

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

\* \* \* \* \*

Investigation of: \*

BNSF TRAIN DERAILMENT AND COLLISION \*  
CASSELTON, NORTH DAKOTA \*  
DECEMBER 30, 2013 \*

\* Docket No. DCA-14-MR-004

\* \* \* \* \*

Interview of: BRUCE ANDERSON

Holiday Inn  
Fargo, North Dakota

Thursday,  
January 2, 2014

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice.

BEFORE: MICHAEL HILLER  
Accident Investigator



I, Bruce E Anderson, have read the foregoing pages of a copy of my testimony given during an interview in the accident investigation of the collision and derailment of BNSF petroleum train with hazardous materials release after striking a derailed car from a BNSF grain train on BNSF's KO Subdivision on December 30, 2013, at about 2:11 p.m. near Casselton, North Dakota and these pages constitute a true and accurate transcription of same with the exception of the following amendments, additions, deletions or corrections:

<u>PAGE NO:</u>	<u>LINE NO:</u>	<u>CHANGE AND REASON FOR CHANGE</u>
<u>5</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>Tom Cooks, engineer on Minot (not Mandan)</u>
<u>5</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>Willmer line (Not Wilmer)</u>
<u>6</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>Form A number -- V9101 (not B9101)</u>

I declare that I have read my statements and that it is true and correct subject to any changes in the form or substance entered here.

Date: 1-17-2014

Witness: [Redacted Signature]

## APPEARANCES:

MICHAEL HILLER, Accident Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB)

RAYMOND LINDSEY  
MICHAEL BUCHHOLTZ  
Operating Practices  
Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)

KEVIN WILDE, General Director  
System Safety  
BNSF Railway

B.J. SHILLINGSTAD  
UTU Transportation Safety Team  
SMART/UTU

DANIEL KENNER  
Safety Task Force  
Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and  
Trainmen (BLET)

I N D E X

ITEM

PAGE

Interview of Bruce Anderson:

By Mr. Hiller

4

I N T E R V I E W

(10:35 a.m.)

1  
2  
3 MR. HILLER: All right. Good morning. Today is January  
4 2nd, 2014. It's 10:35 and it's Thursday. We're here on accident  
5 number DCA-14-MR-004. We are conducting an interview with  
6 Mr. Bruce Anderson. He was the conductor on the grain train  
7 involved in the derailment and subsequent collision.

8 I am Mike Hiller, H-i-l-l-e-r. And we will begin  
9 introducing the folks in the room, and I'll start to my left.

10 MR. WILDE: Kevin Wilde, W-i-l-d-e, BNSF Railway,  
11 Safety.

12 MR. LINDSEY: Raymond Lindsey, L-i-n-d-s-e-y, FRA,  
13 Operating Practices.

14 MR. SHILLINGSTAD: B.J. Shillingstad, S-h-i-l-l-i-n-g-s-  
15 t-a-d, UTU/SMART union.

16 MR. KENNER: Dan Kenner, K-e-n-n-e-r, BLET, Safety Task  
17 Force.

18 MR. BUCHHOLTZ: Michael Buchholtz, B-u-c-h-h-o-l-t-z,  
19 FRA, Operating Practices.

20 MR. ANDERSON: Bruce Anderson, A-n-d-e-r-s-o-n,  
21 Conductor, Burlington Northern and Santa Fe.

## INTERVIEW OF BRUCE ANDERSON

BY MR. HILLER:

22  
23  
24 Q. All right. Thanks a lot, Bruce. I'd like to start off  
25 today by asking you to just characterize your day on December

1 30th, 2013. And this would be the day of the derailment and  
2 subsequent collision of the grain train and the oil train,  
3 respectively. So start with when you picked up your train -- when  
4 you were called to duty, and then let's just go from there, all  
5 the way up to the derailment.

6 A. All right. I was called for on-duty time at 12:15, and  
7 when I got there I had a brand new crew of guys I'd never met  
8 before. Tom Cooks, engineer on Mandan, and student engineer,  
9 Geoff Andersen -- Grand Forks guy, but he's training Dilworth.  
10 And then Road Foreman Paul Douglas, who informed us he was going  
11 to do a check ride.

12 So then we went through a job briefing about some of the  
13 slow orders, you know, that we had coming up and cell phones, make  
14 sure your cell phones are off. And then we were transported over  
15 to 27th Street in Fargo, where our train was. It came off the  
16 Wilmer line. And then we changed crews, did a little briefing  
17 with them on -- oh, that's right, on the way over we -- they had  
18 called us and asked if we'd sign the card on the DP unit. So we  
19 did -- stopped at the 8th Street in Fargo, signed the card on the  
20 DP unit, checked the fuel, and then proceeded to the head end and  
21 changed crews with the inbound crew.

