

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Investigation of: \*

COLLISION OF TWO UNION PACIFIC \*

FREIGHT TRAINS NEAR GALVA, KANSAS \* Docket No.: DCA-14-FR-012

SEPTEMBER 25, 2014 \*

\* \* \* \* \*

Telephonic Interview of: TOM LEDDY

McPherson, Kansas

Saturday,  
September 27, 2014

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice.

BEFORE: DAVID BUCHER  
Rail Accident Investigator

## APPEARANCES:

DAVID BUCHER, Rail Accident Investigator  
Operations Group Chairman  
National Transportation Safety Board  
Washington, D.C.

STEPHEN JENNER, Ph.D., Human Performance Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board  
Washington, D.C.

REUBEN PAYAN, Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board

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Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)

CARL SMITH  
SMART Transportation Safety Team  
Denver, Colorado

GARY GASKILL, Senior Manager - Operating Practices  
Union Pacific Railroad  
Kansas City Service Unit

KEVIN HARMER, Director of Road Operations  
Union Pacific Railroad  
Kansas City Service Unit

STEVE LORD  
Union Pacific Railroad

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## I N T E R V I E W

MR. BUCHER: This is David Bucher, Operations Group Chairman for the NTSB Accident Number DCA-14-FR-012. This is September 28th [sic]. This is the interview of Mr. Tom Leddy, Train Dispatcher for the Union Pacific Railroad in Omaha, Nebraska. And this is a telephone interview. Mr. Leddy is in Omaha. The Operations Group is in McPherson, Kansas.

We'll go around the group, the table here and introduce everyone. If you could speak up for the recorder.

MR. PAYAN: Good morning, my name is Ruben Payan,  
P-a-y-a-n. I'm an investigator with the National Transportation  
Safety Board.

MR. SMITH: Carl Smith, C-a-r-l, S-m-i-t-h, SMART  
Transportation Safety Team.

MR. JENNER: Stephen Jenner, S-t-e-p-h-e-n, J-e-n-n-e-r,  
with the NTSB.

MR. HARMER: Kevin, K-e-v-i-n, Harmer, H-a-r-m-e-r,  
Union Pacific.

MR. GASKILL: Gary Gaskill, G-a-r-y, G-a-s-k-i-l-l,  
Union Pacific.

MR. ZAGATA: Zach, Z-a-c-h, Zagata, Z-a-g-a-t-a, FRA.

MR. LORD: Steve Lord, S-t-e-v-e, L-o-r-d, Union Pacific.

INTERVIEW OF TOM LEDDY

BY MR. BUCHER:

1           Q.    Okay, Tom.  Dave Bucher again.  And that's our group  
2   this morning.  If you would please, could you go back to the day  
3   of September 25th, the day of the accident?  And if you could,  
4   just recount the story that you have concerning the operation of  
5   the two trains involved?

6           A.    Sure.  I guess the first thing that I sort of remember  
7   from I guess my -- I had talked to the train before, but the first  
8   thing I kind of remember standing out is the warrant I issued to  
9   get them up to control point TC 210, that making a meet at Inman,  
10  the ILX-G4X or the 22nd.  And I had typed up the warrant from  
11  Inman to CPTC 210, but when I read the warrant to them, I read it  
12  as from Inman to CPTC 248.

13                   The crew caught that and corrected me, saying that hey,  
14  we're a eastbound train.  We're going to CPTC 210.  I reworded it  
15  and, you know, they repeated it back correct, the correct limits  
16  and okayed the warrant and everything from there.

17                   And then the next time I talked to them is when my  
18  emergency light went off after the -- after they had struck the --  
19  sorry, the KB4GSX23 was pulling into the siding at Galva there.  
20  And when I answered the call, they said that they were coming down  
21  the main, that they had felt that they had a -- or said that he  
22  had a proceed signal and then it dropped red, and then they struck  
23  the train pulling into the siding.

24                   I asked if the crew was, you know, hurt or injured or if  
25  anything was needed.  He said that they didn't feel like they

1   needed ambulance. I then contacted the train that was struck to  
2   see if that train was stopped there. They said that they were  
3   stopped and in emergency. I asked them if they needed any  
4   ambulance or any assistance. They said that they did not.

5           At that point I contacted our SEC to let him know what  
6   was going on. And I believe that initially I gave them the mile  
7   pole for CPTC 210 instead of CPTC 208, but by the end of the call  
8   I corrected it and made sure that they were heading to the right  
9   location.

