

Appendix C

Interview Transcript, Captain Steven Ruiz

Survival Factors Group Chairman's Factual Report

Metrolink train 111
Union Pacific train LOF 65-12
Los Angeles, California
September 12, 2008
DCA-08-MR-009

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

* * * * *
Investigation of: *
*
HEAD-ON COLLISION OF A METROLINK *
COMMUTER TRAIN WITH A UNION *
PACIFIC FREIGHT TRAIN, *
September 12, 2008 *
Los Angeles, California *
* * * * *

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

Interview of: CAPT. STEVEN RUIZ

Los Angeles, California

Tuesday,
September 16, 2008

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to
notice.

BEFORE: DANA SANZO

APPEARANCES:

DANA SANZO, Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board
Washington, D.C.
(202) 314-6534

JOHN QUINTANAR, Battalion Chief
Los Angeles Fire Department
Liaison with Metro Rail

JESUS OJEDA, Security Coordinator
Metrolink Safety and Security Division

CARLOS TAPIA, Mechanical Equipment Inspector
California Public Utilities Commission
Railroad Operations Safety Branch

LYDIA MILLS, Lieutenant
Watch Commander
Los Angeles Police Department

MICHAEL BELLA, Sergeant
Metrolink Bureau
Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

I N D E X

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Interview of Capt. Steven Ruiz, Los Angeles Police Department:	
By Ms. Sanzo	5
By Chief Quintanar	12
By Mr. Tapia	15
By Mr. Ojeda	18
By Mr. Tapia	20
By Chief Quintanar	21
By Ms. Sanzo	25
By Mr. Tapia	26
By Ms. Sanzo	27

I N T E R V I E W

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

MS. SANZO: My name is Dana Sanzo. I'm an Investigator with the National Transportation Safety Board, and today we're conducting an interview for Accident Number DCA-08-MR-009, and for the collision of Metrolink train and UP freight train in Los Angeles, California.

And if we can start by going around the table, if everybody can just state their names and their organizations.

CHIEF QUINTANAR: John Quintanar, Battalion Chief, LA City Fire, assigned to Metro Rail, and I've been assigned to assist in the investigation with NTSB.

MR. TAPIA: My name is Carlos Tapia. I'm a Motor Power and Equipment Inspector in the Railroad Operations Safety Branch of the California Public Utilities Commission, and I was also asked to participate and assist NTSB in this investigation.

CAPT. RUIZ: Captain Steven Ruiz, R U I Z. I'm the Patrol Commanding Officer of Devonshire Patrol Division. I was actually one of the first responders with the Los Angeles Police Department that responded there to join in the unified command with LA County Sheriff's and LA Fire Department.

LT. MILLS: My name is Lydia Mills, Lieutenant. I'm one of the watch commanders. I was not here that day. However, I will be assisting Captain Ruiz to prepare the LAPD after action report.

1 SGT. BELLA: My name is Michael Bella (ph.). I'm a
2 Sergeant with the LA County Sheriff's Department, assigned to
3 Metrolink Bureau, and I was asked to attend the meeting.

4 MR. OJEDA: My name is Jesus Ojeda. I'm the Security
5 Coordinator for Metrolink, also have been assigned to
6 participate in the NTSB investigations group.

7 MS. SANZO: Okay. Thank you, everyone, for being
8 here today.

9 INTERVIEW OF CAPT. STEVEN RUIZ

10 BY MS. SANZO:

11 Q. And, Captain, if you can just start by letting us
12 know how you were notified and tell us about what went on, on
13 that afternoon.

14 A. Okay. I was actually working that day, and I was
15 assigned in this building. I believe it was about -- the time
16 I show here is about -- approximately 4:25 p.m., that I got
17 notified by my watch commander that we had received a citizen
18 report, citizen report that there was a traffic -- an accident
19 involving a train. Initially I believe the initial report
20 possibly may have come out as a train versus vehicle.

