NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
: IN RE: :
: THE ACCIDENT INVOLVING TWO : NTSB Accident No. UNION PACIFIC FREIGHT : DCA16FR005 TRAINS THAT OCCURRED NEAR : GRANGER, WYOMING ON : MARCH 14, 2016 :
:
INTERVIEW OF: MR. ERIC RYKS
Monday, March 14, 2016
Union Pacific Harriman Dispatch Center Omaha, Nebraska
BEFORE
TED TURPIN, NTSB RICK NARVELL, NTSB MIKE CORUM, Federal Railroad Administration LAWRENCE MOZENA, SMART Transportation Division JOHN ALLBERRY, Union Pacific BRIAN FISH, Union Pacific STEVE FORESMAN, Union Pacific TOM LISCHER, Union Pacific
This transcript was produced from audio provided by the National Transportation Safety Board.

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APPEARANCES:

On Behalf of Union Pacific, the Interviewee, and Other Individuals Involved in This Investigation:

CONNIE ROSEBERRY, ESQ. Union Pacific Railroad Company 1400 Douglas Street <u>Omaha, Nebra</u>ska 68179

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1	P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S
2	(Time not disclosed)
3	MR. TURPIN: My name is Ted Turpin. Today
4	is March 18, 2016, and we're at the UP Dispatch Center
5	in Omaha, Nebraska, interviewing a train dispatcher in
6	connection with an accident that occurred near Granger,
7	Wyoming, on March 14th, 2016. The NTSB accident number
8	is DCA16FR005.
9	I want you know the purpose of this
10	investigation is to increase safety and not to assign
11	fault, blame, or liability.
12	NTSB cannot offer any guarantee of
13	confidentiality or an immunity from a legal or
14	certificate action. Okay, so like a conductor, they
15	pull their ticket. NTSB does not do that.
16	A transcript or summary of the interview
17	will be made available to the public in a public
18	docket. And you are allowed a representative. And
19	your choice for representative today?
20	MS. ROSEBERRY: It's me, Connie.
21	MR. TURPIN: Okay. You understand that this
22	is the local court?
23	MR. RYKS: Yes.
24	MR. TURPIN: All right, thank you. So if
25	you'd state your name and spell it?
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1	MR. RYKS: My name is Eric Ryks, E-R-I-C, R-
2	Y-K-S.
3	MR. TURPIN: All right. And we'll go around
4	the table and have everybody introduce themselves.
5	MR. CORUM: Mike Corum, C-O-R-U-M. Excuse
6	me. Operating Practice Specialist, FRA, Kansas City
7	Regional Base.
8	MR. FORESMAN: Steve Foresman, F-O-R-E-S-M-
9	A-N, Senior Director of Operating Practices in Rural
10	Community Settings.
11	MR. NARVELL: Rick Narvell, N like in Nancy,
12	A-R-V-E-L-L. Human Performance Investigator with NTSB,
13	Washington, D.C.
14	MR. LISCHER: Tom Lischer, L-I-S-C-H-E-R.
15	ADP Airman Dispenser.
16	MR. FISH: Ryan Fish, F-I-S-H, Director of
17	Special Practices, Quality Assurance, Union Pacific.
18	MR. MOZENA: Lawrence Mozena, M-O-Z-E-N-A,
19	SMART TD National Safety Team Member.
20	MR. ALLBERRY: John Allberry, A-L-L-B-E-R-R-
21	Y. General Director of Safety, UP Railroad.
22	MS. ROSEBERRY: Connie Roseberry, R-O-S-E-B-
23	E-R-R-Y, Safety Regulatory.
24	MR. TURPIN: All right. Again this is Ted
25	Turpin, T-U-R-P-I-N. You mind if I call you Eric?
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1	MR. RYKS: That's fine.
2	MR. TURPIN: All right, Eric, just tell us
3	what happened the night of the incident?
4	MR. RYKS: I came in and I went to our
5	normal SC meeting, our Safety and Communications
6	meeting. Came back down, started taking the terminal
7	from (phonetic) Missy.
8	And she was, we were going through what was
9	going on with the signal suspension. And she had
10	stated that no trains were authorized through there at
11	the moment and was setting up and saying that I've got
12	it set up to either go this way or this way, whichever
13	way you want to go. Which is pretty much standard for
14	us.
15	And about that time we were about probably
16	halfway through the review of what was going on through
17	the signal suspension.
18	Got an alarm, and I could see an alarm in
19	the OS at the Control Point G844, and I started to turn
20	to her and I said nobody's authorized in here.
21	But before I could get much of that out she
22	says that's not good. And when she said that's not
23	good, I went up on the radio and attempted to contact
24	the two trains that were in the area to find out
25	whether they were stopped or what was going on with
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1	them, make sure they got stopped.
