

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN RE: :

THE ACCIDENT INVOLVING : NTSB Accident No.

AMTRAK TRAIN #89 AND A : DCA16FR007

BACKHOE IN CHESTER, :

PENNSYLVANIA ON :

APRIL 3, 2016 :

INTERVIEW OF: Alexander J. Hunter

Tuesday,
April 5, 2016

Chester, Pennsylvania

BEFORE

STEPHEN M. JENNER, NTSB
DONALD HILL, BLET
WILLIAM BATES, SMART
JONATHAN HINES, AMTRAK
GARY WHITE, FRA
MELVIN WICHELMANN, BLET
ANDREW CIUBA, SMART
DAVID NICHOLS, AMTRAK
JIM GEE, FRA
RYAN FRIGO, NTSB

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

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

10:50 a.m.

1
2
3 MR. JENNER: Good morning. Today is April
4 5th, 2016. My name is Stephen Jenner. I'm an
5 Investigator with the National Transportation Safety
6 Board. The time is 10:50 a.m.

7 We are currently in Chester, Pennsylvania,
8 investigating an Amtrak accident that occurred on April
9 3rd, 2016, in Chester.

10 We are here to interview crew members of
11 that Amtrak train, and right now, we'll be talking to
12 Mr. Hunter, who was the engineer on that train.

13 Before we get started, what I'd like to do
14 is go around the room, starting from my right, and
15 we'll have everyone introduce themselves. Please say
16 your name and who you're with.

17 Again, my name is Stephen Jenner. I'm a
18 Human Performance Investigator with the NTSB.

19 MR. HILL: Donald Hill, BLET Safety Task
20 Force.

21 MR. BATES: William Bates, B-A-T-E-S. SMART
22 Transportation Safety Team.

23 MR. HINES: Jonathan Hines, Assistant
24 (inaudible) Amtrak.

25 MR. WHITE: Gary White, FRA.

1 MR. WICHELMANN: Mel Wichelmann, W-I-C-H-E-
2 L-M-A-N-N, BLET STF, Safety Task Force.

3 MR. CIUBA: Andrew Ciuba, C-I-U-B-A, SMART
4 Transportation Division Local (inaudible) New York.

5 MR. NICHOLS: Dave Nichols, N-I-C-H-O-L-S.
6 Chief Transportation Officer for Amtrak.

7 MR. GEE: Jim Gee, Region II FRA, Inspector.

8 MR. FRIGO: Ryan Frigo, F-R-I-G-O, NTSB
9 Investigator in Charge.

10 MR. JENNER: Okay.

11 MR. HUNTER: Alexander Hunter, Locomotive
12 Engineer.

13 MR. JENNER: And you're with Amtrak?

14 MR. HUNTER: Amtrak, I'm sorry.

15 MR. JENNER: Okay, thank you. So, we
16 appreciate you being here, and basically, we would like
17 to have you tell us your story of what happened on the
18 day of the accident, and we'll let you go at your own
19 pace, and I'll just request if you can just sort of
20 tell us how your day started, where you reported for
21 work, at what time, and just take us through there.

22 MR. HUNTER: Okay, I worked the extra board.
23 So, I don't -- I'm not on a regular assigned train. I
24 got called, you know, early in the morning Sunday, for
25 a 5:25 sign up for Train 89.

1 Got to New York, and you know, met the crew.
2 We did our job briefing. Spoke to the yard crew that
3 came over, you know, got a face-to-face, as far as my
4 brake tests and everything. We had a face-to-face
5 meeting.

6 Went down to the train, and left New York, I
7 think 6:05. We had been running fairly on time, most
8 of the trip. Maybe a few minutes, you know, few
9 minutes behind schedule. Nothing really out of the
10 ordinary going on. You know, weather wasn't great, you
11 know. We were a few minutes late, as I said.

12 But you know, we leave Philadelphia. I think
13 we were, you know, maybe five minutes down, and again,
14 the whole trip, nothing really out of the ordinary.

15 We come out of Chester, came around the
16 curve. I saw the one track car, the larger -- larger
17 track car on -- I was on track three, going south at
18 that point.

19 I saw the larger track car on track two, and
20 from what my perspective, as I came around the curve, I
21 couldn't really -- took me several seconds to realize
22 that the other car was in -- you know, was fouling
23 track three, and once I did that, I, you know, just
24 kind of instinct took over, training or whatever you
25 want to call it. I just laid on the horn as much as I

1 could, put the train into emergency.

2 Then, you know, once I realized like -- I
3 knew -- like, I could see, like when I got closer, that
4 he was pretty well onto my track and I -- you know, I
5 knew I was going to hit him, and I had the train in
6 emergency and I jumped on the deck of the locomotive.

7 At that point, you know, I could -- I flew
8 up -- you know, I could feel the train lift up, and
9 basically, just road it from there, you know, I didn't
10 -- you know, I just kind of curled up in a ball in the
11 deck of the locomotive and waited for it to stop.

12 Then once I kind of got by senses with me, I
13 got up and was trying to make it -- I was proceeding to
14 make a radio call. Radio was inside the dash, and non-
15 operational at that point.

16 So, I opened the door to the locomotive, to
17 see exactly -- I didn't know like, what the condition
18 of the train was, you know, I opened the door of the
19 locomotive just to see what was on the rail, what was
20 off the rail at that point, because I knew I was off.
21 I could feel that I was -- I had derailed, but I didn't
22 really know to the extent of what everything else was.

23 Then like I said, I really couldn't make any
24 -- I had no communications with me. So, I just kind of
25 -- I was going to get down and I was pretty shaken up

1 at that point, and I went to the rear cab of the
2 locomotive, and was going to climb down, but like I
3 said, I was pretty shaken up at that point, and didn't
4 feel comfortable climbing down because I could feel
5 that there was oil or you know, whatever, hydraulic
6 fluid, or you know, whatever on the side of the
7 locomotive. So, it was pretty slippery, and I didn't
8 feel that I was physically able to get myself off.

9 So, I just opened the door and sat there and
10 try and -- and then the conductor came up and you know,
11 we talked for a few minutes, and then you know, I --
12 you know, he was talking -- I don't know who -- I think
13 he was talking to the dispatcher, at that point, you
14 know, trying to relay emergency information and stuff
15 like that.

16 You know, then the emergency personnel
17 showed up and they got me off the locomotive at that
18 point, got a ladder and helped me off the locomotive,
19 and I was -- you know, physically, I was just hyper-
20 ventilating, couldn't -- you know, I was shaken up,
21 really pretty badly shaken up, couldn't catch my
22 breath, you know, was -- you know, adrenalin flowing.
23 I really didn't know what was hurt, you know.

24 MR. JENNER: Right.

25 MR. HUNTER: I didn't know how badly. I

1 knew I was hurt, you know, not, you know, terribly, but
2 you know, I was up and moving around and coherent.

3 But you know, at that point, I told the
4 medical guys, they were asking me, and I said, you
5 know, I said, "My back hurts a little bit and my
6 chest," I said, "I'm having a hard time catching my
7 breath," and as soon as I said I had a little pressure
8 in my chest, they whisked me off to the hospital for,
9 you know, I guess the heart attack protocol and stuff
10 like that.

11 Then I went through all the medical
12 procedures at the -- you know, at the hospital and you
13 know, did all that and everything. Didn't have the
14 heart attack, but you know, they took me in there as if
15 I did, you know, and that's why they took me away in
16 the ambulance and stuff like that. I wasn't really
17 sure to the extent of what have you, but I was pretty
18 shaken up.

19 Like I said, I was hyper-ventilating. I
20 probably felt like I had a -- you know, after-thought,
21 you know, probably had like a panic attack, you know,
22 or just like adrenalin of whatever you want to call it.