21 Within -- at that time, I was preparing to go out to the scene.
22 He indicated where it was and in the Chatsworth area, which is
23 the jurisdiction in which we patrol, the Los Angeles Police
24 Department, Devonshire Division. As I was preparing to leave
25 and gathering some of my materials I may need out there, he

1 came in to inform me that we had now received several calls --
2 the communications dispatcher had advised that they had
3 received several calls advising that it was a train versus
4 train. Within seconds, I was out the door and in my car and
5 responding Code 3, which is lights, emergency lights and siren
6 from the station. Meanwhile, as I was driving there, there
7 were other units that were already advising that they were
8 present. Code 6 is a term we use when they arrive on scene,
9 and I was also informed, I believe it may have been watch
10 commander, that LAFD was already on scene. Upon -- and one of
11 the things that I did as I was driving over there was I made
12 the command decision of declaring a citywide tactical alert for
13 the police department, which basically means that all
14 resources, nobody's allowed to go home at the end of their
15 shift because it's possible that we may need additional
16 resources mobilized to this area because of what -- the
17 affected area and what had occurred. Upon my arrival and
18 parking, I could see that there were already numerous fire
19 personnel present. Helicopters were beginning to land in the
20 grass area of the school, and upon running onto the scene, I
21 basically observed the damaged train, Metrolink train, and I
22 also observed LAFD in basically the rescue -- in their rescue
23 mode, pulling victims and some of the deceased from the train
24 to get -- pulling some of the deceased to get to the -- to some
25 of the victims. Additionally, there were several LA County

1 deputy sheriffs that were present as well as Los Angeles Police
2 Department officers from my division, Devonshire Division, as
3 well as Valley Traffic Division. And at that time I
4 immediately went up to the first battalion chief that I could
5 find and asked him what do you need us to do, and at which time
6 he advised that he wanted the police to provide the security
7 because there were many onlookers and people climbing fences to
8 come over. I think many of them were there to help, but I had
9 also been instructed by a couple of officers that there
10 appeared to even be some homeless people from nearby
11 encampments that were coming in and posing as possible train
12 passengers and even coming up with some injuries that weren't
13 consistent with the train wreck and what we had seen. As far
14 as what I saw, I mean obviously it was very, it was very
15 gruesome. There were some obvious deceased passengers, some
16 injured severely with, you know, mutilated body parts. There
17 were people that were being rendered first aid and basically
18 lifted off on the gurney by -- many of them were being lifted
19 and rushed to the field. I think the more serious victims were
20 being rushed off immediately. At that time, I spoke to a
21 battalion chief, and I couldn't tell you his name or number,
22 but at that time, I started coordinating with my units to kind
23 of give some direction. I told my sergeants that I need you
24 to, you know, to get a team and provide security, keep people
25 out. I also needed a team to work closely with the fire to

1 assist in any, in any aid as far as lifting, you know, some
2 injured or deceased, to help in their, in their first aid mode
3 of operation that they were in. Within I want to say maybe 10
4 minutes, the deputy chief of our department, Deputy Chief
5 Michael Moore, who is the Valley Chief, arrived on scene, and I
6 had heard him broadcast shortly after I arrived that he was on
7 his way, responding Code 3 from a specific location. He
8 immediately -- at that point, prior to his arrival, I was the
9 incident commander for representing the police department, the
10 Los Angeles Police Department. Within, you know, minutes of
11 Deputy Chief Moore arriving, I gave him a quick briefing
12 because he obviously could see the same things that I saw and
13 declared himself the incident commander, and I was his
14 operations guy. We then -- I believe he may have touched base
15 with another battalion chief and -- just to confirm what we
16 were doing, and also as officers were arriving, we started
17 giving them missions to assist in, you know, coordinating some
18 of the arriving units as far as perimeter control, locking it
19 down, and aiding the fire department in any way. The fire was
20 the lead on this operation. We were there basically just to
21 assist. And shortly thereafter, we -- myself and Deputy Chief
22 Moore had given instructions to officers to be there to assist
23 and aid the fire department at their mission, and we -- within
24 minutes we began to implement the incident command structure,
25 the ICS, and we were directing outside resources, different

1 department resources to respond to our command post. Our
2 command post was set up at Canoga and Rinaldi. We had an outer
3 command post, and that's where all arriving LA Police personnel
4 were checking in, and they were waiting for specific missions.

