

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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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: Michael Hahn

Friday,
March 18, 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.

APPEARANCES:

On Behalf of the Interviewee:

DAVID CUNNINGHAM
SMART UTU
Conductor's Vice Local Chairman

On Behalf of the Interviewee:

JEFF BOYCE
SMART UTU

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

CONNIE ROSEBERRY, ESQ.
Union Pacific Railroad Company
1400 Douglas Street
Omaha, Nebraska 68179
[REDACTED]

P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

(Time not disclosed)

My name is Ted Turpin. Today is March 18, 2016 and we're at the UP Dispatch Center in Omaha, Nebraska, and we're interviewing a corridor manager in connection with the accident that occurred in Granger, Wyoming on March 14th, 2016.

The NTSB Accident number is DCA16FR005.

And, just to inform you, the purpose of this investigation is to increase safety and not to assign fault, blame or liability. We cannot guarantee your confidentiality or immunity from legal or certificate actions, although we don't pursue any of those from our agency.

The transcripts of this summary will be made available in a public docket after you have a chance to review it. We've asked if you'd like to have a representative here and I believe it's -- Connie is your representative?

MR. HAHN: Yes, Connie is.

MR. TURPIN: Do you understand this is being recorded?

MR. HAHN: I do.

MR. TURPIN: Alright. Thank you. So, if you'd state your name and spell it, please.

1 MR. HAHN: Michael Hahn. H-A-H-N is my last
2 name.

3 MR. TURPIN: We'll go around the table and
4 have everybody introduce themselves.

5 MR. CORUM: Mike Corum, C-O-R-U-M, Operating
6 Practice Specialist, FRA Kansas City, Region 6.

7 MR. FORESMAN: Steve Foresman, F-O-R-E-S-M-
8 A-N, Senior Director of Operating Practices and Rules,
9 Union Pacific.

10 MR. NARVELL: Rick Narvell, N, like in
11 Nancy, A-R-V-E-L-L. I'm a Human Performance
12 Investigator with the NTSB in Washington, DC.

13 MR. LISCHER: Tom Lischer, AVP Harriman
14 Dispatch Center at Union Pacific.

15 MR. FISH: Brian Fish, Director Dispatch and
16 Practices Quality Assurance, Union Pacific.

17 MR. MOZENA: Lawrence Mozena, M-O-Z-E-N-A,
18 SMART TD National Safety Team.

19 MR. ALLBERRY: John Allberry, A-L-L-B-E-R-R-
20 Y, General Director of Safety, Union Pacific.

21 MS. ROSEBERRY: Connie Roseberry, R-O-S-E-B-
22 E-R-R-Y, Safety Regulatory, UP.

23 MR. TURPIN: Okay. Thank you. Again, Ted
24 Turpin. T-U-R-P-I-N. I mentioned that we'll focus
25 primarily on procedures. But, if you would, just

1 briefly, describe the events that happened on the night
2 of the accident.

3 MR. HAHN: Returned from the safety and
4 communications meeting, train dispatchers were doing
5 their turnover. I was preparing to get back into my
6 duties and the train dispatchers -- I was standing up
7 and I could see that there was some activity that was
8 going on.

9 And then (phonetic) Miss Eron, train
10 dispatcher, came over and advised me that we had a
11 incident going on where a K train and a coal train,
12 they believed, had collided.

13 MR. TURPIN: Okay.

14 MR. HAHN: At Granger.

15 MR. TURPIN: All right.

16 MR. HAHN: I know that the dispatchers were
17 checking on the safety of the crew. And, at that
18 point, they advised me of that, and I started to make
19 notifications to my direct superiors that night. It
20 was Mr. (phonetic) Steven Chad and then (phonetic) Eric
21 Fleming was his, he was a western region
22 superintendent.

23 And then I talked to Mr. Eric Fleming, the
24 northern region superintendent on duty. Also, notified
25 the network superintendent on duty.

1 MR. TURPIN: All right.

2 MR. HAHN: Also, MOTDs, their manager train
3 dispatchers advised them also. Then, returned to my
4 desk.

5 MR. TURPIN: Okay.

6 MR. HAHN: After that, then I started
7 notifying units -- service, my service unit personnel
8 which consists of the DRO Leatherbury and the
9 superintendent to (phonetic) Teri Brown from the Utah
10 service unit.

11 Then continued to assist the train
12 dispatcher when needed, and then I also started making
13 sure that the procedures and safety procedures were
14 followed. And I looked up at the screen and where I
15 have a CAD screen near the safety -- or the area was
16 protected from any further train movements, at that
17 point.