2	There was no contact initially with the
3	train. And then I tried to get a hold of the flagman
4	that was on site. And a few moments later, if I
5	remember right, the K train, I don't remember the unit
6	number, responded that they had been in a collision.
7	MR. TURPIN: Okay. Keep going.
8	MR. RYKS: Okay. I immediately Missy was
9	still there because we were interrupted in the
10	turnover.
11	And, first thing, if I remember right, I
12	asked is anybody hurt. Crew member said no, we're
13	fine. I said what about on the local, the LCK41. They
14	said no they got off.
15	Missy at that time said I'll notify the
16	corridor. And I had grabbed our emergency response
17	book and had opened it up and was starting to go down
18	through it.
19	I notified RMCC about the incident, got them
20	involved, and started to try and get more information
21	about, you know, do we have cars on the ground, did any
22	engines go on the ground, things like that. So.
23	MR. TURPIN: Okay, good. Let's back up a
24	little bit. Do you recall the time you actually sat
25	down at the desk?
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1	MR. RYKS: Not exactly. It would have been
2	about meeting was 9:22. Twenty probably got down
3	to the desk about 36, 37 after the hour, something like
4	that.
5	MR. TURPIN: Okay. What were the specifics?
6	You mentioned that Missy had a conversation with saying
7	it may go this way or that way. What was she talking
8	about?
9	MR. RYKS: She was talking about because of
10	the we had a local that was about to clear off of
11	main 2 in the segment between 833 and 844 going east,
12	that would allow the LCK41, the Kemmerer local, to get
13	down.
14	Now he was dead on his hour's at 2 o'clock
15	so that would be kind of the priority. It takes him a
16	while to do his work. He works there. So try to get
17	him in and get him there and at least get his work
18	done.
19	But we also had the K train coming west, and
20	so if the eastbound local that was already occupying
21	was getting cleared for the Kemmerer local, if they
22	hadn't cleared, then I could take the K train west
23	first. So it was a who clears, who's there first,
24	ready to go, type situation.
25	MR. TURPIN: Okay. Do you recall the local
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1	down at Westvaco what its status was when you sat in
2	the chair?
3	MR. RYKS: It was still eastbound.
4	MR. TURPIN: On this track segment?
5	MR. RYKS: It was still on this track
6	segment headed east. Because the track segment there
7	shows in two different segments, it was in the east
8	segment which means it was getting close to clearing.
9	MR. TURPIN: Okay. Do you recall what you
10	thought your next move would have been?
11	MR. RYKS: I hadn't gotten that far yet. We
12	would have finished turnover and then I would have
13	decided.
14	MR. TURPIN: Okay.
15	MR. RYKS: Probably, if the others had
16	totally cleared, it probably would have been the
17	Kemmerer, the LCK41.
18	MR. TURPIN: Okay.
19	MR. RYKS: Simply because I know he was
20	short and that he didn't have great hours, let's put it
21	that way.
22	MR. TURPIN: Right, right.
23	MR. RYKS: You know, and it takes him, if
24	he's got, it's cold out there, it was below freezing.
25	Download his coal and all that in below freezing is a
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1	little tough for him sometimes. Takes a little longer.
2	So that would have been something to get started as
3	soon as possible.
4	MR. TURPIN: Kind of a side question. Would
5	you have contemplated calling by radio the other
6	eastbound just to see if they were how close they
7	were to clearing? Like you said, the track segments
8	are big so you really don't know but he's
9	MR. RYKS: Probably not. If we were done
10	with turnover I would have made a decision at that
11	point.
12	MR. TURPIN: Okay.
13	MR. RYKS: Because it'd still take three or
14	four minutes for him to, you know, he hasn't cleared,
15	if he hasn't have you broken the OS going into the
16	Blacks Fork Yard there, then I would have run the
17	Kemmerer, because that would have meant I only had
18	about 30 seconds left to wait.
19	MR. TURPIN: Got you. Okay. I'll come back
20	and talk a little more about procedures and suspensions
21	and stuff, but I think I'm done right now with actually
22	the accident night. So we'll go around the table and
23	focus on the accident.
24	MR. CORUM: Mike Corum. Aside from the
25	signal suspension, anything else on turnover that