5 As different command officers were arriving on scene,
6 different supervisors, we gave them missions as -- to oversee
7 some of the various structures within the incident command
8 structure. We immediately touched base with fire department
9 personnel. I know Chief Ruwada was one of the chiefs that was
10 present as were many other command staff from the fire
11 department, and it was immediately declared that this would be
12 a unified command, meaning that we shared, you know, different
13 responsibilities, but we shared in the command structure. So
14 fire obviously -- it was a unified command with a fire lead is
15 what it was, and pretty much throughout the evening, I stayed
16 at the incident command post and directed units -- arriving
17 units and providing them missions within, you know, whether it
18 be perimeter control, shutting off streets, traffic. We had
19 different LAPD captains that were all given -- as they would
20 arrive, we'd say, okay, you're in charge of the perimeter.
21 You're in charge of the logistics. You're in charge of the
22 command post, to direct units and check in units and so pretty
23 much it was, it was ongoing. We had briefs, it appeared to be
24 like maybe every half hour, and if something needed to be
25 brought up sooner or if they needed something from us then

1 we'd, you know, we had -- there was a LAPD liaison there, that
2 was a LAFD fire liaison. There was a LA County Sheriff
3 liaison, other patrol liaison. We had various liaisons
4 representing different agencies. So we're working together to
5 support each other, and that's really it. I remained there
6 throughout the evening, through the morning. I think I stayed
7 there until about 4:00 in the morning and, you know, obviously
8 a little chaotic as is any crime -- as is any type of scene of
9 this nature but, you know, within -- but in my opinion, I think
10 it worked well. It was a very well run unified command
11 involving multiple agencies working together. The NTSB
12 representative arrived, the FBI, the Metrolink. There was
13 probably some other entities that I'm probably leaving out, but
14 it all seemed to work well together.

15 Q. Okay. And could you describe a little bit more the
16 command structure and the different groups or divisions that
17 you might have had. We talked about perimeter control,
18 logistics, and could you just describe that a little bit more.

19 A. Yeah, I mean obviously the priority was the aid and
20 rescue of the victims that were injured in the train wreck, and
21 again it was a fire lead. They pretty much were the lead.
22 They had the equipment, and police, we had police personnel
23 there to support them in their mission, whether it be to move
24 some debris to help get to a victim or to help carry a victim
25 on a gurney with fire, hand-in-hand, and sheriffs and, you

1 know, many other agencies that were represented. So that was
2 one component of it. My role as the -- as working in the
3 incident command structure was we were basically -- it was a
4 unified command. So fire had their own person that was
5 directing their missions. So I really just dealt with the law
6 enforcement component, but we worked real closely with the
7 Sheriff's. I don't have the ICS forms that we use in front of
8 me right now, but as many of the units were arriving, we were
9 giving them, you know, missions within that. For instance, we
10 had somebody in charge of operations. We had somebody in
11 charge of perimeter control. We had another captain that
12 actually was a commander, Commander Samanski (ph.), who was
13 tasked with overseeing the perimeter. So he was working real
14 closely with highway patrol, Department of Transportation,
15 ensuring streets were closed. We also had an investigative
16 component in the mix. We were told that initially this would
17 be LAPD -- there was an agreement made early on between the
18 Sheriff's and LAPD that we would take over investigative
19 responsibility, and we were told that NTSB would be arriving
20 but that they needed us to continue with the investigative
21 responsibility until relieved. So we also had an investigative
22 component. That consisted of another captain. Again, I can't
23 give you specifics as to what they were doing, but it branched
24 off. Everybody had their own section, but we had another
25 captain overseeing the investigative component, and detectives

1 arrived to assist in doing that, and that's from everything
2 from helping to maybe meet with family members and identify
3 missing persons and to try to assist in working closely -- and
4 I also left out the coroner's office was there. The coroner's
5 office was represented as well, but working closely with the
6 coroner's office to ensure that those that were identified, the
7 deceased that were identified were placed on a list. So there
8 was a variety of different functions that every entity had.