18 MR. TURPIN: Okay.

19 MR. HAHN: And then continued to go through
20 my procedures and also needed to continue with my other
21 job duties that night. And then, that's pretty much it
22 as far as my involvement in the incident.

23 MR. TURPIN: Okay. You're a supervisor, but
24 have you worked a suspended signal section before?

25 MR. HAHN: Yes.

1 MR. TURPIN: Have you worked as a Trick?

2 MR. HAHN: It's been 12 years ago. Yes, I
3 believe I did.

4 MR. TURPIN: Okay. This particular
5 suspension on the night of the accident had, actually,
6 the exits were maintained live so the dispatcher could
7 exit trains?

8 MR. HAHN: Correct.

9 MR. TURPIN: Is that unusual or usual or --

10 MR. HAHN: The last few suspensions I have
11 been involved with, with the corridor managers, that
12 has been the standard. And it seems as though, in my
13 recollection, the train dispatchers were able to give
14 signals leaving the area and those entering, the trains
15 entering the area were controlled by the people in the
16 field at that particular signal location.

17 MR. TURPIN: Okay. And in connection with
18 that, we specifically talk about the switches then the
19 switches were left live as well --

20 MR. HAHN: Correct.

21 MR. TURPIN: -- in those circumstances. Are
22 there any additional procedures required if they leave
23 the suspension or part of the suspension active?

24 MR. HAHN: I'm sorry? Procedures by who?

25 MR. TURPIN: Well, the suspension

1 procedures. Okay, does the dispatcher have a certain
2 procedures for suspension?

3 MR. HAHN: Correct. Yes, they do. And,
4 part of their procedures is to make sure that they
5 communicate with people at the signal locations in
6 control of those switches.

7 MR. TURPIN: Okay. And, if the dispatcher
8 has control of the switches, does it change the
9 procedure?

10 MR. HAHN: It changes the procedures in the
11 -- unless -- let me see -- for who changes the
12 procedures for them?

13 MR. TURPIN: For the dispatcher.

14 MR. HAHN: As to when they aren't sharing
15 the responsibility with somebody else?

16 MR. TURPIN: Well, let me try an example.
17 If I didn't have control of it, and I'm a dispatcher,
18 and I call you at VIC --

19 MR. HAHN: Yes.

20 MR. TURPIN: -- then I would have to say --
21 I'd have to instruct to you to line the switches into
22 the site.

23 MR. HAHN: Correct, correct.

24 MR. TURPIN: But, if I had control of the
25 switches, then I would leave that off. I would simply

1 tell you the next train needs to be authorized into the
2 site.

3 MR. HAHN: Correct.

4 MR. TURPIN: Is that the difference?

5 MR. HAHN: Well, I guess I was unclear as to
6 whether you were talking about with or without the
7 signal suspension. During the signal suspension it
8 changes their role at that location. Correct.

9 MR. TURPIN: Okay.

10 MR. HAHN: They need to coordinate the
11 signal suspension movements and signals in that area
12 with EIC in the area.

13 MR. TURPIN: Okay. And if the switches were
14 suspended then they would also have to tell EIC what
15 position to put the switches.

16 MR. HAHN: Correct.

17 MR. TURPIN: Okay. And if the switches are
18 still available to the dispatcher, they wouldn't have
19 to tell them about the switches, just the route?

20 MR. HAHN: Well, it's procedure, at least in
21 my experience, that the dispatcher would coordinate and
22 let them know about both of those items.

23 MR. TURPIN: Okay. Okay. Would you, from
24 this site, expect somebody in the field to double check
25 the position of the switches?

1 MR. HAHN: Yes.

2 MR. TURPIN: Okay. And then that's a
3 personal kind of thing -- it's not -- that's not in
4 writing, right?

5 MR. HAHN: In writing for --

6 MR. TURPIN: Well, within your scope. You
7 know, I'm not asking you to figure out what an
8 operating person's supposed to do -- I'm just -- within
9 what you've read as far as procedures and people in the
10 field inspecting switches.

11 MR. HAHN: Correct. I don't really have a
12 lot of field knowledge in that regard. But, in my
13 opinion, that would be the thing that the person would
14 be doing if they were responsible for that CP point,
15 control point.

16 MR. TURPIN: Okay. So, is there a procedure
17 that requires recording the instructions that are given
18 to an EIC?

19 MR. HAHN: Not to my knowledge. There's
20 some, I mean, as far as the dispatcher's job?

21 MR. TURPIN: Correct.

22 MR. HAHN: No.

23 MR. TURPIN: Okay. And, is there a specific
24 procedure and verbiage that's supposed to be used when
25 authorizing trains through the use of an EIC?