10           Then I went back to get some more information from the  
11   crew on the ILXG4X. I don't exactly remember what was -- what I  
12   asked at that point. Then, you know, I had my Corridor come over  
13   to kind of monitor the situation.

14           I believe that's when he asked me to ask the crew if  
15   they knew how many cars had derailed on either train. The crew  
16   said that the lead engine on the ILXG4 had tipped over, and that  
17   they believed four or five cars had derailed at that point. They  
18   said that, from their vantage point, they couldn't see if any of  
19   the cars were -- they couldn't tell how many cars had derailed on  
20   the KB4GSX23.

21           I also asked if there was any fire or immediate hazards  
22   I need a report on at that point. The crew said that they  
23   couldn't see any fires from their vantage point.

24           So after that conversation and hearing that the lead  
25   locomotive had tipped over, I talked with my Corridor and kind of

1 thought that maybe the crew might have been in some shock or  
2 something. So I decided to send an ambulance at that point in  
3 case their being -- if they're injured at that point and just  
4 shaken up and, you know, not thinking quite straight, so. I  
5 decided to send an ambulance at that point.

6 Had another dispatcher that was sitting next to me that  
7 was overhearing what was going on. He helped me put blocks on the  
8 boards on my screen and everything. And kind of had me think of  
9 other questions that might be pertinent to the situation.

10 I don't know. Can't really think of anything else. I  
11 mean, yeah, sorry, nothing comes to mind right now.

12 Q. Okay. That's actually very good, a very good  
13 description. We'll go ahead with some follow-up questions.

14 A. Okay.

15 Q. In the operation of either of the trains, and I don't  
16 know much -- how long you operate them on your board, but did you  
17 -- there was no indication of any unusual -- anything unusual in  
18 the operation of either train?

19 A. No. Uh-uh. Nothing stands out as being different from  
20 any other day-to-day operation.

21 Q. Okay. And these were two relatively new train crews.  
22 Have you ever -- I don't know if you actually see the crew names  
23 on your board or anything. I've been to -- I've seen your center,  
24 but I can't remember all the details of the operation. But have  
25 you actually operated trains with any of these people before?

1           A.    I have operated with Conductor Pogue before. I remember  
2 his name from, you know, issuing warrants to him before. And I  
3 don't recall Conductor Young, necessarily.

4           Q.    Okay.

5           A.    It -- yeah.

6           Q.    No, well, go ahead. Go ahead.

7           A.    Oh, no. I was just saying, you know, just from issuing  
8 warrants, I remember issuing them to Pogue in the past, but  
9 nothing in particular stood out necessarily.

10          Q.    Okay. Thank you. I'm going to pass it off. We'll  
11 probably go around here real quick in an effort to keep moving.

12               MR. BUCHER: Zach, you want to go?

13               MR. ZAGATA: Zach Zagata, FRA.

14               Shall I hold off on sleep disorder and all that stuff  
15 or --

16               MR. BUCHER: Well, mention -- go ahead and mention it,  
17 and then we'll come back and do that last.

18               MR. ZAGATA: I will come back to you later on and get  
19 some questions about sleep history and that kind of stuff for  
20 fatigue analysis that we do. I have no questions at this time,  
21 though.

22               MR. GASKILL: Gary Gaskill of Union Pacific. I don't  
23 have any questions, yet.

24               MR. HARMER: Kevin Harmer, Union Pacific, I have not  
25 questions at this point.



1 BY DR. JENNER:

2 Q. This is Steve Jenner with the NTSB. Just a couple  
3 questions. Do you have a -- I'm not sure if you're referring to  
4 some of your notes there, which would be perfectly fine. Do you  
5 have a time you could provide when you first got a call from  
6 either train crew?

7 A. Regarding the -- when I had my emergency light go off?

8 Q. Yes. Yeah, the emergency light go off would --

9 A. I would say approximately 5:45 is when I had my light go  
10 off. I'm not sure if that's the exact time, but that would be my  
11 guess.

12 Q. What -- can you just tell me what the emergency light is  
13 and what possible meanings it has?

14 A. Yeah, actually the manager --

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Here's what happens, gentlemen,  
16 is in the field, when they cue us up on their mike as -- in an  
17 emergency situation by dialing 911 and I believe it's #, once they  
18 do that, it sets off the radio on the dispatcher's av-tech. And  
19 when it does that, we have an emergency strobe light that's  
20 attached to that av-tech that starts to strobe, letting anybody  
21 around know that there's an emergency at that desk. So that way,  
22 if the dispatcher is not, at that time, at the desk, an adjacent  
23 dispatcher can answer the emergency.

