

**DCA-06-FR-004**

**Norfolk Southern Rear-end Collision  
Derailment**

**Train No. 226 & Train No. 22R**

**Lincoln, AL**

**January 18, 2006**

**Interview of Student Engineer of  
Train No. 22R**

**13 pages, including cover sheet**

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD  
OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGES

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Investigation of: \*  
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NORFOLK SOUTHERN REAR-END COLLISION \*  
LINCOLN, AL \*  
JANUARY 18, 2006 \* Docket No.: DCA-06-FR-004  
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Interview of: JEREMY CANNON

Comfort Inn  
Lincoln, Alabama

Thursday,  
January 19, 2006

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice.

BEFORE: RUSSELL GOBER

## APPEARANCES:

RUSSELL GOBER, OPERATIONS GROUP CHAIRMAN  
National Transportation Safety Board  
DuPage County Airport  
31 West 775 North Avenue  
West Chicago, Illinois 60185  
[REDACTED]

I N D E X

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INTERVIEW OF JEREMY CANNON

BY MR. GOBER:

Q. Jeremy, can you give me your name, address and phone number?

A. Jeremy Myron (ph.) Cannon, address, 1400 Norfolk Southern Drive, Birmingham, Alabama --

Do what now? Oh, you want --

Q. That's the wrong number.

A. Yeah, I was giving the zip code here. Okay. I mean, the phone number, [REDACTED]

Q. Right. Okay.

A. I've worked for Norfolk Southern for approximately four years. Yesterday, I was making a train trip on 22R. It was also a ride-along with the road foreman to -- we were going to go to Atlanta, I guess.

Q. Okay. Can you tell me what your first indication was that there was a problem?

A. I guess the first thing that stood out in my mind, that struck me as strange, was when we were -- we'd been stopped there for a minute to two in the siding between Coosa and Embry and we went to emergency sitting still. You know, we weren't moving. I guess that was my first indication that something was wrong, but really, at that time, I didn't know like what was wrong, like the severity of anything. I just knew that it was strange to go into

1 emergency sitting dead still. And from there, you know, we tried  
2 to do stuff to get the brakes back and then we were going to go  
3 back -- the conductor was going to go back and try to figure the  
4 problem out. I decided to ride with him. I got off and got in  
5 the car with him and we saw the smoke and you know, the emergency  
6 vehicles and I guess that's when I really realized that something  
7 was bad wrong.

8 Q. Okay. What did you do then?

9 A. I rode back there with him. I didn't go all the way up  
10 to the scene. I stopped where he parked on the rode and I waited,  
11 you know, while he was -- while the road foreman walked down there  
12 with the conductor, because I believe he rode in the ambulance or  
13 the fire truck or something down there, and I waited up there  
14 while they went down to the scene, to the immediate scene.

15 Q. Okay. Did you have any contact with the crew on the  
16 train that was in the accident?

17 A. No.

18 Q. Did you see them at all?

19 A. No.

20 Q. Okay. Did you hear anything about them?

21 A. Yeah, I talked to, I guess, a fire medic, one of the  
22 fire medics down there, and he kind of told me that, you know,  
23 kind of one of them's ankle was hurt, and he told me one of them  
24 was cut up bad, and he told me this other one, maybe his back  
25 might've been hurt or whatever, but that was the first I heard of

1 them.

2 Q. Okay. What did you all do after that?

3 A. Well, several minutes passed and I guess we figured out  
4 what -- I guess Tifton figured out what was going on. He come  
5 and got us all in the car. We went and got the engineer, Paul,  
6 off of the engine and went to the Honda plant -- in there and just  
7 sat. You know, we were on standby after that.

8 Q. Okay. And then after that, did you get called to go do  
9 a drug test or anything?

10 A. Yeah, we went and took -- after we sat there for a  
11 while, we went and Mr. Campbell picked us up and we went to the  
12 drug test and have a little interview and everything.

13 Q. Okay. When you had the little interview, did you tell  
14 him anything that you haven't told us?

15 A. He asked a lot of questions -- because I didn't tell  
16 you. He asked me when was the first time that we had talked to  
17 the dispatcher and I told him that it was right before right down  
18 the hill at -- by the -- industrial plant, which he told us we  
19 were going to head in. I told him that -- they asked about the  
20 signals that were called from the train behind us, and I told him  
21 that the first things I can remember them calling were approach at  
22 Pell City. Clear at Riverside.