9 Q. Okay.

10 MS. SANZO: Well, I'll pause for a moment and go
11 around the table and see if the group members would like to ask
12 some questions. Let's go around this way.

13 BY CHIEF QUINTANAR:

14 Q. Cap, I'm assuming you established a law branch and
15 you went through your --

16 A. Right.

17 Q. Did you provide helicopters? I know that there
18 were -- they said they had seven helicopters making air
19 ambulance transports.

20 A. To my knowledge, our air shift was overhead, but
21 assisting really in the, in the coordination of shutting down
22 the streets, to my knowledge, I don't believe. I don't know
23 for sure. I couldn't tell you if LAPD was responsible for
24 landing and airlifting anybody. I don't believe so. I believe
25 they assisted basically in the -- as the eye in the sky in

1 directing units in because numerous resources were coming,
2 fire, large trucks and various entities and police, but they
3 assisted in the closure of -- coordinating the closure of
4 streets to enable fire personnel to respond safely and have an
5 egress and -- ingress and egress route to and from the scene.

6 Q. We interviewed Chief Castro today who was the Fire
7 Department Ops Chief at the time before Chief Fox got there,
8 and he was very, very complimentary to your department and your
9 department for the -- assisting the firefighters in extricating
10 the riders in cars number 1, 2 and 3 actually. So I just want
11 to give you --

12 A. Thank you.

13 Q. -- kind of that a boy to both of your departments. I
14 mentioned that to your department, of course. And with that in
15 mind, I know that we are paid for doing what we did, but I
16 think your department went above and beyond, and if we can
17 maybe get a list of the individuals that were actually in the
18 train area --

19 A. Sure.

20 Q. -- because I know that I talked to Chief Ruwada
21 (ph.). In fact, I just talked to him -- just got off the phone
22 with him, and I suggested maybe doing some type of an
23 appreciation or something, so maybe if in the future you guys
24 can come up with a list.

25 A. Yeah, in fact, I've been tasked with writing the

1 after action report, and Lieutenant Mills will be assisting me
2 in that. As you can imagine, that's going to be a large task
3 to try and coordinate and find out who was who, but we're
4 trying to identify everybody and what role they played but,
5 yeah, there were a number of officers who were initial first
6 responders there to assist the fire department, and they were
7 actively assisting in, you know, in helping to carry and remove
8 debris and helping the fire department with their mission of
9 the rescue.

10 Q. And when you do something that's beyond your scope,
11 you know, we like to acknowledge that because officers, police
12 officers, law enforcement people are not involved in rescuing
13 people --

14 A. Sure.

15 Q. -- as much as we are --

16 A. Right.

17 Q. -- physical rescue and so forth, and so we'd like to
18 acknowledge them. So again thank both of you.

19 A. And also it just came up, over here at the, at the
20 police department, we actually have a volunteer group who many
21 of -- and a lot of them provide -- they came on scene after
22 listening to the news, and they responded. They're the CEMP,
23 and I'll have to get the acronym for you, but basically what
24 they are, they are trained in first aid --

25 Q. Right.

1 A. -- and EMT training, and they were there to assist,
2 and I know many of them were actually there and they were
3 taking direction --

4 Q. Yes.

5 A. -- from a lot of the fire department personnel, you
6 know, hold -- you know, whether it was to hold direct pressure
7 on a wound or help, you know, bandage somebody up. They were
8 there on the line basically as well. Not initially, but as
9 they were arriving, because of the number of injured, they were
10 there to assist. So I'll also get you the list of those
11 volunteers because they actually rolled up with equipment, and
12 it's a volunteer group really that comes out and provides
13 support. They were real instrumental in providing some of the
14 lighting that we had and equipment as well.

15 Q. Right.

16 BY MR. TAPIA:

17 Q. So LAPD members were helping to walk people out of
18 the train --

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. -- the ones that were injured, and you were also
21 helping to take any metal pieces that were being cut, throw
22 them out?