24 So basically, when these guys talk about their light  
25 going off, that is exactly what they're talking about. It's a

1     strobe light that is associated to the av-tech emergency call  
2     lamp.

3                     BY DR. JENNER:

4             Q.     Great. Thank you. And I'm sorry, you listed a time for  
5     that?

6             A.     I believe it was around 5:45 in the morning.

7             Q.     Okay. When you had conversations back and forth with  
8     the eastbound train, were they able to provide you the information  
9     that you were requesting from them?

10            A.     I think they tried to answer as best as they could, but  
11     it sounded like, from their vantage point, they couldn't see  
12     exactly what had happened down the rail. It sounded like, from  
13     their vantage point, they couldn't see what was going on other  
14     than their train. It sounded like their train was blocking their  
15     view of the other train is what my impression was of the  
16     situation.

17            Q.     I see. Had you heard from the -- I'm sorry if you  
18     mentioned it -- but from the westbound train?

19            A.     Yeah, I had contacted them to see if they were stopped  
20     and if they needed any medical assistance. I believe I revisited  
21     them again just to check and see if they were doing okay at their  
22     current spot and if they were in a safe location and everything.  
23     I believe those were the only two conversations I had with that  
24     westbound train.

25            Q.     Did you give them any instructions about what to do

1 post-accident?

2 A. The westbound train?

3 Q. The westbound train.

4 A. No, I didn't.

5 Q. Okay. Do you want to ask him about reporting signal  
6 problems or I'll just --

7 Okay. Changing directions just a bit. If a crew that's  
8 operating during your shift experiences a problem with a signal,  
9 what is the process for them reporting that? Are you involved in  
10 that process?

11 A. Yeah, I mean that if they had an issue with a signal  
12 that was out of the normal or not operating properly, they would  
13 describe the situation to me, and then I would forward that on to  
14 the signal department. Yeah, also protect the area, putting up  
15 any blocks or anything that would affect train movement would be  
16 protected at that point as well.

17 Q. Okay. And what is the sort of the time frame? If you  
18 get a call from the crew, how long, you know, on average, might it  
19 take for you to report it to the signal department? And how do  
20 you do that?

21 A. Well, I guess it depends on the situation. Typically,  
22 if it's something like this and there could be possible injuries,  
23 then, you know, the safety of anyone involved would be the top  
24 priority. A normal call where, you know, it's just a signal  
25 possibly not functioning properly, response time would be fairly

1 quickly depending on when our signal person was able to answer the  
2 phone.

3 Q. Okay. Fairly quickly meaning sort of real time? You're  
4 able to pick up the phone and contact signal department at, you  
5 know, shortly after you hear of the problem?

6 A. Yeah, you know, within a few minutes.

7 Q. Okay. When you get that -- when you hear from the crew  
8 that there is a problem, do you document that and/or do you  
9 document when you call the signal department?

10 A. No, I don't document it. I believe the signal  
11 department does is my understanding of how that works.

12 Q. Okay. You're -- I imagine you're familiar -- a new  
13 signal was put up at CP207 in that area. Are you familiar with  
14 that?

15 A. Yeah. Yeah, I believe those became active on Monday,  
16 which is what, the 22nd I believe.

17 Q. Right. I think that's correct. Had you received any  
18 reports about problems with that signal?

19 A. No, I didn't receive any reports, any problems with that  
20 signal.

21 Q. Okay. Thank you. That's the questions I have for now.

22 A. Okay.

23 By MR. SMITH:

24 Q. Hi. Carl Smith, SMART Transportation. I just have a  
25 couple of quick questions. How long have you been a dispatcher on

1    this desk?

2           A.    On this desk, it would be -- it would be 18 months,  
3    about 18 months to 2 years.

4           Q.    Okay.

5           A.    Not exactly sure on the exact date that I started on it.

6           Q.    Okay. But you're -- this is your regular assignment,  
7    five days a week or do you --

8           A.    No, I work a variable for different desks in my zone,  
9    based on manpower needs. So, yeah, I'm the extra board dispatcher  
10   in the zone.

11          Q.    Okay. So you're the extra board. Okay. And then, just  
12   one more question. How did you plan the meet at Galva? Does the  
13   computer plan it out in advance or do you -- they used to use  
14   train dispatcher worksheets. I don't think they do that any more,  
15   but what decision process was made to make the meet at Galva?

