

DCA13MR002
Conrail - Shared Assets
Derailment/Hazardous Material Release
Paulsboro, New Jersey
November 30, 2012

NTSB - Interview of Bridge and Building Department Mechanic_2

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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CONRAIL DERAILMENT/HAZARDOUS
MATERIAL RELEASE
PAULSBORO, NEW JERSEY
NOVEMBER 30, 2012

Docket No.: DCA-13-MR-002

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Interview of: WILLIAM SCHAFFERT

Incident Command Center
Paulsboro, New Jersey

Wednesday,
December 5, 2012

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice.

BEFORE: TIMOTHY DEPAEPE
Accident Investigator

APPEARANCES:

TIMOTHY DEPAEPE, Accident Investigator
 Signal Group Chairman
 National Transportation Safety Board
 Office of Railroad, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials
 DuPage Airport
 31 West 775 North Avenue
 West Chicago, Illinois 60185

** PII **

** PII **

CYRIL GURA, Safety Engineer
 Track Group Chairman
 National Transportation Safety Board
 Office of Railroad, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials
 DuPage Airport
 31 West 775 North Avenue
 West Chicago, Illinois 60185

THOMAS NOON, Signal and Train Control Inspector
 Federal Railroad Administration

DAVID KILLINGBECK, Chief Engineer Structures
 Federal Railroad Administration

THOMAS BILSON, Assistant Chief Engineer
 Maintenance of Way and Structures
 Conrail

DOUG TRACY, Assistant Chief Engineer
 Communications and Signals
 Conrail

CHARLES HANSLER, Union Representative
 Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employes
 Division (BMWED)
 District 6

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I N T E R V I E W

(6:08 p.m.)

1
2
3 MR. DEPAEPE: It's 6:08 p.m. And my name is Tim
4 DePaepe, D-e-P-a-e-p-e. I'm a signal accident investigator --
5 railroad accident investigator, with a specialty in signals, for
6 the National Transportation Safety Board.

7 We're doing an interview of Mr. William Schaffert
8 concerning any knowledge he may have about a derailment and
9 hazardous material release at the Paulsboro moveable bridge,
10 approximately milepost 13.7. And we're also going to be talking
11 about trouble tickets and his responsibilities. This accident has
12 an NTSB identifier number of DCA-13-MR-002.

13 And at this time we're going to -- the rest of the
14 people in on the interview are going to identify themselves, and
15 on my right?

16 MR. GURA: Cy, C-y, Gura, G-u-r-a, Safety Engineer,
17 National Transportation Safety Board.

18 MR. BILSON: Tom Bilson, Assistant Chief Engineer,
19 Maintenance of Way and Structures, Conrail.

20 MR. TRACY: Doug Tracy, T-r-a-c-y, Assistant Chief
21 Engineer, C&S, Conrail.

22 MR. NOON: Thomas Noon, N-o-o-n, FRA, Signal and Train
23 Control Inspector.

24 MR. SCHAFFERT: William Schaffert, B&B mechanic,
25 Conrail.

1 MR. DEPAEPE: Can you spell your last name, please, sir?

2 MR. SCHAFFERT: S-c-h-a-f-f-e-r-t.

3 MR. HANSLER: Charlie Hansler, H-a-n-s-l-e-r, Union Rep,
4 BMW Teamsters.

5 MR. KILLINGBECK: David Killingbeck,
6 K-i-l-l-i-n-g-b-e-c-k, Chief Engineer Structures, Federal Railroad
7 Administration.

8 BY MR. DEPAEPE:

9 Q. All right, this is Tim DePaepe again with the National
10 Transportation Safety Board.

11 Mr. Schaffert, I'd like to know when your date of hire
12 was and jobs that you may have held during your career with
13 Conrail up to the current -- present date.

14 A. My hire date was January 7th of 2008. I started as a
15 B&B helper and graduated to B&B mechanic now maybe a year and a
16 half now.

17 Q. Is that the position you currently hold?

18 A. And I currently hold the position as B&B mechanic.

19 Q. Is the area of the Paulsboro moveable bridge part of
20 your responsibility?

21 A. Yes, it is.

22 Q. Okay. At this point I'm going to pass the questioning
23 over to Mr. Cy Gura.

24 BY MR. GURA:

25 Q. This is Cy Gura. Will, have you had a chance to review

1 that -- trouble log sheets?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Are there any of those specific incidents that we guided
4 you to look at, were you out on any of those specific trouble
5 logs?

