



I, Carl Walker, have read the foregoing pages of a copy of my testimony given during a follow-up interview stemming from NTSB's investigation of the head-on collision of Amtrak Train 91 with a CSX local train resulting in a derailment with injuries on April 4, 2018, in Cayce, SC and these pages constitute a true and accurate transcription of same with the exception of the following amendments, additions, deletions or corrections:

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I declare that I have read my statements and that it is true and correct subject to any changes in the form or substance entered here.

Date: 5/15/18

Witness: 

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

\* \* \* \* \*

Investigation of: \*

\*

COLLISION OF AMTRAK TRAIN #91 AND \*

\*

A STATIONARY CSX TRANSPORTATION

TRAIN NEAR CAYCE, SOUTH CAROLINA \* Accident No.: RRD18MR003

\*

FEBRUARY 4, 2018

\*

\* \* \* \* \*

Interview of: CARL WALKER

Chief Engineer Communications and Signals

CSX Transportation

CSX Corporate Headquarters  
Jacksonville, Florida

Thursday,  
April 26, 2018



## APPEARANCES:

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National Transportation Safety Board

RICKY PAGE, Signal Group Chairman  
National Transportation Safety Board

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CSX Transportation

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(On behalf of Mr. Walker)

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I N T E R V I E W

1  
2 MR. HIPSKIND: All right. Good morning everybody. My name  
3 is Richard Hipskind, and I am the investigator in charge for NTSB  
4 for the Cayce, South Carolina accident investigation. We are here  
5 today on April 26, 2018 at CSX's corporate headquarters in  
6 Jacksonville, Florida to conduct an interview with Mr. Carl  
7 Walker, who works for the CSX Transportation company, or CSX.

8 This interview is conjunction with NTSB's investigation of a  
9 head-on collision and derailment with injuries on February 4, 2018  
10 at Cayce, South Carolina on CSX's Columbia Subdivision near  
11 milepost 367.1 in Lexington County. The NTSB accident reference  
12 number is RRD18MR003.

13 Before we begin our interview and questions, let's go around  
14 the table and introduce ourselves. Please spell your last name  
15 and please identify who you are representing and your title. I  
16 would remind everybody to speak clearly and loudly enough so we  
17 can get an accurate recording. I'll lead off and then pass off to  
18 my right.

19 Again, my name is Richard Hipskind. The spelling of my last  
20 name is H-I-P-S-K-I-N-D. I am the investigator in charge for NTSB  
21 on this accident.

22 MR. AMMONS: Steve Ammons, A-M-M-O-N-S, CSX Transportation,  
23 Safety and Operating Practices.

24 MR. PAGE: Ricky Page, P-A-G-E, NTSB railroad accident  
25 investigator, Signal Group, Chairman.

1 MR. HIPSKIND: And our interviewee?

2 MR. WALKER: Carl Walker, W-A-L-K-E-R, CSX Transportation and  
3 I am the chief engineer of communications and signals.

4 MR. HIPSKIND: Okay. Thank you, everybody.

5 Mr. Walker, do we have your permission to record our  
6 discussion, our interview with you today?

7 MR. WALKER: Yes, sir.

8 MR. HIPSKIND: And do you wish to have a representative with  
9 you at this interview?

10 MR. WALKER: Yes, sir.

11 MR. HIPSKIND: Ms. O'Brien?

12 MS. O'BRIEN: This is Erin O'Brien, O-B-R-I-E-N, and I am an  
13 in-house lawyer for CSX in the law department.

14 MR. HIPSKIND: And, Mr. Walker, do you, do you mind if we  
15 proceed on a first-name basis?

16 MR. WALKER: I do not.

17 MR. HIPSKIND: Okay, Carl, thank you for that. Let's  
18 proceed.

19 INTERVIEW OF CARL WALKER

20 BY MR. HIPSKIND:

21 Q. Carl, can you kind of give us a synopsis of your work  
22 experience and take us up to your present job and let us know how  
23 long you've been in that position?

24 A. Okay. I started with CSX in May 1999 after retiring from the  
25 military, the United States Navy. I served -- I retired as a

1 lieutenant, and half of those years in the military was split up  
2 with enlisted service and subsequent commissioning, and held  
3 numerous leadership positions, training jobs, communications  
4 officer on board an aircraft carrier, operations officer, combat  
5 systems officer at one of our Trident submarine bases.

