



SURVIVAL FACTORS HIGHWAY

ATTACHMENT 12

OFD TRUCK 61 INTERVIEWS

HWY15MH006

(12 pages)

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Investigation of: *
METROLINK GRADE CROSSING ACCIDENT *
OXNARD, CALIFORNIA * Docket No.: HWY-15-MH-006
FEBRUARY 24, 2015 *

Interview of: FF 1 and
FF 2

Oxnard, California
Wednesday,
February 25, 2015

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice.

BEFORE: NTSB INVESTIGATOR, Ph.D.
Survival Factors Investigator

APPEARANCES:
NTSB INVESTIGATOR, Ph.D., Survival Factors Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

INTERVIEW

NTSB INVESTIGATOR: Okay. So this is Truck 61.

INTERVIEW OF FF 1 AND FF 2

NTSB INVESTIGATOR: So let's start. Just tell me what position you had on the truck and what your -- if you're firefighter or EMT or what position you are. Go ahead.

FF 1: FF 1. I was on Truck 61 as a firefighter.

NTSB INVESTIGATOR: Okay. FF 1, ----- . Okay, and?

FF 2: And I'm Firefighter FF 2. I was on Truck 61 as well.

NTSB INVESTIGATOR: And then, there's crew of yours that -- the captain ----- not here, and the engineer, ----- (ph.)?

FF 2: The on-duty crew was actually different than the roster you have listed there.

NTSB INVESTIGATOR: Okay. Who was the captain on the truck?

FF 2: It was -FF 1: Captain -----

FF 2: -- Captain -----.

NTSB INVESTIGATOR: -----? Okay.

FF 2: And engineer was -----.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Normally a four-person crew?

FF 2: Yes, sir.

NTSB INVESTIGATOR: Okay. And you guys said your firefighters? Firefighter EMT?

FF 2: Yes. Firefighter EMT.

NTSB INVESTIGATOR: So either one of you can start. Basically just ask, you know, when you guys were dispatched to the scene -- which one of you were driving?

MR.FF 1: Driving the rear of the truck.

NTSB INVESTIGATOR: Oh, you're in -- okay.

FF 1: That's what it'd be, one of the two --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: What kind of truck? We should ask what kind of truck?

FF 1: It's the ladder truck.

FF 2: Ladder truck, the tillered aerial ladder. So there's an engineer and a captain and a firefighter in the cab of the truck, as well as a firefighter in the rear steering the --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: -----

FF 2: -- rear axle as a tillerman.

NTSB INVESTIGATOR: Okay. So whichever one wants to go first, just go ahead and tell us, you know, how you were dispatched, was there any trouble getting to the scene, what happened once you got on the scene, you know, what your duties were.

FF 1: You want to go first?

FF 2: Sure.

NTSB INVESTIGATOR: So this is FF 2?

FF 2: Yes. Dispatch came in. I was sound asleep. I heard the report, got dressed, got on the rig. There was kind of a normal response to the incident as far as dispatch info goes.

NTSB INVESTIGATOR: Do you know about which unit you were arriving on scene, which fire unit?

FF 2: Most likely the third. I know Engine 65 and Engine 61 were ahead of us, and then Battalion 61, I think arrived just ahead of us, so we would have been the fourth.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Is that a command car or --

NTSB INVESTIGATOR: Yeah, that's the IC -- I know who that is.

FF 1: Chief [REDACTED] was actually our incident commander for that day.

NTSB INVESTIGATOR: Right.

FF 2: Dispatch info had said there were cars on their side, train cars on their side with patients trapped.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Your approach was up 5th Street or --

FF 2: Yes. We were eastbound on 5th Street.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And directly from your Fire Station --

FF 2: Yes.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: -- Number 1, is it?

FF 2: Station 1.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: 1, okay. Any traffic encounters en route? Any problems getting there actually?

FF 2: There was a little bit of traffic that we just kind of went --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Around?

FF 2: -- around, but it wasn't major. It wasn't significant in any way. The intersection was heavily congested and there was a fire on the northbound side of the intersection.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Not on the southbound side of the Rice Street, you mean?

FF 2: No. It was on the northbound lanes of Rice. It's kind of like the northeast --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It'd be, as you're looking at Rice from 5th, it'd be on the right side?

