

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

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CSX COLLISION *

MINERAL SPRINGS, NORTH CAROLINA * Docket No.: DCA-11-FR-004

MAY 24, 2011 *

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Interview of: DONNIELLE MASTON

Hampton Inn
Greenwood, South Carolina

Friday,
May 27, 2011

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice.

BEFORE: STEPHEN JENNER
Accident Investigator

APPEARANCES:

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JOHN WHITAKER, General Chairman
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ALSO PRESENT:

TANIKA MASTON

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I N T E R V I E W

1
2 MR. JENNER: Good afternoon. My name is Stephen Jenner.
3 I am an investigator with the National Transportation Safety Board
4 out of Washington, D.C. We are investigating the May 24th, 2011
5 train accident involving two CSX trains in Mineral Springs, North
6 Carolina. Today is May 27th, 2011. We are currently in
7 Greenwood, South Carolina, at the Hampton Inn Hotel. What I'd
8 like to do is first go around the room and have everyone introduce
9 themselves. If you would state name and spelling, and your
10 position, and we'll start to my left.

11 MR. JACKSON: Kimble Jackson, BLET. K-i-m-b-l-e, J-a-c-
12 k-s-o-n.

13 MR. BEATON: Bob Eaton, NTSB out of Washington, D.C. My
14 last name is spelled B-e-a-t-o-n.

15 MR. CORCORAN: Joseph Corcoran, Federal Railroad
16 Administration, Raleigh, North Carolina. Last name C-o-r-c-o-r-a-
17 n.

18 MR. HERNDON: Jim Herndon, United Transportation Union,
19 H-e-r-n-d-o-n.

20 MR. SETSER: Bill Setser, Assistant Division Manager,
21 CSX, Florence, South Carolina, S-e-t-s-e-r.

22 MR. WHITAKER: John Whitaker. I'm General Chairman of
23 UTU, Jacksonville, Florida. Whitaker, W-h-i-t-a-k-e-r.

24 MR. JENNER: Okay.

25 MR. MASTON: My name is Donnielle Maston; I'm a

1 conductor out of Greenwood. Last name is M-a-s-t-o-n, Maston.

2 MR. JENNER: And the spelling of your first name,
3 please?

4 MR. MASTON: D-o-n-n-i-e-l-l-e.

5 MR. JENNER: Okay. We have one more?

6 MS. MASTON: My name is Tanika Maston. I'm the wife of
7 Donnielle Maston. And mine is T-a-n-i-k-a, M-a-s-t-o-n.

8 MR. JENNER: Great. Thank you. Mr. Maston, first of
9 all, thank you for being here. And we appreciate your being here
10 and helping us out.

11 INTERVIEW OF DONNIELLE MASTON

12 BY MR. JENNER:

13 Q. We'll keep things simple, and what we'd like to do is --
14 you know, we're trying to put together the pieces of this event,
15 and we think you can help us out, so -- but I'll throw it in your
16 direction and just have you talk us through your day.

17 And if you want to -- if you could just start about when
18 you were notified that you'd be working this day, and I guess you
19 arrived at the terminal, and if you could just walk us through
20 your first notification?

21 A. Okay. It was about (indiscernible)30 I got to work. I
22 came in and got my paperwork. We waited for about a hour before
23 we was taken to the train. When we got to the train, two crew
24 members -- they're out of Greenwood also, Train Q618. And
25 apparently, they pulled on into the yard, and was in 15 track. We

1 loaded up our luggage. They got off. We got permission to come
2 out of our track to leave. They gave us permission
3 (indiscernible) the Q194.

4 We proceeded on north. We met a train oncoming and we
5 had stoplight McDowell. We waited there for a while, while they
6 cleared. Well, they was clear. We was just waiting for the
7 signal to leave. We went on to Catawba. We waited there for a
8 while as the train was leaving. They was already sitting at the
9 signal, as I remember correctly.

10 After that we was following the 614 -- Q6 -- 616, I'm
11 sorry. And we was following on approach probably from about Van
12 Wyck on through, I want to say. And once we got there to around
13 Mineral Springs, we had a stop signal, so we stopped. Ahead of us
14 was Q616 and we could see their mark. As we proceeded -- well,
15 all the other trains, they gave us positive of ID that our rear-
16 end EOT was working. I told them their marker looked good also.
17 We waited there for about 15 minutes or so.

18 My engineer, he had stepped down to use the bathroom,
19 and as he sat down and we got our signal clear, before he could
20 even pull for us to leave, we was rear-ended. At the time we
21 really didn't know what had happened, but I was knocked pretty
22 much completely out of the chair. He looked back. He didn't see
23 nothing on his side. And as I looked back, saw nothing but fire,
24 flames as high as I could remember.

25 So we hurriedly got off the engine and, well, proceeded

1 on up the track so we could call for 911 and call the dispatcher
2 to tell them that something happened. We didn't know exactly
3 what. He called the dispatcher. I called 911. 911 kept me on
4 the telephone until the fire department got there. He asked me
5 did we have any hazard material. At one time I had to calm down,
6 so he probably I thought I was retarded because I couldn't even
7 think straight. I was -- you know, so hysterical.

8 About time the fire department came. They went on back.
9 He asked me how many cars I had, and I told him I had 9 cars, 2
10 engines. He asked me was any hazmat; I told him no hazmat. We
11 had an empty methanol tank that was bad. So we went on back with
12 the fire department, and he said you only had 9 cars? I said,
13 yes, sir, only 9 cars. He said, well, I see some containers back
14 there look like 18 -- that would come off a 18-wheeler. And by
15 that time my engineer, Corey, said, oh, man, I hope that's not
16 194. And by the time we shined our light down through there, you
17 saw the engine turned over and you saw the containers every which
18 way, I mean on fire, bad, everywhere, like a big explosion.

19 And that was pretty much it, I would think.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. I mean, once we stopped, I called stop, told them we was
22 stopped, you know at the milepost or whatever. That's about it.

23 Q. Okay. I'm going to go back and have you fill in some
24 details.

25 A. Okay.

1 Q. What time did you get called to go to work?

2 A. Oh, we got called to go to work at -- it was 8:30 for
3 10:30. Well, actually, she called me before 8:30, but then she
4 changed it and said we was going to be on duty at 8:30 for 10:30.
5 Told me to show up.

6 Q. But it turns out that you were on --

7 A. On duty at --

8 Q. -- duty for 10:30?

9 A. Yes, sir.

10 Q. Okay. Are you a extra board employee?

11 A. Extra board.

12 Q. Okay. And you were operating as a conductor?

13 A. Yes, I was.

14 Q. Okay. When you arrived at the terminal, what is your --
15 what's the procedure? What do you do and who do you talk to and
16 who did you talk to?

17 A. Procedure is normally I come, I gather all the
18 paperwork. Our work order wasn't quite ready, so the yardmaster
19 brought it to us a little while later. He told us that the train
20 was in the yard waiting for us and for us to get our ride. We got
21 in the carryall. They took us down to the train. After we did
22 all our job briefing and everything, we got together and we --
23 after the yardmaster told us we had permission to leave. He said
24 we had a signal and he said take whatever route is clear, whatever
25 wayline.

1 Q. Okay. And when did you meet your engineer? When did
2 you meet him that evening?

3 A. We met him as -- we met him right there at the same
4 time.

5 Q. You arrived about the same time?

6 A. Yes, sir.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. Um-hum.

9 Q. And what is his name?

10 A. His name is Corey Bell.

11 Q. You mentioned you knew -- you mentioned in your story
12 about the 194.

13 A. Yes, sir.

14 Q. Did you talk to them at any point that evening?

15 A. Well, we had all talked before -- prior to leaving. I
16 mean, we was -- after we got through with all our job briefing we
17 all talked and was laughing and, you know, they was just telling
18 us about our day, having a pretty good time.

19 Q. You knew both crew members --

20 A. Yes, sir.

21 Q. -- on that?

22 A. Both of them.

23 Q. How well did you know them?

24 A. I wasn't quite as close to the conductor as I was the
25 engineer, but we was all friends.

1 Q. Yeah.

2 A. So, I mean, we still talked on a regular basis.

3 Q. Had you ever worked with them --

4 A. Yes, sir.

5 Q. -- before, the engineer?

6 A. Yes, sir.

7 Q. And about how long?

8 A. I worked with the engineer quite a bit even, you know,
9 prior to work. We, you know, had conversations even outside of
10 the work area, so we was pretty close.

11 Q. You had first met at CSX, the engineer?

12 A. Yes, sir.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. At CSX.

15 Q. How many times do you think the two of you had worked
16 together?

17 A. Oh, man.

18 Q. Just an estimate.

19 A. Maybe 15 times or better.

20 Q. Fifteen?

21 A. Yes, sir.

22 Q. Okay. I don't know anything about him, but can you tell
23 him about him? What kind of engineer was he?

24 A. He was a excellent engineer. I mean, he was -- each
25 time I worked with him, he was all up on his, you know, rules and

1 I never seen him doing anything, you know, wrong, you know, as far
2 as what he shouldn't be doing at least. He was real informative,
3 you know. He kept me up on everything and we worked together. I
4 mean, if I didn't know something, I could ask him. Or you know,
5 he would run something by me. And we was pretty much good as far
6 as job briefing and everything.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. So he didn't mind helping at all.