6 A. No.

7 Q. Okay. Now, are there any other incidents going back
8 from Hurricane Katrina back towards -- I'm sorry, Hurricane Sandy
9 back towards -- just walk your memory back, you know, from prior
10 to the hurricane to maybe October 27th, if you could go back that
11 far?

12 A. We, once a week we do our standard greasing of the
13 bridges. I was probably involved in most of that greasing that
14 went along.

15 The day before the hurricane, Sunday evening, we were
16 called out to tie the bridge down and chain the bridge down so it
17 wouldn't swing in case debris and stuff would come down, whatever.
18 We were instructed to chain the bridge down to the pilings, to the
19 dolphins that are along the walkway on the riverside, I call it.

20 Q. Uh-huh, okay. So you chained it in the open to
21 navigation position?

22 A. Correct.

23 Q. Okay. What, did you just use a series of chains and
24 come-alongs, or what?

25 A. It was -- yes, it was a set of, I would call them,

1 half-inch chain, 5/16th chain.

2 Q. Um-hum.

3 A. And roll it around and use the come-along to cinch it up
4 tight.

5 Q. Okay. Anything else -- did you do at that time?

6 A. No.

7 Q. Okay. Were you working that whole period of time from
8 before Hurricane Sandy to about October 27th, or were you off for
9 any period of time?

10 A. No, I was working from -- yes. No, I was on vacation
11 from 11/15 to -- what would be the date? I took that Monday off.

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: The 26th --

13 MR. SCHAFFERT: The 26th. So, it was the 27th I
14 returned to work.

15 BY MR. GURA:

16 Q. Okay. What do you grease on the bridge?

17 A. We grease the -- there's eccentrics that roll -- that
18 lift the bridge, the lift centers. You have the locks where --
19 the lock back and forth. You lube the arms on the lock motors.
20 You lube the bearings on the swing part -- on the -- bearings on
21 the -- what do you call that? The swing part, the --

22 Q. The pivot?

23 A. Yeah, thanks, the pivot. That's what you call it. And
24 that's basically what you do. You also visually just look at the
25 nuts and bolts and the -- and make sure every thing's tight and

1 make sure every thing's tightened up on it.

2 Q. Okay. When you -- the last few times that you lubed the
3 bridge, is there a specific grease or anything that you use? Is
4 it a can of grease or is it like a grease tube or --

5 A. Yeah, it's a grease tube. It's a -- I thought we
6 brought some with us, but it's a heavy-duty grease for
7 high pressure situations.

8 Q. Okay. Do you also grease the bearing plate?

9 A. Yes. We grease the -- on the swing part and on --

10 Q. On the rail seat? Yeah.

11 A. -- on the swing -- the bearing plate on both sides of
12 the bridge and the lower plates where the bridge slides across
13 the -- with the seat on the -- that would be the north side.

14 Q. Okay. Do you have to normally do that during low tide?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Okay. And it was a two-man operation?

17 A. Yes, it's a two-man operation.

18 Q. Okay. In your greasing have you noted anything that
19 needs to be replaced or repaired or compromised or anything like
20 that that you can recall that you reported?

21 A. No.

22 Q. No. I have no further questions.

23 MR. BILSON: I just have one. Tom Bilson.

24 BY MR. BILSON:

25 Q. When you go out there, the bridge is normally in the

1 open position?

2 A. Correct.

3 Q. What do you do then?

4 A. I alternate -- every time I go out I alternate between
5 being open and being closed greasing it so it greases in a
6 different position. Therefore, I make sure it gets a good
7 consistency of grease around all the extremely important working
8 parts of the bridge.

9 Q. How do you close it?

10 A. I will put it into local and you hit the start, the
11 hydraulic start, and you hit bridge open -- or closed and the
12 bridge will close. And it always seems to work -- the bridge
13 always closed, the locks come by, and you notice the green light
14 comes on. And if the green light doesn't come on you usually call
15 somebody. But I don't recall having to do that, but the green
16 light -- well, for some reason we look at the green lights. I
17 mean, you look at the lights.