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1	caught your attention that out of the ordinary or
2	MR. RYKS: No. I mean we weren't done with
3	it. We weren't done with it.
4	MR. CORUM: You hadn't got that far?
5	MR. RYKS: But as far as anything we had
6	seen or done so far, no, there was nothing weird or
7	unusual.
8	MR. CORUM: Okay. That's all.
9	MR. NARVELL: This is Rick Narvell with the
10	NTSB. Eric, can you tell us a little bit about what
11	transpires when a turnover, just generally when you
12	release
13	MR. RYKS: The status of the tracks, status
14	of the signal system, status of switches, if there's
15	anything broken, anything that's out of service,
16	anything that is impeding our ability to move the
17	trains.
18	We go over the trains, kind of what the
19	status, if anybody's short on hours, because we are
20	kind of mountainous out there, a lot of times we will
21	include hey, he's got high (phonetic) Pens prep axle
22	which means he's not going to pull the hills very well
23	and he's probably going to be restricted down the
24	hills.
25	So that gives us an idea of what kind of
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1	speed that we do in maybe for sorting or to get
2	somebody around where we can, and also to be looking
3	for potential hours of service issues.
4	MR. NARVELL: Okay. Is this a do you
5	work off a checklist or some other kind of a document?
6	MR. RYKS: There is a document. A lot of
7	times we will go through that document, not line per
8	line at the immediacy, but we go back over it and
9	double-check that we have covered everything that is on
10	that document.
11	MR. NARVELL: Okay. Have you had situations
12	where there's various work gangs out there, for example
13	track gangs, in the vicinity of a signal gang or vice
14	versa or that you'd have to maybe pay a little more
15	attention to? Has that ever happened up here from a
16	dispatcher perspective?
17	MR. RYKS: I'm not sure I follow your
18	question.
19	MR. NARVELL: If there's different work
20	groups out there on your stack section track, do you
21	have to coordinate with them as well?
22	MR. RYKS: As far as?
23	MR. NARVELL: Train movements and
24	MR. RYKS: Yes.
25	MR. NARVELL: going on track or whatever?
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1	MR. RYKS: Yes.
2	MR. NARVELL: Okay.
3	MR. RYKS: We go over how we're doing it.
4	How it's being done.
5	MR. NARVELL: Okay.
6	MR. RYKS: Yes.
7	MR. NARVELL: Any problems with
8	communications? I know you just got here, I mean you
9	literally just walked in from your safety meeting, but
10	was there any problem with communications the brief
11	time that you, before all this happened.
12	MR. RYKS: With Missy? Because that's the
13	only one I had talked to.
14	MR. NARVELL: Okay, you had not talked to
15	anybody out at
16	MR. RYKS: No, I had not been, I hadn't
17	MR. NARVELL: You just got there.
18	MR. RYKS: I just, literally we were in the
19	middle of the turnover and during the turnover we do
20	not go outside. We don't answer the phone. The only
21	thing we'll answer is our emergency light going off.
22	MR. NARVELL: Okay.
23	MR. RYKS: That's the only thing that will
24	interrupt that turnover. That's so that have
25	continuity through the turnover.
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1	Any questions that are asked from each
2	other, to make sure that there's full concentration on
3	getting the information.
4	MR. NARVELL: So minimizing to the extent
5	you can't have any kind of extraneous discussions or
6	conversations or anything?
7	MR. RYKS: No.
8	MR. NARVELL: Okay, so, okay. All right.
9	That's all I have for right now, thank you.
10	MR. TURPIN: Okay.
11	MR. ALLBERRY: Eric, John Allberry here.
12	Did you instruct any of the EICs, and you probably
13	answered it, but did you instruct any of the EICs to
14	clear that westbound K through that forward C?
15	MR. RYKS: No, I did not. I had not been on
16	the radio or phone at all.
17	MR. ALLBERRY: Okay.
18	MR. TURPIN: Okay. I'm going to have that
19	you repeat yourself as well. During the turnover,
20	Missy gave you verbal information about this westbound,
21	at this location, right? And what was it she actually
22	said?
23	MR. RYKS: That she had not cleared it
24	through there. That it was coming up there and that it
25	was my decision on which I wanted to run first.
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MR. TURPIN: Okay, and she had mentioned the 1 2 local as well? Yes. 3 MR. RYKS: 4 MR. TURPIN: In that --MR. RYKS: Which, both locals she had talked 5 6 about. 7 MR. TURPIN: Okay. MR. RYKS: So I knew the LCK41 was on the 8 long side and I knew the other one was headed back to 9 Blacks Fort. 10 11 MR. TURPIN: Okay. Procedures now. You've handled suspensions before? 12 MR. RYKS: Yes. 13 MR. TURPIN: Have you handled suspensions 14 15 where the switches and signals are completely suspended, where you no longer have control of them? 16 17 MR. RYKS: Yes. MR. TURPIN: And have you handled situations 18 like this where you still have the, the ends are 19 available? 20 21 MR. RYKS: No. 22 MR. TURPIN: Okay, this was an anomaly you 23 think? MR. RYKS: I've only handled a couple of 24 them so I don't know what --25