23 A. Yeah. They were there to assist, and I couldn't give
24 you specifics because I personally didn't stay there but --
25 from what I've heard and what I did see, I did actually see

1 them assisting fire. Fire had the lead, and they were there to
2 assist, whatever fire needed, if it was take this or hold that.

3 Q. They didn't have any or did they have any opportunity
4 to use the tools to cut anything that needed to be cut --

5 A. No.

6 Q. -- to extricate passengers?

7 A. No, our department does not have any equipment or
8 training in that type. So really they were there just to
9 support the fire department.

10 Q. Okay. And that was mostly in the first Metrolink
11 passenger car. Were they in the second and the third car? Did
12 they see anything over there?

13 A. That I don't know. But I know they were assisting --
14 those that could walk, many of us, many of our people were
15 escorting. So that way the fire could go on to help the more
16 injured, the more serious injured. So I know that many of
17 officers, yes, I would say that probably the second and third
18 train, they were helping to walk other people as well. And as
19 additional resources came, they were given different missions
20 by the fire.

21 Q. Okay. Thanks.

22 A. Uh-huh.

23 MS. SANZO: Sergeant.

24 SGT. BELLA: I really -- I wasn't there. So I don't
25 have a lot. I'm learning more and more about it, and the fact

1 that the fire captain pointed out, everybody came together as a
2 team, and that's how it should be. You know, it really -- I
3 was watching it on TV. I called. As soon as I heard about it,
4 I called and asked if they needed me to come in. I actually
5 called Nina, because I knew she was working, and her cell phone
6 was ringing and ringing and ringing, and then finally somebody
7 answered, and it wasn't her, and I thought, oh, my God.
8 Because she and I read these trains, and at first I was very
9 concerned. Fortunately, the party on the other end said, no,
10 she's just busy and has me answering her phone. Who's this?
11 And I identified myself and I asked if they needed me to come
12 in. It was my day off, and they said that there was enough
13 personnel present that they didn't feel they needed me. But a
14 lot of people from what I hear just volunteered. That was a
15 good call to lock it down and get everybody, as many people as
16 possible. I think our agency did the same thing. And, you
17 know, the manpower that was needed to assist fire because that
18 was too much for fire to handle on their own, and people did, I
19 mean without being told, pretty much knew to go out there and
20 help people and get them to, you know, safety, and it looked
21 real good on TV and what's happening now to get the whole thing
22 back up and running. It's pretty impressive, I mean, because I
23 thought, wow, this is really going to be hard for a week or so
24 or more without having that line because that not only is a
25 freight line but the commuter line for Amtrak and Metrolink all

1 the way up the coast, and to hear that they're possibly back to
2 normal operations today is impressive.

3 MR. OJEDA: I'd like to say, first of all, I'd like
4 to each what both people are saying, in terms of their
5 response, LAPD, Sheriff's, fire, you know, sometimes there are
6 no differences, and this time we were working like a huge
7 family including the railroad. So that's one of the big pluses
8 I'd like to throw out there. I do have questions.

9 BY MR. OJEDA:

10 Q. In terms of from a railroad perspective, did you have
11 any type of problems or did you guys have any problems with
12 entering the equipment, doors, windows?

13 A. No, but one of the things -- I don't know who cut the
14 whole in the fence to get in, I imagine fire did, but we -- I
15 mean that was only one opening. It would have been nice if
16 there had been more openings along the way because I mean you
17 had to -- there was one way in and one way out, and that's
18 where they cut it. But I mean it was right there at the scene
19 but many, you know, many officers were having to responding and
20 Sheriff's, and it was just one way in and one way out. You
21 know, in hindsight, I mean I realize the fences are there to
22 keep people from getting injured and going onto the tracks, but
23 maybe some more openings along the way in the event something
24 like that happens. I mean, I guess they could -- but, but I
25 mean, the opening was right where they needed to be get in

1 there, but there was only one way in and one way out. As far
2 as access to the train, other than the first train that was,
3 you know, severely damaged and the other trains were, I mean
4 they were intact. You could enter it, and that was not a
5 problem.