23 MR. JENNER: Right.

24 MR. HUNTER: And then, you know, they took
25 me to the hospital and gave me a good check out. So.

1 MR. JENNER: Okay.

2 MR. HUNTER: That's really all I remember.
3 You know, I mean, there were a few specifics. You
4 know, the -- I don't know, I know because a few
5 engineers in the room, but when you looked down the
6 road, you know, it took me a few seconds, as far as a
7 perspective point to really -- you don't -- you don't
8 really know what's wrong. You just know something is
9 not right at that point, and you know, the closer I
10 got, that's when I, you know, kind of did the double-
11 take, as to far as -- as far as what was where, and you
12 know, how that all worked out.

13 MR. JENNER: Okay, anything else?

14 MR. HUNTER: No.

15 MR. JENNER: Okay, thank you. That was very
16 good. As promised, we're going to go back and just
17 have some fill in the gaps kind of thing.

18 MR. HUNTER: Okay.

19 MR. JENNER: So, at the end, at the
20 hospital, were you required to give specimens for
21 toxicology testing?

22 MR. HUNTER: Yes, the Amtrak officials came
23 and did the FRA kit, I think, whatever.

24 MR. JENNER: Okay, did that process go okay,
25 in terms of getting specimens and procedure-wise?

1 MR. HUNTER: Yes, yes, it went okay.

2 MR. JENNER: Okay.

3 MR. HUNTER: Yes, everything -- the hospital
4 staff and everybody, you know, from the company and
5 everybody that I dealt with was pretty good, as far as
6 handling me. You know, they had an officer out there,
7 making sure that everything was okay, and you know,
8 making sure, I guess no one came back to me or
9 whatever, making sure that only certain people were
10 allowed in with me and everything.

11 MR. JENNER: Sure.

12 MR. HUNTER: So, the hospital went well, you
13 know, as far as they were -- you know, and even the EMS
14 guys, they were -- you know, they told me since I had
15 the chest pains, they said, "Listen, we're going to --
16 you don't think you're having a heart attack, but we're
17 treating you as such."

18 MR. JENNER: Right.

19 MR. HUNTER: And that's why they went
20 through the whole protocol. You know, I got a chest x-
21 ray, an MRI, CAT scan. You know, they -- you know, the
22 EMS guys were great because they said, "Hey, listen,
23 this is exactly what's going to happen. There's going
24 to be a lot of people. It's going to go real quick,
25 and you know, this is how we're going to -- we have to

1 treat you."

2 MR. JENNER: Okay.

3 MR. HUNTER: You know, at this point. You
4 know, so, yes, and then they -- you know, later on -- I
5 was in the hospital for a long time, because I could
6 get my blood pressure to come down.

7 MR. JENNER: Okay.

8 MR. HUNTER: That was why they really held
9 me in the hospital for a while after they, you know,
10 initially checked me out.

11 MR. JENNER: Okay.

12 MR. HUNTER: So.

13 MR. JENNER: Okay, great. Okay, I'm going
14 to go back a little.

15 You mentioned weather earlier, not being
16 great. Can you describe the weather, as you were
17 operating, approaching in that area?

18 MR. HUNTER: Weather north -- well, it was
19 more north of Phillie. It had actually -- actually it
20 was rainy and windy, and that's probably why we're a
21 few minutes down, you know, and then again, this is
22 all, you know, all pretty normal operation stuff.

23 We had some wheel slip. You know, just
24 normal stuff for the day. You know, it was raining
25 pretty good. You know, pretty windy, but actually,

1 then it started to clear, you know, like right around
2 Philadelphia.

3 MR. JENNER: Okay.

4 MR. HUNTER: You know, and everything was
5 normal after that, as far as weather.

6 MR. JENNER: And at the time of the
7 incident, how was the weather, that specific area? Had
8 it cleared up?

9 MR. HUNTER: Yes, it had cleared up.

10 MR. JENNER: Okay.

11 MR. HUNTER: The rain had stopped somewhere
12 around - somewhere, you know, right in Phillie, you
13 know, north of Phillie, somewhere in that area, but you
14 know, it had just started clearing up, and we were
15 making time. Again, I was running normal. You didn't
16 have to worry about wheel slip, anything like that. It
17 was just -- everything was normal after that point.

18 MR. JENNER: Okay.

19 MR. HUNTER: So.

20 MR. JENNER: Great, and we have this
21 occurring around 7:50 a.m., so it was light outside?

22 MR. HUNTER: Yes, it was just getting light.
23 At that time of the morning, you know, there is pretty
24 good glares coming into Phillie, you know what I mean?
25 That's -- that's -- you know, that's how you know the

1 sun -- you know, like when the sun is coming up?

2 MR. JENNER: Right.

3 MR. HUNTER: You know, you can -- you get
4 blasted coming into Phillie. Yes, everything was -- it
5 was getting nice out, actually, the further we got
6 south. So.

7 MR. JENNER: Okay, after the accident, you
8 discussed that your radio was not functioning.

9 MR. HUNTER: Yes.

10 MR. JENNER: Do you have a -- were you
11 issued a cell phone or anything else, any other form of
12 communication?

13 MR. HUNTER: No, not from company. My
14 personal cell phone, I had left at my house that
15 morning.

16 MR. JENNER: Okay.

17 MR. HUNTER: Mistakenly.

18 MR. JENNER: Right.

19 MR. HUNTER: But thankfully, in hindsight.
20 But no, I had left my personal cell phone in my house
21 that morning, because I had gotten -- I don't know, I
22 had like a 2:30 a.m. call and had to leave my -- I had
23 to drive into the city, because there is no other --
24 there's no train transportation to get me into the city
25 at that time of the morning.

1 So, I drove into -- drove into New York and
2 left my house probably quarter to -- you know, 4:15-
3 ish, something like that, 4:15.

4 MR. JENNER: Okay.

5 MR. HUNTER: And I just left my cell phone.
6 I had no other kind of communication on me.

7 MR. JENNER: Okay, after the accident also,
8 you mentioned the conductor arrived at the head and the
9 locomotive. Do you recall your discussion? What did
10 you discuss at that time?

11 MR. HUNTER: Not specifically. I knew he was
12 talking to CTEC on the radio, trying to say like, "We
13 need ambulance," and I told him, "Just tell them we
14 need everything." You know, that's really all I
15 remember saying to him, like, you know, he was -- he
16 was like, "Well, I think we need an ambulance or the
17 fire." I said, "Tell them we need everything," and
18 just get everybody here.

19 I asked him how the crew was. You know, I
20 asked him if everybody on the crew was okay,
21 passengers, you know, just to -- I asked him if
22 everybody -- you know, is everybody else okay?

23 MR. JENNER: Okay.

24 MR. HUNTER: And you know, that was pretty
25 much -- at that time, was the only discussion we had,

1 you know, before the EMS, and he had went back after
2 that.

3 He came up to check on me, and at that
4 point, I was sitting in the rear cab of the locomotive.
5 Like I said, I was trying to get down and it had taken
6 him a few minutes to come up, but you know, I
7 understand what he was dealing with in the back.

8 So, I was just sitting there. You know, I
9 was just sitting there, actually having a cigarette.
10 Trying to settle myself down because I really -- at
11 that point, at that point, I knew everything was safe.
12 You know, I knew everything was being handled. So, I
13 was just trying to calm myself down, and you know, then
14 we really didn't speak all that much with the
15 conductor, except for that couple minute conversation,
16 you know?

17 MR. JENNER: Okay.

18 MR. HUNTER: And then they -- after he went
19 -- he went back to the coach and after that, they
20 whisked me away. So, I really didn't have that much of
21 a conversation with the conductor, other than that.

