

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

NTSB - Interview of Bridge and Building Department Mechanic_3

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: NEWT WALLEN

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
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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

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>I N D E X</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Interview of Newt Wallen:		
By Mr. DePaepe		5
By Mr. Gura		7
By Mr. Tracy		10
By Mr. Noon		11
By Mr. Killingbeck		13
By Mr. DePaepe		15

I N T E R V I E W

1
2 MR. DEPAEPE: This is Tim DePaepe, D-e-P-a-e-p-e. I'm a
3 signal accident investigator with the National Transportation
4 Safety Board. We're here today to interview Mr. Newt Wallen with
5 Conrail. And this pertains to a specific accident at the
6 Paulsboro moveable bridge at approximately milepost 13.7. And
7 this accident is identified as DCA-13-MR-002. That's an NTSB
8 identifier number.

9 I'm going to go around the room now and have each
10 individual here identify themselves, starting to my right.

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

13 MR. BILSON: Thomas Bilson, B-i-l-s-o-n, Assistant Chief
14 Engineer, Maintenance of Way and Structures, Conrail.

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

17 MR. NOON: Thomas Noon, N-o-o-n, Federal Railroad
18 Administration, Signal and Train Control Inspector.

19 MR. WALLEN: Newt Wallen, W-a-l-l-e-n, Conrail, B&B.

20 MR. HANSLER: Charlie Hansler, Union Rep, BMW
21 Teamsters.

22 MR. KILLINGBECK: David Killingbeck,
23 K-i-l-l-i-n-g-b-e-c-k, Chief Engineer Structures, Federal Railroad
24 Administration.

25 MR. DEPAEPE: Thank you, gentlemen.

1 This is Tim DePaepe again.

2 INTERVIEW OF NEWT WALLEN

3 BY MR. DEPAEPE:

4 Q. Mr. Wallen, I'd like to ask you specifically about a
5 couple trouble tickets and your possible involvement with those
6 trouble tickets.

7 Let's start with the one identified as 62816. The
8 problem was bridge did not open after train. It occurred on
9 November 21st, 2012. The repairs, it says none, and then in
10 parens it says, (COA, under investigation). Under notes it says,
11 "Crew reports bridge was closed upon arrival but they did not have
12 a signal. Crew visually inspected bridge and were talked by
13 signal by dispatcher. After train cleared bridge, bridge
14 announced failure to operate. Informed Supervisor Hill."

15 What I'd like you to do, Mr. Wallen, is to just tell me
16 in your own words what transpired that day; did you get called;
17 what did you do when you get out there and just describe it from
18 start to finish, if you could, please?

19 A. On that morning we were -- me and Frank Forant were
20 asked to go to the Paulsboro moveable bridge and get codes that
21 were reading on the computer on what -- any problem codes with the
22 computer, and we did that.

23 Q. Okay. Do you remember what those codes were or the
24 significance or was it just your job to get the codes and relay
25 those back?

1 A. It was just our job to get the codes and relay back,
2 which Frank Forant has paperwork on.

3 Q. Okay. Were you involved in the troubleshooting of any
4 error codes you may have found or, again, like you said, you just
5 got the codes and then other people came out and took care of the
6 problem?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Okay. So, to your knowledge -- that's the extent of
9 your knowledge relating to that event?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Okay, thank you. Let's go to event 62874. Paulsboro
12 bridge. Problem was a bulb out. Date reported, November 28th.
13 It said: Repairs, replace bulbs. Cause, bulb out. "Dispatcher
14 reports a bulb out on the distant signal to Paulsboro bridge."

15 Tell me your involvement with that incident, if any.

16 A. On that day I was sent out to do greasing on the bridge.
17 When I come up to the bridge, the bridge was closed, which was a
18 little unusual because it should have been open. I walked out
19 onto the bridge with Ian Golden and noticed that the locks weren't
20 in place. The bridge was closed, but not -- the locks weren't
21 thrown. Immediately called -- I had Gary Golden called, the track
22 inspector. He came out as soon as possible.

23 In the meantime, a train pulled up on us. And at that
24 time it was a red light. At that time the train had stopped there
25 and I spoke to the conductor. The conductor got off the truck --

1 off the train and walked the bridge with me. And he had told me
2 he had a green light. And I asked him to hold up until the bridge
3 inspector, Gary Golden, got there.

4 Q. Okay. All right, I'm going to shift gears a little bit
5 because I forgot to ask you your date of hire and just like your
6 work history, like what kind of jobs you've worked?

7 A. May 14th I started with Conrail. So it's about 2-1/2
8 years. B&B for probably 2 years of it. I'm on the bridge roster,
9 track roster. Anything else?