6 Q. Okay. Thank you. In terms of the railroad
7 cooperating with you, law enforcement and fire, did you find it
8 acceptable? Were they doing what you guys required from the
9 railroad?

10 A. You're talking like Metrolink personnel?

11 Q. Metrolink, yes.

12 A. Oh, yeah, I mean from the onset, they had a
13 representative, and they were working real close with us.
14 There was -- every agency that was there had a representative
15 at the police command post. And we worked real closely
16 alongside, shoulder to shoulder with the fire and again
17 Sheriff's were part of our law.

18 Q. Do you know if anyone from your department, to your
19 knowledge, called the railroad to shut it down right after the
20 incident?

21 A. That I don't know. I don't know.

22 Q. And that would --

23 A. Yeah, it's possible that could have been done by the
24 Sheriff's. I really don't know. Because I know, again as I
25 was on scene, there was already Sheriff's and my officers on

1 scene, but I personally did not. So I don't know.

2 Q. Okay. Thank you.

3 MR. TAPIA: I have a question.

4 BY MR. TAPIA:

5 Q. When you left here by Code 3, did you need to use
6 your radio to get information or to give information? And if
7 you did, did you run into any problems communicating, anybody
8 else getting on the same frequency and talking at the same
9 time?

10 A. No, in fact, the radio was actually unusually quiet
11 at that time, and when I heard the broadcast that there were
12 casualties, several or numerous casualties is the way
13 broadcast, we try and have radio discipline and not tie up the
14 radio and make a whole lot of ruffraff. The only request that
15 I did upon hearing that was I knew it was going to be a long
16 night. I knew it was going to be a large perimeter. I knew it
17 was going to take resources, and with my training and
18 experience, about the only request I did was to show me
19 responding Code 3, and upon hearing the news that there was
20 some casualties, I declared a citywide tactical alert which
21 tells our department nobody can go home and be ready to be
22 deployed as needed, and then I think shortly thereafter, I
23 don't know if it was as I was approaching, I requested 40
24 officers to assist right from the get-go. So that was my only
25 broadcast, but we try and limit. In fact, the only

1 broadcasting that was being done were those already on scene
2 directing others to respond on Canoga to Rinaldi. In other
3 words, how to arrive at the scene safely without interfering
4 with the fire department and allow their trucks to come in. So
5 I thought it was very well-coordinated as far as working with
6 them to allow them to get their equipment in.

7 CHIEF QUINTANAR: I have one question.

8 BY CHIEF QUINTANAR:

9 Q. You mentioned Commander Moore, is it?

10 A. Deputy Chief Michael Moore.

11 Q. He was the lead or the IC along with Chief Ruwada for
12 fire and police.

13 A. Right.

14 Q. And then yourself, you were operations. If we had
15 time to interview other LAPD officers, who would you suggest
16 that we --

17 LT. MILLS: Wolleck was one of the first responders,
18 and he's here today.

19 THE WITNESS: Well, are you -- you're asking about
20 first responding officers?

21 BY CHIEF QUINTANAR:

22 Q. Yes. Yes, somebody that might give us a different
23 perspective. I mean you're --

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. -- you're giving us the command perspective.

1 A. Right, sure.

2 Q. Somebody that might give us one that was maybe --

3 A. I actually have, I actually have some officers here.
4 She mentioned an Officer Wolleck. Him and his partner were
5 among the first. I don't know if they were the first LAPD on
6 scene, but they were among the first there at the onset
7 helping. So I would say some of our officers who were there
8 to -- and his whole mission was basically to stay there and
9 assist fire. So he wasn't aware of what was happening with
10 incident command. So he could tell you firsthand what their
11 role was and what they were doing and what they saw, sure.

