 interlocking signal is Rockview. All right?

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. Sorry. Like I said, I talk with my hands.

11 Q. Yeah. Okay. Last thing I wanted to ask you about --

12 A. Yes, sir.

13 Q. -- from where you live to where you report --

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. -- about how long a trip is that for you?

16 A. Sir, I'm -- two minutes.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. I'm real close to the depot.

19 Q. And does the -- I'm just thinking of the three-hour  
20 call.

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. So do you --

23 A. Okay.

24 Q. Do you have an option of taking --

25 A. That first hour --

1 Q. -- a shorter -- do you --

2 A. -- I start up a pot of coffee. Second hour, I take my  
3 shower -- I mean this is just the ritual I do. I take my shower  
4 and then I start making sandwiches to go to work. And I eat. And  
5 then I have generally 30 minutes left before call time, and I just  
6 head for work. And I go over to the depot and I'll make a pot of  
7 coffee and I'll sit there and talk with everybody, and see what  
8 train I'm going to catch. You check for the general orders to see  
9 if there's any new general orders, you know, anything new that I  
10 need to know. That's my general -- that's how I do things.

11 Q. Okay. All right. Does the railroad give you an option  
12 of taking a shorter call, if you wish?

13 A. They used to. I used to try to fight that when I was on  
14 the engineer's extra board, the three-hour call. And I never got  
15 anywhere with CMS. That is the crew calling system for the Union  
16 Pacific Railroad. They would -- you know, I'd put in a request  
17 for a two-hour call and the lady would put it in the computer and  
18 they'd still give me a three-hour call. I have just learned to  
19 accept the three-hour call. I can't do anything about it.

20 MR. FLANIGON: Okay. That's --

21 BY MR. NARVELL:

22 Q. Okay. Yes, thank you (indiscernible).

23 A. Yes, sir.

24 Q. Again, a few follow-ups and, again --

25 A. Yes, sir.

1 Q. -- I don't want to sound like a broken record -- we'll  
2 get together after this.

3 A. Okay.

4 Q. What hospital were you taken do you know? And where?

5 A. St. Francis, I believe. Wasn't that St. Francis?

6 Q. And where is that? Do you know?

7 A. Cape Girardeau.

8 Q. Cape -- okay. So you were transported right from the  
9 scene right to St. Francis?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Okay. All right. When you reported for duty, did you  
12 feel rested?

13 A. Yeah. Yeah, I was, I was in good shape.

14 Q. Okay. Did you feel -- were you tired? I don't want to  
15 say -- put words in your mouth, but just give us a --

16 A. Well, you know, I'm 58.

17 Q. Right.

18 A. And I don't get around like, you know, I used to on a  
19 run. I mean I always had a theory that the railroad couldn't work  
20 me hard enough. Now, I was raising six kids and, you know, they  
21 need things, so I always worked.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. And now, what I'm doing is just saving up money for  
24 retirement.

25 Q. Gotcha. So you felt rested when you reported for duty?

1           A.    Yeah, yeah.  I felt good.  Yeah, I'd taken a nap  
2 earlier.

3           Q.    Okay.  Is the UP aware of your medical status, your  
4 medical condition?

5           A.    As far as I know.  I've never hidden it.

6           Q.    Okay.  So they're -- has the railroad ever asked you?

7           A.    Well, when I would do random drug testings I'd always  
8 have the lady put it on there that, you know, I'm diabetic, you  
9 know, just because of maybe, you know --

10          Q.    Something showing up?

11          A.    -- a spike in blood sugar or something like that.  I  
12 wanted to explain that.  And when I had carpal tunnel surgery  
13 there was a lawyer firm that -- I mean they went through  
14 everything of my life.  They even knew the registration on a  
15 motorcycle I bought in 1970, so I'm sure they know about  
16 everything.

17          Q.    Okay.  All right.  You mentioned to one of these -- one  
18 of our folks here that you took food on board?

19          A.    Yes, sir.  I always take food.

20          Q.    Do you remember -- is there a standard thing you take or  
21 what was it that night?

22          A.    Well, what it was, was I had gone by Evans Meat Market  
23 and gotten some smoked turkey and some Colby cheese.  And I had --  
24 hell, I can't remember if I made the sandwich with rye bread  
25 because -- oh, I love rye.  It might have been the -- more than

1 likely it was the whole wheat.

2 Q. Okay. That's fine.

3 A. Now, I had those, a bag of chips, and a bag of cookies.

4 Q. This is what you brought with you on the --

5 A. Yes, sir. That's what I brought with me.

6 Q. Okay. And we already got (indiscernible).

7 A. Yeah, it was three sandwiches, about six, seven cookies,  
8 and a bag of chips, Cheetos.

9 Q. Okay. Going back to -- and I'm just looking at my  
10 chicken scratch of notes here -- that the last thing you remember  
11 was Gorham? And I don't -- I'm sorry, I don't know where that is.  
12 Am I pronouncing that right?