22 Ron Davis, Dilworth engineer, was there to pick up Road  
23 Foreman Paul Douglas at Casselton. So he stayed there, at 27th  
24 Street, to do our roll by and at that point the inbound crew could  
25 go home.

1           And then we called the -- when we are all ready, you  
2 know, when everybody agreed it was okay to, you know, leave -- I  
3 called the Dilworth terminal dispatcher. We were on main 2. And  
4 he says, and he says signal indication west.

5           When we got to West Fargo we changed from channel 76 to  
6 70. And then we talked to dispatcher DLD just before we got to  
7 CP-20. He said there'd be some delay there. They had a eastbound  
8 train coming at us on main 2 that was stopped, and then there was  
9 another westbound train beside us on main 1. And once he got the  
10 signal to go west on main 1, then we crossed over behind him to  
11 main 1, from main 2 to main 1, followed him.

12           And then, let's see, everything was going along fine.  
13 Detectors were working good. We got to the approach signal at  
14 Casselton to KO Junction, and I called out -- it was double  
15 yellow, so I called out, "approach medium to KO Junction, main  
16 track 1." I'm pretty sure it was 35 that we were going, because  
17 the engineer was starting to slow down already to drop off the  
18 road foreman at CP-30.

19           And then right after that, dispatcher DLD called and  
20 asked if we'd take a Form A restriction on the radio. And then I  
21 said, "Conductor Anderson. Ready to copy Casselton." He also had  
22 contacted the M train ahead of us who we had followed out of CP-20  
23 and asked if they'd take a Form A. So then he proceeded to give  
24 us the Form A number -- B9101, I think. And I got the first part  
25 of the milepost, 50 something. I can't remember exactly now.

1 Then the signal maintainer -- I did see his truck there at  
2 Casselton as we were going by that approach medium signal. He  
3 broke in on the radio and said something about, do you feel  
4 anything wrong or notice anything -- I didn't quite get his  
5 transmission.

6 And then I had turned to the -- said to the other, what  
7 did he say exactly; did you catch that, you know? And then it was  
8 -- just then Paul Douglas, the road foreman, he said our train  
9 went in emergency. And I was kind of looking at him and --  
10 because I didn't hear the air go, and I didn't hear the beep,  
11 beep, beep, beep, like you usually -- so I was kind of like --

12 He grabbed the radio. He was sitting right at the  
13 control stand there. He grabbed the radio, because there was an  
14 oncoming train, eastbound train. He called them -- I'm pretty  
15 sure he called their radio -- or their ID number out because they  
16 were right -- that close. And he said, "Our train's in  
17 emergency," you know, calling the eastbound, our -- "Casselton.  
18 Our train is in emergency."

19 And then I grab my radio, did, "Emergency, emergency,  
20 emergency, main 1, Casselton." And they were by the head end  
21 already. Never got a response from those guys at all. And then,  
22 geez, it wasn't too long at all and -- well, I remember Paul  
23 Douglas did say -- the road foreman did say, they aren't slowing  
24 down. And I said we never heard from them. I think -- I'm just  
25 guessing but, I said, they are probably on that other channel



1 because, I said, I'm pretty sure they came from the Mandan side.  
2 I didn't see them coming through the turnout at KO Junction.

3           Anyway, then they did slow down and then just stopped,  
4 and then they, like, "We're a key train." We heard -- they  
5 evidently switched over to 70 -- "We're a key train. We're on  
6 fire. We're getting out of here. We're a key train. We're on  
7 fire. Everybody get out," you know, and so --

8           We looked back. We saw smoke and fire already, I don't  
9 know, maybe 40, 50 cars back, you know, on both sides of main 1  
10 and 2, both sides of our train. And then the road foreman, Paul  
11 Douglas said, well, let's get out of here, just leave everything.  
12 We did grab our grips because they weren't unpacked even. So, we  
13 just -- well, pretty much all of us had backpacks, so we just  
14 grabbed them, got out, walked west, away from the train, so --

15           Then we continued to walk west until we got past the end  
16 of the oil train. And then we walked south across the main 2,  
17 across the ditch, over to the ethanol plant, where Engineer Ron  
18 Davis was going to pick us up with the road formen's vehicle. And  
19 he did pick us up. Then, let's see, and then there was just a lot  
20 of radio traffic, a lot of telephones going off for the road  
21 foreman and he was, you know, talking to the dispatchers,  
22 Albanese, and Mike Lund.