1 MR. HAHN: No.

2 MR. TURPIN: Okay. Well, would you, as the
3 corridor, manager expect the trip dispatcher to use?

4 MR. HAHN: In speaking to --

5 MR. TURPIN: The EIC --

6 MR. HAHN: The EIC?

7 MR. TURPIN: -- and getting those
8 instructions.

9 MR. HAHN: Well, I would think it would say
10 something to the effect as the UP 1, 2, 3, is going to
11 be your next train. I want them to go Main 1 to Main 1
12 at a certain location.

13 And, you know, all line and switch, if it's
14 in the dispatcher's control, and let him know about
15 that. And if their going into the signal suspension
16 then the EIC would need to verify the positions of
17 those switches since it's in that signal suspension
18 area.

19 MR. TURPIN: Okay. Would you expect the EIC
20 to do a complete read or repeat?

21 MR. HAHN: Not exactly, but, yes, I would
22 expect the EIC to have a good repeat of the knowledge
23 at that point.

24 MR. TURPIN: Would you expect a timestamp at
25 the end?

1 MR. HAHN: No.

2 MR. TURPIN: Okay. Think I can go around
3 the room?

4 MR. CORUM: Mike Corum. In reference to the
5 night of the incident, did you have any conversation
6 with the dispatchers in terms of who was going to run
7 next, when and where, any location? Or was that solely
8 up to the dispatchers?

9 MR. HAHN: I have input into that. I did
10 not have input into that particular incident or --
11 because I was at the safety meeting, and I think the
12 train dispatchers were doing that on their own at that
13 point. My general influence on that was,
14 is that we need to move trains through there as
15 efficiently and safely as we can, and that was my
16 expectations. I generally have a job briefing with the
17 train dispatchers as they come in on their shift.

18 They had completed their turnover and
19 (phonetic) Missy was already engaged in that and in
20 supervision with the other corridor manager. So, she
21 probably had instructions from the other corridor
22 manager.

23 MR. CORUM: Okay. So then, while you were
24 in the safety meeting, there was another one who was
25 filling in for you or was --

1 MR. HAHN: No, no, I just left the desk for
2 about 15, 20 minutes.

3 MR. CORUM: Okay. Okay. .Thank you.
4 That's all.

5 MR. NARVELL: This is Rick Narvell with the
6 NTSB (inaudible). I just had a question on the
7 turnover in general. Could you kind of give us a sense
8 of what that entails and how, maybe, typically how long
9 those would last?

10 MR. HAHN: For the train dispatchers?

11 MR. NARVELL: Yes, I'm sorry.

12 MR. HAHN: Yes, the train dispatchers go
13 over written documents. They have a written turnover,
14 a standard written turnover that they review. They
15 review any and all ongoing maintenance waive
16 activities.

17 They, you know, also if there's been what we
18 call slow orders, track speed's been lowered, they go
19 over that and make sure everybody has a clear
20 understanding of that. Then they also go over each and
21 every train that they have on their territory so that
22 they have -- the next dispatcher has a knowledge of
23 what that train will be doing. Generally 10 to 15
24 minutes, probably, for a turnover.

25 MR. NARVELL: Okay. As far as the, I guess

1 the situation awareness for lack of a better term, if
2 there are different crafts out there working, signal,
3 NOW, et cetera, would they be required to maintain
4 contact with them and see what's, say what if something
5 came up, where are you, where are you going, et cetera,
6 those kinds of things -- from a dispatcher's
7 perspective?

8 MR. HAHN: Would the dispatcher be required
9 to talk to the maintenance away?

10 MR. NARVELL: Know where they are et cetera.

11 MR. HAHN: In that particular -- yes, in
12 that particular location they talk to the EIC on a
13 frequent basis to make sure everybody has a good
14 understanding of what's going on and what would be
15 transpiring.

16 MR. NARVELL: Okay.

17 MR. HAHN: Generally, again, when the
18 dispatchers sit down, they'll contact the maintenance
19 away folks on a project such as that and make sure they
20 have a clear understanding of what the project entails,
21 just to make sure they know they're on the same page
22 with the maintenance away folks.

23 MR. NARVELL: Okay, great. Thank you.

24 MR. LISCHER: This is Tom Lischer. Coming
25 back to authority in a signal suspension, does the

1 train dispatcher tell the EIC what route they want to
2 take or do they tell them to line the switches?