13 A. Right. Gorham, is where we come out of Salem, go  
14 through Benton, Illinois, come down the old M&I track --

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. -- to a place where we come to where there's double  
17 main. This is the Missouri Pacific track.

18 Q. Right.

19 A. And you come out -- there's a Y there. You can go to  
20 the north leg of the Y or you can go to the south leg of the Y.  
21 We do down through the south leg of the Y -- I was lined up -- and  
22 you come out on Track 2 right there.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. And you're -- you know, I remember that.

25 Q. But beyond that up to (indiscernible)?

1           A.    Well, nothing specific, sir.  Not anything that I could  
2  -- you know, like I told you about the, you know, the moon, the  
3  eclipse of the moon.

4           Q.    Yes.  Yes, I remember that.  You looked out?

5           A.    Nothing -- yeah, nothing after that you know.

6           Q.    Okay.

7           A.    Maybe we had nothing to talk about or say, you know.  We  
8  would call out signals, but that'd be it.

9           Q.    Okay.  And just to be clear, you don't recall the series  
10 of signals up to and including the incident.  Is that correct?

11          A.    No, sir.  I do not.

12          Q.    Okay.  All right.

13          A.    I wished I did, but I don't.

14          Q.    So you're rested -- any symptoms that you can recall  
15 from -- because, you know, you've been a diabetic for a while.

16          A.    Yeah, yeah.

17          Q.    Any symptoms up to the time that you can remember?

18          A.    Nah.

19          Q.    Okay.  Okay.  Last one for me for now.  We got your cell  
20 phone.  No use.  We know that.  Who's your carrier?

21          A.    Verizon.

22          Q.    Verizon?

23          A.    I get a 15% discount.

24          Q.    Oh, good.  Okay.  That's all for now.

25          A.    Yes, sir.

1 MR. NARVELL: Okay. Thank you.

2 BY UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

3 Q. You mentioned earlier that you always start early, but  
4 you never did say what. I'm assuming for slowing your train down,  
5 braking?

6 A. Yeah, yeah, for slowing down. Yes, sir. I would start  
7 early.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. That is my typical way of running. Not only does it  
10 save fuel, but, you know, it just makes a nice comfortable ride  
11 in. You know, I've got a theory. I've got all damn day to get up  
12 to the signal and stop.

13 Q. Usually how far out do you start? Like, if you was  
14 going to --

15 A. Well, it depends on the train --

16 Q. If you was going to --

17 A. -- but I would generally look between two miles and a  
18 mile and a half. And I would use dynamics until I got within a  
19 certain distance, and then I would start using air to bring myself  
20 down to a nice safe stop.

21 Q. Okay. You say you usually start braking two miles out?

22 A. Yeah, between a mile and a half, two miles. Yes, sir.

23 Q. Okay. And usually with dynamic blending braking?  
24 Dynamic and air both?

25 A. I don't -- I only use the air if I have to, slowing

1 down. I generally just try to use the dynamic brakes. Now, if I  
2 need air I use air. If I don't need it I don't use it.

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay. That's all I have.

4 MR. EARDENSOHN: I just had a couple of follow-up  
5 questions.

6 MR. FLANIGON: Yes, mention your name again, if you  
7 could.

8 MR. EARDENSOHN: Randy Eardensohn with Union Pacific.

9 BY MR. EARDENSOHN:

10 Q. You mentioned that you remembered stopping somewhere and  
11 I didn't write that down.

12 A. Yes, sir. That was Mount Vernon.

13 Q. Mount Vernon. And what do you remember about that stop?  
14 Is it -- was it a routine stop?

15 A. Yeah, a routine stop.

16 Q. Did you meet a train?

17 A. We were meeting -- there was a train that had left out  
18 ahead of us, and they were at Ina. That's the very next siding.  
19 And so, the dispatcher put -- I don't know what they did with them  
20 at Ina because I wasn't there. But for us, they put us in the --  
21 you know, we were -- we held ourselves out just a little bit. I  
22 asked the dispatcher if it's all right that we hang out just a  
23 little bit before blocking what we call Toll Road in the middle of  
24 Mount Vernon siding. And -- because we knew the rear end of our  
25 train would sit just about right on that or real close to it.

1           And -- well, to tell the truth the people at Mount  
2 Vernon they -- they'll go around that gate. Okay? And I didn't  
3 want them to go around the gate and, you know, possibly get hit by  
4 the train that we were going to meet.

5           Q.    Okay.

6           A.    So, you know, we were looking out for the public. So we  
7 listened and when we heard them go by the hotbox detector at 280  
8 -- anyway, the hotbox detector that's our indication that they're  
9 on their way. So then, we just went ahead and finished pulling in  
10 and stopped. And when the train come by, looked it over. And  
11 after they went by, we left.