9 Q. That evening, did you -- as you mentioned, you're
10 friends. Did you talk about just friendly things or did you talk
11 about work or both?

12 A. Well, I mean, pretty much we talk about friendly things
13 as far as me and Corey. We did everything; you know as far as
14 what we needed for work, you know, so that we could leave. That's
15 basically it. I mean, all it was just going over our paperwork
16 and everything and --

17 Q. Right.

18 A. -- once it was time to get our job done, you know, we
19 went and got our stuff, on our way, and that's pretty much what
20 they done too.

21 Q. With this engineer, had you worked with him on the
22 accident territory, Monroe?

23 A. Yes, sir. Normally -- yeah, I have. I have. We caught
24 a lot of road switches, you know, between Greenwood and Monroe. I
25 have worked with him.

1 Q. And did you have -- how did those trips go?

2 A. They went fine.

3 Q. Okay. So no problems working --

4 A. No problems.

5 Q. -- working with him?

6 A. No, sir. I felt he was more than familiar with the
7 area.

8 Q. Right. And you talked a little to the conductor as
9 well?

10 A. Yes, sir.

11 Q. Of 194?

12 A. Um-hum.

13 Q. And how did they -- how did he seem to you? You don't
14 know him as well.

15 A. Uh-uh.

16 Q. Did either one of them have anything, express any
17 concerns that evening? How did they look in terms of their health
18 and fitness?

19 A. Oh, it was a normal, normal night.

20 Q. It looked like a normal night?

21 A. A normal night.

22 Q. They didn't mention anything, I'm worried about this, I
23 have concerns about --

24 A. No.

25 Q. -- that?

1 A. Uh-uh.

2 Q. When -- okay, now during your trip -- we'll get you on
3 the road, did you know when 194 was behind you? Their --

4 A. No.

5 Q. -- departure time?

6 A. I didn't. I didn't.

7 Q. At any time during the trip, did you hear radio
8 communications between you and 194?

9 A. Like I was telling, I think it was Mr. Setser, the
10 engine was very noisy. Our radio, the microphone was on the
11 engineer's side. I just had -- I didn't have -- normally on the
12 train we have the normal handset, you know that you can put up to
13 your hand. But on this one, I just had like a little, a little CB
14 like. And I heard different things, but really I didn't know if
15 he was ahead of us or behind of us because it was kind of staticy
16 and wasn't ever very clear.

17 Q. So you're hearing conversations --

18 A. Yes, sir.

19 Q. -- communications from other trains --

20 A. Yes, sir.

21 Q. -- but the quality is not good?

22 A. Yes, sir.

23 Q. Okay. So --

24 A. I mean it could have something to do with the distance,
25 you know, distance apart. Because once you get, you know, so many

1 feet or 100 feet away, you -- it's not going to be that very
2 clear.

3 Q. What's the rule about coming across signals and calling
4 them out? Is there a rule that requires you to do that?

5 A. Yes, sir. We have to call what type of signal it is,
6 our train number, engine number, what type of signal it is, and
7 what direction you're traveling.

8 Q. And who does that communication go to?

9 A. Well, it goes across to, I guess, whoever closest to
10 hear it.

11 Q. Okay. You're not calling to the dispatcher; you're just
12 broadcasting it --

13 A. Yes, sir.

14 Q. -- to what other trains are --

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. -- in the area? Okay. Did you hear other trains call
17 out signals that evening?

18 A. Yeah, other trains were calling signals.

19 Q. But because of your poor reception, could you tell which
20 trains were calling signals?

21 A. I heard a lot of the ones going south. Like when we was
22 passing by, we heard some of the southbound trains, you know,
23 that --

24 Q. Right.

25 A. -- signal radio.

1 Q. But anytime during the trip -- and, again, I apologize
2 for repeating this --

3 A. Well, once we was at Mineral Springs, we did hear the
4 616 call the signal, you know, that we heard them talking on the
5 radio for them to proceed on north ahead of us.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. Like I said, I really can't tell you about the 194
8 because really we was so shocked even when they, you know, they
9 hit us; we wouldn't have never thought they were that close to us.

10 Q. When you were stopped at -- what signal were you stopped
11 at?

12 A. That was at the Mineral Springs signal.

13 Q. Did you use the radio to broadcast your position?

14 A. To call the stop. Yes, sir, told them that we were
15 stopped at that signal.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. We was only there for about 15 minutes, so --

18 Q. At what point, if you were there 15 minutes, when did
19 you call that you were stopped there?

20 A. We was there. We was there once we stopped.

21 Q. (Indiscernible).

22 A. Yes, sir.

23 Q. Once you stopped, you --

24 A. Yes, sir.

25 Q. -- immediately -- okay. Tell me about visibility of

1 signals that evening.

2 A. Visibility, they was all clear. You could see. It
3 wasn't cloudy. Just a regular clear night there.

4 Q. Okay. Any problems seeing any signals that evening?

5 A. No.

6 Q. Did you come across any dark signals that evening?

7 A. No.

8 Q. Okay. Did you hear any detectors during your trip?

9 A. Yes, all the detectors were sounding. They worked.

10 Q. Do you know which trains they were --

11 A. I'm not really sure.

12 Q. -- you were hearing? Okay.

13 A. I'm not sure.

14 Q. But you heard no information from 194, either through
15 detectors or radio communication, as --

16 A. That's kind of really hard to say. I mean, it was
17 pretty much --

18 Q. Okay. Okay, I'd like to know a little more about when
19 you were sitting there and you felt an impact. Where were you at
20 that time?

21 A. I was in the chair sitting.

22 Q. Okay. And the engineer was the restroom area?

23 A. He had went to -- not at the time we got hit. He had
24 got back up in the seat.

25 Q. Oh, so he was --

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. -- sitting there as well?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. And what happened to you at impact?

5 A. At impact I was bounced out of the chair. I mean,
6 bounced out and -- well, I got contusions to the chest, so
7 apparently I had to hit my station in front of me. So I got
8 bounced up out of my chair, I mean, onto my feet.

9 Q. Yeah.

10 A. And by the time I actually was able to look back, you
11 just saw -- you didn't know what was going on. All you saw was
12 just fire everywhere.

13 Q. Okay. So what was the -- if you walk me through, how
14 did you see the fire?

15 A. I looked back out my back glass.

16 Q. Okay. So if you'd just walk me through with me some
17 detail about who made the call and when and what you did?

18 A. Well, I made the call to 911 after we got off the train.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. Corey, he called the dispatcher, and he was talking to
21 the dispatcher and I was talking to the fire department. Well,
22 911 and he was getting us in contact with the fire department.

23 Q. How long do you think it took the fire department to
24 arrive?

25 A. I would say they got there in about 45 minutes.

1 Q. Oh, that long?

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. By the time we got everything, you know squared away
5 with the 911. I mean, they was asking me questions and I was
6 telling, man, look, you got to come to this. He asked me where it
7 was at. I was trying to tell him the best description possible.
8 And you know, he kept me on the phone with him until someone from
9 the fire department got there.

10 Q. All right. Now, during this 45-minute period, what are
11 some of the things you were doing?

12 A. I was on the phone with the 911.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. Trying to answer all the questions he asked me. One of
15 his main concern was if we had any hazardous material. I told him
16 -- after I got myself together, I told him no, sir, we didn't have
17 anything hazardous. We just had the one empty methanol tank.

18 MR. BEATON: Just one point of clarification, Steve. Is
19 that 45 or 4 or 5 minutes?

20 MR. MASTON: Forty-five.

21 MR. BEATON: Forty-five minutes --

22 MR. MASTON: Yes, sir.

23 MR. BEATON: -- for the fire department to arrive --

24 MR. MASTON: Yes, sir.

25 MR. BEATON: -- on the scene?

1 MR. MASTON: The actual fire department. Now the -- I
2 don't know if he was like the chief of the fire department; he got
3 there but he was just, you know, in a regular vehicle.

4 MR. BEATON: Okay.

5 MR. MASTON: And then after that, shortly, later the
6 fire department got there.

7 MR. BEATON: Okay.

8 MR. MASTON: Yes, sir.

9 MR. BEATON: Thank you.

10 BY MR. JENNER:

11 Q. Okay. Did you -- before the fire department arrived,
12 did walk towards the point of impact to --

13 A. No, sir, we stayed --

14 Q. -- the back of the train?

15 A. Actually, 911 told us to stay there at the store across
16 the street, and once they got there and everything, then we went
17 back there towards the impact.

18 Q. Oh, so both of you walked over to the store?

19 A. Yes, sir.

20 Q. And what store was that?

21 A. It was -- I don't know what the name of it was, but it's
22 the only store right there.

23 MR. BEATON: Is that the Subway?

24 MR. MASTON: I'll tell the fire department is a little
25 ahead. I don't know what the name of the store was. Kangaroo

1 maybe. Kangaroo Express, I want to say maybe.