22 MR. JENNER: Okay, do you recall the last
23 time that you operated over the area where the accident
24 happened?

25 MR. HUNTER: Yes, it was -- I can't remember

1 when -- I'm trying to remember when I worked. It's
2 different every day.

3 MR. JENNER: Okay.

4 MR. HUNTER: I think it was Friday. No,
5 Thursday, I went down the road on Train 125 and 138.

6 MR. JENNER: At that --

7 MR. HUNTER: Late morning job.

8 MR. JENNER: Okay, at that time, do you
9 recall if there was work being done on the track? Was
10 there a crew out there doing --

11 MR. HUNTER: No, I don't remember.

12 MR. JENNER: You don't remember?

13 MR. HUNTER: Like specifically there.

14 MR. JENNER: Okay.

15 MR. HUNTER: You know, we didn't -- we
16 encounter these guys all the time.

17 MR. JENNER: Right.

18 MR. HUNTER: You know, so it's not really --
19 unless it's like a -- like a huge track gang, you know,
20 like the -- like they're doing further south. I don't
21 know what you call it, the whole TLM, you know, unless
22 it's something like that, you know, like when you see
23 the TLM, usually you normally have a -- like, for that
24 day, on 125 we had Form D for 80 mile an hour slow-by.

25 MR. JENNER: Okay.

1 MR. HUNTER: So, but you know like this type
2 of situation, when you have one car out there, we see
3 that pretty much all the time.

4 MR. JENNER: Right.

5 MR. HUNTER: You know, and I don't really
6 specifically remember where everything is, you know
7 what I mean?

8 MR. JENNER: Right.

9 MR. HUNTER: So.

10 MR. JENNER: If I could just explore that a
11 little. If you can walk me through the procedures, and
12 this is not uncommon, the way you're describing it.

13 What information do you get that there is a
14 crew ahead and you may need to adjust your -- your
15 operations, and I guess I'm asking in terms of, do you
16 hear from the dispatcher? Is it from the signals
17 instructing you? How do you approach when you're
18 headed toward a work crew?

19 MR. HUNTER: Well, normally, you know, I
20 could -- when I'm running the train, you know, you're
21 not really tuned into the radio. You are, but you
22 aren't. You know, like when I hear my train number,
23 that's -- my ears pick up, you know what I mean? It's
24 -- you don't get any information other than Form D's,
25 like I said just said, with the slow-by.

1 Like, a slow-by Form D. But typically, like
2 these guys -- you'll hear it on the radio for foul --
3 you know, call and give it up, calling for foul time,
4 giving up foul time, and that's really like, the
5 dispatchers don't normally call us specifically.

6 MR. JENNER: Okay.

7 MR. HUNTER: But through experience you
8 know, like if this guy has foul time between A and B,
9 and you're getting bad signals coming up to that, okay,
10 he didn't give his foul time back.

11 MR. JENNER: Right.

12 MR. HUNTER: I mean, that's typically the
13 only way we know where they are --

14 MR. JENNER: Right.

15 MR. HUNTER: -- and what's going on.

16 MR. JENNER: And that's why I was asking
17 what sources of information do you have to tell you
18 that a crew is coming up.

19 MR. HUNTER: Right. You know, I mean,
20 typically as engineers, you know, if I get a bad
21 signal, I don't want bad signals. I want to see all
22 green going down the road.

23 MR. JENNER: Right.

24 MR. HUNTER: So, if I see a bad signal, my
25 ear -- you know, I kind of listen to what is -- you

1 know, try to listen to what's going on ahead of me.

2 MR. JENNER: Right.

3 MR. HUNTER: Then you'll hear them talking.

4 MR. JENNER: Right.

5 MR. HUNTER: You know, sometimes giving up
6 foul times. It's like, okay, all right, I got workers
7 up there.

8 MR. JENNER: Okay.

9 MR. HUNTER: But on a typical day, you
10 usually have the flag men --

11 MR. JENNER: Right.

12 MR. HUNTER: -- you know, with the whistle
13 boards and -- or at night, the lights, you know, that's
14 typically your only indication that you got people out
15 there working.

16 MR. JENNER: Do you recall the signal you
17 received before --

18 MR. HUNTER: I had all clears, pretty much
19 leaving Phillie.

20 MR. JENNER: Okay, right. All right, okay,
21 if you can describe the track itself. You mentioned
22 curves. Does it also go up and down? Left and right,
23 as you're approaching that area?

24 MR. HUNTER: No, there's a pretty good
25 right-hand curve coming out of Chester into Hook. Hook

1 is -- you know, I'm doing 110. Track speed is 110 at
2 that point.

3 Hook interlocking is 100 miles an hour, and
4 I don't even know, I don't even remember, it might be
5 from the download, like I don't even know if I had the
6 brakes touched up coming into Hook, because I usually
7 brake pretty light. I only had to drop 10 mile an
8 hour. So, I usually brake pretty far back and usually
9 just use a light braking application coming in, to
10 bring me down that 10 miles an hour.

11 MR. JENNER: Okay.

12 MR. HUNTER: Sometimes I might even just use
13 the regenerere brake, the dynamic brake to bring me down
14 for the speed restriction that's like that.

15 So, you know, I'm aware of, you know, I have
16 to put the brake on coming into this speed restriction.
17 So, I mean, and it's straight track probably for
18 several miles, you know, couple miles at that point,
19 after that curve coming out of Chester, until you hit
20 Hook, you know, and the station there. So.

21 MR. JENNER: Okay, I didn't ask you earlier,
22 but how was the equipment that day? Did you have any
23 issues?

24 MR. HUNTER: No, no, it was running
25 normally. Everything was fine. Brakes were fine.

1 MR. JENNER: Okay, and if you can give me
2 insight, when you first detected that something may
3 have been out there, something wasn't right. Just walk
4 us through that again.

5 You said there were several second where
6 you're trying to assess what's going on.

7 MR. HUNTER: Well, again, I could -- when
8 you're looking at a distance, and you're doing the
9 speeds that we do, you don't really -- you don't know --
10 -- you don't really know what's specifically wrong, but
11 you know something is not right. Something just -- you
12 know, because I look at this every day.

13 You know what I mean? You go down the road,
14 you look at the same piece of track every day, and you
15 know what I mean, you just know -- like I said, you
16 don't know what's wrong, but just when something is not
17 right, until I got closer.

18 You know, because I was kind of -- I kind of
19 looked down the track, and you know, like I said, I saw
20 the -- I saw the track vehicle on two track, and the
21 backhoe was right next to it, or right -- you know,
22 like just adjacent to it, you know, kind of on -- kind
23 of straddling tracks two and three.

24 That's -- it -- like I said, it took me
25 several seconds to process that he was actually on --

1 you know, fouling track three where I was, and that's
2 when -- you know, like I said, training or instinct
3 comes in, and all I did was land -- I don't know what
4 came first, I laid on the horn and dumped it, and I
5 really don't know the -- like, what I did first.

6 But I know I laid on the horn a little bit.
7 Then I realized they weren't -- you know, like they
8 were actually not going to go anywhere. You know what
9 I mean? They were there, and that's when I -- I threw
10 the train into emergency and when I realized, you know,
11 that I'm -- I was going to strike a pretty big piece of
12 equipment, and I -- and at that point, you don't know
13 what is going to happen.

14 MR. JENNER: Right.

15 MR. HUNTER: You know, because I have been
16 in incidents, you know, before that. I had struck a
17 car before and I know that -- like, stuff can happen.

18 So, that's when I just, you know, put it
19 into emergency and then dove onto the deck, and that's
20 really all I did.

21 MR. JENNER: Okay, you mentioned that when
22 your training or instincts kicks in, and what training
23 are you specifically referring to?