FF 2: Yeah.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Sound about right? Okay.

FF 2: From 5th, yes. From 5th, yes.

FF 1: Yeah.

FF 2: Looking north, yes. Orientation -- so there was fire there. You could see a vehicle kind of in the dirt there as we passed and train cars on their side. Right about that same time that we were pulling up, Engine 65 had made the update that there was a fire. They assigned Engine 61 to take the fire attack and they continued in to start triage. And we arrived and were assigned right in to help assist with the triage rescue group. Is that what we were titled?

FF 1: That I remember the group.

FF 2: Yeah.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: So you were --

FF 2: Barely awake at that point.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: -- rescue rather than the firefighting effort?

FF 2: Yes.

FF 1: Correct.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: So you didn't need to use your aerial ladder or anything?

FF 2: No. We didn't use the aerial ladder. When I got off the truck, I had actually grabbed just a box light, a flashlight, to take because there were patients coming out of -- can I use the picture real quick?

NTSB INVESTIGATOR: Yeah.

FEMALE SPEAKER: Is this one of the --

FF 2: So this is the truck, where we parked it, and out of the rear of this train car there was just kind of a little bit of mangled metal. So then we were assisting --

NTSB INVESTIGATOR: So the truck sits off the end of 206, of Train Car 206. That's for the tape.

FF 2: Okay. We were assisting victims in climbing out --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Were they streaming out of the car at that point or --

FF 2: There was, I don't know, maybe five or six that still needed some assistance getting out. How many came out before, I have no idea, but there were about five that we assisted out of the rear. We already had one firefighter from Engine 65 was inside. Actually the engineer from 65 was inside. And he requested a backboard because there was one person that wasn't able to get up and walk out.

So I don't know who brought the backboard over, but I climbed in. Once all the walking victims were able to get out, climbed in and assisted with C-spine of that victim inside, and then made the transfer out to the triage area with him.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Triage was in the pavement, on the roadway itself?

FF 2: Yes, sir.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Kind of behind your -- in front of your truck there?

FF 1: Yeah.

FF 2: Yeah. Kind of right there. Well, that same area.

And then after putting him down in the triage area, went and assisted with just kind of carrying other victims that were on backboards and in C-spine from the other cars. I guess it would be 211. I carried another two or three victims and just transferred them over to triage based on the kind of tag that they had.

BY NTSB INVESTIGATOR: Okay.

FF 2: And then from there, just rolled in from triage into assisting with some of the treatment of just a little bit of bandaging and --

NTSB INVESTIGATOR: What kind of injuries did you see?

FF 2: The one gal with a skull fracture, I had talked to her and covered her with a blanket. And then, the other --

NTSB INVESTIGATOR: So she was a -- obviously a red?

FF 2: Yes, yes. I don't remember what order they left the scene in, but she was one of the first ones from that red tarp to leave. And then, as all the ambulances were taking the patients at that point to the hospital, I was asked to go back to the cars and collect belongings, personal belongings.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Personal effects?

FF 2: Um-hum. So I went back and climbed in each of the cars for just one lap, down and back.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Find anything unusual?

FF 2: The one thing that got my attention was the sledgehammer. Other than that --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Well, there is a sledgehammer in the car in the --

FF 1: Yeah.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: -- equipment locker. Is that the same sledgehammer you're talking about?

FF 2: I don't know where it came from.

FF 1: (Indiscernible) just a loose --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Or (indiscernible).

FF 2: It was just a loose --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Came loose?

FF 2: -- sledgehammer, a yellow handle, big --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It's held in with a little securement bracket. My concern here is that these things shouldn't be coming loose. There may be a strap in there or something too.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And we don't know that someone didn't take it out.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Right. Very true.

FF 2: Right.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes.

FF 2: So there was the loose sledgehammer. The bicycles were still mounted --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah. We --

FF 2: -- in place on the walls and we removed them from the walls.

NTSB INVESTIGATOR: What train car was that that the sledgehammer was in? Do you know?

FF 1: I think it was that one, wasn't it?

FF 2: 211?

FEMALE SPEAKER: Toward the -- toward this end or this end?

