

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGES

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Investigation of:

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TRAIN COLLISION
CHATSWORTH, CALIFORNIA

* Docket No.: DCA-08-MR-009

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Interview of: KENNETH SQUIRES

Portland Hills, California

Wednesday,
September 17, 2008

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice.

BEFORE: TED TURPIN

APPEARANCES:

TED TURPIN, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board
Washington, D.C.
(202) 314-6439

DARRELL SMITH
Union Pacific Railroad

JAY ELLIS
California Public Utilities Commission

BILL DESKIN
Federal Railroad Administration

TED FRITZ, Transportation Manager
Connex Railroad

SCOTT PALMER
Metrolink

MR. RANDOLPH
Union Pacific Railroad

JOHN GILPEID

KEN GRIFFITH
State Task Force Coordinator

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I N T E R V I E W

MR. TURPIN: What did we say today was, the 16th?

SPEAKER: Seventeenth.

SPEAKER: You said the 17th?

MR. TURPIN: I know. September 17th, at the Hilton in Portland Hills, and we're taking the interview from the conductor of the southbound UP train involved in the accident on September 12th near Chatsworth, DCA-08-MR-009.

INTERVIEW OF KENNETH SQUIRES

BY MR. TURPIN:

Q. And do you understand that you're being recorded?

A. Yeah.

Q. Okay. Would you please state your name and spell it?

A. Ken Squires, Kenneth Squires, K-e-n-n-e-t-h, middle, middle initial L, S-q-u-i-r-e-s, Jr.

Q. All right. Thank you.

MR. TURPIN: Now, we'll go around the table and get everybody's name as well. My name is Ted Turpin. I'm with the NTSB, T-u-r-p-i-n.

MR. SMITH: Darrell Smith, S-m-i-t-h. I'm with the Union Pacific Railroad.

MR. ELLIS: Jay Ellis, E-l-l-i-s. I'm with the California Public Utilities Commission.

MR. DESKIN: Bill Deskin, D-e-s-k-i-n, Federal Railroad Administration.

1 MR. FRITZ: Ted Fritz, F-r-i-t-z, Metrolink, Connex.

2 MR. PALMER: Scott Palmer, P-a-l-m-e-r, the OET (ph.).

3 MR. ROBERTS: Tom Roberts, R-o-b-e-r-t-s,

4 (indiscernible) Metrolink.

5 MR. RANDOLPH: (indiscernible) Randolph,

6 R-a-n-d-o-l-p-h, Union Pacific Railroad.

7 MR. GILPEID: And John, G-i-l-p-e-i-d.

8 MR. ENGLAND: John England, E-n-g-l-a-n-d,

9 (indiscernible).

10 MR. GRIFFITH: Ken Griffith (ph.), (indiscernible),

11 State Task Force Coordinator.

12 MR. TURPIN: Thank you. That's everyone in the room.

13 All right.

14 BY MR. TURPIN:

15 Q. Okay, Mr. Squires, why don't you just explain to us what
16 happened.

17 A. We were struck by a Metrolink coming out of the tunnels
18 at Chatsworth, a head-on collision.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. What else do you want -- I don't know what you want.

21 Q. That's fine.

22 A. Full detail or --

23 Q. Well, let's start out at CP Davis.

24 A. Okay. I don't have 100 percent recollection of the, of
25 -- I'm in and out of memory, so I don't recall a lot. The last

1 thing I recall is seeing the Metrolink and saying, "Oh, my God,"
2 and that's the last thing I recall. I don't recall the collision.

3 Q. Okay. Okay, that's fine. Now, can you back up from
4 that?

5 A. Okay. We, we left, we left Oxnard. We got our train
6 together. We got a few cars out of the, we got a few cars out of
7 (indiscernible), and we got our train together, Oxnard. We got on
8 the siding. I called Metro for authority, got our authorities
9 from the UP and the Metro, and left.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. And then just normal everyday -- you know, on my part
12 normal everyday signal maintain -- you know, log book, nothing
13 abnormal on down to the incident.

14 Q. Okay. Do you remember the last entry you made in the
15 log book?

16 A. I don't.

17 Q. Do you remember the last stop, prior to the accident?

18 A. I don't. No, I don't. Oxnard?

19 Q. Okay. That's fine. (indiscernible). If you -- let's,
20 let's go to inside the, the big tunnel, okay?

21 A. Okay.

22 Q. You've left CP Davis. You're in the big tunnel.

23 A. Okay.

24 Q. You come out into the daylight. Okay?

25 A. Okay.

1 Q. Are you near the intermediate yet or do you need to go
2 through that?

3 A. Like I said, I, I honestly don't recall this.

4 Q. Okay. That's okay.

5 A. It's just -- I don't recall the tunnel. I just -- when
6 I seen the Metro, that's my last memory, seeing the Metro, and I
7 stood up and screamed out, "Metro."

8 Q. Do you remember what the engineer did?

9 A. I stood up and --

10 Q. If he called -- okay, go ahead.

11 A. Oh, I'm sorry. I stood up and said, and said -- it's
12 all -- you know, "Oh, my God, there's Metro." And he
13 (indiscernible).