10 Q. Okay. And the job you currently are working right now,
11 what's that title?

12 A. B&B.

13 Q. Okay.

14 MR. DEPAEPE: I'm going to pass the questioning over to
15 Mr. Gura at this time.

16 BY MR. GURA:

17 Q. Newt, I need a little bit more clarification because
18 when you were speaking I was kind of writing and didn't get it all
19 down on that 62874. You were greasing the, basically, the -- the
20 trouble ticket basically says "bulb out" and it does not have
21 anything what you did to do with the bulb out. It's basically you
22 guys are out there greasing the bridge and when you arrived out
23 there the bridge was closed. When you say closed, it was closed
24 to marine traffic and basically open for rail traffic?

25 A. Yes, sir.

1 Q. Okay. And did you say that it was not locked in
2 position?

3 A. It was not locked in position.

4 Q. Not locked.

5 A. The locks were not thrown.

6 Q. Not locked. Now, did you personally see what the signal
7 was? Did you say that it was red or did you say the conductor
8 said it was green?

9 A. The signal was red. When we got there the signal was
10 red.

11 Q. Okay. But once the train got onto the circuit it turned
12 green?

13 A. Once the train got on the circuit, he said to me, "It's
14 green." And I asked him to take a walk with me.

15 Q. Then when you went to walk with the conductor, had the
16 locks engaged?

17 A. The locks engaged.

18 Q. The locks engaged?

19 A. The locks were locked.

20 Q. And you hadn't manipulated anything?

21 A. I did not go into the building.

22 Q. You didn't, okay. And had he operated remotely?

23 A. I don't know.

24 Q. Don't know, okay. Did he say anything about -- he
25 didn't say anything that he operated remotely, did he?

1 A. No.

2 Q. Oh, okay. When you were told to get the codes, did you
3 write the codes down over in the B&B PLC bungalow, on that sheet
4 of paper, then?

5 A. I didn't.

6 Q. The other guy did?

7 A. The other guy did.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. And he has them with him.

10 Q. And he has it with him. Okay. The -- just his copy for
11 the day, not that whole sheet, does he?

12 A. I think he has the original and a copy.

13 Q. All right. Have you ever been involved in any of the
14 bridge inspections?

15 A. No, sir.

16 Q. No. Primarily when you go on the bridge, it's primarily
17 for lubricating?

18 A. Lubricating and maintenance. Just, you know, any loose
19 bolts on it, welding. I'll go with the welder.

20 Q. You know, those are the ones that we asked you to
21 review. Thinking back to the most recent incident -- you know,
22 basically, it would be the day before the derailment. Could you
23 think back in your mind, were there any other times that you were
24 on the bridge and did some work with anybody? You know, kind of
25 going back --

1 A. No.

2 Q. -- and expanding out? No?

3 A. No.

4 Q. No further questions.

5 MR. DEPAEPE: Mr. Bilson?

6 MR. BILSON: I don't think I have any questions.

7 MR. DEPAEPE: Mr. Tracy?

8 BY MR. TRACY:

9 Q. Yes, I just -- one clarification. When you arrived at
10 the bridge, the signal was red --

11 A. The signal was red.

12 Q. -- and the locks are withdrawn --

13 A. The locks were withdrawn.

14 Q. -- the rail, the slide rails are withdrawn?

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. Then at some point the train arrived and then you met
17 the conductor on the bridge?

18 A. Uh-huh.

19 Q. And at that point he said he had a green signal?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. But -- and the locks were driven at that point?

22 A. The locks were driven.

23 Q. Okay. That's it. I just wanted to clarify that. Thank
24 you.

25 MR. DEPAEPE: All right. Mr. Noon?

1 BY MR. NOON:

2 Q. When you say the signals were red -- now, I'm assuming
3 you came in on the East Commerce side, which would be the south
4 side of the bridge, and you drove down that road?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Okay. So you get out of the truck. So the first signal
7 you saw was the 1N, the one going north?

8 A. Coming in from the gate --

9 Q. Yeah, you're coming in from the gate, right?

10 A. That's the one I saw.

11 Q. The bridge is here. The one you saw over here, was the
12 -- that's the 1N?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Did you walk on the other side to see the 1S?

15 A. No.

16 Q. So we don't know the condition of the signal on 1
17 outside?

18 A. No, not from me.

19 Q. Okay. When you walked on the bridge and you saw that
20 the slide rails were not driven, all right, but the train wasn't
21 there yet?

22 A. It was not there yet.

23 Q. Okay. So then the train comes in, the conductor gets
24 down, he walks over with you and now they're driven?

25 A. They're locked.

1 Q. Okay. Did you hear them drive?

2 A. No.

3 Q. You --

4 A. No.

5 Q. Okay. Were they driven on both sides of the bridge?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. No, no, I mean when you first walked up there and they
8 weren't driven, was the north and south side both not driven?