2 BY MR. JENNER:

3 Q. Okay. So did you -- you didn't walk back before the
4 fire department arrived?

5 A. No. No.

6 Q. Okay. How many times do you think -- I'm jumping back
7 now -- you know, approximately that you've operated over this
8 territory?

9 A. Quite a bit. Quite a bit. Quite a bit. Quite a bit.

10 Q. How do you --

11 A. Actually, I had just made -- I made a trip probably
12 about a week or so ago.

13 Q. Okay, is quite a bit 20, 50, 100, or just --

14 A. I'd say out of --

15 Q. I'm not holding you to any number.

16 A. -- out of 6 years there's been quite a few.

17 Q. Quite a few?

18 A. Yes, sir.

19 Q. Okay. Do you --

20 A. As far as an exact number count, I'm not sure. It's
21 been quite a few.

22 Q. Okay. How do you regard it as a territory operating?
23 Is this an easy, a difficult, somewhere in between?

24 A. It's not very difficult. It's not very difficult.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. It's the longest route that we have out of all. But as
2 far as hard, it's not very difficult.

3 Q. Okay. With the engineers that you've talked to, do you
4 get the impression of how they regard the territory? Do they have
5 to seem to concentrate more and fight the train more?

6 A. With all the rules and regulations that CSX have, I
7 think everybody pretty much stay up on their P's and Q's. Yeah.

8 Q. Okay.

9 MR. JENNER: All right, and I'm going to end the initial
10 questions right there are for me, and we're going to send it
11 around for some -- to see anyone has some follow-up questions.
12 You doing okay?

13 MR. MASTON: Yes, sir.

14 MR. JENNER: Okay. So just say who you are and fire
15 away.

16 MR. JACKSON: Okay. Kimble Jackson, Brotherhood of
17 Locomotive Engineers.

18 BY MR. JACKSON:

19 Q. Mr. Maston, I just want to clarify the radio. Did you
20 have a handset on your side?

21 A. Yes, sir.

22 Q. Okay. But your speaker wasn't very clear, right?

23 A. No.

24 Q. Okay. And most of what you were hearing was coming from
25 the engineer side, right?

1 A. Uh-hum.

2 Q. Okay. The other question is -- has to do with after
3 impact. You said you got of the engine right after impact?

4 A. Yes, sir.

5 Q. Because you didn't know what was going on, right?

6 A. Right. I mean --

7 Q. I'd have jumped off there too.

8 A. -- you see nothing but fire coming at you, you going get
9 off there too.

10 Q. Yeah. Hey, I don't blame you. I'd do the same thing.

11 MR. JACKSON: That's all I got right at this time.

12 BY MR. BEATON:

13 Q. Just a couple of real quick follow-up questions. Again,
14 my name is Bob Beaton from NTSB. Were you aware that the Q194 was
15 behind you?

16 A. I knew they was leaving out of the yard behind us, but
17 once they left I really know didn't the exact time they pulled
18 behind us.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. And as far as -- I mean, I knew they was behind us but
21 just not really.

22 Q. How long of a trip is it from the yard to Mineral
23 Springs?

24 A. We left there about 10:30. Our accident happened about
25 3:30, and we had been sitting on there about 15 minutes, so about

1 that time span.

2 Q. So that's 5 hours or so?

3 A. Yes, sir.

4 Q. And that -- and during the course of that 5 hours, Q194
5 was the only train that would have been behind you?

6 A. Behind us, right.

7 Q. Okay. And during that 5 hours did you -- were you aware
8 of any radio communications from Q194? Were they calling signals?

9 A. I'm not really aware. I'm not really aware.

10 Q. Was that because you were too far away, do you think
11 or --

12 A. That's what I would think.

13 Q. Okay. So your expectation was that they must have been
14 pretty far behind you?

15 A. They were pretty far behind us, yeah.

16 Q. Okay. Did -- were you surprised when you were hit that
17 it was Q194 that hit you?

18 A. Well, when I -- when we was hit, like I said, we didn't
19 know exactly what it was. We really didn't come to realization of
20 being what it was until we went back with the fire department and
21 we saw the engine's turned over and the cars all piled up. And,
22 you know, they was pulling out --

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. -- the conductor.

25 Q. When you think about it now, you were sitting there for

1 15 minutes --

2 A. Uh-hum.

3 Q. -- when Q194 hit you. So in that 15 minutes, Q94 [sic]
4 came up the track, and it would have passed a few signals. Do you
5 remember hearing any horns?

6 A. I wouldn't have heard the horn. Between our engine and
7 -- I wouldn't have heard the horn. Our engine running and it was
8 loud on the inside. Doors closed. I mean, we was on a widebody,
9 so they're pretty airtight as far as inside.

10 Q. Okay. Didn't have the windows down?

11 A. No, not that I -- uh-uh. I don't think so. I mean
12 that's kind of something that I really don't even remember if I
13 had them --

14 Q. You don't remember?

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. Was it a hot night that night?

17 A. It was -- it was all right. It was comfortable.

18 Q. Do you remember what you had on?

19 A. I had on some blue khakis and I don't know what kind of
20 shirt I had on.

21 Q. Short sleeve?

22 A. Short sleeve.

23 Q. So comfortable?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Comfortable weather? Okay. But you don't remember

1 hearing any horn or even at that private crossing coming up
2 into --

3 A. No, I wouldn't a heard it.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. I mean, I wouldn't heard it. I mean with our two
6 engines and nine cars, I wouldn't have heard it.

7 Q. Okay. Have you ever heard a train whistle from behind?

8 A. No, never from behind.

9 Q. Okay. Of course coming at you --

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. -- they're -- yeah, okay. In the radio communications,
12 while you were sitting there in those last 15 minutes as Q194 was
13 coming across those crossings and those signals, you still didn't
14 hear any radio traffic? Any --

15 A. I heard -- I heard, you know static up on the radio. I
16 mean you -- a lot of times it's very vague. I mean, unless you're
17 right there passing or so you normally hear it. Sometimes you
18 hear a DD going off, and once you hear the DD sometimes you can
19 barely -- you know, you can't even hear that that clear sometimes,
20 so --

21 Q. If a train is 5 miles away, I understand that. If a
22 train's 2 miles away and there's mountains, you're on the one side
23 of a mountain and they're other side, then I could understand
24 that.

25 A. Yes, sir.

1 Q. But on a straight, relatively straight track, relatively
2 low terrain, rolling hills, you still couldn't pick them up?

3 A. That area, they did -- there were some curves in the
4 area.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. So as far as radio response and everything, it's going
7 to be kind of hard because you all know how electronics is; they
8 work sometime good and sometimes they don't.

9 Q. But you could hear the train in front of you, so your
10 radio was working?

11 A. Yes, sir. We actually heard the train ahead of us when
12 -- once they were leaving. I mean, we saw their lights, so you
13 could pretty much tell the light was -- you know, getting a little
14 farther ahead of you.

15 Q. Do you remember any calls to Q194 from the dispatcher?

16 A. I'm not sure.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. I'm not sure.

19 Q. Did you talk with the dispatcher from your train?

20 A. No.

21 Q. No. Okay. I just wanted to ask you -- and again, I'm
22 sorry for your loss here. I know these were two people that you,
23 and you said that you knew both of them, talked to them outside of
24 work, I mean, about work things and non-work things?

25 A. Yes, sir.

1 Q. Social things? And how well did those two get along?
2 Were they friends?

3 A. Yeah, they were friends, I mean -- yeah, they were
4 friends also. I mean, here in Greenwood we're all pretty -- all
5 of us are pretty close, I mean.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. We're all like family.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. I never had a problem out of anyone and, you know,
10 everybody, if they didn't know you, they will come up to you and
11 introduce themselves with me, you know.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. Very close. We're all very close.

14 Q. Would you describe their lifestyles as healthy and
15 productive and --

16 A. Yes, very healthy.

17 Q. -- solid citizens?

18 A. Yeah, very healthy.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. Yes, sir.

21 Q. And any problems that you're aware that they may have
22 had?

23 A. No.

24 Q. Family or --

25 A. No. All of them were very happy. As a matter of fact,

1 both of them was engaged to get married, so, you know, they was
2 pretty --

3 Q. Pretty --

4 A. I think they're pretty happy, or were pretty happy.

5 Q. Okay. And they got along with others --

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. -- at work?

8 A. Yes, yes.

9 Q. Okay. Did they work together often?

10 A. I'm not quite sure that -- I really don't know how much
11 they had worked together, but I mean 9 out of 10 all of us have
12 worked together, you know --

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. -- all of us at one particular point in time have worked
15 together.