23           And then there was -- one of the firemen contacted us,  
24 and asked if we could possibly move some of those oil cans away  
25 from the fire. And then the road foreman was trying to get

1 permission first from some of the railroad people, before we did  
2 that. And they pretty much said, yeah, well, you know you're in  
3 the field there, I guess, you know, whatever you need to do. Just  
4 everybody be safe, you know, don't take any chances, so on.

5 My engineer, Tom Cooks; and his student engineer,  
6 Geoff Andersen, then they -- I don't know what time this was  
7 exactly. They got up on the DP engine and set it up to run as a  
8 single unit. Then they drove me back through the ethanol plant to  
9 a road crossing. The firemen had said, we could go approximately,  
10 maybe three football fields, you know -- or for the heat anyway.

11 Q. Yeah.

12 A. And I made a cut at about 50 cars, and then they pulled  
13 them west up to the crossing at the CP-30.

14 And then the engineer and the student engineer, they  
15 stayed on the DP. And then I rode around with Foreman Douglas and  
16 Ron Davis, tried to find the engine crew that had bailed off the  
17 oil cans there. And eventually, I heard dispatcher KSB, I think,  
18 say that he thought they were at the Casselton High School. So we  
19 went over there and that's where we found them. And they seemed  
20 to be doing okay, but --

21 Q. Um-hum.

22 A. At the time.

23 Q. Yeah.

24 A. They were shook up, of course, but 00

25 Q. Yeah, they were.

1           A.    And that's -- I don't know.  Is there's anything else I  
2 need to --

3           Q.    No.

4           A.    That's pretty much --

5           Q.    That's your -- okay, so --

6           A.    I mean, there was just a lot of waiting around.

7           Q.    Yeah.  Okay.  So, one question I have --

8           A.    Yes.

9           Q.    You asked to -- you were asked to sign the card on the  
10 rear DPU.  Could you just elaborate a little bit more on what you  
11 mean by that?

12          A.    Well, it's the FRA card.

13          Q.    The daily inspection card?

14          A.    Daily inspection card, yeah.

15          Q.    Okay.

16          A.    The engineer -- actually the student engineer -- or the  
17 engineer went up and signed it.

18          Q.    Okay.

19          A.    I don't sign those things, but --

20          Q.    You had said you saw smoke and fire immediately.  We're  
21 kind of interested in that, from a hazardous materials  
22 perspective.  How much time do you believe went by after the time  
23 of collision before you saw fire?  Was it --

24          A.    It couldn't have been more than probably a couple of  
25 minutes at the most.  I mean, the -- they said they were a key

1 train, we're on fire, we're on fire, everybody get out; you know,  
2 anyone in the area clear out, stuff like that they were saying.  
3 And we looked back out the window and then I could see the flame  
4 and black smoke. And then we, like -- well, we better get out of  
5 here.

6 We didn't know how long it would take for each  
7 consecutive tank to possibly heat up, and we didn't know, so --

8 Q. Right. Right.

9 A. -- we weren't going to hang around to find out.

10 And it was later on, the fireman did say -- when he had  
11 contacted us about possibly moving some of these oil cans away,  
12 that we thought -- he said, the fireman anyway, that about every 7  
13 minutes one of them was heating up and moving west at that  
14 point --

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. -- because of the wind direction, maybe. I think it's a  
17 northeast wind sometimes. But that's just what the fireman said.

18 Q. Right. Now you were in the process of getting a track  
19 warrant?

20 A. Temporary Form A, or a verbal Form A on the radio.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. Alert CTC, you need a track warrant.

23 Q. Okay. So a temporary Form A, that would have been a  
24 speed restriction?

25 A. A temporary speed restriction and I want to say it's

1 milepost 50-something. I didn't even get to finish the limits of  
2 that.

3 Q. All right. Tell me about the mayday rule, or the  
4 emergency rule.

5 A. Oh, the -- when you say "emergency, emergency,  
6 emergency"?

7 Q. Yeah, what -- yeah, what --

8 A. Well, that's whenever your train is in any undesirable  
9 application, you know, emergency application, you're supposed to  
10 get on the radio and say "emergency, emergency, emergency" three  
11 times, and give location as best as possible --

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. -- for any oncoming traffic or traffic following.