9 A. They both weren't driven.

10 Q. Both weren't driven?

11 A. Both of them.

12 Q. And then when you walked the track with the conductor
13 they were both driven --

14 A. They were all -- all four.

15 Q. -- on both -- all four sides were driven, okay. But
16 then you don't know what the condition of the 1S signal was on the
17 one that the engine was looking at?

18 A. No. No.

19 Q. But, he -- the engineer -- the conductor said it was
20 green?

21 A. It was green. And I never checked -- after he told me
22 it was green, I never checked again. I held him up for the bridge
23 inspector.

24 Q. Okay. So, you drove up, saw a red signal, you walked
25 across the bridge, realized that they weren't driven, the train

1 comes, he gets out of the train, he talks to you --

2 A. We walk together.

3 Q. -- and walk together and now everything is driven?

4 A. Now it's all locked.

5 Q. Everything is fine. Now, you or the other B&B, you
6 never reset anything? You never pressed any buttons? You never
7 did anything?

8 A. I never went in the -- I never went in.

9 Q. You never went in the box, okay. And now, Mr. Golden,
10 Sr. showed up then, right?

11 A. Yes, sir.

12 Q. Now, did the train then leave or did it leave before he
13 showed up?

14 A. No, he spoke to the conductor too.

15 Q. He spoke to the conductor too, okay. That's it.

16 MR. DEPAEPE: Mr. Hansler?

17 MR. HANSLER: No questions.

18 MR. DEPAEPE: Mr. Killingbeck?

19 BY MR. KILLINGBECK:

20 Q. This is David Killingbeck again. Newt, you came there
21 with Frank Forant to get codes.

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. And just -- I think you just answered this for Mr. Noon,
24 but you did not go into the bungalow, the B&B bungalow, where the
25 computer or the PLC is located. Is that correct?

1 A. This is a different day. This is the day -- this is a
2 completely different day.

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: What are we talking about?

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'm confused.

5 MR. WALLEN: This is the Wednesday.

6 MR. KILLINGBECK: I'm talking about -- where's --

7 MR. WALLEN: The 21st?

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Wednesday the 28th, I thought you
9 said.

10 BY MR. KILLINGBECK:

11 Q. What day did you go there to --

12 A. The 21st is when I went with Frank Forant, was the 21st.

13 Q. Okay. To collect codes.

14 A. Collect codes.

15 Q. And was that the day where you observed a red signal
16 and --

17 A. That was the 28th.

18 Q. Oh.

19 A. That was the Wednesday before Thanksgiving.

20 Q. Oh, excuse me.

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You were with Evan [sic] when you
22 saw the switch --

23 MR. WALLEN: Ian.

24 BY MR. KILLINGBECK:

25 Q. Ian, okay. Going back to the date that you were sent

1 there to obtain the codes --

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. -- with Frank Forant, to get those codes, were you --

4 A. He went.

5 Q. He went in; you did not?

6 A. No.

7 Q. Then I don't have any more questions.

8 MR. DEPAEPE: All right. This is Tim DePaepe again. I
9 don't have any follow-up questions at this time. Mr. Gura?

10 MR. GURA: None here.

11 MR. DEPAEPE: Mr. Bilson?

12 MR. BILSON: None for me.

13 MR. DEPAEPE: Mr. Tracy?

14 MR. TRACY: None.

15 MR. DEPAEPE: Mr. Noon?

16 MR. NOON: No further questions.

17 MR. DEPAEPE: Mr. Hansler?

18 MR. HANSLER: No.

19 MR. DEPAEPE: Mr. Killingbeck?

20 MR. KILLINGBECK: No.

21 MR. DEPAEPE: All right.

22 BY MR. DEPAEPE:

23 Q. I want to specifically ask you if you had worked at the
24 Paulsboro moveable bridge within 24 hours of the accident? The
25 accident occurred approximately 7 a.m. on 11/30/2012. Did you

1 work there on the 29th at all?

2 A. No.

3 Q. Okay. While we asked about specific things related to
4 the trouble tickets, I'm just curious, to the best of your
5 recollection, if you can recall having to do any work at that
6 location from approximately when Hurricane Sandy came, October
7 27th, until current -- until November 30th, not including what
8 we've just talked about.

9 A. No.

10 Q. I mean, were there any additional times that you can
11 recall?

12 A. No.

13 Q. Okay. What I'd like to do at this time is to give you
14 an opportunity, if there's anything you may know or think might
15 add value to our investigation to help us determine what happened
16 here, this is your opportunity to do that and help us out. If you
17 don't have anything, that's okay also.

18 A. I have nothing.

19 MR. DEPAEPE: All right. Mr. Wallen, we really
20 appreciate your time being here. And it is 5:32 p.m. and thereby
21 I'm going to conclude this investigation. Thank you very much.

22 (Whereupon, at 5:32 p.m., the interview was concluded.)

23

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 Newt Wallen

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