12          Q.    Okay.

13          A.    We got a signal and we left.

14          Q.    Do you remember what signal that was?

15          A.    Yeah, it was a clear signal.

16          Q.    Clear? Okay.

17          A.    Yeah.

18          Q.    So leading up to that stop do you remember the  
19 succession of signals that you had?

20          A.    Yeah. Oh, yeah.

21          Q.    What were they?

22          A.    Well, let's see. At -- well, you got the advanced  
23 approach, and then the next signal post you come down to we had a  
24 double yellow, which is a -- it's an approach diverging. And  
25 then, the next signal after that was a diverging approach.

1 Q. Okay. So, if you'd give me them signals again, what you  
2 had?

3 A. Going into Mount Vernon?

4 Q. Yeah.

5 A. Yes, sir. You have an advanced approach, and then the  
6 next signal was approach diverging. And then from there is  
7 diverging approach. And we had gotten permission from the  
8 dispatcher to hang out until, you know, the -- that train had  
9 gotten close to where we could pull in and -- because we knew we  
10 were going to block Toll Road, or, you know, like I said the rear  
11 end might be sitting close to it or right on it. And we didn't  
12 want anybody to run out there (indiscernible).

13 Q. Well, could you see the signal from where you stopped?

14 A. Well --

15 Q. (indiscernible) crossing could you see the next signal?

16 A. Well, what we had done is we had pulled in and stopped  
17 short of Toll.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. No I take that back. Let me see, let me see, let me see  
20 -- we stopped before the diverging approach and we listened. And  
21 it wasn't long after that that we heard them coming through the  
22 hotbox detector. So then we just went ahead and pulled in. And  
23 we cleared up, they went on by, and -- well, they got held up by  
24 the NS for a couple minutes.

25 Q. Okay. So when you pulled in did you end up stopping or

1 did you just make a --

2 A. Oh, no, no, no. We pulled in and we stopped.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. Because like I said, they got stopped by the NS, and --

5 Q. So they stop for the red signal that was in the siding?

6 A. Yes. Yeah, 400 feet.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. So, you know, we were talking about -- you were talking  
10 about earlier about calling signals with the conductor?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. So what are -- you know, we have a rule called cab red  
13 zone, right?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. And when does cab red zone apply?

16 A. Cab red applies when -- well, for me it would have been  
17 that diverging approach, from there down to the absolute.

18 Q. Okay. So what --

19 A. So I didn't talk any of that in there. If there was any  
20 talking to do, the conductor did it. I am allowed though to talk  
21 to that conductor about the signals. And if I did any talking it  
22 was about the signals.

23 Q. Okay. So you communicated about the signals?

24 A. Oh, yeah. Yes, sir. Yes, sir, we did.

25 Q. Okay. Now, the conductor's log, you talked about that

1 earlier too that you've never filled out --

2 A. No, no, I --

3 Q. -- but you're familiar with the conductor's log?

4 A. I'm familiar with them filling them out. Yes, sir.

5 Q. Okay. And on the log -- this is a copy of the log  
6 actually from your train.

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. The conductor's required to record certain things?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. And do you know what those are or what they're --

11 A. I'm not fully rehearsed on it. No, sir.

12 Q. One of the things that they record when they go past  
13 signals are speeds.

14 A. Okay.

15 Q. And did the conductor call any speeds out --

16 A. I believe he had a speed recorder in front of him.

17 Q. Okay. Is there a requirement that you communicate the  
18 speed with each other when you go by the signals?

19 A. Not that I'm aware of.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. Now, in the past if there is not a speed recorder in  
22 front of him to where he could see it, he will ask me how fast I'm  
23 going. And I will then tell him how fast I'm going.

24 Q. And that's at the signals?

25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. Is that correct?

2 A. Yeah, at the signal. Yes, sir. That is correct.

3 Q. Okay. So you don't remember him asking you any speeds  
4 on this particular trip?

5 A. No. No, sir.

6 Q. Do you remember any communication from him about the  
7 speed or him announcing the speed that he's seeing or anything?

8 A. No. No.

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay. That's all I have.

10 MR. RANDLE: Rance Randle. I don't have any questions.

11 MR. BLANCHARD: All right, sir.

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I could use a short little break,  
13 a restroom break.

14 MR. BLANCHARD: Okay.

15 MR. FLANIGON: Okay. Sure. Okay. We can take a break.  
16 I'll turn this off.

17 (Off the record.)

18 (On the record.)

19 MR. FLANIGON: So after a short break, we are back  
20 speaking with Mr. Blanchard.

21 And Joe, you're going to --

22 MR. BERRY: My name is Joseph Berry, J-o-s-e-p-h  
23 B-e-r-r-y. I'm a Motive Power and Equipment inspector for the  
24 Federal Railroad Administration.

25 BY MR. BERRY:

1 Q. Mr. Blanchard, I'd like to tell you a little bit about  
2 myself because we do have a few things in common. I'm third  
3 generation railroad. My grandfather worked for the Union Pacific  
4 in North Platte, Nebraska, and he used to sit under the hump and  
5 inspect the cars as they rolled over the top of him.