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1	MR. TURPIN: Okay.
2	MR. RYKS: whether this would be or not.
3	MR. TURPIN: Is this the but this is the
4	first time you've had them where they were actually
5	live at the ends for exit?
6	MR. RYKS: Yes.
7	MR. TURPIN: Okay. Did you have a
8	conversation with Missy about that?
9	MR. RYKS: We were starting to, and that's
10	when this happened.
11	MR. TURPIN: Okay. Is there anything you
12	think is peculiar that you'd have to pay attention to
13	by the fact that you had live exit points?
14	MR. RYKS: Just that I needed to make sure I
15	included the EIC on all moves. No more than I would
16	have at any other time.
17	MR. TURPIN: Okay. If you didn't have
18	control of the ends, how would you instruct them to
19	handle the switches?
20	MR. RYKS: I would have if I wanted the
21	Kemmerer local out, for example, I would have said
22	okay, I'm going to take the Kemmerer local UP, and I
23	don't remember the numbers, UP1234, I want them lined
24	from the long siding to Main 2 at Control Point G844.
25	MR. TURPIN: Okay. And in those
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1	circumstances are they, the dual controls, are they on
2	hand all the time? With the power's off in the field?
3	MR. RYKS: If that was the case, I wouldn't,
4	I couldn't tell. Because you've got signal suspension
5	so I would not be able to see anything.
6	MR. TURPIN: Right, but that's what I'm
7	saying. In those circumstances do they normally keep
8	the power off the switches?
9	MR. RYKS: You would have to ask them. I
10	don't know. That does not show on my board if they're
11	suspended.
12	MR. TURPIN: If they put power on the dual
13	control switch it would show up, wouldn't it?
14	MR. RYKS: If the code line was set up to
15	see it.
16	MR. TURPIN: I got you. I got you.
17	MR. RYKS: If the code lines were cut
18	MR. TURPIN: Because it could be a signal
19	issue, you're right.
20	MR. RYKS: If the code line's not there, I
21	couldn't see it.
22	MR. TURPIN: I see, that makes sense. Okay.
23	And in this case you remember sitting down, you could
24	see the switches?
25	MR. RYKS: Yes.
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1	MR. TURPIN: Okay.
2	MR. RYKS: At Control Point G844.
3	MR. TURPIN: Okay. And everything was a
4	stop?
5	MR. RYKS: Yes.
6	MR. TURPIN: Okay.
7	MR. RYKS: All signals that were exiting 844
8	had stopped. All in 844 was at stop.
9	MR. TURPIN: Okay. And you recall the
10	position of the switches?
11	MR. RYKS: Yes.
12	MR. TURPIN: And they were?
13	MR. RYKS: The you had the 11 Switch
14	which is the switch that comes off the long siding was
15	lined long siding to Main 1.
16	MR. TURPIN: Okay.
17	MR. RYKS: Main 2 was two to two. That 15
18	crossover was normal which is one to one, i.e., in that
19	crossover and two to two on the east end of that.
20	MR. TURPIN: Okay. Is there a written
21	procedure on the verbal process of talking with an EIC?
22	MR. RYKS: Not that I know of.
23	MR. TURPIN: Is there a record-keeping that,
24	when you're talking to the EIC and give them train
25	movements, do you record that?
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1	MR. RYKS: I keep it separate on a sheet of
2	paper, yes.
3	MR. TURPIN: Okay. Is it authorized UP
4	procedure unwritten or you just, do you use that?
5	MR. RYKS: I just do it just to double-check
6	myself.
7	MR. TURPIN: Personal.
8	MR. RYKS: That's correct.
9	MR. ALLBERRY: Record-keeping, okay. Do you
10	recall if Missy had a sheet like that?
11	MR. RYKS: I do not know.
12	MR. TURPIN: We didn't ask her so I was
13	wondering if you'd noticed.
14	MR. RYKS: I did not know. I don't know
15	what she does, how that works for
16	MR. TURPIN: Okay. We're comparing this
17	instruction to the EIC to instruction that you'd
18	normally give to a train. So if you were to authorize
19	a train to proceed through here what process would you
20	use?
21	MR. RYKS: I've got to make sure that the
22	route is lined. I have to make sure that the yes,
23	assuming that I've got control of the switches, that
24	the switches are aligned for their movement and
25	blocked. There's no conflicting move, that the track