24 MR. HUNTER: I've been doing this for 17
25 years. I've only been with Amtrak for a couple, but I

1 started in 1999 with New Jersey Transit. I've been
2 through fatalities. I've had three suicides. I struck
3 a car down on the coast line when I was working for New
4 Jersey Transit.

5 It's just through experience, you know, and
6 when -- you know, when you go through train handling,
7 you know, with the other engineers, they tell --
8 everyone tells stories about this, that, and the other
9 thing about accidents and stuff like that.

10 I was always one to -- if something
11 happened, I wanted to know why. You know what I mean?
12 I was always one to ask -- just so I could learn from
13 something.

14 MR. JENNER: Right.

15 MR. HUNTER: Like from something -- like,
16 anything, anything -- any kind of violations, anything
17 like that, accidents, I wanted to -- you know, I would
18 always ask and know. So, you just -- it's just from
19 learning over the years, and like I said, instincts,
20 it's really -- you know, it's like a gut reaction.

21 First thing we're always taught to do if
22 anything is on there, just dump the train, you know.
23 You know, that's really -- put the train into emergency
24 and ride it out. I mean, that's really -- and that's -
25 - that's always ingrained in your head.

1 MR. JENNER: Right.

2 MR. HUNTER: You know what I mean? That's
3 from other -- now, that's from working with other
4 engineers and you know, going through the schools and
5 everything like that. I went through two locomotive
6 engineer training programs that were pretty intensive,
7 and you know, it's just through experience. That's
8 just what you do. It's not really anything you think
9 about. You just got to react and that's really about
10 it.

11 MR. JENNER: Okay, I see, thank you. Is
12 there anything else that -- I'm sure you've done a lot
13 of thinking about this, that in terms additional
14 training or additional equipment or anything, that
15 would have helped you with this situation?

16 MR. HUNTER: No, not -- not specifically. I
17 mean, there's really -- at that point of this accident,
18 there's really not much you can do. You know what I
19 mean? There is -- I don't know -- and surprisingly, I
20 was telling Mr. Hines that I was pretty impressed at
21 how this locomotive held up, as far as what I felt we
22 went through.

23 MR. JENNER: Right.

24 MR. HUNTER: Do you know what I mean, and
25 like, seeing the damage that was done to the

1 locomotive, I was -- I feel that I'm pretty lucky to
2 walk away from this intact, as far as the equipment
3 goes. Do you know what I mean?

4 Like, the damage done to this locomotive,
5 you know, I obviously looked at it, you know, but the
6 equipment handle -- I think did what it's designed to
7 do, you know. Like I said, I was -- you know, pretty
8 surprised that there wasn't more damage or that I
9 wasn't -- you know, everything else didn't come off the
10 rail, you know what I mean? That was my first
11 reaction, you know, my first thought was, where is
12 everything else?

13 MR. JENNER: Right.

14 MR. HUNTER: You know?

15 MR. JENNER: Right.

16 MR. HUNTER: Because we had -- we had 10
17 cars, you know, I have a heavy train, and you know, you
18 don't really know what's going to happen at that point.

19 MR. JENNER: Okay.

20 MR. HUNTER: But you know, the training, I
21 mean, it's -- it's really just through experience, you
22 get to -- when you start looking at this stuff, you
23 know.

24 So, it's -- you know, we go through a pretty
25 long training period.

1 MR. JENNER: Sure.

2 MR. HUNTER: You know, my training was -- I
3 think -- I think I was promoted maybe a year after I
4 started school, but I had 15 years experience before I
5 came to Amtrak. So, I was pretty quick to go through
6 this program.

7 So, no, I mean, it's -- it is what it is,
8 and we all get the same training, but it's just through
9 years of experience, that you gain this -- gain some
10 knowledge or instincts or what have you, you know?

11 MR. JENNER: Okay, you discussed your --
12 that you had chest pains and anxious afterwards. But
13 specifically when -- for -- when you're at the
14 hospital, were you injured in other ways, physically
15 banged up?

16 MR. HUNTER: Yes, that's pretty -- you know,
17 it wasn't -- there weren't any -- like, they did x-
18 rays. They did all that on my chest, you know. My
19 back hurts. You know, I'm going to have a -- you know,
20 I had a pretty knot and a couple cuts on my elbow, on
21 my knee. I'm going to have a pretty good knot on my
22 hip now and everything.

23 When I was in the hospital, it was primarily
24 my back and my chest, because I dove on this side from
25 my shoulder and everything.

1 MR. JENNER: Right.

2 MR. HUNTER: You know, so my shoulder was
3 hurt, and all through here, through my back, you know,
4 it was just that -- you know, it was all like soft
5 tissue stuff at the time, and that was just -- I
6 couldn't take a breath. You know what I mean?

7 I think that was part of it. I was just so
8 clenched up, and I guess through adrenalin and
9 everything, I didn't really -- I didn't feel all the
10 other stuff until yesterday, to be honest with you.

11 MR. JENNER: Okay.

12 MR. HUNTER: You know, all the other bumps
13 and bruises, and again, I'm going to have a pretty good
14 knot. I have a pretty good knot on my hip, because
15 that's the side -- because I was operating like this
16 and I dove that way, and then got bounced around pretty
17 good.

18 MR. JENNER: Okay.

19 MR. HUNTER: So, but that was -- at the
20 hospital, that was primarily the issue was, I just
21 couldn't take a deep breath. You know, it hurt from my
22 back through, you know what I mean? All the way around
23 here, you know, that was probably just from jumping and
24 or whatever. So.

25 MR. JENNER: Okay, great. Thank you for all

1 that. I'm finished with my first round, and what we'll
2 do, as promised, we'll -- I'm going to give other
3 people an opportunity to ask some follow up questions.

4 We'll go around a second time and I'm going
5 to ask you a little about your training and experience
6 --

7 MR. HUNTER: Okay.

8 MR. JENNER: -- and things like that, but
9 for right now, we're interested in this -- your -- the
10 day of the accident.

11 MR. HUNTER: Okay.

12 MR. JENNER: Do you need a break at this
13 time?

14 MR. HUNTER: No, I'm okay.

15 MR. JENNER: Okay, if not, we'll go to my
16 right. Please introduce yourself, and ask your
17 questions.

18 MR. HILL: Thanks. This is Don Hill, with
19 the BLET Safety Task Force.

20 I just had a questions, but first I want to
21 say -- I want to commend you on your actions and that
22 you did a great job.

23 MR. HUNTER: Thank you.

24 MR. HILL: What was your original date of
25 hire with New Jersey Transit, if you recall that?

1 MR. HUNTER: Three-ten-ninety-nine.

2 Everyone remembers those days, right? Mr. Gee here did
3 my interview and hired me at that.

4 MR. HILL: I know Mr. Gee well, and what was
5 the last time you actually performed service prior to
6 this incident?

7 MR. HUNTER: Saturday night, Saturday
8 afternoon.

9 MR. HILL: And your off duty was at night?

10 MR. HUNTER: Yes. Actually, no, I ran
11 pasture trains on Saturday. On Saturday? Yes, I
12 can't remember -- yes, it was at -- I don't know,
13 everything is -- I write everything down. I do
14 something different every day.

15 MR. HILL: Okay.

16 MR. HUNTER: No, 125 and 138 were Saturday.
17 No, was it? No, that's what it was, yes, because I had
18 worked the YM4 the night before, on Friday night. I had
19 a couple quick turns.