16          A.    The decision behind it was I thought that the K train  
17   would be in the clear prior to the intermodal train arriving,  
18   because the intermodal was making a meet at Inman that I thought  
19   would allow the westbound train enough time to clear prior to the  
20   other one coming down the main.

21          Q.    If you didn't think the K train had time to clear, what  
22   would have been the process to make plan another meet? What steps  
23   would you have taken?

24          A.    I'm sorry, I didn't understand the question.

25          Q.    If you didn't think the K train was going to clear,

1 would you have held the K train at a further east location and  
2 brought the eastbound train up to meet them?

3 A. No, I don't think it would have had any effect. I mean  
4 if the cutter (ph.) train would have arrived sooner, I may have  
5 put in the siding, but it's -- I don't know -- not necessarily  
6 when it's kind of a 50:50, it doesn't really matter at that point,  
7 I guess.

8 Q. Right. Okay. And you make these decisions on meets  
9 yourself or does the CAD make the decision. I'm just going off of  
10 things I've known. I've never been to the Harriman Center, so  
11 it's all kind of hearsay and speculation.

12 A. Well, the CAD does do some planning, but in this  
13 particular case, it was my decision to make that meet.

14 Q. Okay. All right. Those are all the questions I have.  
15 Thanks for helping us out this morning.

16 A. All right. Any other questions?

17 BY MR. PAYAN:

18 Q. Mr. Leddy, this is Ruben Payan with the NTSB. Thanks  
19 for your patience. Just to follow up on some of the -- when the  
20 CP207 was cut in, did you work the days before the accident on  
21 that territory?

22 A. No, that was the first night I worked on that  
23 territory --

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. -- since that signal light cut in.

1           Q.    Okay.  Were you -- did you work this territory during  
2 the cut over?  When they --

3           A.    No, I didn't.

4           Q.    No?  Okay.

5           A.    I did not.

6           Q.    So, but during your shift, there was no reported unusual  
7 occurrences regarding that signal or that territory?

8           A.    No, there was not.

9           Q.    Okay.  All right.  Thank you.  That's all I have.

10          A.    Thank you.

11                BY MR. BUCHER:

12          Q.    Dave Bucher, one more time.  I have just a couple follow  
13 up questions.  Tom, were you given any orientation or semi-  
14 training for the new installation at 207?  Or I mean, we know that  
15 they put bulletins out, but was there anything for the train  
16 dispatcher?

17          A.    I guess I got a quick briefing from the person that I  
18 relieved about the operation.  They said that, you know, it was  
19 just added, control point, the signals that we would control.  
20 But it didn't sound like it really affected any of the operations,  
21 it's (indiscernible) switch was blocked, so there wasn't anything  
22 -- any reason to use the switch going in.  But you know, it just  
23 sounded like there's an additional control point that we would be  
24 able to line signals at.  But no other, I guess, instruction was  
25 given further than that.

1 Q. And also, just to follow up to operations of 207, the  
2 CP. In your conversation with co-workers or other dispatchers  
3 that work in that district there, has anyone else mentioned issues  
4 with the signal there at CP207, so far?

5 A. I haven't heard anything.

6 Q. Okay. All right. And hop back just one second here. I  
7 didn't ask this question before. How many years have you been a  
8 train dispatcher for Union Pacific?

9 A. I joined in October of 2011 or 2012. I'm sorry; I don't  
10 remember.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. I think it was 2012, about two years.

13 Q. Two years. Okay.

14 A. Two years, yeah.

15 Q. Okay. I think that covers mine. Anybody? We were  
16 going to ask you a couple questions about your work-rest, but I'm  
17 going to double check anybody has any additional questions about  
18 the operation.

19 BY MR. HARMER:

20 Q. Got one. Hey, Tom, this is Kevin Harmer with the Union  
21 Pacific. How was that CAD point, that control point added to your  
22 CAD screen so that that comes in to play?

23 A. What do you mean, how was it -- you mean do we warm  
24 start it on or when we warm started it on?

25 Q. Yeah, like on your CAD screen, because that was not a



1 control point before, and now it becomes a control point at 207.  
2 Because it wasn't previously on a CAD screen, and then, once we  
3 cut it in, how does that become a CP on your CAD screen?