12 Q. And he's working today?

13 A. Yes.

14 LT. MILLS: He is working. I believe he is. You
15 know, he had an interview today. So I seen him.

16 CHIEF QUINTANAR: Okay.

17 LT. MILLS: If you'd like, I can go and see if he is.

18 CHIEF QUINTANAR: Maybe we can get his number --

19 THE WITNESS: And there may be a list. I'd have to
20 look at the lineup today to see who's working, but there may be
21 additional officers, but I'm expecting later today or maybe
22 tomorrow morning a list of personnel that were there, and I
23 could probably give you a more detailed list, break it down to
24 the first responders that were, you know, break it down as
25 closely as possible. Right now it would be just who I recall

1 from my memory, but in looking at lists and some of the rosters
2 that were put together.

3 BY CHIEF QUINTANAR:

4 Q. Yeah, I'm assuming that Dana, you know, we don't want
5 to speak to, you know, an individual who handled the perimeter,
6 you know.

7 A. Right, no, no.

8 Q. I mean (indiscernible) --

9 A. But by looking at that list, I can tell you, I mean,
10 I could be able to tell you that these were my first
11 responders.

12 Q. Right.

13 A. These were the guys that were there right at the
14 onset.

15 Q. Can we give you a call tomorrow maybe and --

16 A. Sure.

17 Q. -- or tonight, whenever you have that list because
18 Dana's leaving Friday.

19 A. Okay.

20 Q. So we're hoping to wrap everything up by Thursday.

21 A. Okay.

22 Q. So if we can get that list as soon as possible --

23 A. Sure.

24 Q. -- we'd appreciate that.

25 A. Sure.

1 MS. SANZO: Lieutenant, would you like to ask any
2 questions or --

3 LT. MILLS: No.

4 MS. SANZO: Offer any insights?

5 LT. MILLS: No, I'm just now hearing for the first
6 time all of this stuff. So --

7 THE WITNESS: And if I could just add, I mean --

8 MS. SANZO: Certainly.

9 THE WITNESS: -- I mean, when you look at the thing,
10 as chaotic as it looked, it actually came together as a joint
11 operation. I think everybody worked well together, NTSB, FBI,
12 Department of Transportation, that's our City, because we got
13 them to relieve some of our officers on street corners shutting
14 down traffic, so they could be used for something else. And,
15 you know, there were a number of concerns that were popping up
16 along the way. We were getting reports of looking into who's
17 jumping fences and going into people's backyards and trying to
18 take pictures, and so really we were trying to close down the
19 scene but no, it was definitely -- I mean, I've worked real
20 closely in many planned events, when you have an incident,
21 whether it be a major parade or a major, you know, victory,
22 championship for the Lakers or whatever it may be, and we've
23 always worked well together with fire, Sheriff's and a lot of
24 the outside entities, but this is something that was
25 spontaneous, and I think as a result of the training that we've

1 done in the last probably 5 to 10 years, with ICS, it all came
2 together and worked well, and everybody knew their mission and,
3 you know, they worked well together.

4 BY MS. SANZO:

5 Q. Okay. Along those lines, I'd like to ask if you
6 could give any advice or recommendation to other departments on
7 training or planning that helped during this incident?

8 A. Yeah, what I would recommend is like I said, in the
9 last few years, as a supervisor, as a commander officer, we've
10 attended trainings at the LA Fire Academy over -- at Leesh Park
11 (ph.), bottom of Leesh Park there.

12 CHIEF QUINTANAR: Near Dodger's Stadium.

13 THE WITNESS: Near Dodger's Stadium, and one thing
14 that we do in these exercises is we go over the incident
15 command structure. We do tabletops. We do training and stuff.
16 Although it's just tabletop exercises and practice, but I think
17 that helped contribute, and all that comes into play when it's
18 needed, and I think we have a good working rapport with the
19 agencies here in Los Angeles, the LA Sheriff's also, you know,
20 work well with us, but again it's to intermix the training
21 between fire personnel. Years ago it used to be just the
22 police, but now we have a lot of joint training for disasters
23 and things of that nature, but I think it paid dividends in an
24 incident like this.