20 MR. HILL: Okay, and what is your normal day
21 off?

22 MR. HUNTER: Tuesday.

23 MR. HILL: How long you been with Amtrak?

24 MR. HUNTER: May 5th, 2014.

25 MR. HILL: That's all I have. Thanks.

1 MR. HUNTER: Okay.

2 MR. BATES: William Bates. SMART. I don't
3 have any questions for you.

4 MR. HUNTER: Okay.

5 MR. HINES: Jonathan Hines, Amtrak. Just
6 first of all, thank you for coming. Appreciate it.

7 Just one question. If you could just take
8 us back to Chester, and as you're heading south on
9 three track, approaching the scene, did you notice
10 anything besides -- you spoke of the track (inaudible)
11 and the vehicle on track two and the vehicle on track
12 (inaudible). Did you see anyone else or any other
13 vehicles as you were approaching?

14 MR. HUNTER: No, not that I remember.

15 MR. HINES: No further questions.

16 MR. WHITE: Gary White. You stated that
17 after the impact, you noticed that the radio was
18 inoperable.

19 MR. HUNTER: Yes.

20 MR. WHITE: When you went back to the cab,
21 did you think about using the radio then or were you
22 still trying to calm down? I mean, that's
23 understandable.

24 MR. HUNTER: I didn't think about it at that
25 point. I was still trying to process it.

1 MR. WHITE: Okay.

2 MR. HUNTER: You know, like I noticed that
3 everything was going off. You know what I mean? The
4 radio was inoperative, but the reverser was still in,
5 and everything -- that's what was -- it was bothering
6 me, the bells and whistles, I'm trying to -- I'm trying
7 to focus on what I need to do, and so, I shut the -- I
8 shut the reverser off, I went back and it was only --
9 you know, a couple minutes before the -- maybe a few
10 minutes before the conductor came up. I don't really
11 know that time frame.

12 But I had just assumed at that point that
13 somebody was going to call. Do you know what I mean?
14 I realized that -- when I looked out of the locomotive,
15 off the -- the front cab where I was, when I knew
16 everything was in tact, I knew the conductors were
17 going to be okay, and I didn't really think about it at
18 that point, you know, because there was no way for me
19 to talk on the head end, and you know, I knew
20 everything was okay in the back, at least temporarily,
21 so, I didn't even really think about trying to
22 communicate. I just had assumed that, you know,
23 somebody had already made the call at that point.

24 MR. WHITE: All right, and (inaudible) sends
25 his greetings.

1 MR. HUNTER: Thank you.

2 MR. WHITE: That's all I have.

3 MR. GEE: AJ, it's good to see you.

4 MR. JENNER: Introduce yourself.

5 MR. GEE: I'm glad you're okay.

6 MR. JENNER: Jim, introduce yourself.

7 MR. GEE: Jim Gee. G-E-E. FRA Region II.

8 Okay, AJ, I only got two questions. The first one was
9 -- three -- is when you left Philadelphia, and before
10 you got to Baldwin, what track were you operating on?

11 MR. HUNTER: Three track.

12 MR. GEE: In three track from Baldwin down,
13 and you said you had clear signals the whole way. Did
14 you have any flips at all or anything like that, that
15 you recall? I know they happen real quick.

16 MR. HUNTER: No, not that I recall.

17 Everything was pretty normal coming out of
18 Philadelphia.

19 MR. GEE: Now, I get that what you're
20 saying, you've been around a long time. You just -- you
21 just -- you have a hunch, something ain't right, then
22 you come up around the curve and up, and you could see
23 the equipment on, you know, on the main two there, and
24 you was on three, right, kept looking, and then when
25 you seen it was something in your way --

1 MR. HUNTER: Yes.

2 MR. GEE: -- did you ask yourself, how in
3 the world did that get there? What was going on?
4 What's the mess up here?

5 MR. HUNTER: Well, John told me what I said
6 after the fact.

7 MR. GEE: Right.

8 MR. HUNTER: But no, I didn't think about
9 that, at the time. All I thought about was just
10 getting that train into emergency, and I -- I know I
11 didn't have a lot of time.

12 MR. GEE: I know.

13 MR. HUNTER: You know what I mean? Like, I
14 could tell that I didn't have a lot of time with the
15 speed I was doing, and it wasn't really much of a
16 thought process at that time, you know what I mean?
17 There wasn't really much time to process much, as far
18 as that.

19 Like I said it was just more, training kicks
20 in and you know, and your instincts kicked in and you
21 just kind of react to the situation, rather than --
22 really not much of a thought process from what I -- you
23 know?

24 MR. GEE: Right, right. Okay, thank you,
25 AJ.

1 MR. HUNTER: Okay.

2 MR. FRIGO: Ryan Frigo. AJ, I just have just
3 a few clarifying questions for you.

4 Do you recall anything specific in the
5 safety briefing before you left PAT, related to any
6 bulletins or general orders that discussed any work
7 that you might encounter or any work crews that you
8 might encounter on your run down?

9 MR. HUNTER: No, we had no Form D's. I know
10 they been doing the work down south. You know, with
11 the track vehicles, you know, the under-cutters and all
12 that stuff. So, but the weekends, they don't work.

13 You know, typically we'll get a Form D for
14 that. So, nothing other than -- you know, we had no
15 Form D's and no, you know, nothing specific in our
16 paperwork or anything, where anybody was working. We
17 typically don't know. You know, that's -- we typically
18 don't know what tracks are out of service until we come
19 up to them and stuff like that. So, it's not listed in
20 our paperwork anywhere.

21 MR. FRIGO: Okay, thank you, and when you
22 were at 30th Street, do you recall any conversations
23 over the radio between the conductor and the
24 dispatcher, prior to departing?

25 MR. HUNTER: No. No, I don't recall. No, I

1 don't recall them talking. Nothing that I remember,
2 maybe because I stepped out of the locomotive to check
3 my, you know, my (inaudible) at Phillie, I stepped out
4 of the locomotive and came back in. You know, I don't
5 know if anything happened in between that, but I don't
6 recall anything --

7 MR. FRIGO: Okay.

8 MR. HUNTER: -- as far as conversation
9 between them and the dispatcher.

10 MR. FRIGO: Okay, and after leaving 30th
11 Street, again, you mentioned before that when you're
12 running, you know, you're listened to the radio, but
13 you're more tuned into your job, and when you hear your
14 train number, you tune in.

15 But do you recall any chatter or anything
16 related to what you normally hear from a work gang or a
17 work crew?

18 MR. HUNTER: No, it was quiet. I believe I'm
19 the first train down, so it's -- for us -- for me,
20 that's typically a nice run. You know, on the weekends
21 there is no -- no -- there's very little radio chatter.
22 So, I don't remember anybody, any talk on the radio,
23 pretty much the whole way.

24 You know what I mean? Like during rush hour
25 in the week, you know, there is typically a lot of

1 radio chatter, but on the weekends, it's usually quiet.
2 You know, I don't remember anything on the radio after
3 I left, after I left Philadelphia.

4 MR. FRIGO: Okay, AJ, and just to follow up
5 on Jon's question about what you remember in your field
6 of vision, from that morning.

7 Do you recall seeing the whistle board or a
8 watchman or anything in place?

9 MR. HUNTER: No.

10 MR. FRIGO: Okay.

11 MR. HUNTER: No, I don't think there was a
12 whistle board or a watchman out there. I don't
13 remember. There was no watchman. I know that. I
14 don't recall if there was a whistle board before.

15 MR. FRIGO: Okay.

16 MR. HUNTER: I don't think there was.

17 MR. FRIGO: I don't have anything further.

18 MR. JENNER: Great, thank you. This is
19 Steve Jenner again.

20 Nothing further in terms of that day, but
21 what I'd like to do, just get a little bit about your
22 background and if you can just walk us through your --
23 when you start -- first started working in the industry
24 and take us up to this position.

25 MR. HUNTER: Okay, I started with New Jersey

1 Transit March 10th, 1999. Hired off the street as a
2 locomotive engineer. I hadn't been in the industry
3 before that.