3 MR. HAHN: They tell them what route's going
4 to be happening.

5 MR. LISCHER: And that's -- and then the
6 switches are lined in the fields?

7 MR. HAHN: Correct. Correct.

8 MR. LISCHER: Thank you.

9 MR. TURPIN: All right, but in this
10 circumstance, the dispatcher had to line the switch,
11 correct?

12 MR. HAHN: In its control point at G844 was
13 shared?

14 MR. TURPIN: Right.

15 MR. HAHN: Correct.

16 MR. TURPIN: Okay.

17 MR. HAHN: Well, let's put it this way, the
18 dispatcher can control the switch, not absolutely
19 necessary for them to do that. The folks in the field
20 could probably do that, but at this location that was
21 being done by the dispatcher.

22 MR. TURPIN: Okay. And then in this
23 particular one, if the dispatcher had wanted them to
24 throw it, they would have required additional
25 permission to use that switch.

1 MR. HAHN: Correct. Correct.

2 MR. TURPIN: Okay. We talked earlier with
3 the other dispatchers that dispatchers give informal
4 information often to EIC's or maintenance away about
5 trains coming, trains leaving and then there's a formal
6 point it changes over to the actual movement of the
7 trains. How do you make that distinction between those
8 instructions and conversations?

9 MR. HAHN: Well, I think the formality is
10 the key of it is that the dispatcher will generally
11 say, "I have three trains in the area. I'm going to do
12 this, this and this with those three trains. However,
13 I'm not ready to do that yet because they're not at
14 that location yet."

15 When they are ready for them, they call UP
16 EIC and say I want UP 1, 2, 3 to 4 to go this movement
17 now. Then I want UP 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 to go next and this
18 route.

19 MR. TURPIN: Okay. Is that kind of an
20 informal policy or is that written somewhere using
21 engine numbers kind of solidifies the conversation?

22 MR. HAHN: Well, in all other forms of
23 authority, the use of the engine number and direction
24 are formal operations for them. So, yes.

25 MR. TURPIN: Okay.

1 MR. HAHN: I would say that, at that point,
2 when they start using UP such and such, then that makes
3 a more a formal operation and probably gives them the
4 routing and that kind of thing. So.

5 MR. TURPIN: Okay. Anything else? Anything
6 else from the table? Mike?

7 MALE PARTICIPANT: I do have a question. Is
8 there anything written that says using a unit number is
9 formal or informal way of communicating?

10 MR. HAHN: No. No there is none.

11 MALE PARTICIPANT: Thank you.

12 MR. TURPIN: All right, just kind of some
13 general stuff. When did you go on duty, Monday?

14 MR. HAHN: I believe I got there 17:15
15 central time.

16 MR. TURPIN: All right.

17 MR. HAHN: Give or take a few minutes.

18 MR. TURPIN: And your shift was from when to
19 when?

20 MR. HAHN: 5:30 -- 5:30 or 17:30 to 5:30 in
21 the morning.

22 MR. TURPIN: Okay. So, you worked 12?

23 Mr. HAHN: Correct.

24 MR. TURPIN: Was that your first shift of
25 the week or --

1 MR. HAHN: Correct.

2 MR. TURPIN: So that's --

3 MR. HAHN: I came back from days off in the
4 middle of Monday night.

5 MR. TURPIN: You worked four days or five
6 days? You work five days a week?

7 MR. HAHN: It varies. We have a schedule
8 where we work two on, two off, three on, two off, three
9 on, two off.

10 MR. TURPIN: Okay.

11 MR. HAHN: So, it can range from different
12 times of the calendar week.

13 MR. TURPIN: Okay. And, your, basically,
14 your work history. When were you hired, where?

15 MR. HAHN: I was hired in 1998 and here in
16 Omaha the whole time. I've been, was a train
17 dispatcher for six years prior to becoming a corridor
18 manager. So, give or take 12 years, it'll be, actually
19 June, I'll have 18 years in with the railroad.

20 MR. TURPIN: Okay. Did you ever work this
21 desk?

22 MR. HAHN: As a train dispatcher? No.

23 MR. TURPIN: Okay. Okay. That's it. Do
24 you have anything you'd like to add? No?

25 MR. HAHN: I do not have anything else to

1 add. MR. TURPIN: All right. Very good.
2 Thank you much.

3 MR. HAHN: Okay.

4 MR. TURPIN: Hang on a second. I got one
5 more --

6 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went
7 off the record at an undisclosed time.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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

DATE: 03-18-16

I hereby certify that the attached transcription of page 1 to 20 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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