18 Q. Is that the green light on the panel or the green light
19 on the signal?

20 A. Green light on the signal.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. Just, you know, that we -- because usually if you --
23 there and you can't get a foul on the tracks you have to get a
24 watchman so you have to do more of it by yourself and have the
25 watchman watch if, you know, I can't get a foul on the tracks.

1 So --

2 Q. So, if you got the green signal you got to have a
3 watchman?

4 A. Right.

5 Q. Makes sense.

6 A. You know, basically, it's just to make sure you're
7 covered somewhere.

8 Q. Good point.

9 A. You know? And basically, in local control the bridge
10 seems to work pretty good.

11 Q. That's the only way you --

12 A. It opens; it closes.

13 Q. That's the only way you can really close it, right?

14 A. Correct.

15 Q. Or open and close.

16 MR. BILSON: I have no other questions.

17 MR. TRACY: Doug Tracy, no questions.

18 MR. NOON: Tom Noon. I do have a question.

19 BY MR. NOON:

20 Q. When you say you open and close the bridge for train
21 traffic and you said you saw the green light? You saw there's a
22 green signal?

23 A. Correct. I don't close it for the train traffic. I
24 close it for working on the bridge.

25 Q. Yeah, but you close it?

1 A. Yes. Okay, yes. For a train, yes.

2 Q. Do you shunt the tracks or anything?

3 A. No.

4 Q. All right. So shouldn't the track be shunted before you
5 can get a signal?

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No.

7 BY MR. NOON:

8 Q. No?

9 A. Not in remote.

10 Q. Not in remote. Oh, okay.

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Not in local.

12 MR. SCHAFFERT: I'm sorry, not in local.

13 BY MR. NOON:

14 Q. Not in local, not in local, okay. Okay.

15 Do you get called out for trouble?

16 A. Sometimes.

17 Q. Okay. Have you ever gone on to trouble and seen -- have
18 seen the bridge closed but the bar -- but the slide rails not
19 driven?

20 A. No.

21 Q. Every time you've gone out there the rails have been
22 driven?

23 A. Correct.

24 Q. The slide rails? Okay. That's enough. Thank you.

25 MR. HANSLER: Charlie Hansler. No questions.

1 BY MR. KILLINGBECK:

2 Q. David Killingbeck. One or two questions. How do
3 you -- first off, do you understand the term the slide rails or
4 the slide locks?

5 A. Correct, yes.

6 Q. Do you grease those?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. How do you go about greasing the slide locks
9 particularly on the north end?

10 A. The north end, which are the new locks, all have brand
11 new grease fittings in it. There's one, two, three, four, five --
12 I do believe there's five on each side. There's three on the --
13 actually there's five on the inside and I think two on the
14 outside.

15 Q. And that introduces grease where?

16 A. Onto the side of the slide rails. And I do believe it
17 is -- and the keepers, keeper plates and the slide rail and the
18 wall of the rail.

19 Q. Is there any means built in to introduce grease beneath
20 the slide rail, between the surface of the bed plate and --

21 A. I do believe there is. Because it's well greased. I
22 always make sure that everything's good and lubed and there's no
23 -- you know, you don't see any clean steel on it anywhere. So, it
24 does lube the whole slide on the north side.

25 Q. Okay. I understand that there's a bearing in the crow's

1 nest or at the top of the A-frame.

2 A. Correct.

3 Q. Do you ever grease that?

4 A. We did that 3 weeks ago, I do believe.

5 Q. And that grease is for the --

6 A. In the same -- they got grease fittings up there. And I
7 do that also either the bridge is open and the bridge is closed,
8 but the -- and so you get it variable places where the grease will
9 go. It would be in different positions.

10 Q. You said that before that you alternate between greasing
11 it with the bridge closed. In other words, it's -- the river is
12 obstructed and with the bridge open. But with the bridge open,
13 how do you get to the north end of the bridge?

14 A. You don't have to -- there is no grease fittings on
15 land, on the north side other than the seats where the bridge --

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. -- lands. There is no grease fittings on the north side
18 on the land -- on -- what the heck is it called -- the span,
19 right? No, not the span, I'm sorry, the --

20 Q. Yeah, approach span.

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. Do you ever have opportunity to brush any grease or
23 dribble any grease on --

24 A. We'll brush grease in the gaps where it slides in.

25 Q. -- where the slide locks --

1 A. Slides in the -- yes, where the slides lock --

2 Q. -- go into the base assembly on the approach?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Okay. How do you grease the bearing plates on top of
5 the rest pier, where the north end of the swing span lands?