FF 1: I think it was 211, and they also found -- that's where they found the -- a big, like a duffel bag, a large duffel bag that also had some other tools in it. So I don't know -- we weren't sure if it was a --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It sounds like it was a crew bag.

FF 1: -- it was the crew's bag or someone else, yeah. So it had some like -- a drill or something like that. It had some equipment.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Oh, yeah. There was a mechanic on board the train.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I was going to say, it sounds like a mechanic was on board.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: He was on. He worked on the Garden Track. He was -- I actually spoke to him. He was actually on the news quite a bit. He gave an interview.

NTSB INVESTIGATOR: Okay. So you went swept -- you went through and swept the cars, and then what happened?

FF 2: After that, brought the belongings out and they had a little collection point for those, and went back in to help with just the movement of patients into transport. Was just given direction that, like, these two are the next two. I don't have any identification of any of them or anything. I just was kind of pointed like these are the next two to go, and given an ambulance number, and would either have a gurney or carry the patients to the ambulance.

NTSB INVESTIGATOR: Okay. All right. And then you were -- and then that's about all the rest of the --

FF 2: Um-hum. The rest of it was kind of wrapped up at that point.

NTSB INVESTIGATOR: Okay. Do you guys have any questions?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I always like to ask a final question. In knowing what you know now, in retrospect -- everybody's a Monday morning quarterback and you had experience here none of you had before, right? Is there anything you'd like to share with us that you'd do differently that you see now you could have approached a little different way to maybe save time, save effort, whatever? Anything jumps out at you?

We had a previous group, for example, offered some thoughts on foam nozzling.

FF 2: Oh, okay.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: That kind of thing.

FF 2: From our approach through like my interaction and movement with the victims and the other crews on scene, we didn't have any forced extrication need. We didn't have to use any saws, any tools, anything like that, so that went incredibly well. So if you help design those things, kudos to you because they held up all the access points and everything. It was --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Right. There's actually --

FF 2: -- really, really --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: -- -- there's actually a certain number of G's that the seat catchments have to endure to stay secured to the railcar itself --

FF 2: Right.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: -- that kind of thing. There's a regulation on that.

FF 2: Yeah. I mean, just looking around the scene, there's a tremendous amount of forces and impacts and things. There's -- I don't know if it's a knuckle or what it is. It was a metal object as big around as a normal waist. It was just snapped.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: In a railcar or --

FF 2: It was off the end of one of the cars.

FEMALE SPEAKER: So maybe the coupler head.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah. It's the coupler, coupler head.

FF 2: Maybe a coupler?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah.

FF 2: And it was impressive. I mean, that's a big chunk of metal and --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Right. That's not surprising when these cars, they come together and they buckle and kind of go zigzag, and there's a huge load that goes on these, and that's actually a good thing because that absorbs energy. And anything you can do to benignly absorb energy is a good thing.

FF 2: Yeah. So the first -- I don't know what to call it -- the -- what would have been the front of the train where the conductor would have been sitting, I didn't even see that car on the first approach, and I didn't know it existed until I went over to help remove patients from 211. So it was impressive. But access was the key thing for us. It was easy access.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And the end doors were open and everything when you got there? Because, of course, it's on their side, so the doors are now horizontal.

FF 2: Right.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And they're about, yea high. FF
2: They were all open.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: They were all open (indiscernible) --

FF 2: Everything was open.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Lights, emergency lighting? Did you see any cars dark?

FF 2: Our car --

FF 1: Ours --

FF 2: -- had to have been dark because I took a flashlight in there.

FF 1: But I think it was just to get by the benches or something, right by the seats, because I do recall seeing the lights on --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: On the floors or just --

FF 1: -- the floor or side, whatever it was. Yeah, however we were at in there. But I do remember seeing lighting in there because I remember hearing them ask if the power had been secured. And all of us were like the power's secured, but I still see lights here. So I don't know what was controlling that, but the power -- the lighting was still on, so --

NTSB INVESTIGATOR: All right. So yeah. Let's move on to --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: How about training? Have you guys had any training on these railcars before? Familiarization training or anything?

FF 2: I did do a training with -- and I believe it was Amtrak, not Metrolink -- just kind of a familiarization with the cars and --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Slide show or PowerPoint or whatever?