6 Came to CSX as a manager in communications in '99, and  
7 shortly after that I was promoted to director of program  
8 management, and shortly after that director for Southern Region  
9 communications in 2004. In 2009, I was promoted to assistant  
10 chief engineer of communications, giving me the entire system for  
11 coms. 2015, October, promoted to the -- well, took over the  
12 assistant chief engineer for signal construction, and in March  
13 2017, appointed the chief engineer communications and signals.

14 Been with the company just shy of 19 years. May 17th will be  
15 my 19th year, May 17th of this year. My current duties and  
16 responsibilities, I mean, obviously I'm responsible for all work  
17 performed in the Communications and Signals Group. Our biggest  
18 project is obviously positive train control. Been working that  
19 since the very beginning, I've been involved with that.

20 I have approximately 1800 people that I'm responsible for:  
21 the Signal Construction Group, both the Communications and the  
22 Signals Group, and the Network Operations Center located at  
23 Warrington Street, where I have Communications and Signal  
24 personnel working over there. We do the cutover projects for the  
25 company, all communications, installations, wayside install, all

1 signal maintenance and repair.

2 Also, I failed to mention the Savannah Signal Shop, I have  
3 that responsibility as well. They play a major role in the  
4 buildout of the buildings that we install for positive train  
5 control.

6 So and -- and, of course, I participate in numerous meetings  
7 regarding PTC, the cutovers that we perform. Any discussion about  
8 the extension or not-extension or meeting the deadline of PTC, I'm  
9 involved in that. Work closely with our Technology Group who  
10 manages the Verizon Professional Services Group, who play a key  
11 role in the network buildout of PTC for us. So, in essence,  
12 they're like kind of dotted line to me with respect to the project  
13 management aspect of it. There's a -- there's heavy involvement  
14 from them.

15 So that's kind of a brief synopsis of my current roles and  
16 responsibilities.

17 Q. Thank you. I appreciate that, Carl.

18 You know that I want to get kind of a broad answer to all the  
19 things that you do relative to planning out a lot of this PTC  
20 work. So let's kind of tackle it this way. This coming Monday,  
21 you're going to get assigned a management trainee, who's going to  
22 shadow you and who's going to learn from you and I'm that guy,  
23 okay?

24 A. Um-hum.

25 Q. So over the course of a day, a week, a month, kind of project



1 what is it that I'm going to see us do? Because I'm going to be  
2 with you at all these meetings, and tell me who I'm going to meet  
3 and the conversations you're going to have and kind of guide me  
4 through as a new management trainee about your work and what you  
5 do. Can you entertain that idea?

6 A. I can.

7 Q. Okay. The floor is yours.

8 A. All right. So, if you're walking into my office on Monday  
9 morning as a new management trainee, I'm going to introduce myself  
10 obviously and I'll get a little background information on you,  
11 what your background is, what type of work you've done, and then  
12 I'll start to associate how your talents are going to best fit my  
13 group, and then who I need to put you with initially. So I'm  
14 having that internal process going on without sharing that with  
15 you. Okay? That's just what I do. That's the military in me.

16 All right. So -- but we'll have a conversation. We'll set  
17 expectations, you know, hey, this is what I expect. I need to  
18 know what you expect from me. And we'll talk about the  
19 organization, now keeping in mind that you've already told me what  
20 your background is, I've already got a spot where I want you to be  
21 and who I want you to be with to help build the confidence in you  
22 based on your prior work experience. And the worst thing you  
23 could do is to put somebody in a situation and right off the bat,  
24 they lack the confidence and they make a decision, well, I don't  
25 think I want to work here. You want to get them bought in as

1 quick as possible.

2 So obviously safety is going to be a big player in this. You  
3 know, before I send you out to the field, I'm going to put you  
4 through safety certification. We'll have all that worked out for  
5 you and just get you scheduled and get that completed as quick as  
6 we possibly can.

7 And, well, prior to you coming, we'll have the -- we'll have  
8 somewhat of a layout on the training and things that we want you  
9 to see. If you're coming to me from a construction background,  
10 then I'm going to turn you over to our Construction Group  
11 initially, and this is the guy -- you know, I'll give you my  
12 Southern Region director, you know, working for Jamie and then  
13 he'll bring you into the fold and pair you up with one of the  
14 construction engineers.

15 And those guys, now when you get out there you're going to  
16 see that you're going to be right in -- you're right in the middle  
17 of things and they're going to point things out to you that you  
18 should not be involved in and more of an observatory type thing  
19 because you really don't know the lay of the land yet. You just,  
20 you know, focus on the manager and the instructions that are being  
21 provided to the people that are working for him. That's the best  
22 way that you can learn initially.

