

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

NTSB - Interview of Conrail Bridge and Building Department Mechanic_1

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: FRANK FORANT

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 Frank Forant:		
By Mr. DePaepe		5
By Mr. Gura		6
By Mr. Bilson		9
By Mr. Tracy		10
By Mr. Noon		10
By Mr. Killingbeck		12
By Mr. Noon		13
By Mr. Killingbeck		14
By Mr. Noon		14
By Mr. DePaepe		15

I N T E R V I E W

(5:40 p.m.)

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2
3 MR. DEPAEPE: It's 5:40 p.m. on December 5th, 2012. My
4 name is Tim DePaepe, D-e-P-a-e-p-e. I'm a railroad accident
5 investigator, specialty in signals, for the National
6 Transportation Safety Board. We're here to talk about the
7 Paulsboro movable bridge and the derailment/hazmat release on
8 November 30th, 2012. We're going to talk about trouble tickets
9 relating to this location and this is a specific interview of
10 Mr. Frank Forant.

11 And at this time, I'm going to have everyone around the
12 room introduce themselves, spell their last name, and say what
13 their position is and what company they work for. For
14 identification purposes this accident number is known as DCA-13-
15 MR-02 and that's an NTSB identifier number. At this time, I'm
16 going to ask Mr. Gura, to my right, to identify himself.

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

19 MR. BILSON: Tom Bilson, B-i-l-s-o-n, Assistant Chief
20 Engineer, Maintenance of Way and Structures, Conrail.

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

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

25 MR. FORANT: Frank Forant, F-o-r-a-n-t, B&B mechanic,

1 Conrail.

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

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

7 MR. DEPAEPE: Thank you, gentlemen. This is Tim DePaepe
8 again.

9 INTERVIEW OF FRANK FORANT

10 BY MR. DEPAEPE:

11 Q. Mr. Forant, can you tell me your hire date and a brief
12 summary of your work history, various jobs you've held on Conrail?

13 A. I was hired June 1st, 2½ years ago. I believe it's --
14 whatever that year is, 2010, '09?

15 Q. '10.

16 A. And my previous work history was 12 years in Local 19
17 Sheet Metal Workers as a sheet metal mechanic doing custom
18 fabrication for various structures, signage structures, and custom
19 aluminum fabrication for stadium work and things of that nature.

20 Q. Okay. What job do you currently hold with Conrail?

21 A. B&B mechanic.

22 Q. And does the accident area -- is that part of your
23 territory?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. All right. At this point I'm going to pass the

1 questioning along to Mr. Cy Gura.

2 BY MR. GURA:

3 Q. Frank, going back to the trouble log sheet. Have you
4 had a chance to review it?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. What reference numbers pertain to you specifically?

7 A. 62816.

8 Q. And basically, in the narrative column, what does it
9 say?

10 A. "Crew reports bridge was closed upon arrival but they
11 did not have a signal. Crew visually inspected bridge and were
12 talked by signal via dispatcher. After train cleared bridge,
13 bridge announced failure to operate, informed Supervisor Hill."

14 Q. Okay. What's your involvement with that? Just tell me
15 what you all did and how did you get involved in this?

16 A. Oh, on that date, 11/21, I was instructed by my
17 supervisor, Ryan Hill, to go out and obtain the error codes that
18 were coming up on the computer, the bridge operation computer, and
19 write them down and bring them back to him so they can see it,
20 what actually was coming up at the time this train crew had gone
21 over.

22 And when I arrived at the bridge, the bridge was closed
23 but the locks weren't thrown, and I had instructed my supervisor
24 on that. And I wrote down the error codes, which I have here.

25 Q. Okay. And what are the error codes that you retrieved?

1 A. The first area [sic] code was a limit, sw.faultnorth-
2 TLNK8LS2A/B(26). The second one was failed to open (78). The
3 third was failed to close (79). And the fourth was high pressure,
4 filter clogged (41). And like I said, when I arrived, the bridge
5 was closed but not lined and locked.