6 A. Okay.

7 Q. And my dad was a general car foreman in North Platte,  
8 and then I eventually took the apprenticeship there. So I  
9 understand about railroading being in your blood. It just --

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. I just never got away from it. My interest in not only  
12 being here, other than being employed by the Federal Railroad  
13 Administration and (indiscernible) a paycheck, is I'm really  
14 interested in the crash worthiness of a locomotive. We have  
15 federal regulations that locomotives are to be built to certain  
16 standards. S-580 I believe is the AAR standard for new built  
17 locomotives. And so, the locomotive that you were riding was  
18 build to standard S-580. And that's all great being built to that  
19 standard, but sometimes we lost crewmembers. In your case we  
20 didn't.

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. You were able to come out with very little injury, but I  
23 have also investigated accidents in which people didn't make it.

24 A. Yes, sir.

25 Q. And so, while I am not an expert in crash worthiness, I

1 do see a lot of things. And so, I do have some experience that I  
2 hope is beneficial to this investigation so that in the future we  
3 can -- for example, you can survive the initial crash, but if we  
4 can't get you off the train then what have we gained? If we build  
5 the locomotive to an S-580 and -- but we can't get you out, for  
6 whatever reason -- and I took a look at all those things. So I've  
7 got some images here and I'm not going to show you all these  
8 images. There's almost 200 images. I picked about a half a dozen  
9 images.

10 A. Okay.

11 Q. If you don't mind, so that I can show you the cab and  
12 maybe ask you some questions about where you were --

13 A. Sure.

14 Q. -- after the accident, and how you got out, you know,  
15 with the assistance -- and I did talk with the deputy sheriff who  
16 helped get you off of the train. And so, I just wanted to clear  
17 up --

18 A. Oh, that was the deputy sheriff? I thought it was two  
19 firemen. I didn't know -- he was damn strong and I'm glad. You  
20 know, I weigh almost 300 pounds and I couldn't get out that  
21 window, not like my conductor did. And my conductor had seen the  
22 door and he and this other guy they yanked, yanked, yanked, and  
23 managed to get it open. There was dirt coming in it and  
24 everything. And I was able to get up high enough to roll out.  
25 And then they both picked me up and away we went.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. Now, that's what I remember.

3 Q. Okay. And that's -- that lines up with what I learned  
4 from the deputy.

5 A. Okay.

6 Q. Let me just turn back --

7 A. Although I do remember the deputy starting to -- there  
8 was somebody starting to slide down the hill and I reached down  
9 and I grabbed him and pulled him up so that he could go with us up  
10 the hill.

11 Q. When the deputy arrived at the locomotive he first saw  
12 the conductor kind of sticking his head just above the window.

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. And he believed that the conductor was standing on  
15 something to get out possibly?

16 A. I believe it was -- yeah, it's a chair.

17 Q. Okay. And was that -- I'm thinking it was probably the  
18 middle seat. Does that seem --

19 A. You know, to orient myself, you know, you got to take  
20 the locomotive, flip it on its side --

21 Q. Yep.

22 A. -- and it went over on the conductor's side.

23 Q. Right.

24 A. It must have been the middle seat or -- I'm not really  
25 sure.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. But I was just damned glad it was there.

3 Q. All right. What I'm showing you here, Mr. Blanchard, is  
4 -- this image number for the record is P525501. And we are  
5 looking down at the left side window, so as -- the locomotive is  
6 laying on its side, so I'm standing up and I'm taking a picture of  
7 the left side window.

8 A. That's where I was laying.

9 Q. So that's what I wanted to ascertain. Now, were you  
10 laying on the window or were you laying -- where do you remember  
11 laying?

12 A. Well, I got gashes on my elbow and I -- it was -- the  
13 window is busted out? Because I remember hearing broken glass or  
14 something to broken glass. And I didn't know that -- you know, I  
15 didn't know of any extent of my injuries, but I remember my  
16 conductor helping me get up.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. That -- wow.

19 Q. I can show you a little bit farther away picture. Let's  
20 see --

21 A. Jesus Christ. Pardon my language.

22 Q. That's quite all right. You're not going to offend me.

23 A. Was that the damn -- was that the escape?

24 Q. All right. Let's just stay with this picture right  
25 here.

1 A. Okay. I'm sorry.

2 Q. It's not my intent to confuse you with a bunch of  
3 pictures.

4 A. No that's all right. That's all right. I'm sorry.

5 Q. For the record, the conductor's side window is on the  
6 left side of the engine. It's a sliding type window?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. And for the record, the window's -- if the glazing is  
9 broken and pushed down, I presume that some of the breakage  
10 happened at the time of the derailment and then the firefighters  
11 apparently were in there because there was a large amount of foam  
12 -- or maybe they shot from outside. But when I entered the cab on  
13 the afternoon of the incident it was full of foam. I did not see  
14 any presence of blood or anything like that.