16 Q. I'm thinking of the crews that I've worked with in the
17 past, and once you get to know people in a crew you kind of know
18 who's the better buddy with --

19 A. Yes, sir.

20 Q. -- these two than those two.

21 A. Yes, sir.

22 Q. Would you say they were good buddies or just
23 acquaintances?

24 A. I feel like they were pretty close.

25 Q. Pretty close?

1 A. Yes, sir. Both of them were from the same hometown,
2 Abbeville. So I mean, it's very small -- likely it's smaller than
3 here in Greenwood, so --

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. -- everybody know everybody, you know. So, yes, I feel
6 like that.

7 Q. Okay, that's all I have for right now. Thank you very
8 much.

9 A. You're welcome.

10 MR. JENNER: Thank you. FRA?

11 BY MR. CORCORAN:

12 Q. Now you had Union Pacific locomotives?

13 A. Yes, sir, U.P.

14 Q. I forget the night. I think it was the fourth. What --
15 do you remember the lead unit?

16 A. It was 4220, I think.

17 Q. 4220?

18 A. Yes, sir.

19 Q. Now, did that -- do you recall if that locomotive had an
20 indicator light for your EOT being lit?

21 A. On my side normally -- no. On my side I did -- you know
22 normally on the some of the CSX engines you have your screen there
23 in front of you. I had nothing like that in front of myself.

24 Q. So nothing -- you don't know?

25 A. No, sir.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. All I know is, you know the -- I think it was two trains
3 that we met; they told us that we had a good light, good blinking
4 light.

5 Q. Right. That's I wanted -- that was my next question.

6 A. Yes, sir.

7 Q. Do you remember which trains they were?

8 A. I don't.

9 Q. Okay, so you had two good light. Now, you know, I know
10 this is tough. This is really a tragic set of circumstances. I
11 just want you to know that none of us are here to try and get
12 anybody trapped or -- we're just trying to determine the facts
13 about what happened. That's all. And I just want you to just,
14 you know, do what you've been doing, be honest. We've asked a lot
15 of questions about the engineer.

16 A. Yes, sir.

17 Q. But now what was the conductor -- what was his -- let's
18 say -- I guess I kind of what to see -- I want to get a real
19 feeling of what his, let's say, like work ethic may have been
20 like. Did you two hire our together or work together or here --

21 A. Well, he been out for about 12 years and I'm going into
22 my 6th year. This will be my 6th year.

23 Q. So he was a cutback engineer too?

24 A. Yes, sir, he has been a cutback engineer at one time.

25 Q. So did you work with him as a -- when he was an

1 engineer?

2 A. Oh, no, he was a engineer. He was the engineer, right?

3 That's what --

4 Q. No, no, no. The conductor.

5 A. Oh, the conductor. No, sir, he was just a conductor. I
6 hired out -- I think it was the class in front of me.

7 Q. So did you have any dealings with him training or
8 anything?

9 A. No, I haven't never had to train with him because --

10 Q. No training or anything like that?

11 A. -- actually he had transferred from Spartanburg, I
12 believe, and came to Greenwood. So he hasn't been in Greenwood
13 quite as long.

14 Q. Right.

15 A. Right.

16 Q. Was -- based on your knowledge, since it's such a small
17 town and crew base and you all know each other, was he the type of
18 conductor who was exceptionally vigilant or could he -- would he
19 -- what do you think?

20 A. I think he caught on pretty quick. He was very aware.
21 I feel like he was aware of what he was doing. I mean, I don't
22 think he was the type of person who was going to cut corners or
23 nothing like that.

24 Q. You don't think that?

25 A. Yeah. You know, as far as what I have seen. Yes.

1 Q. I think that's about it.

2 You said that visibility was good.

3 Now ,at what point did you go across the street to the
4 store? I was just curious about that.

5 A. That was as soon as we was able to get out the train.
6 We took off out the tracks. From our engine to the store it might
7 have been about -- it really wasn't that far. I mean, it didn't
8 take very long to get there. So while I was on the phone trying
9 to get there, you know I was calling and they just told us to get
10 as far away as we could. So I mean, as far as distance, it wasn't
11 that far. I mean, it wasn't a mile or nothing like that. It
12 was --

13 Q. Right, right, right.

14 A. Right.

15 Q. Okay. After you got hit and saw the fire --

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. -- you got down?

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. You called --

20 A. I mean to me it seemed the fire was getting closer and
21 closer. I didn't know if our cars was on fire or what was going
22 on. I mean, it was just --

23 Q. You called when you got -- where were you when you
24 started making the call?

25 A. Oh, I was off the train.

1 Q. I mean it's not --

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. This is not -- it's an emergency and, you know, it's not
4 like a --

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. -- a cell phone issue. I just want to know --

7 A. As soon as I saw myself clear and with stable balance, I
8 was on the phone trying to get some help.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. Yeah. I mean, it was a shock, man. I mean, I didn't
11 even know -- I didn't know what's -- I didn't even know what state
12 of mind I was in. You know, I'm just trying to get off and get
13 going.

14 Q. Yeah.

15 A. I tell you I never been in nothing like that ever in my
16 life. Ever. Never been that scared. Ever.

17 Q. Most people haven't.

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. Well, I appreciate you coming out. It takes a lot of
20 guts. And I don't have any more questions for you.

21 MR. JENNER: UTU, Mr. Herndon?

22 MR. HERNDON: Yes, I do.

23 BY MR. HERNDON:

24 Q. Jim Herndon with UTU.

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. And I have got a few questions for you.

2 A. Okay.

3 Q. And I've got them kind of ad hoc, so I'm going to jump
4 around quite a bit.

5 A. Uh-hum.

6 Q. Do you remember what time you departed?

7 A. We -- it was right around, it was right around 10:00,
8 let's see about 11:30 it was around we departed.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. 11:30, maybe 11:45 we actually got past the north end of
11 Greenwood, somewhere, somewhere after that.

12 Q. Good. Now you said you met two trains. Did you meet
13 them both at the same location --

14 A. No, sir.

15 Q. -- or two --

16 A. No, sir.

17 Q. Okay. When you went --

18 A. The first one I think it was at McDowell, and I think
19 the second one was at Catawba, I want to say. I'm really, really
20 not sure as far as that, but I want to say that's how it went.

21 Q. Do you remember what time you met him at Catawba?

22 A. No, sir.

23 Q. Okay, but the train you met at Catawba was the last
24 train that passed you?

25 A. Yes, sir.

1 Q. That you met and they okayed the rear-end lights,
2 correct?

3 A. Yes, sir.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. Yes, sir.

6 Q. Do you remember what the signal indication was at North
7 Waxhaw?

8 A. At Waxhaw?

9 Q. Yeah. At the north end?

10 A. Approach.

11 Q. Approach? Do you remember what you got at 316?

12 A. All of it was approach.

13 Q. All of them were approaching?

14 A. Yeah, approach. As I can remember correctly.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. Yes, sir.

17 Q. So when you stopped there in Mineral Springs the next
18 signal in front of you was --

19 A. Was a stop signal. Oh, yeah, at Mineral Springs --

20 Q. Yes.

21 A. -- it was on red.

22 Q. On red?

23 A. Yes, sir. At Mineral Springs.

24 Q. Okay. Got it. You pass a hot box detector or a defect
25 detector at 322, correct?

1 A. Yes, sir.

2 Q. When Q194 passed it, did you hear it go off?

3 A. I did hear a defector, but like I said, I didn't -- I
4 heard it but I really didn't know, you know.

5 Q. You couldn't tell --

6 A. Yes, sir.

7 Q. Okay. All right. Mr. Bell, you said he the one who
8 called dispatcher. Did he call on the radio or did he use a
9 personal --

10 A. He called on his cell phone also.

11 Q. He used a cell phone?

12 A. Yes, sir.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. We was completely off the train.

15 Q. All right. And it was the 911 operator that told you to
16 leave the general vicinity and go --

17 A. Yes, yes.

18 Q. -- to the Kangaroo Express or whatever was there?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Okay. Do you remember what time you stopped at Mineral
21 Springs?

22 A. We had only been sitting there about 15 minutes or so,
23 and we got hit right about 3:30, so --

24 Q. Okay, so about 3:15?

25 A. Yes, sir.

1 Q. And is it safe to say that you didn't have any -- you
2 didn't talk to the crew on Q194 after impact, right?

3 A. No, sir.

4 Q. You didn't go back when --

5 A. No, sir.

6 Q. -- the first (indiscernible) --

7 A. Because we wasn't -- we didn't even know we had got hit
8 by another train.

9 Q. Right. On the UP 4220, did you have the AC running?

10 A. Yes, sir --

11 Q. Do you remember?

12 A. -- the AC had been running that night.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. Off and on because it's get pretty cold at that time.

15 Q. Yeah, I've had them myself. The first one I had I was
16 afraid to shut it off, afraid it wouldn't come back --

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. -- because we had to put a jacket on.

19 That's all that I have for you, Mr. --

20 A. Okay.

21 Q. -- Maston. Thank you.

22 MR. JENNER: Okay, Mr. Setser, CSX, do you have any
23 questions?

24 MR. SETSER: I do. Bill Setser, CSX.

25 BY MR. SETSER:

1 Q. Donnie, I'd like to go back to the north end of Waxhaw
2 and talk about those signals. Did you guys come through the
3 siding or did you go up the main?