4 Originally, I had put in for assistant
5 conductor program, but when they -- my resume, I have a
6 military background. I had six years in the Navy. So,
7 when they called me for the interview, human resources
8 said that I might be more suited as a -- you know, with
9 my background in the military and then things that I
10 did there, that to be an engineer. I asked her which
11 paid more and she said engineer. I said, "Okay, I'll
12 take that one."

13 So, you know, that's really how I got hired
14 as an engineer. Worked -- I worked the extra board for
15 New Jersey Transit for about seven years, primarily on
16 the coast line. But we -- you know, I was Newark
17 division guy, so, I covered Atlantic City, primarily, I
18 was on the Long Branch extra list for about six years.

19 So, I worked the coast line, you know,
20 Raritan Valley line, Atlantic City line, qualified New
21 York to Philadelphia on the corridor.

22 Worked in Kearney quite a bit, in the yard
23 at Kearney, BMMC. Can't remember, I think it was late
24 2007, Jim, that I was hired as a road foreman.
25 Something in there. I think it was 2007 to 2010, I was

1 a road foreman.

2 MR. JENNER: Still with New Jersey Transit?

3 MR. HUNTER: Still with New Jersey Transit.

4 MR. JENNER: Okay.

5 MR. HUNTER: Working -- I worked -- started
6 working in Newark. Then I went down to the -- like, I
7 was a road foreman on the coast line for about a year
8 and a half, out of Long Branch.

9 Then I was up in the -- got assigned to the
10 TOC in New York, only lasted about nine months doing
11 that, before that beat me up and I went back to running
12 trains.

13 MR. JENNER: When was that?

14 MR. HUNTER: In 2010, I believe. Sometime.
15 Sometime in the spring of 2010, May or June. Somewhere
16 in there.

17 MR. JENNER: Okay.

18 MR. HUNTER: Spent the next few years
19 running trains, the coast line and New York, had
20 assignments off the coast line and out of New York.

21 Then just started coming -- I tried to come
22 over here a couple times. You know, I was looking to
23 make moves. I was looking all over the place, but I
24 ended up -- I interviewed with Jon for an instructor's
25 position and interviewed Mr. CALAJEZEE {phonetic} for a

1 road foreman position with Amtrak.

2 That didn't work out. So, I decided, you
3 know, the next time a locomotive engineers class came
4 up, that's when I put in for that and started down in
5 Wilmington with Amtrak, May 5th of 2014.

6 MR. JENNER: Okay.

7 MR. HUNTER: And then just qualified down,
8 qualified everything, said I was a student engineer,
9 been promoted. So, I was a student engineer for about
10 13 months, and including Wilmington, you know, all
11 together it was between three months school and
12 qualifying and running trains was about a year. So, I
13 got promoted in June of 2015. Then I've been on the
14 extra list since.

15 MR. JENNER: And you've been running in this
16 territory since?

17 MR. HUNTER: Yes.

18 MR. JENNER: Okay, and you are --

19 MR. HUNTER: I think I got out of -- I think
20 I -- I finished qualifying some time in like October of
21 2014, and started train handling and running trains in
22 like around October 2014, with other engineers.

23 MR. JENNER: Right, and the first time that
24 you were qualified in New Jersey Transit was when?

25 MR. HUNTER: That program is a little

1 longer. I started in -- I think I got promoted some
2 time --

3 INTERVIEWER: Year and a half.

4 MR. HUNTER: Yes, well, it was -- at that
5 time, it was 15 months to the -- they were short
6 people, so it was like 15 months to the day, I think it
7 was like June of 2000.

8 MR. JENNER: Okay.

9 MR. HUNTER: Somewhere in there that I was
10 promoted.

11 MR. JENNER: Right, okay.

12 MR. HUNTER: Like, after running again. I
13 think that -- the transit program is about a seven
14 month classroom program with a month of (inaudible) in
15 between.

16 MR. JENNER: Okay.

17 MR. HUNTER: And then same thing with
18 Amtrak, you go out and qualify the lines and run each
19 line with another engineer. So, I guess that -- you
20 know, whatever, that lasted nine or ten months, or
21 whatever that was.

22 MR. JENNER: Okay, great, and did all that
23 go smoothly for you, all the Amtrak training and
24 testing --

25 MR. HUNTER: Yes.

1 MR. JENNER: -- and things like that?

2 MR. HUNTER: Yes, I haven't had any
3 problems.

4 MR. JENNER: Great.

5 MR. HUNTER: Never had any -- I think I
6 messed up one test when I was qualifying, but that was
7 my fault because I was studying the wrong -- I wrote
8 everything out. I write everything out and when I --
9 you know, this time with Amtrak, you know, it's 15
10 years later, I'm a little bit older.

11 So, I write everything out and study it, you
12 know, I was studying it that way. I think I failed one
13 test, but then got 100 on it, the next time I went back
14 and took it. But that was really the only blip in my
15 training here.

16 Even with New Jersey Transit, you know, the
17 classroom part is a little bit longer, but you know, as
18 far as running trains, I kind of picked it up pretty
19 quickly, you know.

20 MR. JENNER: Okay, and so you're --

21 MR. HUNTER: I've had some good instructors
22 along the way.

23 MR. JENNER: Right.

24 MR. HUNTER: I learned a lot from a lot of
25 the guys who -- lot of '68 and '69 men, you know what I

1 mean? A lot of experience and so, that's -- had some
2 good people along the way.

3 MR. JENNER: Good, good to hear. Thank you.
4 Okay, changing pace a little bit.

5 Sometimes we have medical officer here who
6 will ask you those questions. She's not. So, I'm going
7 to ask you those. I hope that's okay.

8 MR. HUNTER: Yes.

9 MR. JENNER: Before the accident, you know,
10 how was your overall health?

11 MR. HUNTER: I'm usually in pretty good
12 shape. Right now, I'm probably in the worst shape that
13 I've been in, in a long time.

14 MR. JENNER: We all are.

15 MR. HUNTER: Yes. I try to keep myself in
16 pretty good shape.

17 MR. JENNER: Okay.

18 MR. HUNTER: You know, I smoke, but you
19 know, that's usually at a minimum.

20 MR. JENNER: Okay.

21 MR. HUNTER: You know, as far as exercise
22 and all that stuff, haven't had a whole lot of time to
23 be doing that, but fairly decent health.

24 MR. JENNER: Okay.

25 MR. HUNTER: You've know, I've had some

1 blood pressure issues in the past, but I guess that's
2 just representative of my age, at this time, and you
3 know, just normal stuff, you know.

4 MR. JENNER: Any chronic conditions? You
5 know, high blood pressure or diabetes or anything like
6 that?

7 MR. HUNTER: Yes, no, just like the last
8 couple years that I've gone to my personal doctors, as
9 far as that goes with my blood pressure. He wanted to
10 put me on blood pressure medication and I talked him
11 out of it. I told him I was going to exercise and get
12 my diet right, and that really didn't work out all that
13 well, but you know, he wanted to put me on medication
14 because I was border line hypertension.

15 MR. JENNER: Okay.

16 MR. HUNTER: You know, just normal stuff, I
17 think with age and everything, but you know, like I
18 said, I talked him out of that and I'm going to see
19 them tomorrow, and I think that's exactly what's going
20 to happen.

21 MR. JENNER: Right.

22 MR. HUNTER: But other than that, I'm in
23 fairly good health. You know, I ride bikes. I surf.
24 I'm a pretty active person, so I try to stay in shape
25 for all that.