FF 2: Um-hum. That's --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: They didn't bring a train in to show you?

FF 2: No. No. And we didn't go out to a train. It was --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You guys been on these trains before?

FF 2: -- conversational.

FF 1: A couple weeks ago.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: So you had -- you'd be amazed how many young firefighters had never even been on a train before.

FF 2: Right.

FF 1: Yeah.

NTSB INVESTIGATOR: Okay. So why don't you go ahead and -- this is FF 1.

FF 1: Yes.

NTSB INVESTIGATOR: And --

FF 1: I was on Truck 61. A lot of it would be repeat as ----- said. So we made our way down to the scene. We do you want me to repeat everything that he said as far as the scene?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Anything different.

NTSB INVESTIGATOR: Yeah. Things that are different that you noticed or --

FF 1: Okay. Well, the --

NTSB INVESTIGATOR: -- your duties.

FF 1: As far as the approach and all that, everything was basically the same. And for a lot of it, ----- and I were actually together for the assistance of the -- removing or getting people out of that first car that he mentioned, the -- what is that, 211? Is that 211 or --

FF 2: 206.

FF 1: 206. That's the first one that we had walked up to. And again, we -- as he mentioned, we had helped out four or five or six people out of that that were able to get out and with their bags. And then we went inside and assisted packaging one or two other folks in there that had some complaints of back pain or neck pain. And then again, we were almost side by side when most of them -- and just transferred over to the other car and assisted people there doing the same thing.

If we weren't helping packaging, we were helping just to get them from that height, from that doorway, to get them out and then carry them over to the staging area, the triage area. And again, following suit, we went back and they asked us to go to see if we could recover some personal effects. There was nothing out of the ordinary with that. As he mentioned, the sledgehammer thing. I think he had found somebody's -- somebody found some teeth or something in there. I was like, oh, okay, interesting. But nothing out of the ordinary, just keys, backpacks, normal things.

NTSB INVESTIGATOR: Like false teeth or actual teeth?

FF 1: Yeah, it looked like somebody's false teeth or maybe like a bridge or something. It was in a container. Maybe it fell out of a bag.

NTSB INVESTIGATOR: In a container, okay.

FF 1: Yeah. No, no, no, it wasn't like that. Yeah, it was in a container. You'd be surprised the things you come across.

NTSB INVESTIGATOR: We haven't got the injury descriptions yet, so I --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Some poor guy's going around looking for his teeth.

FF 1: Yeah. And let's see. So after we did those things with looking through the cars, we ended up back at the triage area, just kind of assisting people with the loading on the ambulance or trying to keep them warm, trying to get them blankets and things to keep them warm because it started to get -- a lot of them started shivering out there, so -- let's see.

And then it seemed like everything was just -- everything was moving pretty smooth as far as the transportation, getting them out to the hospitals. I wasn't involved in any of that, other than helping to load patients; not the coordination of any of it.

NTSB INVESTIGATOR: Okay.

FF 1: I think that might have been about it. I mean, it's pretty much the same thing as what ----- had mentioned.

NTSB INVESTIGATOR: What about you as far as hindsight, things that could have gone better or --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Things that you'd do differently, lessons learned.

FF 1: I don't think that it -- for what we had, I don't think that it would have necessarily did anything any different. It seemed like everything was pretty cut and dry. The openings were there to get the people out. They were wide enough and it worked out well. If at some time, some of those things, if they were smashed and there was metal in the way, well, then we would've had to been preparing for something else, maybe using our tools to get in there or starting to remove windows or doing something else.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: But you were just working the cars that were over on their sides, not the upright ones?

FF 1: Correct. But as far as anything that I would do different, I -- off the top of my head, I don't think I really have anything.

NTSB INVESTIGATOR: Do you guys have any questions for us or anything that we didn't think to ask?

FF 1: No, I don't.

FF 2: No, I don't. No, sir.

FF 1: I don't.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You guys?

NTSB INVESTIGATOR: That's great. Any questions for you guys?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you.

NTSB INVESTIGATOR: Great.

FF 1: Sure.

(Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: METROLINK GRADE CROSSING ACCIDENT

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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.