25 MS. SANZO: I'll ask the group.

1 CHIEF QUINTANAR: I agree with you. I mentioned to
2 Dana that three, four years ago when we went as two
3 departments, when Sheriff's joined us at Oxnard where all our
4 command officers went up there and had an opportunity to, you
5 know, let our hair loose a little bit and also at the same time
6 go over the incident command system and NIMS and so forth. So
7 that was almost the beginning of us. It seemed to work a lot
8 better, and this is a good example.

9 THE WITNESS: Yeah.

10 MR. TAPIA: I have another question.

11 BY MR. TAPIA:

12 Q. When the LAPD officers climb on the -- onto the
13 Metrolink passenger cars, were they possibly in the locomotives
14 as well? If they did, was there any question they had, like I
15 can't touch this or I'm not supposed to touch that or is this
16 safe, that you know of?

17 A. I know that one of the questions I had asked of the
18 fire department, was there any potential for like a hazardous
19 material exposure, and they -- the person I talked to deemed
20 that they had rendered it safe. They had put out the threat of
21 the fire. As far as did any of my officers go on the freight
22 train, I don't know the answer to that. I really don't know.

23 Q. All right.

24 A. I would imagine that somebody cleared and checked to
25 make sure there were no additional victims or -- but I don't

1 know. We were really there as -- to assist the fire who was
2 the lead on the actual scene. So I couldn't tell you if they
3 did that, but I can, I can tell you right now that my officers
4 wouldn't have taken it upon themselves to go do that without
5 getting direction from fire because we were there to support
6 them.

7 Q. Okay. All right. Thanks.

8 BY MS. SANZO:

9 Q. I'd just like to ask if any you have any final
10 thoughts or advice to departments on handling an incident like
11 this, if there's anything else you'd like to add at all?

12 A. No, I just think training, like I talked about, you
13 know, that really prepares you for events like this, just
14 consistent training and training with the agencies, the various
15 agencies intermix because not only do we work with the
16 Sheriff's and the fire department, we also work with other city
17 entities, whether it be DWP, the Department of Water and Power,
18 General Services. There's even different entities within the
19 city and county that work together and are part of it. So it's
20 not just limited to law enforcement and fire. There's also,
21 you know, from the civilian side, other entities that work with
22 us, and they also understand the structure, the ICS structure.

23 MR. TAPIA: One last thing I want to say.

24 MS. SANZO: Uh-huh.

25 MR. TAPIA: That is that I've been to other training

1 relations, like a whole class, and when I went to this one,
2 this one was tremendous, and just hearing the TV, I see Arnold
3 Schwarzenegger and other people saying that the way the police
4 department and the Sheriff's and the fire department, the way
5 they worked together was just fantastic and participating in
6 interviews, the work that you guys did was just tremendous.

7 THE WITNESS: Thank you.

8 MR. TAPIA: Everybody should be very thankful for
9 that.

10 THE WITNESS: Thank you. Additionally, one of the
11 other things that we did from the outside, as far as our
12 department goes, was because of the gruesome exposure that many
13 of the personnel got, we also brought in our psychologist from
14 the City Department to assist with anybody, because I mean this
15 literally shook up both fire and law enforcement personnel,
16 anybody that was there. I mean, people were breaking down in
17 addition to doing their job, and they continued to do it, but
18 it was an emotional thing for many people. But we also, you
19 know, utilized our behavioral sciences psychologists to go out
20 there to help and just make sure that our law enforcement, our
21 fire and everybody that was involved with the outside agencies
22 were also being cared for as well and, you know, looked after.

23 MS. SANZO: I'd like to thank you very much for your
24 time today. It was an incredibly informative interview, and
25 that will conclude the interview.

1 (Whereupon, the interview in the above-entitled
2 matter was concluded.)
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: HEAD-ON COLLISION OF A METROLINK
 COMMUTER TRAIN WITH A UNION
 PACIFIC FREIGHT TRAIN
 September 12, 2008,
 Los Angeles, California
 Interview of Capt. Steven Ruiz

DOCKET NUMBER: DCA-08-MR-009

PLACE: Los Angeles, California

DATE: September 16, 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.

Kathryn A. Mirfin
Transcriber