1 MR. JENNER: Okay, I see you're wearing
2 glasses. Do you wear those full time for reading and
3 for distance?

4 MR. HUNTER: Yes, these are progressive.

5 MR. JENNER: Right. Were you wearing them
6 when you were operating the train?

7 MR. HUNTER: Yes.

8 MR. JENNER: Okay, your hearing, is that
9 normal?

10 MR. HUNTER: Yes.

11 MR. JENNER: Any restrictions operating the
12 train due to hearing or --

13 MR. HUNTER: No.

14 MR. JENNER: -- vision or anything else?

15 MR. HUNTER: No, nothing.

16 MR. JENNER: Okay, I think Mr. Gee will ask
17 you more detailed questions about your work, about your
18 rest patterns. But how is your sleep overall? Do you
19 have any sleep disorders?

20 MR. HUNTER: No.

21 MR. JENNER: Insomnia?

22 MR. HUNTER: No.

23 MR. JENNER: Apnea?

24 MR. HUNTER: No, nothing like that.

25 MR. JENNER: Okay.

1 MR. HUNTER: Lack of every once in a while,
2 but that's -- you know, I think that's a product of
3 working the extra list.

4 MR. JENNER: Yes.

5 MR. HUNTER: So, but yes, nothing medically,
6 you know, sleep-wise.

7 MR. JENNER: Okay, good, I appreciate your
8 input there.

9 With that said, we'll go around a second
10 time for any follow up.

11 MR. HILL: Don Hill, BLET Safety Task Force.
12 No additional questions.

13 MR. JENNER: Okay.

14 INTERVIEWER: No questions.

15 MR. HINES: Jon Hines, I don't have any
16 questions.

17 MR. WHITE: Gary White, FRA. No further
18 questions.

19 MR. GEE: Jim Gee, FRA. Yes, I just have a
20 couple here.

21 AJ, you were in at 5:25 that morning. What
22 time did you mark off that day? Do you remember?

23 MR. HUNTER: I was off duty at 6:50
24 Saturday.

25 MR. GEE: Okay.

1 MR. HUNTER: In that range.

2 MR. GEE: Okay.

3 MR. HUNTER: P.M.

4 MR. GEE: All right, your last certification
5 date, you know, when you were -- your last date when
6 you went in for a re-cert?

7 MR. HUNTER: January.

8 MR. GEE: Of this year?

9 MR. HUNTER: Yes.

10 MR. GEE: Okay.

11 MR. HUNTER: Yes, I was in the first class
12 that they ran in New York. I can't remember the exact
13 date. January 19th, something. First couple weeks in
14 January I had my re-cert.

15 MR. GEE: And the last one, AJ, Mr. Jenner
16 asked you about your vision, but your -- your glasses
17 and your hearing.

18 With your color test, did you take care of
19 there in the office or did you get a road test or just
20 the normal way?

21 MR. HUNTER: Normal way. Yes. I passed. I
22 haven't been to my physical. My birthday is in July,
23 so I haven't gotten my physical yet this year. My last
24 --

25 MR. GEE: Eye test?

1 MR. HUNTER: -- eye test and physical test
2 was before -- I had to get it before -- May of last
3 year. Had to go in before I got promoted.

4 MR. GEE: Okay, thank you. Thank you very
5 much.

6 MR. JENNER: Do you have -- are you going to
7 go through your FAST thing or do you want me to do
8 that? The work rest?

9 MR. GEE: Well, I asked him -- well, do you
10 -- yes, go ahead.

11 MR. JENNER: Okay, well, first of all.

12 MR. FRIGO: Ryan Frigo. I don't have any
13 further questions.

14 MR. JENNER: Okay, and again, what we'd like
15 to do is just get a sense of your on duty times and
16 your off duty activities on the few days leading up to
17 --

18 MR. HUNTER: Okay.

19 MR. JENNER: -- the accident. So, as best
20 you can, sir, can you remind me of what time you went
21 on duty on Sunday? It was early.

22 MR. HUNTER: Five-twenty-five a.m.

23 MR. JENNER: Right, okay, and Saturday, did
24 you say that you worked on Saturday?

25 MR. HUNTER: Yes, I did work Saturday. I

1 mistaken, I thought I had run that train. I was on duty
2 Saturday at 9:20, I believe.

3 MR. JENNER: Okay, 9:20 in the morning?

4 MR. HUNTER: Yes, I ran -- that was the day
5 I did two, so I ran 21 -- 2207, 2220 on Saturday.

6 MR. JENNER: Okay, so --

7 MR. HUNTER: Off duty, I think I was off
8 duty at 7:10 roughly.

9 MR. JENNER: Okay, so, off duty at 7:10.
10 So, after you went off duty, what did you do? Where
11 did you go off duty?

12 MR. HUNTER: I went off duty in New York.

13 MR. JENNER: Okay.

14 MR. HUNTER: Called the crew caller, told me
15 I was first on the board. Went home and went to sleep.

16 MR. JENNER: Okay, how long does it take you
17 to get home?

18 MR. HUNTER: About an hour and a half. I
19 got home roughly 8:30 Saturday night.

20 MR. JENNER: Okay, did you have dinner or
21 relax or anything?

22 MR. HUNTER: Yes, that's about all I did. I
23 just had a quick bite to eat and --

24 MR. JENNER: Okay, and what time did you go
25 to bed?

1 MR. HUNTER: I was probably in bed by 9:30.

2 MR. JENNER: And you fall asleep how long
3 after you're --

4 MR. HUNTER: I was out, yes.

5 MR. JENNER: Okay.

6 MR. HUNTER: The previous night before that,
7 I was off -- I didn't go off duty until midnight. I
8 had kind of a tough week.

9 MR. JENNER: Okay, so, you went to sleep a
10 little after 9:30. What time did you wake up?

11 MR. HUNTER: I think I had the alarm set for
12 3:50.

13 MR. JENNER: Okay.

14 MR. HUNTER: Because I drive in. That job,
15 the assignment that I was working that day, they told
16 me the assignment I was working the night before,
17 wasn't rested for anything.

18 So, like that job, I can -- since I know I
19 was driving in, I just set my alarm for when I have to
20 go. I got called at -- right after for 2:00 a.m. for
21 the job.

22 MR. JENNER: You got a wake up call at 2:00
23 a.m.?

24 MR. HUNTER: Crew dispatcher.

25 MR. JENNER: Okay.

1 MR. HUNTER: Calling me out for the job.
2 You know, I get a three hour call, typically a three
3 hour call to come in.

4 MR. JENNER: Okay.

5 MR. HUNTER: So, I got called a little bit
6 after 2:00 a.m. Already had my alarm set, because
7 that's actually the first job of the morning on the
8 weekends. So, had my alarm set, got up and drove into
9 New York.

10 MR. JENNER: Okay, how did you feel at the
11 beginning of your shift? Did you feel alert? Did you
12 feel tired? What were you?

13 MR. HUNTER: I was tired.

14 MR. JENNER: Okay.

15 MR. HUNTER: Nothing out of the ordinary.

16 MR. JENNER: Okay.

17 MR. HUNTER: You know, if you're getting up
18 at 3:30 in the morning, or whatever it is.

19 MR. JENNER: Right, and at the start of your
20 shift, how did you feel by then?

21 MR. HUNTER: I felt fine.

22 MR. JENNER: Okay.

23 MR. HUNTER: You know, again, I was --
24 nothing out of the ordinary. I wasn't overly tired, as
25 far as -- you know, that's what you want to hear. I

1 wasn't like --

2 MR. JENNER: No, I'm getting at --

3 MR. HUNTER: Yes, yes, yes, yes, no, no, no,
4 I wasn't like -- I wasn't overly tired, you know. Just
5 normal, you know.