4 A. What we would normally do is we would normally try to  
5 cut that -- most of them are going to cut a control point in on,  
6 will generally cut the location in and will not be functional  
7 until signal has told us that we have control of it at that point  
8 in time. I do not know off hand how or when we put that control  
9 point on the CAD screen itself. I just know that Monday was when  
10 we started to have the ability to control and give signals.

11 Q. Okay. So on Monday, you had it on your screen?

12 A. Correct.

13 Q. Okay. Thank you.

14 MR. BUCHER: Okay. Dave Bucher again. Zach is going to  
15 ask you a few questions here about work-rest and then we can, I  
16 think pretty much wrap it up.

17 BY MR. ZAGATA:

18 Q. Zach Zagata, FRA. What's your commute time to work?

19 A. I believe it's about 30 minutes.

20 Q. Do you have any kind of sleep disorders or anything like  
21 that?

22 A. I do not.

23 Q. And you said you're extra board, correct?

24 A. That's correct.

25 Q. Do you guys -- I'm not -- do you guys get a call with

1 that?

2 A. Occasionally, yes. That particular night I was --  
3 planned to work that desk.

4 Q. Okay. And let's say you're on vacation, what time would  
5 you normally go to sleep if it's a normal day?

6 A. I guess probably 11:30, 12 at night.

7 Q. And then how long would you sleep for after that?

8 A. Probably 7 to 8 hours.

9 Q. So you're -- as far as your quality of rest prior to  
10 reporting for work that day, how do you feel it was? Excellent,  
11 good, fair, poor?

12 A. I would say it was good. Probably very good.

13 Q. Do you normally take naps?

14 A. Occasionally, yes.

15 Q. Did you take a nap within 8 hours of going to work that  
16 day?

17 A. I did not.

18 Q. As far as your alertness level just prior to the  
19 accident, 1 being very sleepy and 5 being very alert, how would  
20 you rate your alertness level?

21 A. Probably a 3½, 4.

22 Q. Do you take any kind of prescription or over-the-counter  
23 medications?

24 A. No, I do not.

25 Q. All right. Now, we're going to get into your sleep

1 history. We'll start on the 24th, which would have been  
2 Wednesday, do you remember what time you went to sleep on  
3 Wednesday?

4 A. No, I don't recall.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. It was the day prior?

7 Q. Yes.

8 A. Okay. I believe I went to bed at 2:30 -- about 2 or 3  
9 in the morning.

10 Q. So that would have been actually 2:30 on the 25th, is  
11 that correct?

12 A. That's correct.

13 Q. No, it would be on the 24th. Yeah, 24th, yeah. And  
14 what time did you wake up from that?

15 A. Let me think. I think it was -- I remember it was later  
16 than I normally sleep in, but I want to say it was like maybe 1 or  
17 2 in the afternoon almost.

18 Q. Okay. Now, how about Tuesday? Can you remember what  
19 time you went to sleep on Tuesday the 23rd?

20 A. Which day was that?

21 Q. That would have -- Tuesday the 23rd.

22 A. That was the day prior to the one we were just talking  
23 about?

24 Q. Yes.

25 A. Maybe -- I want to say it was maybe -- I really don't

1 recall to tell you the truth. I want to say it was maybe 11:00.

2 Q. And that would have been at night.

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. At what time did you wake up from that; do you recall?

5 A. I don't. I think worked first shift that day, though.  
6 So I probably would have -- if I'm working days, I usually wake up  
7 at 4:45 or 5.

8 Q. And then how about the day prior to that, can you  
9 remember it by any chance?

10 A. I don't.

11 Q. Okay. That's okay. I have no other questions.

12 MR. BUCHER: Okay. Go around the table here. This is  
13 Dave Bucher, again. Any final questions for Tom?

14 Okay. Tom, thank you for taking time out of your day to give  
15 us this information. We really appreciate it. And we will be  
16 forwarding you a copy of the transcript, probably about two or  
17 three weeks from now.

18 MR. LEDDY: Okay. Sounds good.

19 MR. BUCHER: Thank you again. And this concludes the  
20 interview of Mr. Leddy.

21 (Whereupon the interview was concluded.)  
22  
23  
24  
25

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF:           COLLISION OF TWO UNION PACIFIC  
FREIGHT TRAINS NEAR GALVA, KANSAS  
SEPTEMBER 25, 2014  
Interview of Tom Leddy

DOCKET NUMBER:           DCA-14-FR-012

PLACE:                   McPherson, Kansas

DATE:                    September 27, 2014

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.

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Laura Shanley  
Transcriber