23 And you'll spend some time with this construction engineer,  
24 you know, a few weeks, and then we'll move you over to our  
25 maintenance side. We'll get you set up with the signal

1 maintenance manager and go through the same process. Then once  
2 we've done that we'll get you moved over to a communications  
3 manager. You'll spend sometime with that person. And we'll roll  
4 you into our Network Operations Center. You'll spend -- you'll  
5 stand some watches over there and understand what the com manager  
6 does. You know, on a shift-basis we have 24/7 operation. You'll  
7 spend a week on the day shift, you'll spend a week on the night  
8 shift. So you'll get some flavor of all that.

9 We'll send you up to the signal shop. You'll see what we  
10 have going on up there. Now, in the meantime, we'll also provide  
11 training. We were big at this before we kind of reduced the REDI  
12 Center staffing. We still have some training up there that we'll  
13 put you into. We've got ASW training that we want to send you to.  
14 And there's some other communications --

15 Q. AWS [sic] means?

16 A. Oh, Assistant Signal Worker training.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. I'm sorry. So we have four phases of that we'll put you  
19 through. And there's also a small PTC lab up there that we'll put  
20 you through as well so you can understand that. We also have some  
21 in-house PTC training that Jason's group provides. You'll meet  
22 Jason later. You know, you don't know Jason because you're just  
23 coming to my office, right, you know.

24 Q. Okay. Understood.

25 A. Yeah. And so, I mean, we're role playing now, but this is

1 what I -- this is what you would expect if you walked in my office  
2 on Monday morning.

3 So we'll get you trained up in that aspect. This training,  
4 our management training program is about a year long unless you  
5 show progress in advance of -- advanced progress of picking up the  
6 information, we may place you earlier than a year into a job. You  
7 know, we've placed some folks as quick as 9 months before. So it  
8 depends on how well the individual picks up the information.

9 And then once you have been assigned, then you'll have, you  
10 know, people working for you, obviously, either in a  
11 communications capacity or a signal maintenance capacity or a  
12 construction capacity, or you may end up at our Network Operations  
13 Center.

14 Q. Well, let's fast forward about 6 or 9 months, or a year, and  
15 I have performed like a star, and somebody from higher on up says,  
16 you've got to get him to shadow Carl all the time so that he can  
17 learn all the things that Carl does, the meetings he goes to,  
18 planning the work and such like that. So take me into that world.

19 If I was with you posting those meetings and you're at the  
20 meetings, deciding about PTC implementation, et cetera, what would  
21 I see? What would I observe that goes on in your world and how  
22 all of that unfolds?

23 A. Well, first thing I would tell that person is make sure your  
24 phone is fully charged all the time. That's number one.  
25 That's -- I'm serious, that's the very first thing. Keep a bag

1 packed and, you know, be ready to go.

2       So back here at headquarters what you would see if you're  
3 sitting in my chair every day, you know, you're in my office  
4 shadowing me, a lot of conference calls, meetings, PTC working  
5 group meeting, our PTC scheduling meeting, our PTC change control  
6 meeting. These are weekly meetings. Then the rash of phone calls  
7 that we get -- that I get on changing the schedule or moving a  
8 subdivision up because, you know, we want to try and tighten up  
9 our timeline.

10       Any type of incidents that we incur -- you know, we've kind  
11 of changed some things around because of this incident to bring  
12 everything in. The weekly safety calls, the 0600 incident calls  
13 that we have every morning -- every morning, 7 days a week, 365  
14 days a year. You've got to be on that call to talk about things  
15 that have occurred and what we've done to fix them, any type of  
16 impact to the railroad. So that means you've got to get up about  
17 4:30 to go through all the reports and be ready to answer any call  
18 that you got -- that you might get from, in my case, from my boss  
19 or my boss's boss, or Mr. Foote.

20       I mean, they can pick the phone up and call me, Carl, what's  
21 this all about? So you've got to be ready to answer those  
22 questions, and you know, it takes a lot of time. And up until the  
23 time you go to bed at night, you know, you're checking in with the  
24 Network Operations Center multiple times after you leave work.

25       The last phone call I make when I walk -- before I walk out

1 of my office is to our Network Operations Center to find out how  
2 the railroad is, any C&S issues. And 2 hours after I leave the  
3 office, I make another call. So it's a 2-hour basis until I go to  
4 bed.