6 MR. JENNER: Okay, and if I could back up,
7 did you work Friday?

8 MR. HUNTER: Yes, I worked four to midnight
9 on Friday. Yard job.

10 MR. JENNER: Four p.m.

11 MR. HUNTER: Three-fifty-nine to MR. FRIGO:
12 59 on Friday, I worked an extra yard job.

13 MR. JENNER: Okay, and after midnight, you
14 drove home and went to bed?

15 MR. HUNTER: Yes.

16 MR. JENNER: Okay.

17 MR. HUNTER: Again, this last week is -- you
18 know, with Easter being the week before, it's typically
19 pretty busy week for us on the railroad because
20 everyone's kids are in school, so it's -- you know, I
21 knew that week, I'm going to be working a lot. So, I
22 was anticipating working all that week anyway.

23 MR. JENNER: Okay, so Saturday your shift
24 started at 9:20 a.m.?

25 MR. HUNTER: A.M.

1 MR. JENNER: And do you have any idea what
2 time you --

3 MR. HUNTER: I got home -- what time did I
4 get home? I got home about 1:00 a.m.

5 MR. JENNER: Okay.

6 MR. HUNTER: I guess.

7 MR. JENNER: Right.

8 MR. HUNTER: Saturday morning.

9 MR. JENNER: What time would you have gotten
10 up on Saturday morning, if your shift started at 9:20
11 a.m.?

12 MR. HUNTER: Actually, on the weekends, like
13 with -- I'm kind of used to this. Again, I've been
14 doing this for a while. So, I kind of have my routine,
15 as far as like -- like, on the weekends, I know I got
16 to get up and go, because train schedules, you know,
17 there's trains, blocks of trains every hour going into
18 New York.

19 So, for me to be on time, like on the
20 weekend, I usually -- I'm usually up at call time.
21 When they call me, I get up and get ready for work.

22 MR. JENNER: Okay.

23 MR. HUNTER: Check the train -- check the
24 train schedules, see exactly -- you know, when they
25 give me my duty time --

1 MR. JENNER: Right.

2 MR. HUNTER: -- I'll get up and --

3 MR. JENNER: So, like a three hour call
4 time?

5 MR. HUNTER: I get a three hour, yes, I get
6 a three hour call time, on those days, like especially
7 on the weekends, when there is not a lot of trains, I
8 just typically get up, have a quick cup of coffee,
9 check the train schedules, see exactly when -- you
10 know, see exactly what trains you got to catch, you
11 know, because on the weekend you're either 40 minutes
12 early or you're 20 minutes late.

13 So, you got to -- you know, just because of
14 the lack of trains, so, yes, I just -- that's usually
15 what I just do, and then I head in.

16 MR. JENNER: Okay, thanks for working
17 through that. Anymore questions before I wrap up?

18 MR. GEE: I just have one quick question.

19 MR. JENNER: Mr. Gee.

20 MR. GEE: Just to confirm again, when were
21 you promoted and you made your first big trip for
22 Amtrak?

23 MR. HUNTER: I can look here, but I know it
24 was -- when was this?

25 MR. GEE: Just about?

1 MR. HUNTER: June 19th.

2 MR. GEE: Okay.

3 MR. HUNTER: I was promoted and got my cert
4 card and I went right out that day.

5 MR. GEE: Okay, all right.

6 MR. HUNTER: Got promoted. I got promoted
7 in a.m. and I was working the 6:15 that night.

8 MR. GEE: Okay, and then you work mostly the
9 extra board, right?

10 MR. HUNTER: Yes, I've been on the extra
11 board since I got promoted.

12 MR. GEE: Okay, were you working when they
13 had the change in assignments and they moved them back?
14 A lot of the regulars -- or was there any -- did you
15 notice any kind of a flow with your extra board, like,
16 you know, when you work a lot of your -- it's either
17 feast or famine on the extra board.

18 MR. HUNTER: Right, well coming into this
19 week, you know, like I said, the week of Easter, it's
20 typically a pretty busy week for us, but the weeks --
21 you know, couple weeks leading up to that, as in --
22 hasn't -- I had laid in a few days each week, couple
23 days each week, so it wasn't really -- you get that
24 lull, like in the spring and then usually after Easter
25 week, it usually picks up.

1 But the weeks coming into this, this one
2 were average to slow.

3 MR. GEE: Okay, thank you. That's all I
4 have.

5 MR. JENNER: Okay. Anything else? Nothing
6 else? Okay, thank you very much for being here, and
7 your story.

8 But what I'd like to do is end up by saying,
9 I'm sure you've given this incident quite a bit of
10 thought.

11 So, is there anything we can learn from
12 this, in terms of, is there any additional type of
13 training or equipment or anything, that we can do,
14 introduce, to either help prevent this type of incident
15 from happening, or if it does happen, to make the
16 response, you know, more effective?

17 MR. HUNTER: I really don't know. But I --
18 again, I was in management. I knew there was a break
19 down somewhere in communication. I know that this guy
20 is not suppose to be on the track. Where that is,
21 that's -- I mean, the procedures that are now in place,
22 I think are fairly decent. I don't know where you
23 would be able to improve on them, you know, but
24 typically when I was a road foreman, I've done
25 investigations, you know, and I've done derailments --

1 you know, like in the yard and stuff like that, I've
2 done fatalities, I've responded to all these things.

3 So, what I've learned over the years, and
4 then like I said before, if something happened, I
5 usually try to learn from it. Like I'll talk to the
6 guy or I'll talk to people and I want to see what
7 happened.

8 MR. JENNER: Okay.

9 MR. HUNTER: It's not -- what I've learned
10 in my experience, it's not one thing that's going to --
11 that makes these things happen. It's usually a series
12 of three or four things that break down or not break
13 down, but happen. It's a series of events. It's not
14 one event, it's not one event that makes this happen.
15 It's a series -- it's a progression or series of events
16 that these things occur.

17 You know, you got human beings involved, you
18 know, there is all -- there is a lot of mis-
19 communication and you know, typically that's what it
20 is. It's just -- and I really don't -- I'd been
21 thinking about it, and I really don't know like -- like
22 I said, the procedures that are in place, there is a
23 number of procedures to keep these guys safe. There is
24 a number of procedures to keep me safe.

25 You know, I'm sitting there and I know as

1 I'm going down the track, something is not right, you
2 know, because I have my clear, somebody -- something
3 happened somewhere, and like I said, it -- my
4 experience, it's not one thing that does this. You
5 know, it's a series of events, series of mis-
6 communications or what have you, however you want to
7 put it, that allow these things to happen, you know?

8 MR. JENNER: Okay.

9 MR. HUNTER: So, I mean, and I really don't
10 know how you would fix this. Do you know what I mean?
11 If there is any way to prevent something like this from
12 happening, procedures and stuff that we have in place
13 now are -- you know, we always say the safety rules are
14 written in blood anyway, but and there is so many of
15 these procedures are in place already, I don't know
16 where you could add or take away to improve upon them.
17 I really don't. But you know, like I said, it's
18 typically more than one thing that allows these things
19 to happen. So.

20 MR. JENNER: Right.

21 MR. HUNTER: You know, I don't know. I
22 couldn't give you a good answer to that, as far as, you
23 know, as that goes. So.

24 MR. JENNER: Fair enough. I appreciate your
25 insight and your perspective on that.

1 With nothing else, it's 11:54 and we'll
2 finish up and again, thank you very much for being
3 here.

4 MR. HUNTER: You're welcome.

5 (Whereupon, at 11:54 a.m., the interview in
6 the above-entitled matter was concluded.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

MATTER: Accident Involving Amtrak Train #89 and a
Backhoe
NTSB Accident No. DCA16FR007
Interview of: Alexander J. Hunter

DATE: 04-05-16

I hereby certify that the attached transcription of page 1 to 58 inclusive are to the best of my professional ability a true, accurate, and complete record of the above referenced proceedings as contained on the provided audio recording; further that I am neither counsel for, nor related to, nor employed by any of the parties to this action in which this proceeding has taken place; and further that I am not financially nor otherwise interested in the outcome of the action.



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