6 Q. Okay. Do you know what any of those codes mean? Have
7 you ever been instructed on the codes, their meaning?

8 A. The first one, limit, sw., no, I couldn't tell you what
9 that means.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. I mean, the other two, failed to open, failed to close,
12 are pretty basic. The high pressure filter, all I know about that
13 is they were having a problem with the filter being clogged
14 and --

15 Q. And the hydraulic --

16 A. Right.

17 Q. Now, you said you are a mechanic. Do the mechanics take
18 care of that?

19 A. As far as the high pressure filter?

20 Q. Yes.

21 A. No, I -- not to my knowledge.

22 Q. Okay. Who takes care of that?

23 A. Like, I would assume it's an outside contractor.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. Reason being is because I've never worked on it. I was

1 never instructed on working on it, so --

2 Q. And do you know of anybody in the B&B that does work on
3 it?

4 A. No.

5 Q. Okay. We're going to go off the record here for a
6 moment. It is currently 5:46.

7 (Off the record.)

8 (On the record.)

9 MR. DEPAEPE: It's 5:47 p.m. This is Tim DePaepe.
10 We're back on the record. Mr. Gura's going to continue his
11 questioning of Mr. Forant.

12 BY MR. GURA:

13 Q. Okay. So, you wrote the codes down for your own record?

14 A. No, for my supervisor, Ryan Hill.

15 Q. Okay. Did you also write the codes down in that little
16 pad of paper that's inside the B&B bungalow there too when you --

17 A. No, I did not.

18 Q. Okay. Besides what's listed on the sheet there, do you
19 recall going back, as far as prior to the accident -- starting
20 back then, just thinking back, have you been on that bridge
21 anything other than that one time?

22 A. If I had been on there -- I mean, I can't tell you an
23 exact date -- it would be to grease the bridge.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. You know, all the moveable parts and whatnot. That

1 would be the only reason I'd be back there.

2 Q. And that is your only experience then is that one time
3 just to retrieve the codes and your description of what you've
4 seen on the bridge, and then anything prior to that, you greased
5 the bridge?

6 A. Yeah, I see no mechanical issue.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. To the best of my knowledge.

9 Q. Okay. I don't have any further questions.

10 MR. DEPAEPE: Mr. Bilson?

11 BY MR. BILSON:

12 Q. Frank, I just have one question. When the -- you
13 arrived you said the bridge was lined but it wasn't locked.

14 A. Correct.

15 Q. How did you leave that? Did you do anything or did you
16 just leave it that way?

17 A. I hit the reset and reset after I copied the codes.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. I reset the code -- I mean, hit the reset button. And
20 then I put it in local and I operated the bridge.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. The bridge opened, and then after it was finished
23 opened, I closed it. And the bridge closed and locked in local,
24 normal operation announcements, all that. And then before I left,
25 I reopened the bridge and put it back in auto.

1 Q. Okay. So, reset, local, bridge opened, you ran it
2 again, bridge closed without incident, locked, recycled it, opened
3 up, and then you left?

4 A. Correct.

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

6 MR. DEPAEPE: Mr. Tracy?

7 MR. TRACY: Yes.

8 BY MR. TRACY:

9 Q. When you arrived at the bridge and saw it was unlocked,
10 did you happen to notice what the signal -- what color the signal
11 was?

12 A. That I didn't look at, no.

13 Q. Okay. How about after you operated it and had it in the
14 -- had it lined and locked for rail traffic and all the
15 announcements were correct?

16 A. I didn't look at the signal, no.

17 Q. Okay, thank you.

18 MR. DEPAEPE: Mr. Noon?

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible) head.

20 BY MR. NOON:

21 Q. I'm getting (indiscernible) too.

22 You went out there -- now you reset -- you reset the
23 button and the locks -- you arrived on the location, the bridge
24 was closed, but the locks were on driven?

25 A. Right.

- 1 Q. Okay.
- 2 A. Correct.
- 3 Q. You took the codes and then you reset it?
- 4 A. Right.
- 5 Q. When it reset, what happened? Did it open or did it
6 lock?
- 7 A. No, when I reset it, it opened it. Once I put it in
8 local, it opened.
- 9 Q. It opened. It didn't -- since the bars were already
10 withdrawn, it didn't reset it, it just swung open?
- 11 A. Right. Exactly.
- 12 Q. Okay. All right.
- 13 A. Like it would normally if --
- 14 Q. And now this -- refresh my memory, that report came from
15 a train?
- 16 A. This was a train crew, this report, yes.
- 17 Q. Was the train there?
- 18 A. No, the train had already gone past.
- 19 Q. So, the train had gone --
- 20 A. There was no train traffic when I was there at all.
- 21 Q. Okay. But the train had already passed?
- 22 A. I would have to assume.
- 23 Q. But the rails were withdrawn?
- 24 A. Right.
- 25 Q. Okay. So then you reset it. It swung open. You hit it

1 to open -- to close. It closed. You operated it a couple of
2 times and everything worked normal.