14 Q. What are -- okay, so in this case, the road foreman  
15 tried to call out to the oil train?

16 A. Yeah. Well, he noticed that their air went into  
17 emergency before I even noticed it. As I said, I didn't hear the  
18 air. I didn't hear the beep, beep, beep that you usually get from  
19 the computer. And he was right by the control stand, so -- and  
20 they were coming at us fairly close already, so --

21 Q. You could see them?

22 A. Oh, yeah, yeah. So he grabbed the radio right away.  
23 Then I did my thing right after that, because it's required. Like  
24 I say, he beat me to it, but -- he knew we were in emergency  
25 already.

1 Q. I see. Okay. So, going back to the movement of those  
2 cars, let's talk a little bit about that. You had, you guys had  
3 walked west. You had gotten to the ethanol plant --

4 A. Um-hum.

5 Q. -- and Ron Davis was supposed to pick you up.

6 A. He was there, yeah.

7 Q. Okay. So, who asked the -- who was the first person to  
8 make the move on the decision to move the cars? How did that  
9 transpire? Give me a little bit more detail on that.

10 A. Well, it's -- as I said, it was the fire department  
11 basically that wanted us to move those cars if we could, just to  
12 get them away from the fire so there wouldn't be any more  
13 explosions, or so on. And then Mr. Douglas, he proceeded to try  
14 and get okay from his, you know, higher -- you know, like I say  
15 Mike Lund or Albanese or --

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. And I don't know if he talked to any -- he might have  
18 talked to somebody else, but I couldn't tell you who that was,  
19 because --

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. -- there was a lot of noise.

22 Q. Right. Now, when you say fire department, do you have  
23 -- was there a man, a name of somebody that you'd -- you know,  
24 that actually was there that said, hey, I need this?

25 A. Yes, there was a guy that talked to us, but I don't know

1 his name. He was by the passenger window in the front seat.

2 Q. Okay. And so his request was "we need you to move some  
3 of these oil cans." And the oil cans, of course, are the tank  
4 cars, right?

5 A. Crude oil, yes.

6 Q. Okay. And from that point, what was -- you know, what  
7 transpired as far as the -- who decided on how many cars to cut,  
8 who was going to do what? You know, how did that play out?

9 A. Well, once the road foreman decided it was okay, I mean,  
10 from everyone he talked to, we -- the fireman had said, you know,  
11 with the heat you could get within maybe three football field  
12 lengths or so --

13 Q. Okay. So, they kind of gave you a little bit of a  
14 perspective about --

15 A. Well, yeah, because they didn't want too close, you  
16 know, but --

17 Q. Right.

18 A. And then there was a crossing there. So I'd say that  
19 was approximately 50 cars. I counted 50 cars, 49 of them were oil  
20 cars and one of them was a buffer car. And there was a crossing  
21 right there, which the -- it was a safe distance.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. We felt like it was a pretty safe distance. So, you  
24 know, we contacted the engine crew on the DP and did the in  
25 between and --

1 Q. Right.

2 A. -- went in and made the cut. Then, when they were  
3 ready, they pulled them west.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. And then we wanted to make sure that the, you know, the  
6 lever didn't drop. So then after we -- they separated, then we  
7 got out of there, I guess.

8 Q. Okay, so you pulled west?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. And you went west about --

11 A. Twenty-five cars, maybe.

12 Q. Twenty-five cars.

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. Maybe farther.

16 Q. Okay. Was that the only move that was made?

17 A. There was another one made later.

18 Q. What can you tell me about that?

19 A. Well, I wasn't involved directly, but the -- our  
20 engineer and engineer trainee were still on that DP waiting for us  
21 to get back to them, pick them up. Because they were out trying  
22 to find that other crew that bailed off that, you know, the engine  
23 that collided.

24 And they went -- well, a fireman had talked to them to  
25 see if they could grab some more cars. And they were using, I



1 guess, the fireman's radio or something.

2 Q. Who was using the fireman's radio?

3 A. Well, the -- my engineer and his student trainee.

4 Q. Um-hum.

5 A. That's what they said to me. Then they went back,  
6 grabbed another 26 cars, I guess.

7 Q. How much time do you think had transpired or went by  
8 between the movement of the first cut to the follow-up movement of  
9 the next 26?

10 A. Oh, I bet it was a half hour, 45 minutes.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. Half hour at least. Not positive.