23 We also talked about our train being in the clear and I  
24 told him that I did forget to set the counter. I pulled around to  
25 where I thought the clear was and asked the engineer, do you think

1 we're in the clear? And he said, yeah, we should be, according to  
2 what we had and --

3 Q. Were you operating the train?

4 A. Yes. And he said, yeah, we should be. And so maybe a  
5 minute or two passed and we heard them call clear at Riverside,  
6 which is the preceding signal to the siding. So that was my  
7 reassurance that we were in the clear, you know. So we --

8 Q. You actually heard the crew behind you say clear at  
9 Riverside?

10 A. Yes. And I distinctly remember it because of us having  
11 a conversation about being in the clear, you know, I heard them  
12 said it and I distinctly remember it because that was my  
13 reassurance that we had -- we had definitely cleared.

14 Q. Okay.

15 MR. GOBER: -- do you have any questions?

16 BY UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

17 Q. Did you say the crew on the second train, the following  
18 train, informed you that the rear of the train, that your train  
19 was in the clear?

20 A. No, we heard them cry clear signal at Riverside, which  
21 is the preceding signal before you go into the --

22 Q. And they -- said Riverside?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. A clear signal?

25 A. Clear at Riverside.



1 Q. Did you hear any others?

2 A. I heard the signal before that, approach Pell City, and  
3 that's the only thing I heard them say. That's the only thing I  
4 could hear during the whole trip.

5 Q. Did you hear anything after that?

6 A. No. No, I didn't. I've been the training LET since --  
7 on the road since November and that was the territory that I come  
8 off of, too. So I mean, I've worked over there the whole time  
9 I've been -- actually the whole time I've worked for NS. You  
10 know, that's the territory I ran.

11 BY MR. GOBER:

12 Q. And you worked as a conductor before you went in to  
13 engineer the train?

14 A. That's right.

15 Q. And whenever you guys went by Pell City and Riverside,  
16 what kind of signals did you have?

17 A. A clear at Pell City and approach at Riverside.

18 Q. What did you have at Coosa?

19 A. Divergent approach.

20 Q. Okay. And -- I'm confused about the counter. Did you  
21 set the counter?

22 A. No, I forgot to set the counter and by the time I  
23 realized I forgot to set the counter, we were -- you know, it was  
24 late in there, where it wouldn't have done me no good. You know,  
25 I couldn't judge and we were, I guess, probably about half in

1 before I realized I didn't. But having stopped there before, you  
2 know, many times, I was fairly confident of where I stopped in the  
3 clear, but I did ask the engineer, you know, for a little  
4 reassurance. You know, do you think we're in the clear, and he  
5 was like, you know, we definitely should be.

6 Q. How much more room did you have on the track?

7 A. Oh, probably -- for a rough estimate, I would say maybe  
8 -- maybe 20 cars. Ever since -- ever since I've been over there,  
9 that's like -- kind of like a standard stopping place. There used  
10 to be a road crossing there and -- road crossing. But generally,  
11 unless you're on something really, really long, it's where  
12 everybody kind of stops at and that's where I kind of learned to  
13 stop and that's where I kind of was planning to stop at, you know.

14 Q. Great. If you had gone closer to the clear, would you  
15 have blocked anything?

16 A. No, we wouldn't have had anything more blocked than we  
17 had already.

18 Q. Um-hum -- anything that you could think of that you  
19 could tell us that would help us in keeping an accident like this  
20 from happening again?

21 A. I mean, in all -- in all seriousness, I mean -- I mean,  
22 I guess -- could've pulled up further, but I don't really see  
23 where that would've mattered. If I was in the clear, I was in the  
24 clear. And if I wasn't in the clear, they shouldn't have come  
25 around there on a clear board. So I mean, I can't really see

1 where anything on my end I could've done different to prevent it.

2 Q. Um-hum. Would the dispatcher have a signal set up where  
3 the switch would line back automatically once you got in the  
4 clear?

5 A. Yeah, we would have to be in the clear. I mean, I --  
6 what I know about the signal system, which is limited, you know,  
7 we'd have to be in the clear and then the switch would line and  
8 that would initiate the signal, from what I know, which is  
9 limited. You know, that's the way -- my understanding of how it  
10 works.

11 MR. GOBER: Okay. Does anyone have any further  
12 questions?

13 BY UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

14 Q. I just got one. You were transferred to the hospital  
15 for a post-accident test. What hospital?

16 A. I can't even tell you. It was some little lab in  
17 Birmingham. I don't know what the name of it was.

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay --

19 MR. GOBER: If we need you, we got the numbers where we  
20 can give you a call. I don't think we'll need to call you back,  
21 but you're free to go today.

22 MR. CANNON: All right.

23 MR. GOBER: Send the engineer in here.

24 MR. CANNON: I will.

25 (Whereupon, the interview in the above-entitled matter

1 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: Norfolk Southern Rear-End Collision  
Lincoln, AL  
January 18, 2006  
Interview of Jeremy Cannon

DOCKET NUMBER: DCA-06-FR-004

PLACE: Lincoln, AL

DATE: January 19, 2006

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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David Martini  
Transcriber