14 Q. Do you think you saw it first or before?

15 A. I don't know. It could have been simultaneously. I
16 don't know.

17 Q. Did he say --

18 A. (indiscernible).

19 Q. -- anything?

20 A. Not that I recall. Not that I recall.

21 Q. Okay. Earlier we talked to, talked to the brakeman and
22 he explained that you were extra on this job?

23 A. Yes, I was extra.

24 Q. Was this the first day on the job?

25 A. First day, yeah. Yeah.

1 Q. When's the last time you've worked the relief in --

2 A. I think it wasn't that long ago. Within the month, I
3 believe it was in the month.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. The date, I don't recall, but --

6 Q. How often do you work up the coast?

7 A. Oh, when I'm on there, (indiscernible) board, two, two
8 or three times a month.

9 Q. Yeah.

10 A. Something like that, yeah.

11 Q. Have you ever heard any, any concerns about the signals
12 around the tunnels or the signals at Topanga or -- problems?

13 A. Like malfunction?

14 Q. Yeah, malfunction.

15 A. Malfunction, no.

16 Q. No?

17 A. The only thing I'm aware of is just people on the rocks
18 in the mountains. I'm aware of that. That's about it.

19 MR. TURPIN: Go ahead.

20 MR. SMITH: Ken, how about any kind of --

21 MR. TURPIN: You have to say --

22 MR. SMITH: Darrell Smith.

23 BY MR. SMITH:

24 Q. Ken, how about any kind of radio communication? You
25 never hear anything or anybody calling signals, or maybe a dragger

1 (ph.) going off or anything like that?

2 A. No. And that could have been because we were in the
3 tunnel, but no, no radio. No.

4 Q. Do you remember if you were calling the signals?

5 A. I believe the engineer was calling the signals.

6 Q. Calling the signals.

7 A. Because I was extra.

8 Q. And an advanced approach, yellow over yellow, do you
9 remember seeing a yellow, a yellow over yellow signal?

10 A. I don't recall the signal.

11 Q. You don't?

12 A. I don't recall the signal. That's my -- (indiscernible)
13 to the best of my -- I don't recall. I may have saw the signal,
14 but I --

15 MR. SMITH: I don't have any other questions.

16 MR. ELLIS: All right. Jay Ellis.

17 BY MR. ELLIS:

18 Q. What time did you go in?

19 A. 11:30 a.m.

20 Q. And what did you work the day before?

21 A. I believe I had -- I was on the extra board. I believe
22 I laid in a day or so, a day or maybe two, a day or so.

23 Q. When you went to work at 11:30, do you recall anything
24 that made you (indiscernible)?

25 A. Anything what?

1 Q. (indiscernible).

2 A. What do you mean?

3 Q. Anything out of the ordinary? When you got on the
4 train, was it (indiscernible) headed to Oxnard?

5 A. No.

6 Q. Was the (indiscernible)?

7 A. Oh, yeah.

8 MR. ELLIS: I don't have anything --

9 SPEAKER: No questions.

10 MR. TURPIN: Scott?

11 MR. PALMER: Yeah, Scott Palmer, of the OET.

12 BY MR. PALMER:

13 Q. Have you ever noticed, before, at Chatsworth, looking
14 toward Topanga, whether or not any of the signals looked brighter
15 or easier to spot than others?

16 A. I don't recall any difficult signals.

17 Q. (indiscernible) spot a (indiscernible) signal,
18 (indiscernible) clear or --

19 A. Yes, I -- pretty clear (indiscernible) straight --

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. -- from the station, you know.

22 Q. All right.

23 SPEAKER: A couple questions. I'd like to follow up on
24 that question again. Can you see, see the signal from Chatsworth
25 Station clear enough to interpret what (indiscernible)?

1 MR. SQUIRES: One more time.

2 SPEAKER: When you're approaching that signal --

3 MR. SQUIRES: Coming from?

4 SPEAKER: Coming -- going towards Topanga, towards

5 (indiscernible) --

6 MR. SQUIRES: So coming from Champco to (indiscernible)?

7 SPEAKER: Yeah.

8 MR. SQUIRES: Okay.

9 SPEAKER: When you reach the station, can you see that
10 signal kind of at the end of the siding there?

11 MR. SQUIRES: Yeah.

12 SPEAKER: (indiscernible)?

13 MR. SQUIRES: To the best of my recollection, I'm pretty
14 sure.

15 MR. REMINES: My name's Jim Remines. I don't have any
16 (indiscernible).

17 MR. TURPIN: Anything else?

18 SPEAKER: List of things I have (indiscernible). I
19 mean, there's no, there's no penalty for not remembering. Okay.
20 We don't, we don't --

21 MR. SQUIRES: It's frustrating.

22 SPEAKER: Yeah, I'm sure it is.

23 MR. TURPIN: All right. (indiscernible). Thank you
24 very much.

25 (Whereupon, the interview in the above-titled matter was

1 concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: TRAIN COLLISION
 CHATSWORTH, CALIFORNIA
 Interview of Kenneth Squires

DOCKET NUMBER: DCA-08-MR-009

PLACE: Portland Hills, California

DATE: September 17, 2008

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been compared to
the recording accomplished at the hearing.

Kay Maurer
Transcriber