15 A. Okay.

16 Q. So if there was blood, it was washed away. And I  
17 presume that you were laying down somewhere around the window?

18 A. Oh, yes, sir.

19 Q. Is that correct?

20 A. That's, that's where I was at.

21 Q. Okay. Now, you indicated that the conductor -- did he  
22 tap you on the shoulder or -- were you laying on your back? Were  
23 you laying on your side? What do you remember seeing when you  
24 woke up?

25 A. I remember Jimmy talking to me and me looking up at him.

1 And he's going, Doc are you all right? And I said, I don't know.  
2 What the hell happened? And, you know, he then told me we were in  
3 an accident. And I heard -- then is when I heard the dispatcher  
4 wanting to know if everybody's okay on the crew. I don't know how  
5 long I laid there. But I got up and got a hold of the microphone,  
6 Jimmy handed it to me, and I said this is Engineer Blanchard. For  
7 the moment I'm okay. And then, that's when I got a look at, you  
8 know, Jimmy's face and the blood had gushed on him and he looked  
9 horrible.

10 But, yeah, that's -- it was dark, so -- but I would --  
11 yeah, because of the glass and everything that's where I picked  
12 myself -- you know, Jimmy helped me up was there.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. And I did hear glass, you know, as I'm trying to get  
15 myself up. Because, you know, you're using everything you can to,  
16 you know, move yourself around to be able to get up.

17 Q. Okay. Now, after you got up --

18 A. Yes, sir.

19 Q. -- were you able to stand or --

20 A. Yes, I was able to stand.

21 Q. Because when the deputy arrived -- very distinctly from  
22 his report, as well as -- well, actually from his report he said  
23 that you had mobility issues or a problem with mobility. Maybe  
24 you said something to him?

25 A. Well, I told him that I couldn't get, I couldn't get up

1 high enough to make it out that window like Jim did.

2 Q. Right. Did you see him exit the cab? Were you -- did  
3 you see him go out?

4 A. No I didn't see him.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. I saw him -- you know, I remember seeing his feet go up.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. And then, I'm looking around -- you know, because I  
9 didn't -- I couldn't figure out how the hell he got up on that.

10 Q. Well, there was a couple of firefighters -- according to  
11 the sheriff's deputy's testimony, a couple firefighters helped  
12 your conductor out that window.

13 A. Oh, they did?

14 Q. Yeah, they did.

15 A. Oh, all right.

16 Q. So he was already -- his head -- when the officer --  
17 when the deputy arrived he could see his head. And then, you  
18 know, the firefighters did help him out. And so, the sheriff  
19 actually brought you out the door.

20 A. Yeah, somebody opened up the door. I took it, it was  
21 Jimmy and one of the firemen that had managed to grab the door and  
22 get it up. And I managed to get my body up high enough to where I  
23 could roll out.

24 Q. Right.

25 A. Roll out the door.

1 Q. Well, fortunately in your case this deputy is 6'5" and I  
2 don't know how many pounds. And what he indicated to me was he  
3 opened the door -- so the engine is laying on its side.

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. And I'm going to show you another picture here.

6 MR. FLANIGON: This is Mike Flanigon. Just for  
7 clarification are we talking about the front door of --

8 MR. BERRY: No, sir, we are not.

9 MR. FLANIGON: You're talking about rear door behind the  
10 engineer's seat?

11 MR. BERRY: Yes. I'm going to pull the picture up here.  
12 It's --

13 MR. BLANCHARD: Oh, is that -- okay. Yeah, that would  
14 be the engineer's door wouldn't it?

15 MR. BERRY: For the record, the image number is P525 --  
16 I'm sorry. Repeat -- P5250552. And I will come back and make a  
17 correction on that other image number because I think I gave a  
18 wrong number.

19 BY MR. BERRY:

20 Q. We are looking at the right hand side of the locomotive,  
21 what we would call the engineer's back door. So the engine is on  
22 its side, so to -- in order -- so the hinge is actually now facing  
23 up.

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. For the record.

1 A. Yeah, they had to pull up.

2 Q. Right. The deputy sheriff grabbed the door handle with  
3 his left hand, and apparently you had made it up far enough he  
4 said that you -- you offered him his hand -- your hand. You  
5 offered him your hands and he was able to get a hold of you and  
6 kind of get you partially way out that door to where he could  
7 reach around and grab the back of your pants.

8 A. Yeah, I got a hell of a wedgie.

9 Q. Yeah. And he even said -- you said something to the  
10 effect that I can't get my fat ass out of here, or something like  
11 that.

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. Yeah. But at any rate, he literally pulled you out the  
14 door. And it took a big man to do it.

15 A. Oh, yeah.

16 Q. And then, the officer indicated that he kind of got --  
17 as I understand it, he got -- you were in this area right here.  
18 And you can't see the ground level, but it kind of slopes here.