4 A. We was on a main.

5 Q. And your next signal -- your next signal at 316 --

6 A. As I remember, it was an approach.

7 Q. Was an approach.

8 A. As I remember.

9 Q. Did you call the signal approach at the north end of
10 Waxhaw on the radio?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. And the 316, did you call it as soon as you see it --
13 saw it or --

14 A. Yes. I normally call all them out. I call all of them
15 -- it's, you know when I see them.

16 Q. When you leave the north end of Waxhaw, how soon does it
17 become visible, the 316, say?

18 A. Normally -- it's pretty straight away. You normally can
19 see it over the hill. I mean, it might be about 3 or 4 miles
20 away, you normally can see it, though.

21 Q. So you can see it pretty quickly?

22 A. I think I can. If it's that one.

23 Q. Okay. And as you take the approach at the 316 you then
24 come to Mineral Springs. And is Mineral Springs an absolute or an
25 intermediate signal?

1 A. Absolute.

2 Q. And what was that signal?

3 A. A stop signal.

4 Q. So you had a red signal at Mineral Springs, and at this
5 point to have that red signal you explain that you were following
6 Q616?

7 A. Yes, sir.

8 Q. Could you see the rear of Q616 ahead of you?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. And what did you identify as being the rear of the train
11 that you could see?

12 A. A EOT flashing.

13 Q. And did it appear to be south of the next absolute
14 signal causing you to have the red signal?

15 A. One more time?

16 Q. The signal -- the train, was it still in the next block
17 that was causing you have the red --

18 A. Right.

19 Q. -- signal?

20 A. Right.

21 Q. And as that train progressed, Q616 progressed north, did
22 the signals upgrade as he progressed?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. How long had you been stopped?

25 A. Only for about 15 minutes.

1 Q. How long have you --

2 A. It wasn't long.

3 Q. -- been stopped before the signal went from red and then
4 upgraded to approach?

5 A. The whole time there was only about 15 -- about 15
6 minutes, I would say. We wasn't there long at all.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. As soon as it turned green and we saw it, we was going
9 to call it and he was getting ready to pull, and that's as we got
10 hit. So I mean it wasn't a very long time. I didn't even get to
11 call to see and he didn't even get to put the throttle in any
12 position.

13 Q. Okay. Donnie, I understand we've asked you a lot of
14 questions and we've asked you to remember a lot, and we certainly
15 appreciate that. I'm trying to understand this 15-minute segment
16 here as it relates to Q616. And you know when you came in and you
17 stopped on the red, and I'm assuming that the 15 minutes started
18 then that you're making reference to that you stopped?

19 A. Yes, sir.

20 Q. If we broke this 15 minutes down, how long would it be
21 before you stopped until the signal upgraded, in your opinion?

22 A. I really don't know.

23 Q. Okay. And how long would say that the signal was
24 indication clear upgraded from the approach yellow?

25 A. How long did it stay clear before we was moving? We

1 would have started moving.

2 Q. Oh, I understood you to say you did not get a chance to
3 move.

4 A. Right.

5 Q. But how long did the signal, when it upgraded from
6 yellow approach to green, what was that time frame?

7 A. It couldn't have been no more than 5 or a little better.
8 It wasn't too long. As far as a particular time, man, I really
9 don't know.

10 Q. Would you say it was half the time that you sat there or
11 less or more than half the time or less than half?

12 A. Was it half the time? One more time. Repeat that one
13 more time.

14 Q. I'm just trying to figure out how long the indication
15 was green before that -- while we sat there for this 15 minutes,
16 how long that it was green?

17 A. How long we was sitting there will the signal was green?

18 Q. Yes, sir.

19 A. As soon as we saw it turn, man, we was going to leave,
20 so I mean it wasn't long at all.

21 Q. So it was brief?

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. It was very brief.

25 Q. All right. And you explained that the engineer went

1 down to the bathroom. Did anybody leave the cab of the locomotive
2 at all while --

3 A. No.

4 Q. -- you guys stopped there?

5 A. No.

6 Q. And the -- what were your actions inside the cab while
7 you were stopped there? What did you do?

8 A. While I was stopped, I was there waiting on the better
9 signal for us to leave.

10 Q. Just waiting in your seat?

11 A. Yeah. Yes, sir. Looking forward, straight ahead.

12 Q. And do you recollect that the engineer was sitting or
13 standing whenever you guys were struck in the rear?

14 A. He was sitting.

15 Q. Sitting?

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. Did you ever call on the radio and announce the clear
18 signal that you had?

19 A. No, I didn't get a chance to.

20 Q. And just for -- just to clarify, I understand from your
21 prior questions that you had a conversation at Greenwood with the
22 crew of Q194, and then you leave, you depart, and then you
23 separate as you traverse the Monroe subdivision. So from the time
24 that you guys left or you got on your trains at Greenwood, was
25 there any conversation at all between you and Q194?

1 A. No.

2 Q. Okay. That's all the questions I have. Thank you.

3 A. Okay.

4 Q. I appreciate it.

5 MR. JENNER: Okay, I saw you stretching. Do you need a
6 break?

7 MR. MASTON: Yeah, I need to get up for a minute.

8 MR. JENNER: Okay. We'll take -- do you want 5 minutes?

9 MR. MASTON: Yes, please.

10 (Off the record.)

11 (On the record.)

12 MR. JENNER: Okay, we're back on the record. Jim, let
13 me -- you mentioned that you may have some additional questions --

14 MR. HERNDON: Yes.

15 MR. JENNER: -- before we go around the second time.
16 This is Jim Herndon.

17 BY MR. HERNDON:

18 Q. Is there anything in your earlier testimony, or
19 statements rather, not testimony, statements you made you'd like
20 to clarify for us?

21 A. I'm leery as far as my Mineral Springs. You asked me
22 about the intermediate or the absolute, and I got to say after
23 thinking about it, it's got to be an intermediate. And that's why
24 we would be waiting on favorable signal from the next train.

25 Q. Okay, I was just -- that question, Mr. Maston, I was

1 just trying to see as the signal for -- I was saying if the signal
2 was --

3 A. Right.

4 Q. -- progressing based on the rear of the train leaving
5 and --

6 A. Right. But I mean just thinking about it, it has to be
7 intermediate.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. Because even me and Corey had, we had done our brief at
10 the time and we were waiting on a formable -- favorable signal,
11 I'm sorry.

12 Q. Thank you for clarifying that.

13 MR. JENNER: Okay. We'll go around a second time, and
14 then I've got some follow-ups.

15 BY MR. JENNER:

16 Q. Let me just ask you about your injuries. Can you tell
17 me what you're experiencing right now?

18 A. Well, when I first got there after we sat down and kind
19 of calmed down a bit, I started having pains in my stomach. I had
20 told -- what was the other train master's name in the brown shirt?

21 MR. BEATON: That was Clark McAllister.

22 MR. MASTON: No, it's the other one.

23 MR. BEATON: Greg Robbins?

24 MR. MASTON: Yeah, him. At first I was having like real
25 tensing up in my stomach and, you know I didn't know what it was,

1 maybe nerves or whatever. And he asked me did I need a Pepto-
2 Bismol, and I told him no, I was fine on that. And then about
3 another hour or so later I was experiencing a chain of pain across
4 my chest. And after that they took us to the emergency room, and
5 you know they came and they started treating me. They took some
6 X-rays and they said I had contusions to the chest, bruising of
7 the arm. And I probably stayed there for a little while longer.
8 They took a drug test and took some blood samples. They gave me
9 three prescriptions. They gave me -- what was that prescription
10 for?

11 MS. MASTON: Percocet, Flexeril, and Trauminal (ph.),
12 Ternal (ph.).

13 MR. MASTON: Yeah, Ternal. And then I got back home and
14 the next -- that next morning I work up and I mean like I had just
15 been ran over. So we called the doctor because actually my blood
16 pressure was high also at the emergency room. They checked it
17 twice, and they told me to follow-up with my personal doctor once
18 I got home, you know to make my pressure had went down. So that
19 was one of the reasons I called besides my back and everything.

20 And when I got there to the doctor, they took me in and
21 they examined me. They took some X-rays of my back, which I
22 haven't gotten all the information back on it, but they did say
23 that I had some whiplash to my neck. My abdominal muscle was
24 sprained. And my spine has been twisted, which is causing some
25 numbness in my legs. And they told me definitely need to try to

1 get with a chiropractor or, you know someone who can help me. And
2 they gonna to follow back up with me Monday on some more results
3 that they come up with after going over it some more. So she told
4 me that I needed to pretty much just rest.