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1	occupancy, or the track that he's going to is blocked
2	so no computer can line anything in there and I can't
3	line anything in, just accidentally.
4	It takes quite a bit more to do it when the
5	block is there. And then I have a verbal to authorize
6	them by it.
7	MR. TURPIN: Okay, and that verbal process,
8	is that formal?
9	MR. RYKS: Yes.
10	MR. TURPIN: And do they repeat?
11	MR. RYKS: Yes, they do.
12	MR. TURPIN: Okay. Do you end up with a
13	time?
14	MR. RYKS: Giving them a time on it? No.
15	MR. TURPIN: Okay. Unlike, say, if a track
16	warrant would actually have time.
17	MR. RYKS: No, it does not.
18	MR. TURPIN: Okay. Would you say your
19	communication with the EIC is as formal as the one
20	you'd do for a train, or just a little less formal?
21	MR. RYKS: I would say I have the, that it's
22	the same, I mean I always say the same thing basically
23	is, you know, telling them what the move is and what I
24	want done.
25	MR. TURPIN: Okay.
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1	MR. RYKS: And I am, you know, I want this
2	train, this UP number, I want him two to two westward
3	at 844, I want two to one at 847.
4	MR. TURPIN: Do they normally repeat?
5	MR. RYKS: Yes, I make sure they repeat so
6	they have it right.
7	MR. TURPIN: Okay. Do you have informal
8	discussions with EICs just to help them do their work,
9	like you've got two west coming and two east?
10	MR. RYKS: I will very carefully say yes, I
11	would say yes. I'm coming if I know I'm coming with
12	two, I'll tell them the two.
13	MR. TURPIN: Yes.
14	MR. RYKS: I'll say we're coming and give
15	him the route, and this is the number and this is the
16	number.
17	MR. TURPIN: Okay.
18	MR. RYKS: If I don't know and he's asking
19	oh, I, can we realign a switch. I said, I might say
20	yes, I'm planning to go this way, but I won't give him
21	a UP number.
22	MR. TURPIN: Okay.
23	MR. RYKS: I won't give him the number so he
24	doesn't have any thought that he's got authority to run
25	it.
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1	MR. TURPIN: Okay, so you make a distinction
2	by leaving out that engine number.
3	MR. RYKS: That's correct.
4	MR. TURPIN: Okay.
5	MR. RYKS: And I also tell them flat out I
6	believe I'm going to go this route. You want a line,
7	go ahead, because sometimes they say these switches are
8	getting harder, they're freezing up, we need a little
9	extra time.
10	MR. TURPIN: Okay.
11	MR. RYKS: So I'll go ahead and give them
12	the route I'm going to go but I won't give them the UP
13	number.
14	MR. TURPIN: Okay. Go around the room?
15	Thank you.
16	MR. CORUM: Mike CORUM. Was this the first
17	time that you sat down at this desk with a discussion?
18	MR. RYKS: At that location? Yes.
19	MR. CORUM: That's all I've got.
20	MR. NARVELL: I just have one on the
21	accident. Mr. Turpin had asked you about talking with,
22	communicating with the EICs. Have you ever had a
23	difficulty with them understanding you or you
24	understanding them, either formal or more informal
25	communications?
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1	MR. RYKS: Once in a while I will ask for
2	clarification. Sometimes they'll throw a term at me
3	that I'm not a hundred percent on. So, to be a hundred
4	percent sure, I will ask for clarification.
5	MR. NARVELL: Okay, great, thank you.
6	MR. TURPIN: Okay. Anything? All right. I
7	think I'll hand you over back to Rick.
8	MR. NARVELL: He just came on.
9	MR. TURPIN: Oh, you don't need any of that?
10	MR. NARVELL: No.
11	MR. TURPIN: Okay, well let's at least do
12	employment history. Where you're hired out, when?
13	MR. RYKS: I was hired out in November of
14	'97 working for CMS, Crew Management, and then in, was
15	it July of '99 I got picked up as a dispatcher,
16	qualified in February of 2000.
17	MR. TURPIN: Okay. And what is your normal
18	shift now?
19	MR. RYKS: Third shift on that desk.
20	MR. TURPIN: How long have you been on that
21	desk?
22	MR. RYKS: I actually don't know. I don't
23	follow that that much, just
24	MR. TURPIN: All right. But you're regular
25	on it?