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. There were two firefighters, one on each side, and they  
21 actually lifted you down, and then got you down on the ground.  
22 And then they assisted you to walk up the hill.

23 A. Yeah. Okay. All right.

24 Q. Does that make sense?

25 A. Yes, sir.

1 Q. So the reason I'm asking these kinds of questions or  
2 kind of going down this trail is because you survived the initial  
3 impact. But there's flames going up and you're kind of in -- I  
4 think the officer said that you had -- quit pulling my -- you  
5 know, don't pull my belt. You were kind of trying to get him to  
6 stop from pulling you. And he says, sir, we've got bigger  
7 problems than your --

8 A. Yeah, they were saying that there was a fire and --

9 Q. Right. And so, if we hadn't -- if we -- I say we  
10 meaning the emergency response people weren't able to get you out  
11 in time we could have had a real disaster on our hands.

12 A. Oh, yeah.

13 Q. So you survived the initial crash, but it's not just the  
14 initial crash. It's getting you out. And because of your  
15 mobility issues and strength and so forth, apparently maybe you  
16 were able to stand up on that seat? Does that make sense?

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. To where he could reach you?

19 A. Yes. Yes, it does. And before that, Jimmy had smelled  
20 diesel fumes, and I smelled them too. And we -- you know, we  
21 looked for the emergency cutoff and I found it and I pushed it. I  
22 don't know -- I thought the fire was on our locomotive and --  
23 because I smelled the diesel fumes. And -- but I -- you know, as  
24 I came out that door I looked around and, no, I don't know where  
25 the fire was at. But it, it wasn't on our locomotive that I could

1 tell at that time.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. But I did have a strong smell of diesel fuel inside the  
4 cab. But for survivability that's a damn good engine.

5 Q. Yes. It did quite well.

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. It did quite well. It gave you a chance. But again, we  
8 needed to get you out of that locomotive. And had your injuries  
9 been worse it could have ended differently.

10 All right. I'd like to switch and ask you -- kind of  
11 back up a little bit and let's go back to the initial terminal and  
12 just kind of ask you a few questions.

13 A. Sure.

14 Q. I did document for the record the position of all the  
15 switches and controls when I got in the cab on the afternoon of  
16 the accident.

17 A. All right.

18 Q. And so, I looked at where was the conductor's brake  
19 valve handle? Where was the automatic brake valve handle? Where  
20 was the independent brake valve handle? You know, was the engine  
21 isolated, et cetera, and all those things?

22 Now, after the accident I already know that you pushed  
23 the emergency fuel cutoff.

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. I don't know whether you did or somebody else did, but

1 there were several breakers that were cut off and that's just  
2 standard procedure. You know, before you leave the locomotive we  
3 want to shut some breakers off. So I'd kind of like to go through  
4 the position of some of the switches and then ask you some  
5 questions.

6 A. Yes, sir.

7 Q. Before we get there, I want to start at the initial  
8 terminal. So where was the train when you took charge of it?

9 A. It was down at I believe what we'd call the Cemetery  
10 Road.

11 Q. Okay. Was the power on?

12 A. Yes, sir. Power was on it.

13 Q. So you got there how?

14 A. By the yard limo.

15 Q. Okay. Do you remember about what time that was?

16 A. It was sometime after call time. I don't know the exact  
17 time.

18 Q. Okay. When you got to the train did you -- were the  
19 engine's inspections up to date, the locomotive's, or --

20 A. I believe they were up till midnight. And I had planned  
21 farther on down the road if I got stopped anywhere that I would  
22 inspect the engines.

23 Q. Okay. So the engine inspections to your recollection  
24 were up to date and not -- and no inspection was required at that  
25 time?

1 A. At that time, yes, sir.

2 Q. Okay. Now, when you got on the train had the Class I  
3 brake test been performed? Was there an air slip on it?

4 A. Yes, sir. We obtained an air slip. Yes, sir. And  
5 then, I had -- before leaving I had -- because the brakes were  
6 set. I had released the air, give them enough time to charge up,  
7 and I did a set and release.

8 Q. Okay. Now, do you remember what time it was when you  
9 departed the yard?

10 A. No.

11 Q. Okay. Can you tell me a little bit about how you  
12 initially handled the train coming out of the yard, use of the  
13 throttle? And then on the trip, the grade? Were you using -- did  
14 you use any air? Were you using dynamic, et cetera?

15 A. Well, when you come out of Salem Yard, you know, 20 mile  
16 an hour is the max speed on the siding. So as I came out I hit  
17 the distance signal -- or the distance marker, pardon me, at the  
18 switch, and then, you know, built my speed up to 20 mile an hour  
19 to pull out. And as soon as I got by that I then -- I'm believing  
20 there was a 25 mile an hour slow order at 254 -- I can't remember  
21 -- but it was over a bridge, just a little old bitty bridge.