5 BY MR. JENNER:

6 Q. You had mentioned drug testing.

7 A. Yes, sir.

8 Q. Was that blood and urine?

9 A. Yes, sir, blood and urine.

10 Q. Right.

11 A. I think it was for the FRA.

12 Q. Okay. Had you taken any medications before the test?

13 A. No.

14 Q. Okay. Did -- in terms of just the collection process,
15 did things go okay?

16 A. I haven't heard anything from it.

17 Q. No, I mean just the process in terms on someone being
18 there and knowing what they're doing and --

19 A. At the hospital?

20 Q. Yeah.

21 A. Well, once I first got there I had to ask for a X-ray,
22 you know and they came in and they just wanted to give me a
23 aspirin and tell me you're all right. But, you know, with the
24 seriousness of the accident, and I knew I was having the pain, and
25 I mean just -- I didn't know if I had hit the thing when I got

1 bounced, but that's the only thing I could figure why my chest and
2 everything was hurting. And you know I just wanted to get them to
3 check it out because it had started hurting. And so they did.
4 They finally went on and took me back there after I asked for it.

5 Q. Who took you to the hospital?

6 A. McAllister.

7 Q. That's this --

8 A. Train master McAllister.

9 Q. Okay. And what's the name of the hospital?

10 A. It was Carolina Medical State in Monroe.

11 Q. Are you on -- taking the medications right now?

12 A. Yes, sir.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. I'm taking 'em.

15 Q. Do you feel like your memory is affected or do you feel
16 it's pretty clear right now?

17 A. Well, it makes you drowsy. It does make you drowsy.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. So. To be honest, man, after what I saw that night,
20 just everything is like a shot of steel to right now. So I mean
21 it's a shock.

22 Q. Okay. I imagine that CSX has employee assistance
23 programs that, you know I'm sure they encourage you to use and you
24 can be in discussion with your representatives about what, you
25 know what they can do, if you're interested.

1 A. Yes, sir.

2 Q. Okay, I'm going to put you back to the scene for a
3 second. When the EMT arrived and at one point you were at the
4 store and you met with them and walked back to the scene.

5 A. Yeah, I went back.

6 Q. Did you ever see anyone talking to the crew members of
7 194?

8 A. The EMS talked to Phillip once they got him off and onto
9 the stretcher. And you know he was bleeding pretty bad out of his
10 arm. It was busted up pretty bad. He had a bruise to the head
11 that was bleeding. And he constantly asked for water. They said
12 they couldn't give him any water because they, you know they
13 wasn't sure what his problem was. So they left it at that. They
14 took him onto the helicopter and they flew him off. A few hours
15 later they got in contact with us and told me -- told us he had
16 passed. It took them about a hour or so before they could get the
17 engineer off because he was pinned. When they pulled him off, he
18 neck was broke and it was just turned. And the only thing that
19 was holding it was his skin. His chest was very enlarged. And to
20 me it looked like his waist had been broke.

21 Q. Did you talk to the conductor at all at that time?

22 A. Yes, sir. Corey and I, we was there with him.

23 Q. Okay. What --

24 A. Because he was telling like -- he was the conductor. He
25 told 'em he was a conductor. He gave his age and, you know he was

1 pretty much talking like everything was going to be all right.
2 You know just the main thing is he kept on asking for water.
3 That's what he wanted. He was very thirsty. Very thirsty.

4 Q. I'm sorry, did you actually -- did you yourself talk to
5 him?

6 A. We both talked to him at one.

7 Q. Right. Did he ask about what just happened?

8 A. He didn't say anything. He didn't say anything. No,
9 sir.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. Not that I heard.

12 Q. Let me ask you just a little bit about your background.

13 A. Um-hum.

14 Q. When did you first hire on with the railroad?

15 A. I hired out like in '05. I hired out in Greenwood. My
16 very first day I got forced to Cayce because they really didn't
17 have no work for us in Greenwood. I worked in Cayce for about,
18 about a year solid that time. Got called back to Greenwood. I
19 worked in Greenwood for about a year-and-a-half. I got
20 furloughed. I went back to Cayce for a little while. I worked
21 there for about eight months. Got furloughed again. And I think
22 I stayed out that time, it was about almost 9 months. About 9
23 months. And came back after that about in February. I have
24 pretty much been working ever since then.

25 Q. Okay, were you hired out as a conductor?

1 A. As a conductor, yes, sir.

2 Q. Okay. And was that your first position in working in
3 the railroad?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Okay. And you went through the normal training process?

6 A. Uh-hum.

7 Q. And certifications?

8 A. Uh-hum. Yes, sir. I went in the class in Waycross.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. I stayed there for -- I think it was 5 weeks, I believe,
11 5 or 6 weeks. Then went to Atlanta for the 2 weeks of training.

12 Q. Okay. You mostly work in extra board?

13 A. Yes, sir.

14 Q. Okay, is that a lot people at Greenwood work extra
15 board?

16 A. Well, for like us with 6 maybe 7 years, that's pretty
17 much all we stand for is the extra board. We not too often until
18 this time right here, since they didn't call back a lot of the
19 other ones that had been furloughed that had been out for a while,
20 did we stand for. And I'm just so used to working on the extra
21 board, that's pretty much where I stay.

22 Q. Okay. Tell me a little bit about life on the extra
23 board.

24 A. Life on the extra board is unpredictable. You know when
25 they call, you got to go somewhere. You never know exactly where.

1 You know you got the two hours and you, you know to be to work. I
2 think I kind of like the extra board because it gives me different
3 places to go instead of just the one side place if I was on the
4 booth. You get some people and they like one side and they just
5 go that one way. But me, myself I like to be on the extra board
6 because I get to stay familiar with the different places. That's
7 pretty much it.

8 Q. Do -- now the word you used you is unpredictable.

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. And that's my understanding of it.

11 A. Right.

12 Q. Now is that in terms of not just the territories that
13 you're at a stop right, but how about time of -- time that your
14 duty starts?

15 A. Time that you're going to start.

16 Q. Yeah.

17 A. Yes, sir.

18 Q. How do you prepare yourself for that?

19 A. How do I prepare?

20 Q. Yeah, that you don't know when the next --

21 A. Dude, you have --

22 Q. -- call's coming.

23 A. Well, you have a general idea once you have to go to
24 work. I mean you can pretty much look on the computer and tell
25 maybe, have a roundabout idea what job you're going to get, almost

1 about what time you're going to go to work and, you know you can
2 tell by looking at the pool, north pool/south pool of who's going
3 to be vacant for that turn. And normally they tell you what time
4 it's going to be planned. So I normally try to give myself some
5 time to get some rest so once they call me I'm able to go.

6 Q. And before, before you went on duty this evening, what
7 other -- can you just tell me the other days that you worked?

8 That this was --

9 A. I went on --

10 Q. -- you went on duty --

11 A. I went on duty --

12 Q. Monday night?

13 A. Yes, sir, Monday night.

14 Q. So what --

15 A. I had been off. I had got off I think it was Friday
16 morning. Friday morning took me to about 8 o'clock Thursday, I
17 mean Saturday night, and my off day started for Sunday. So I
18 didn't go back to work until I got called for the 618. So I had
19 been off since Friday morning.

20 Q. What are some of the things you did on your off time?

21 A. Rest. Rest. I like to spend time with my family.

22 Q. How did you feel when you got the call and then -- I
23 mean just in terms of how did you feel that evening?

24 A. Felt fine.

25 Q. Felt good. Okay. Before this incident were you in good

1 overall health?

2 A. Yes, sir. Yes, sir.

3 Q. And there was no medical --

4 A. No problems.

5 Q. -- problems that required --

6 A. No, sir.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. No.

9 Q. And the 194 crew, I'm pretty sure I asked you this, when
10 you were talking to them, did they seem -- did they seem alert to
11 you?

12 A. They seemed fine to me.

13 Q. No, no concerns on your part?

14 A. Uh-unh.

15 Q. Okay. Okay, I think that's my -- that's all I have
16 right now.

17 MR. JENNER: We'll go around a second time.

18 MR. MASTON: Okay.

19 MR. JACKSON: Kimble Jackson, BLET. I don't have
20 anything at this time, but I really appreciate you coming in.

21 MR. MASTON: Yes, sir.

22 MR. JACKSON: And helping us out with this. And I
23 greatly appreciate the fact that Tanika is backing and supporting
24 you at the time.

25 MR. MASTON: Uh-hum.

1 MR. JACKSON: So kudos.

2 MS. MASTON: It's hard.

3 MR. JACKSON: I know. Ask my wife. So thanks. I
4 really appreciate it.

5 MR. MASTON: You're welcome.

6 MR. JENNER: Okay, Bob?

7 MR. BEATON: Bob Eaton, NTSB. I echo Kimble's comments
8 and gratitude. We really do appreciate you coming in, and respect
9 the fact that it is difficult to have to go rehash this over and
10 over again.

11 MR. MASTON: Yes, sir.

12 MR. BEATON: I just want to emphasize that we're here
13 just to figure out what happened and what wrong, so things can
14 change and we can fix it so it never, ever happens again.