6 A. We got a long pole to reach down. Is that what -- the
7 seats or the rest span for the slides?

8 Q. No. No, where the bridge girders themselves sit down at
9 the north end where they rest.

10 A. We have a long pole that reaches down there.

11 Q. So do you stop the action of the bridge part way?

12 A. You stop it -- you stop the bridge --

13 Q. Do you --

14 A. -- almost closed and then get off and you can grease it
15 and then you can continue through the cycle.

16 Q. How do you stop it?

17 A. You hit -- sorry. Sorry.

18 (Cell phone ringing.)

19 MR. SCHAFFERT: There you go.

20 You hit -- you can either hit emergency stop in the
21 through cycle.

22 BY MR. KILLINGBECK:

23 Q. That -- so the E stop is the only way --

24 A. Or you can hit --

25 Q. -- emergency stop --

1 A. Or you can hit the stop -- there's a stop motion button
2 on it also, I do believe. But usually we use the stop button, the
3 emergency stop button.

4 Q. Does that introduce any kind of error code that
5 displays?

6 A. Other than an emergency -- it says emergency stop
7 buttons on.

8 Q. And then when you pull the emergency stop button back
9 out, it just continues --

10 A. You can just start it back up and it will go back
11 through its cycle.

12 Q. So, the emergency stop button is like a doorbell, you
13 push it and it bounces back?

14 A. No. You push it and it stays in.

15 Q. So you have to manually pull it back out?

16 A. And you have to manually pull it back out.

17 Q. And it continues?

18 A. Yeah, correct.

19 Q. Okay. That's the only thing I have.

20 MR. DEPAEPE: I don't have any follow-up questions.

21 Mr. Gura?

22 MR. GURA: Yes, I just have one.

23 BY MR. GURA:

24 Q. You explained how you greased the north end with the
25 Zerks, over there, the grease fittings.

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. What do you do on the south end?

3 A. The south end we usually brush the lube in there. There
4 is some grease fittings there. There's a couple of -- it's
5 about -- we usually brush it on, the grease. There's a couple
6 grease fittings, I do believe. I don't recall right at the
7 moment. But we'll brush grease -- if you see any kind of shiny
8 metal or anything or if it's -- if it is, we'll put grease on it
9 just because that's what you need grease for, you know?

10 Q. Okay. All right.

11 A. It's a good place to grease, you know? If it isn't
12 wiped clean.

13 MR. DEPAEPE: Mr. Bilson?

14 MR. BILSON: I have nothing else, thank you.

15 MR. DEPAEPE: Mr. Tracy?

16 MR. TRACY: Nothing else.

17 MR. DEPAEPE: Mr. Noon?

18 MR. NOON: No further questions.

19 MR. DEPAEPE: Mr. Hansler?

20 MR. HANSLER: No.

21 MR. DEPAEPE: Mr. Killingbeck?

22 MR. KILLINGBECK: No further questions.

23 BY MR. DEPAEPE:

24 Q. I want to specifically ask you if you worked at the
25 bridge in the 24 hours prior to the accident? The accident

1 occurred at approximately 7 a.m. on November 30th. So that would
2 pretty much mean anytime on the 29th of November.

3 A. No.

4 Q. No? What I'd like to do now, at this time, is to
5 provide you with an opportunity to add anything that you might
6 think would help us with our investigation into this accident.
7 Anything we may have missed or something you may know that you may
8 think would be helpful to us?

9 A. No, I have nothing.

10 Q. All right.

11 MR. DEPAEPE: Well, I want to thank you for your time
12 here. And it is 6:25 p.m., and that concludes this interview.
13 Thank you.

14 (Whereupon, at 6:25 p.m., the interview was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: CONRAIL DERAILMENT/HAZARDOUS
 MATERIAL RELEASE
 PAULSBORO, NEW JERSEY
 NOVEMBER 30, 2012
 Interview of William Schaffert

DOCKET NUMBER: DCA-13-MR-002

PLACE: Paulsboro, New Jersey

DATE: December 5, 2012

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.

Amy Weston
Transcriber