22 There's a 25 mph on that, so, you know, I just, you  
23 know, slowly just let my speed -- you know, I hit my distance  
24 marker on that. And as soon as I was over that, I then, you know,  
25 excuse me, started building speed.

1 Q. Okay. Now, let's fast forward a little bit and take you  
2 to a point where you can remember -- before the accident happened  
3 how you were handling the train before the accident happened.  
4 What part of the territory were you on that you could remember the  
5 grade, what throttle position you were in, and whether you used  
6 your dynamics prior to the accident, within the last 10,15 minutes  
7 prior to the accident?

8 A. I, I don't -- I don't know the timeframe from the  
9 accident to when I went by Gorham. I don't -- you know, that is  
10 the time I have no memory.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. I don't have anything to tell you about that.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. But, you know, before then I used dynamic brake to slow  
15 my train down for the slow orders. And then once I got to just  
16 about stopped with the dynamics I then set air.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. That's how I would bring my train to a halt.

19 Q. To your recollection, how many times did you use the  
20 dynamic brake after departure? Before the accident?

21 A. I don't know.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. You go down through a series of hills and hollers  
24 between Salem and Mount Vernon. And, you know -- I don't know how  
25 many times, sir.

1 Q. Okay. What would be the maximum that you would have  
2 pulled the dynamic out? What notch would you have used to use  
3 your dynamic?

4 A. Well, in past times I've gone all the way to dynamic 8,  
5 and other times dynamic 6. On this one, I don't know. I just --  
6 you know, I'm not just looking at the handle. I'm looking  
7 straight ahead. I'm looking, you know, at my track, you know. My  
8 eyes just, you know, go from the front to the speedometer or  
9 wherever the damn speedometer is. And if I feel I need more  
10 dynamic, I add more dynamic to it. But my eyes are always just  
11 moving. I was trained that, you know, just don't fixate on one  
12 thing. Your eyes have got to be moving so you're aware of  
13 everything that's going on.

14 Q. Okay. Do you know how the -- did the conductor say  
15 anything to you about what he did prior to the accident? Do you  
16 remember anything he might have said?

17 A. He did say that he plugged the train.

18 Q. Do you know how he plugged the train?

19 A. No, sir, I don't. See, we -- when he and I were talking  
20 was at the -- sitting at the ambulance.

21 Q. And if you don't mind, define for the record what you  
22 mean by plugged the train.

23 A. That's put the train in emergency, the conductor's side  
24 of the emergency handle.

25 Q. Okay. So you do you know if he put -- do you know if he

1 used the conductor's handle or did he --

2 A. No I do not know.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. No I don't know that. When he finally got me up and  
5 going, we -- you know, like I said we talked to the dispatcher.  
6 And then we heard somebody outside the locomotive, and had seen  
7 some lights. And Jimmy was trying to get a hold of them to come  
8 help us out. And then, we heard something about a fire, and --  
9 well, to tell you the truth, sir, that was all the incentive we  
10 needed to get out of there.

11 Q. Right.

12 A. And did we look at anything? I didn't. My main  
13 objective was to get out of that locomotive.

14 Q. Okay. It would have been mine.

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. I think I just have one last question.

17 A. Yes, sir.

18 Q. Other than pushing the emergency field switch to cut the  
19 engine off, did you touch any of the controls or did you --

20 A. No.

21 Q. -- kick any breakers down?

22 A. No, sir.

23 Q. Did you touch --

24 A. I touched nothing.

25 Q. Okay.

1           A.    All I did was I located with my flashlight the emergency  
2 cutoff and I pushed that button.  And that was because of my MOP  
3 Dawson had informed me that in case of an accident that's what I  
4 needed to do.  I was on -- the cop on a train, and we were showing  
5 the policeman, you know, where on the locomotive to hit the  
6 cutoff.

7           Q.    Do you remember the conductor kicking any breakers down?

8           A.    No, sir.  No.

9           Q.    Okay.

10          A.    No.

11          Q.    All right.  Well, I thank you very much for your time.

12          A.    Yes, sir.

13          Q.    It is very valuable information and --

14          A.    Well, I hope so.

15          Q.    -- I hope that we're able to use it to keep somebody  
16 else from getting hurt.

17          A.    Yeah.  Now, I have had people in the past ask me about  
18 seatbelts.  And I don't know that seatbelts would have helped or  
19 hurt in this situation.  But everybody asked me if I had my  
20 seatbelt on.  And I was going, what seatbelt?  Okay.  That's all  
21 I had to say about that.

22               MR. FLANIGON:  Okay.  Thanks.  So we -- do you want to  
23 stay here or do you want to swap back?  You guys --

24               So I think we're -- we got Corey next, and then Kenny,  
25 and I know Rick had --

1 MR. NARVELL: Just a couple and then we'll talk.

2 MR. BLANCHARD: Yes, sir.

3 MR. FLANIGON: -- a couple more, and then we'll be set.

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I just had one more, too.