13 Q. And you said you weren't directly involved in it. What  
14 does that mean?

15 A. Well, I didn't know it was going to take place.

16 Q. You didn't know it was going to take place?

17 A. No.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. We didn't know it was going to take -- and we were at a  
20 Peterson Seed Company, Mr. Davis and I, along with the crew from  
21 the oil train, and which was on the north side of the track.  
22 There were firemen there, ambulance. There was county, you know,  
23 deputies and stuff there. And the ambulance crews came over and  
24 wanted to make sure we were okay, see if we wanted to get checked  
25 out.

1 Q. Um-hum.

2 A. I didn't -- felt I needed to, but the other two guys got  
3 checked out by the ambulance. And then we could hear some radio  
4 conversation and then we could see those cars moving over there.

5 Q. Yeah.

6 A. On the opposite side of ours, we could see them, you  
7 know, in between cars, that they were moving tank cars west.

8 Q. How close do you -- okay, so he went for 26 additional  
9 cars. How close would he have had to get in to the accident to  
10 make that cut of 26 cars? Would it have been three football  
11 fields?

12 A. Well, let's see, it's going to be 1200 feet there,  
13 roughly.

14 Q. 1200 feet from --

15 A. Closer.

16 Q. 1200 feet closer?

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. Okay. So, how far away from the fire, do you think?

19 A. I don't know, 10 cars, 11.

20 Q. Ten or 11 cars?

21 A. Um-hum. I'm not sure though.

22 Q. Okay. That's all right.

23 A. I don't remember -- when I made that initial cut, I  
24 don't remember how many cars there were, from that cut to the  
25 fire.

1 Q. Okay. So did you make the initial cut?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Okay, so you made the initial cut --

4 A. Fifty cars, yeah.

5 Q. -- of the 50 cars and that was at the road crossing?

6 A. There was a road crossing there. Yeah, it was --

7 Q. And you were how far away?

8 A. I believe it was at road crossing -- Peterson Seed, I  
9 think, crossing, on the south side of it.

10 Q. So you were at least still 36 cars from the --

11 A. Oh, at least that, yes.

12 Q. Yeah, okay.

13 A. There was a fire truck east of us, kind of just to the  
14 south of where the fire was. Mainly just there to protect, I'm  
15 sure, the property.

16 Q. Oh, yeah.

17 A. And so we figure, well, we didn't want to go as close as  
18 them. That's right where the fire was basically, so --

19 Q. I'm just curious, is this -- this is not a very common  
20 event --

21 A. No.

22 Q. -- of course. But are there any rules or training or  
23 anything like that, that train crews receive when it comes to  
24 these types of hazardous materials accidents, where you've got  
25 equipment on fire, and the emergency responders ask you to support

1 movement of equipment away from the risk area? Is this something  
2 that you guys have been --

3 A. Trained to do?

4 Q. -- trained to do or asked to do or --

5 A. No, we were just thinking about community.

6 Q. Yeah.

7 A. People, helping.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. Because they were -- I mean, it was burning. You could  
10 see that. We saw a couple of them go up in flames, so --

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. We wanted to keep --

13 Q. So, did you feel coerced at all --

14 A. No.

15 Q. -- in the movement of these cars?

16 A. No.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. Not at all.

19 Q. Not at all.

20 A. No.

21 Q. I don't have any more questions right now.

22 A. Okay.

23 MR. HILLER: Kevin?

24 MR. WILDE: Bruce, I don't have any questions for you.

25 Thanks.

1 MR. HILLER: Okay.

2 MR. LINDSAY: No, sir. No questions.

3 MR. SHILLINGSTAD: I have no questions.

4 MR. KENNER: No questions.

5 MR. HILLER: All right.

6 MR. BUCHHOLTZ: No questions. Thank you, Bruce.

7 MR. ANDERSON: Oh, thank you.

8 MR. HILLER: All right. So here concludes our interview  
9 with Mr. Bruce Douglas [sic]. And --

10 MR. ANDERSON: Anderson.

11 MR. HILLER: Oh, I'm sorry, Anderson.

12 MR. ANDERSON: That's okay.

13 MR. HILLER: I apologize.

14 And the time now is 11 a.m. Thank you very much.

15 (Whereupon, 11:00 a.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:           BNSF TRAIN DERAILMENT AND COLLISION  
                                  CASSELTON, NORTH DAKOTA  
                                  DECEMBER 30, 2013  
                                  Interview of Bruce Anderson

DOCKET NUMBER:           DCA-14-MR-004

PLACE:                      Fargo, North Dakota

DATE:                       January 2, 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.

---

Anne Gunn  
Transcriber