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1	MR. RYKS: I'm the regular. I've been 1400
2	days on it, 1400 shifts on it.
3	MR. TURPIN: Oh, wow. Okay.
4	MR. RYKS: So.
5	MR. TURPIN: That's a bunch.
6	MS. ROSEBERRY: Yes.
7	MR. TURPIN: You must like that desk.
8	MR. RYKS: It's a challenging time so I like
9	the challenge. It's, some days it's easy as can be,
10	you know, line them up and let them go and everybody
11	works. And other times it's tough.
12	MR. TURPIN: Yes.
13	MR. RYKS: Working with the locals out there
14	in the soda patch and then all the stuff in Ogden yard
15	and everything else. Some days it's tough. But I just
16	can't
17	MR. TURPIN: Just kind of a personal why
18	do you prefer third shift?
19	MR. RYKS: I had kids when I was young.
20	MR. TURPIN: Okay.
21	MR. RYKS: And I was able to go to their ball
22	games and do things with them. I could get home and
23	see them off to school. I'd be up when they got back.
24	MR. TURPIN: Okay.
25	MR. RYKS: And so for that reason and also
I	I

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	24
1	the wife worked nights until about six months ago. So
2	we were on the same schedule that way.
3	MR. TURPIN: Okay. I've heard some
4	dispatchers say they don't like maintenance away, but.
5	MR. RYKS: I get maintenance away at night
6	sometimes, you know, not as much, but yes, it's just a
7	personal, I'm just now used to it, and so.
8	MR. TURPIN: Yes, okay, good, thank you.
9	MR. CORUM: Well I just have a couple
10	questions, Eric, about the post incident, so.
11	MR. RYKS: Okay.
12	MR. CORUM: You called all, you got your
13	emergency play lookout.
14	MR. RYKS: Correct.
15	MR. CORUM: Contacted RMCC?
16	MR. RYKS: Yes.
17	MR. CORUM: Okay. Any idea how long that
18	was until the first responders could actually arrived
19	on scene? I'm just curious. If you know.
20	MR. RYKS: I do not know.
21	MR. CORUM: Thank you.
22	MR. TURPIN: All right, anybody else have
23	anything? We're done with this interview.
24	(Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went
25	off the record at an undisclosed time.)
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CERTIFICATE

MATTER: Union Pacific Freight Train Accident Granger, WY March 14, 2016 Accident No. DCA16FR005 Interview of Eric Ryks

DATE: 03-14-16

I hereby certify that the attached transcription of page 1 to 25 inclusive are to the best of my professional ability a true, accurate, and complete record of the above referenced proceedings as contained on the provided audio recording; further that I am neither counsel for, nor related to, nor employed by any of the parties to this action in which this proceeding has taken place; and further that I am not financially nor otherwise interested in the outcome of the action.

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