15 MR. MASTON: Yeah.

16 MR. BEATON: Okay, that's what motivates --

17 MR. MASTON: I don't wish this on anyone.

18 MR. BEATON: That's what motivates all of us here at
19 this table. I wanted to share with you -- you were talking about
20 being at the hospital and not getting the X-ray. So my wife is a
21 nurse, and I take her with me every time I go to the doctor
22 because they don't ever give me what I want.

23 MR. MASTON: Yes, sir.

24 MR. BEATON: And I use her to tell them what I need.
25 Okay, so I'm sympathetic and I think that's --

1 MR. MASTON: Yes, sir.

2 MR. BEATON: I don't want to get in conversation on the
3 general state of our healthcare system, but --

4 MR. MASTON: Yes, sir.

5 MR. BEATON: -- you just have to be patient with them.

6 MR. MASTON: Okay.

7 BY MR. BEATON:

8 Q. I did have a couple of follow-up questions, and I'm not
9 a trained conductor or an engineer, okay, but I'd like to
10 understand -- you drive a car?

11 A. Yes, sir.

12 Q. I drive a car too. I'm -- if we're just going to do the
13 thought of driving a car, I'm a busy highway out here and there's
14 cars around me, and I'm looking ahead of me, to the sides of me,
15 I'm looking in my rearview mirror.

16 A. Right.

17 Q. I'm trying to figure out where the nuts are out --

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. -- there that I need to avoid.

20 A. That's the thing I learned. When you're driving a car,
21 you can't just drive for yourself; you've got to drive for the
22 other person too.

23 Q. That's right.

24 A. Around you. That's right.

25 Q. That's right. Good defensive driving.

1 A. Yes, sir.

2 Q. Well, now can you take me, with that knowledge about me,
3 can you put me in a train, and do you use the same kind of
4 principle of kind of understanding where everybody is ahead of you
5 and behind you?

6 A. If I'm aware of it.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. If you're aware.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. Like I say, so many things is unpredictable. As far as
11 a train and a car, you really can't -- you really can't -- to me
12 you can't compare that because a train going to be so much longer
13 than what a car would be.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. So --

16 Q. That's good.

17 A. -- you know it's kind of -- it's kind of hard to just
18 say, well, look, they're going to be right here. It's not really
19 like I can just look out my rearview mirror and see way back there
20 because, you know it's going to be so much different. So I really
21 can't --

22 Q. It's not the same?

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. (Indiscernible).

25 A. To me it's not the same as far as that.

1 Q. I appreciate you educating me a little bit. What I was
2 thinking about, though, is you know when I'm driving down the
3 highway and I see a big truck in my rearview mirror.

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. And then, you know I worry about that truck because I
6 want to make sure he sees me.

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. I -- do you have that same kind of a sense about if you
9 know a train is behind you, you're wondering about, well, you know
10 he's back there somewhere?

11 A. Yeah. Well, yeah, you're going to wonder, but like I
12 say, you're not -- you're not going to really see him. So you
13 know he probably back there. I mean like I said I knew 194 was
14 leaving behind us, but exactly how far or how close they were, I
15 didn't know.

16 Q. Okay. And throughout that course of the trip from
17 Greenwood, the fact that you didn't hear from 194 didn't -- you
18 didn't think about that big truck behind you on --

19 A. Right.

20 Q. -- the freeway? You didn't think about it?

21 A. Yeah. But you're going to see that truck behind you on
22 the freeway. He's going to see you.

23 Q. Okay. But for 194 you didn't --

24 A. No, sir.

25 Q. It's not the same? It's just not the same process?

1 A. No, sir. Not to me.

2 Q. Okay. All right. Well, I appreciate you being patient
3 with me and educating me on that. I want to talk a little bit and
4 find a little bit more about the 911, the emergency response.

5 A. Uh-hum.

6 Q. And 45 minutes. You guys called 911. There was a first
7 responder, somebody showed up in their car --

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. -- or jeep or truck, whatever it was. And you and your
10 engineer ran up to the store. At what point in the process did
11 you know that you had been struck or did you realize you were
12 struck by a train?

13 A. We didn't -- at that time we didn't know. Even as I was
14 talking to 911 I had actually got off for the phone with 911
15 before I ever knew that we had got struck by the other train.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. Yes. We didn't know we had got struck by the other
18 train until the fire department and EMS had started asking about
19 the container cars. And by the time we went back there with them
20 and we saw it, that's when we realized that we had been struck by
21 another train.

22 Q. Was that 45 minutes with the EMS?

23 A. No, that was with the fire department, me on the phone
24 with the fire department. Well, not fire department; 911.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. Until the chief or whoever it was that drove up. He was
2 with the fire department, but I don't know what his title was.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. He just pretty much took us on from then, and from there
5 on we went down and the fire department came, EMS came.

6 Q. So from the time you were struck to the time you went
7 down with that firefighter, how much time was that?

8 A. How much time? If I had to guess, about a hour almost.

9 Q. About an hour?

10 A. I would think. I would think. I really would. I mean
11 don't quote me on the time, but --

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. -- you know just as far as panicking and everything.

14 Q. It felt like an hour?

15 A. It felt like a long time.

16 Q. Got it. Okay.

17 A. And if I had to guess, I would just say it had to be
18 about that.

19 Q. And it was at that point that you realized you were
20 struck by another train?

21 A. After we went down there and he told us about the
22 container cars?

23 Q. Yeah.

24 A. Yes, sir.

25 Q. And at that point did you connect the dots and say oh,

1 my God, that's --

2 A. Well, actually Corey connected the dots for me. Because
3 when we were sitting thinking all he kept on saying, he said man,
4 I don't know what just went on, but it's almost like we've been
5 struck by another train. You know it was just --

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. -- something that ran across, but I mean in a million
8 years we weren't thinking nothing about a train hitting us in the
9 rear. So we just kind of kept it as something happened and it
10 sure was fire, fire and flame.

11 Q. And so the inevitable has to occur at that point and you
12 realized that your two acquaintances were -- I mean it had to be
13 194 that hit you?

14 A. Yes. And after that, the only thing we said man, he's
15 said oh, my God, I hope we didn't just get struck. And by that
16 time he said we had no container cars, we saw the engine laying
17 over on the ground. We knew we weren't going to have another
18 engine behind 9 cars, so.

19 Q. So you knew and you knew who was in that train?

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. At that point.

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. What happened at that point? Did you want to run down
24 and help your friends? Did you want to have -- well, you tell me.

25 A. Yeah, I did. If I could have actually went up there

1 with them and pulled them out myself, I would have. I did. But,
2 you know they told us to stand back, they got it. Even as far as
3 the fire department and everything, they went to get chainsaws and
4 everything to go to cut, but one of the guys no, put the chainsaw
5 up; we really got a problem here; come on.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. And they -- I mean, yes, they did what they could do,
8 but it just wasn't enough.

9 Q. And at some point, though, they were telling you to
10 stand back.

11 A. Uh-hum. We was standing back, right.

12 Q. At some point you saw Phillip on the stretcher?

13 A. Yeah. We side by side. It wasn't no further than us
14 right here. And then when they pulled Greg off, they put him
15 right by me just like that.

16 Q. And Greg was already passed --

17 A. He was already --

18 Q. -- at that point?

19 A. He was dead. He was dead. They say he died probably as
20 soon as it happened.

21 Q. With Phillip, you were right there with him. How long
22 were you with him?

23 A. He was there with us a good 20 minutes.

24 Q. 20 minutes?

25 A. They waited for the helicopter to land and, you know

1 they was patching him up, keep trying to keep him from bleeding,
2 and you know trying to do whatever their procedure is as far as
3 helping him. He was talking. They was asking him questions, you
4 know trying to keep him, you know going. And I mean he was
5 answering their questions just fine.

6 Q. Did he recognize you?

7 A. I feel like he did. I mean he didn't really say hey,
8 Donnie, what you doing or nothing like this. He -- you know he
9 was very responsive. He was more so concerned really about
10 getting some water and just getting the attention that he needed
11 from the EMS. You know everything they asked him, he did.

12 Q. Was he lying on the ground or lying to stretcher?

13 A. He was on a stretcher.

14 Q. On a stretcher. So they had taken him out of the cab?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. And --

17 A. Onto the stretcher.

18 Q. Onto the stretcher. And then you and your engineer were
19 able to go sit right next to him?

20 A. Yeah, we was right there with him.

21 Q. Right there?

22 A. All the way until they brought him away from the --

23 Q. Did you pat him on the shoulder --

24 A. We touched him.

25 Q. -- hold his hand?

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. Say hang in there, man, whatever?

3 A. Yeah, talk. Talk. Matter of fact, Corey asked him for
4 a number to call his -- I don't know if it was his sister or a
5 parent. But he asked him for a number of who could he call and he
6 told him.

7 Q. He did?

8 A. Yes. Yes.

9 Q. So he was pretty alert?

10 A. Yes, he was.

11 Q. Did Corey trying calling the number?

12 A. Yeah, Corey --

13 Q. And did it work?

14 A. -- he did call. Corey was the one that he got in
15 contact with the family members.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. He did.