5 MR. FLANIGON: Yeah, go ahead.

6 MR. REYNOLDS: I have no other questions.

7 MR. FLANIGON: No other questions. Okay. Ken?

8 MR. EDWARDS: Okay. I'm good. He's done good.

9 MR. FLANIGON: Rick, you had -- your name is, again,  
10 sir?

11 MR. NARVELL: Rick, sorry. Rick Narvell. Thank you.

12 BY MR. NARVELL:

13 Q. FRA just asked you a moment ago if there was some  
14 discussion you had after the accident with your conductor in the  
15 ambulance?

16 A. Yes, sir.

17 Q. Can you tell us a little bit about what the content of  
18 that was?

19 A. Basically, I had asked him what the hell happened?

20 Q. Right.

21 A. You know, I asked him in the locomotive and he just told  
22 me at that time is that we hit the BN. And I said, oh no --  
23 blank. And then he says, we got to get out of here because we  
24 smelled diesel fuel.

25 Q. Right.

1           A.    And the dispatcher had told us that help was on the way.  
2   And Jimmy wanted to get out of the locomotive.

3           Q.    Sure.

4           A.    Well, he started looking for a way to get out.  And I --  
5   you know, I'm still kind of, you know, dazed I guess.  And Jimmy  
6   managed to kind of get close to the window and was yelling.  I  
7   guess he had seen a light.

8           Q.    Okay.

9           A.    I guess.  I am not sure about that point.  And then some  
10  people finally, you know, had called up and said they were here to  
11  help us.

12          Q.    Okay.

13          A.    And that we needed to get out of there because there was  
14  a fire.

15          Q.    Was there any other discussion about what had transpired  
16  in the ambulance with Jimmy?

17          A.    Then, the next time Jimmy and I are sitting there and I  
18  just -- you know, Jimmy what the hell happened?  And he says, we  
19  hit the BN.

20          Q.    Okay.

21          A.    And I -- Christ, you know.  And we're looking around and  
22  you could see some of the devastation.  And there was a lady there  
23  with her husband, and apparently she had a broken ankle.

24          Q.    Okay.

25          A.    And she was screaming as the paramedics are working on

1 her, and I felt terrible about that. And I looked at my conductor  
2 and he's got blood --

3 Q. All over him. Okay. Take break?

4 MR. FLANIGON: Do you want to take a break?

5 MR. BLANCHARD: Please.

6 MR. FLANIGON: We'll take a short time out here.

7 (Off the record.)

8 (On the record.)

9 MR. FLANIGON: Okay. We're now back after another short  
10 break, and Rick Narvell is going to ask one question he says.

11 BY MR. NARVELL:

12 Q. Randall, you talked about -- actually, I haven't had any  
13 lunch. This looks pretty good, your lunch here that you brought  
14 on board with the turkey and the --

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Did you actually consume all that or any portion of it  
17 between then and the accident?

18 A. No, I -- no. I didn't get into any of that.

19 Q. So you didn't eat anything at all?

20 A. No, no.

21 Q. That you brought on?

22 A. No. That was set up for breakfast and lunch the next  
23 day.

24 Q. Okay. So your --

25 A. But if I needed it, I would have gotten into it.

1 Q. It was there, yeah.

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Okay. So your last meal would have been when you ate  
4 dinner at 7:00 p.m.?

5 A. Yes. Yes.

6 MR. NARVELL: Great. That's all I've got for now.

7 MR. FLANIGON: All right, sir.

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I don't have anything.

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I don't have any further  
10 questions.

11 MR. FLANIGON: Then we're good. The last question I  
12 always like to -- well, actually I'd like to ask two last  
13 questions.

14 MR. BLANCHARD: Yes, sir.

15 MR. FLANIGON: And one is, if you were in my shoes is  
16 there a question we didn't ask you that you think would be  
17 helpful?

18 MR. BLANCHARD: No.

19 MR. FLANIGON: And then, the last is can you think of,  
20 you know, anything for the good of safety that would have helped  
21 prevent this accident?

22 MR. BLANCHARD: No. No, sir.

23 MR. FLANIGON: No. All right. Okay. Well, we'll wrap  
24 up then, and I want to thank you. It's 1:16 and we are turning  
25 off the tape. And before I do that I just want to say again thank

1 you very much for being here and being so responsive to our  
2 questions.

3 MR. BLANCHARD: You're very welcome.

4 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF:           UP and BNSF TRAIN COLLISION  
                                  MAY 25, 2013  
                                  NEAR CHAFFEE, MISSOURI  
                                  Interview of Randall Blanchard

DOCKET NUMBER:           DCA-13-MR-004

PLACE:

DATE:                        May 26, 2013

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,  
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been compared to  
the recording accomplished at the hearing.

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Anne VanDereedt  
Transcriber

## **ATTACHMENTS**

JPEG File: P5250501



JPEG File: P5250552

