

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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In the Matter of: \*  
\* Docket No.  
DERAILMENT AND SUBSEQUENT \* DCA-05-MR-009  
COLLISION OF TWO METROLINK \*  
COMMUTER TRAINS IN \*  
GLENDALE, CALIFORNIA \*  
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Thursday,  
January 27, 2005

INTERVIEW OF:

BRUCE GRAY

PRESENT: MIKE FLANAGAN

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

1  
2 MR. FLANAGAN: Okay. There we go. Okay. It  
3 is Mike Flanagan with NTSB. It is January 27, about  
4 3:34 p.m. and we are interviewing Mr. Gray, Bruce Gray,  
5 who is Metrolink engineer, Amtrak employee, on the  
6 Metrolink train involved in the accident.

7 I would like to just confirm that I have your  
8 permission to tape record this interview.

9 MR. GRAY: Yes, you do.

10 MR. FLANAGAN: Okay. I will start out just in  
11 just a general way. If you could walk us through, you  
12 know, what happened from your standpoint, what you saw,  
13 what and what you did and what you heard and so forth.

14 MR. GRAY: Well, from my standpoint, as I  
15 approached Glendale, like I normally do when I work  
16 that train, I made a radio call out to Chuck Wright on  
17 901, to ask if it was clear at Glendale, if he was on  
18 the move, that I could continue in. And he told me  
19 that it was all clear, come on in. And I proceeded on  
20 down the number two track. As I am proceeding down I  
21 noticed what looks to be kind an orange glow down, down  
22 between the two tracks, number one and number two. And  
23 as I got closer down there I realized that there was an  
24 outline of an automobile. And I immediately put the  
25 train in emergency. And upon doing so I exited the cab

1       and went out in what I called the little mezzanine  
2       level, the little level that the cab control  
3       compartments are. And I told the individuals that, the  
4       passengers right there to hang on. And a couple of  
5       seconds or so, go back and we hit the car. At which  
6       point I turned back around and looked out the vestibule  
7       window and realized that there is a UP train I can see  
8       now parked in the side. And I know that Chuck is  
9       coming and it is a little bit hazy, I am predominant on  
10      the UP freight and Chuck's train. I believe its  
11      headlight was damaged, it was still dark, so. Which he  
12      normally would do anyways. But, knowing that we were  
13      on the ground and I just had the sense that, I could  
14      tell that the fireman's side and the direction of  
15      travel was between the rail and the engineer's wheel  
16      was on the outside of the rail.

17                When I came up to the switch, I knew it was  
18      going to act as a guide rail and throw me into the  
19      siding. So, I went upstairs to try to tell people  
20      upstairs to hang on and take a position in the aisle,  
21      squat down and down to position them. I tried to brace  
22      myself. And that is the whole account, about the time  
23      I plugged in and the time of impacted the freight  
24      train, I would estimate to be about 15 seconds.

25                MR. FLANAGAN: Okay.

1           MR. GRAY: And hit the train, was thrown into,  
2           in the area of the seat compartment. And was pinned  
3           there with some debris and a woman fell on top of me  
4           and she was pinned with me. That is pretty much the  
5           summary version.

6           MR. FLANAGAN: Okay. Going back if we could to  
7           the, as you were approaching and starting to recognize  
8           that there is something up there on the track, do you  
9           recall approximately the speed --

10          MR. GRAY: The speed of my train was 79 miles  
11          an hour. I was in idle, I am always in after coming  
12          through the scanner. I go through the scanner in power  
13          and come out at Broadway in idle -- and traditionally  
14          the train will, will sometimes, depending on how many  
15          cars, the stabilizer will drop a couple of miles an  
16          hour. I wasn't really quite sure if it had dropped to  
17          78 or, you know, 79.

18          MR. FLANAGAN: In that neighborhood.

19          MR. GRAY: In that neighborhood.

20          MR. FLANAGAN: You think it was before or  
21          after the grade crossing that you saw this --

22          MR. GRAY: To the best of my recollection it  
23          was approximately at the grade crossing sign that I  
24          made the --

25          MR. FLANAGAN: The whistle post.

1           MR. GRAY: *The whistle post.*

2           MR. FLANAGAN: *Okay.*

3           MR. GRAY: *That I made the observation that*  
4 *there was a car and put the train in emergency. And at*  
5 *that time is when I exited the cab. My approximation*  
6 *was about 10 seconds from the time I, I put the train*  
7 *in emergency to the time that we hit the vehicle.*

8           MR. FLANAGAN: *Okay. Prior to this all coming*  
9 *about where there any problems, abnormalcies with*  
10 *equipment --*

11          MR. GRAY: *The train was running just fine.*

12          MR. FLANAGAN: *Everything was normal.*

13          MR. GRAY: *Yes.*

14          MR. FLANAGAN: *No, no alarms, no --*

15          MR. GRAY: *No alarms, nothing.*

16          MR. FLANAGAN: *Nothing else to occupy you.*

17          MR. GRAY: *No.*

18          MR. FLANAGAN: *Okay.*

19          MR. GRAY: *Just a normal trip. Didn't have*  
20 *any sign of anything --*

21          MR. FLANAGAN: *Okay. After all this happened*  
22 *and the train came to rest, did, can you kind of walk*  
23 *through that part about any communications with the*  
24 *trains or your actions or the --*