18 Q. Okay. And while you were with him in that 20 minutes --
19 again, I do respect that it's difficult in those moments to
20 remember the details, but did he ever ask what happened or --

21 A. No, once.

22 Q. -- suggest --

23 A. No, he didn't ask. He didn't ask.

24 Q. Did anybody tell him hey, you ran into the back of me
25 or?

1 A. I don't -- I mean they wanted to ask him, you know the
2 questions that they needed, but I don't think they wanted to do
3 too much movement or anything, you know.

4 Q. Okay. But there was no -- do you believe that Phillip
5 ever realized what had happened?

6 A. I'm not sure. I'm not sure. I mean he knew he was at
7 work, but I mean as far as the accident --

8 Q. That's not normal at work?

9 A. Yeah, that's not. So I'm not sure really about that.

10 Q. Is there anything that you can tell me that might help
11 me understand what Phillip and Greg did or didn't do?

12 A. For me to put my finger on just one thing?

13 Q. No, just --

14 A. No, I couldn't. I mean anything could have happened.
15 You just never know.

16 Q. Can you give me an example of anything?

17 A. No. I don't know. And I'd rather not even say because
18 I mean I hate to say something --

19 Q. Because you don't know?

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. I respect that. I do. Okay, again, I appreciate you
22 taking the time and being honest and open and helping us out. So
23 you have my complete gratitude. Thank you. I don't have any
24 further questions.

25 MR. JENNER: FRA, Joe?

1 MR. CORCORAN: I have nothing.

2 MR. JENNER: And UTU, Jim?

3 MR. HERNDON: Just two. Jim Herndon with UTU.

4 BY MR. HERNDON:

5 Q. Donnie, in your career you said that you had been
6 furloughed. I didn't catch how many times during -- since 2005?
7 Just a quick guess. Nothing --

8 A. The longest time was the first year, I'd say about three
9 times.

10 Q. About three times?

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. The last time that you were furloughed you were
13 recalled, when in February of this year, did I understand that
14 right?

15 A. No, no. It was --

16 Q. No. When were you --

17 A. I've been working on steady for about -- it should be
18 about 2 years.

19 Q. Okay. So were recalled at least two years ago?

20 A. Yes, sir.

21 Q. Okay. I caught something about February and I didn't
22 catch --

23 A. Yes, sir.

24 Q. -- the whole thing.

25 A. No.

1 Q. Last question. From the time of impact, how long were
2 you there at the scene before you were transported to the
3 hospital? Do you remember?

4 A. It happened at 3:30. We didn't get to the hospital
5 probably until about 11:30, almost 12 o'clock.

6 Q. Okay. That's all I have.

7 MR. JENNER: Bill, CSX?

8 MR. SETSER: I don't have any further questions of
9 Donnie. Once again, thank you. I appreciate your time here
10 today. And our EAP services are extended out to you, and our
11 thoughts and prayers with all the families involved in this
12 accident.

13 MR. MASTON: Okay.

14 MR. SETSER: That's all I have.

15 MR. JENNER: Okay. Tanika, anything you want -- you'd
16 like to add?

17 MS. MASTON: Well, I know there's probably, you know
18 don't concern, you know -- I feel like since all this has happened
19 it's been a lot of stress on me because I'm having to sit at home
20 and take care of him knowing that he's going through -- I never
21 seen him like this before. Because it's lately he's sleeping all
22 the time or in the bed, you know some -- I have to make him eat.
23 You know he hadn't ate since the accident. I made him eat
24 something last night.

25 And what really bothers me most is my 14-year-old calls

1 me and says when ain't he talking, you know blah, blah. So I'm
2 like, well, you know you got to understand he been in a accident.
3 And I'm trying to explain to him he saw the -- somebody die. And
4 you know when you see somebody die, it's hard on you. And you
5 know he's just more concerned about he's telling me he doesn't
6 want to go to school, I'll stay at home with Donnie, I -- you
7 know, which is it was my son prior to him so it's his stepson.
8 And you know I don't want him to be stressed out or something, you
9 know like it's taking more victim, you know, and I don't have the
10 answer to his questions.

11 And so like I tell -- I've been trying to tell Donnie, I
12 think he might need to get some help because I don't want him to
13 get depressed or, you know. And it causing more harm to him and
14 it's really going to affect us more, you know. Because like I
15 can't even go to the store and he calls me to come right back. Or
16 if I'm walking to the next room and he's in this room, 9 times out
17 of 10, I look back and he's behind me and, you know I made a
18 statement at first, I was like you scared, you know and he was
19 like you just don't understand what I saw, what I been through.

20 And it's like me might go to bed at 12 o'clock; 3
21 o'clock we back up and he was like you wanna watch TV, and I'm
22 saying to myself sleep, you know. But you know I get up. And I
23 try to -- when he toss and turn, you know I say you okay, you need
24 anything, you know. And to me, you know I just feel like
25 physically he hurtin' but mentally I think he needs help, you

1 know.

2 MR. JENNER: Okay.

3 MS. MASTON: Because just like riding to meet you all,
4 he really just, you know he really had been wanting to ride, and I
5 said, you know, well, I drive you. The whole time we're driving,
6 you know he's like oh, you scared me, stop, you know. I'm like I
7 got you. I got you. I'm changing lanes, you know. He's like
8 real jumpy. And I'm just saying maybe, you know somebody needs
9 to, you know tell him. I know, you know it's a man thing where
10 you think you're don't need any help, but --

11 MR. JENNER: All right. Well, thank you for sharing.
12 It's an incredibly traumatic experience, physically and mentally,
13 emotionally, and everything. So it's more than one person should
14 have to go through. So --

15 MS. MASTON: Like I said. And my 7-year-old, we
16 recently just sent her out. She's in (indiscernible) right now.
17 Because she, you know she heard it but she really didn't know --
18 she heard it at school. And all she could say my daddy wasn't on
19 the train. So when she came home she was like daddy, you know who
20 crashed on the train. And he was like, well, it was one of my
21 friends but, you know it wasn't me. And she asked are you okay,
22 and he said, well, I'm okay. And she said, well, you walkin'
23 funny. You know how little kids do. Well, are your friends okay
24 and, you know he was like no. And she said hey, dad, you know.

25 And I was like please don't -- you know I try to tell

1 people don't keep asking. That's what I was telling whenever -- I
2 knew people was calling, but me, I would get on the phone and say
3 no, he cannot talk right now, you know. Because I hate for him to
4 have to keep reliving it over and over. And it's been people
5 calling left and right. You know lawyers and everything. And
6 like I told him, we ain't thinking about none of that right now.
7 You know.

8 Which another lady called from -- I think her name was
9 Sue somebody. You know she was trying to get his stuff in order
10 or whatever. Disability or something. And he wasn't able to talk
11 to her, and I said, well, maybe if you call back or we'll get back
12 in touch with you, and she said okay, you know as soon as
13 possible. You know. So that's kind of what we've been going
14 through. And we went to visit the family yesterday, and I knew it
15 was kind of hard on them.

16 MR. JENNER: Right.

17 MS. MASTON: Because as we was leaving, no one was
18 going, you know he was talking, but as we as was leaving he was
19 just like back to hisself again. You know in my little -- and I'm
20 like you don't want to talk with me, and he's like it's all right.
21 Straight got home, straight to bed. I'm like you need to drink
22 something; you know which I tried to tell him that can affect your
23 health more than anything.

24 MR. JENNER: Okay. Well, thank you for sharing that.
25 Yeah, so we don't always hear these -- this side of the story. So

1 it's important for us to understand as well, and the company as
2 well. So we all make note of that. Okay, I'm not going to keep
3 you much longer. I'm going to thank you for being here. And just
4 one last question I'm going to ask is -- I'm sure you've been
5 running through this over your mind many times. Is there anything
6 that you can think of that may make your industry a little safer
7 in terms of different regulations or procedures or rules or
8 equipment, or any anything come to mind?

9 MR. MASTON: I know we have to have rules and
10 regulations as far as the railroad. Sometimes I think they get a
11 little carried as far as the procedures of the rules. Everybody
12 got to have somebody watching them to keep in order. But
13 sometimes it does get a little out of hand. And what it does, it
14 cause a lot of the employees to be so uptight. They so uptight.
15 They don't really get the point of the job like they need to.
16 That's it pretty much. I mean we all know what we have to do once
17 we go to work. But sometimes it just feels like you always got
18 somebody just right there standing there in your presence. And I
19 mean instead of letting you work, it kind of hinders you from
20 working sometimes. It cause more of a problem sometimes as it do
21 actual help.

22 MR. JENNER: Okay. And anything else that you want to
23 share? Okay. Well, again, thank you very much. And if no other
24 questions, then we'll finish up now.

25 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: CSX TRAIN COLLISION
MINERAL SPRINGS, NORTH CAROLINA
MAY 24, 2011
Interview of Donnielle Maston

DOCKET NUMBER: DCA-11-FR-004

PLACE: Greenwood, SC

DATE: May 27, 2011

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.

Kimberly A. Hawkins
Transcriber