3 A. On local control --

4 Q. On local control.

5 A. -- everything worked normal.

6 Q. On local control.

7 A. Right. Inside the building itself. Not from the
8 outside. Inside the building.

9 Q. All right. Okay, thanks.

10 MR. DEPAEPE: Mr. Hansler?

11 MR. HANSLER: No questions.

12 MR. DEPAEPE: Mr. Killingbeck?

13 MR. KILLINGBECK: Yes, David Killingbeck.

14 BY MR. KILLINGBECK:

15 Q. In order to collect these codes, do you have to delete
16 the code as you scroll through the list and write each one down or
17 when you hit the reset button that just -- that clears them all?

18 A. Well, I don't know how to scroll. All I know is the
19 codes flash up one at a time.

20 Q. Oh.

21 A. They'll flash up in that little square box.

22 Q. So, you have --

23 A. So, I have to wait for it to --

24 Q. -- a few seconds to --

25 A. Yeah, so I had to do it a couple of times to get it

1 correct. And then after I got all the codes, you know, because
2 this -- the first one, the SW, took a couple of flickers for me to
3 get it, to write it complete. But, you know, after that, after I
4 got all the codes and seen they went through, cycled a couple of
5 times, then I reset it.

6 Q. Do you have to do something to make it start cycling
7 through these codes or you walk in the door --

8 A. No, when I walked in the door it was doing it.

9 Q. It's already just --

10 A. Right.

11 Q. -- rolling through them? Okay. That's the only
12 questions I have.

13 MR. DEPAEPE: Okay, thank you, sir. I don't have any
14 follow-ups at this time. I'm going to go around the table one
15 more time. Mr. Bilson?

16 MR. BILSON: I didn't -- no, thanks.

17 MR. DEPAEPE: Mr. Tracy?

18 MR. TRACY: Nope.

19 MR. DEPAEPE: Mr. Nook -- Mr. Noon?

20 BY MR. NOON:

21 Q. Is there -- when you go in the house it's locked, right,
22 into the shed?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. It's locked. And the manual control is inside?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. So you have to have a lock to get inside?

2 A. A key to get inside.

3 Q. A key to get inside, okay.

4 A. Right.

5 Q. And the reset button is not locked separately, that's
6 all inside?

7 A. That's (indiscernible) --

8 Q. So it's one lock and you're in?

9 A. You can get in the door, you do it, yeah.

10 Q. Okay, that's good.

11 MR. DEPAEPE: Mr. Hansler?

12 MR. HANSLER: No questions.

13 MR. DEPAEPE: Mr. Killingbeck?

14 MR. KILLINGBECK: David Killingbeck, one follow-up.

15 BY MR. KILLINGBECK:

16 Q. I think you stated that when you pushed the reset
17 button, the bridge immediately opened.

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Okay, thank you.

20 MR. NOON: Can I have more questions, or no?

21 MR. DEPAEPE: Mr. Noon?

22 BY MR. NOON:

23 Q. Have you done this before? Have you reset the bridge
24 before on other occasions?

25 A. Not to my knowledge, no.

1 Q. Okay.

2 MR. DEPAEPE: Thank you.

3 BY MR. DEPAEPE:

4 Q. We were talking about a specific incident, Mr. Forant.
5 Have you worked on that bridge any other times between, like,
6 October 27th and the accident date of November 30th, like since
7 Sandy to the accident, Hurricane Sandy?

8 A. If I had worked on it, I don't know the specific date,
9 but it would be just to grease the mechanisms.

10 Q. Okay. So pretty much you're greasing and --

11 A. Visual inspection.

12 Q. Visual inspections of the bridge?

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. Okay. Had you worked on that bridge within 24 hours
15 prior to the accident time? And the accident at the bridge
16 occurred approximately at 7 a.m. on November 30th. Do you recall
17 working on a bridge on November 29th at all?

18 A. November 29th, no.

19 Q. No. Okay.

20 A. I did not.

21 Q. All right. Thank you, sir. We're going to wrap up this
22 interview pretty quickly. At this time I'd like to ask you if
23 there's anything that you might know or might think is pertinent
24 to this investigation and, if so, to speak about it now.

25 A. I have nothing further.

1 Q. All right. Well, I appreciate your time here,
2 Mr. Forant. It is currently 5:56 p.m. and we -- this interview is
3 concluded. Thank you.

4 (Whereupon, at 5:56 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 Frank Forant

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