25          MR. GRAY: *After the train came to a stop, I*

1       *could, the woman that was on top of me screaming and*  
2       *yelling that her arm was broken, that she needed help.*  
3       *I could lift this way and see an orange glow and knew*  
4       *that the train was on fire. I still didn't, wasn't*  
5       *100 percent sure that I had hit the freight train.*  
6       *But, with the abrupt stop that we had, I, my guess at*  
7       *that particular moment was we had hit it and the fire*  
8       *now was being constituted some kind of oil or diesel*  
9       *fuel. I told her that it was time to get up, that we*  
10       *didn't have the luxury of waiting for someone to show*  
11       *up. So, as much as we are in pain, we need to get out.*  
12       *And I had to push her out of the way, and I tried to,*  
13       *did my best to squeeze out and when I finally got free*  
14       *and I saw the fire, I looked over to my left and the*  
15       *whole part of the cab car was gone from where it was*  
16       *at. I just, I just got far enough. And I looked down*  
17       *and luckily I was able to see that the fire was no*  
18       *bigger than a large camp fire at the time. So, I knew*  
19       *that there was no immediate, didn't have to sprint*  
20       *down. So, what I did is I then made a phone call,*  
21       *because I realized that I hadn't been able to get out*  
22       *an emergency call. So, I got on my cell phone and I*  
23       *called Valley Sub, and gave him the whole emergency*  
24       *spiral. And first he indicated that we had already*  
25       *gotten the call. So, I then --*

1           MR. FLANAGAN: We need to turn this off for  
2 just a second.

3           (Off the record.)

4           MR. FLANAGAN: Okay. We are back with the  
5 interview.

6           MR. GRAY: Okay. So where did I leave off? I  
7 made the phone call and he indicated that they had  
8 already gotten the call and service was on their way.  
9 At this particular point, the individual that was on  
10 top of me was now kind of sort of in the aisle way and  
11 she was, she was requesting help. Unfortunately my  
12 back wasn't in a position to where I could pick her up.

13          She was a larger woman and so I, well, prior to all of  
14 that, actually I, as I was looking out and I could see  
15 employees on the blacktop, which I now know was the  
16 Cosco, I screamed out to them because only one  
17 individual had a fire extinguisher, and they had  
18 already exhausted it, and I screamed out to them that  
19 they all needed to, someone needed to go find some fire  
20 extinguishers. So, they all ran out and then I was  
21 trying to deal with this woman. And I was able to  
22 scream out and get some individuals from the upper  
23 level further down the train to come over and give her  
24 hand. And about that time, the fire extinguishers had  
25 returned and they had started to put the fire out and

1       *the train started to fill with black sooty smoke, and I*  
2       *started to get a little light headed as if I was going*  
3       *to pass out. So, I stuck my head out one of the*  
4       *windows that was open to try to get some fresh air and*  
5       *regain myself. And in doing so, I knew that at that*  
6       *point, the shape that my back was in, that that was*  
7       *really my only point of exit. So, I was able to wait*  
8       *for someone to come by and I screamed out to an*  
9       *individual who also brought someone else over to help*  
10      *me as I went out the window and, and grabbed onto and*  
11      *lowered my feet as far as possible to the ground and*  
12      *they were able to help brace my fall as I jumped down.*  
13      *And then just crawled about 30 feet away from the car,*  
14      *laid down on the ballast.*

15                *MR. FLANAGAN: Okay. Okay. I think that is*  
16      *all I have. Let me see if anybody else has a question.*  
17      *No, okay.*

18                *Anything you want to add or --*

19                *MR. GRAY: Not at this particular time.*

20                *MR. FLANAGAN: Okay.*

21                *MR. GRAY: I am pretty, you know, that is*  
22      *pretty good for now.*

23                *MR. FLANAGAN: Okay. Thanks a lot. We*  
24      *appreciate it, we appreciate your time.*

25                *(Off the record.)*



1                   MR. FLANAGAN: One quick question. Mike --  
2 CPUC.

3                   UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes, did the emergency  
4 lighting come on --

5                   MR. GRAY: The lighting was on all the way  
6 while we were on the ground, until we hit the vehicle.  
7 I didn't notice the change in the lighting. So, the  
8 ATP at that point, to my knowledge, was still on. Once  
9 we made the abrupt stop, everything went black. I  
10 didn't see any lighting other than in the cab car.

11                   UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: All right. (Inaudible)

12                   MR. GRAY: It was a matter of surviving that,  
13 you know, I did everything I tried to think of.

14                   MR. FLANAGAN: Okay. Anything else?

15                   Okay. Thank you again.

16                   (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)