5 Q. The old check-in?

6 A. Yeah. I mean, I don't like surprises and I don't want to --  
7 I want to be answer -- I want to be able to answer a question.  
8 And my boss calls me and asks me about a derailment we've got in  
9 Selkirk, in the yard, you know, or we've got something going on  
10 with an outage on the com network or whatever, I want to be able  
11 to have the answers for him.

12 If I know about it, he's going to know about it, so he's not  
13 calling me, you know. And that's how I typically do things. And  
14 that's what you've got to be thinking about, letting people know  
15 as soon as you find things out. Don't wait for them to call you.  
16 So the proactiveness of checking in with the Network Operations  
17 Center has proven to be a viable strategic or a tactical method  
18 of, you know, keeping people informed and not really putting a lot  
19 of heat on yourself, and more importantly a lot of heat on the  
20 people that work for you.

21 You know, because in this job, if you're planning to take  
22 this job, you have to be that buffer between the top and the  
23 bottom. You know, you've got to protect your folks. And  
24 that's -- when you do that, you will -- you'll understand that  
25 they'll bend over backwards for you.

1           So that's, you know, with the meetings, the phone calls, the  
2 traveling, you know, monthly overlaps out in the field, monthly  
3 goal checking on our PTC forecasting, that's huge. I mean, I  
4 that's a -- that is a big deal when we forecast numbers with  
5 respect to where we're going to be with respect to cutovers,  
6 number of wayside locations that we're going to complete, number  
7 of radios we've got to get done for 220. We can't miss those  
8 numbers because they go up to the executive team and when there's  
9 an issue -- and fortunately for us, we've not missed our numbers  
10 in years.

11           Right now, you know, I'm one short of our goal for this month  
12 and we'll get that taken care of today. But when you -- if you're  
13 in this job, when you tell somebody you're going to do something,  
14 and you get the buy-in from your team, you can't just communicate  
15 that, yeah, we're going to do this. You've got to talk to your  
16 folks about it, get them on board, and then you tell them.  
17 Because you can't sign people up for something that they don't  
18 know about.

19 Q.   Carl, are other departments part of this communication  
20 process as well, when we're talking about the PTC process?

21 A.   Yes. Yes, we have our Mechanical folks involved in these  
22 meetings. Our Network Ops folks from the transportation  
23 perspective, dispatching, they're involved. Technology is  
24 involved because of the back office systems, and the PTC coms  
25 portion of it for technology. We also have our Purchasing Group

1 involved. We have our finance group involved. We have our law  
2 department involved. These are all key players in every meeting,  
3 a representative from each one of those groups. We have our  
4 operating -- Rules Operating Group involved.

5 I mean it, and I maybe missing out on -- missing a couple of  
6 departments, but it's pretty much every group in the operating  
7 department involved in these meetings. So there's a core group  
8 that has been intact since the very beginning. So people come,  
9 change jobs, leave the company, but there is about four of us,  
10 five of us, maybe, that's been conducting these meetings since Day  
11 1.

12 And it's -- you know, and sometimes it gets really heated,  
13 you know, candid discussions about things that, you know, that we  
14 were talking about doing but we can't commit to as a group yet  
15 because everyone hasn't had the opportunity to go back and do  
16 their research and come back with the facts to make something  
17 happen.

18 So we may be -- we may get asked to do something by somebody  
19 that's not in the room, you know, that's higher than us, but we've  
20 got to figure out how to make it happen. But we -- you know,  
21 sometimes we get a deadline and, hey, can you get this done by  
22 this date? Well, I can't just sign up for that yet until we all,  
23 you know, we all get together and talk about it.

24 That happens, not as much as it used to because the process  
25 over the years has really gotten a lot better and we communicate



1 so much better now, you know, within the organization. But early  
2 on, the early days it was a little, it was a little testy.

3 Q. So as this guy who's shadowing you, it seems to me that you  
4 were adamant, that you wanted to impress upon me communication --  
5 above, below, at all times be prepared, but above all be ready to  
6 communicate and have answers?

7 A. That's right.

8 Q. Know your stuff, right?

9 A. Yes, sir.

10 Q. And now it seems like what I'm learning from you talking  
11 about the other departments has more to do with cooperation and  
12 coordination. Is that fair to say?

13 A. That's fair to say, but more importantly you get to the  
14 coordination and the cooperation part of it, you've got to  
15 build -- you have to build a relationship, you know, and you've  
16 got to know the folks that you're dealing with. You've got to  
17 know them. You know, you've got to -- you know, you become  
18 friends with them.

19 I mean, you know, you and I are friends and I can tell you  
20 what's on my mind whether you like it or not, and you don't get  
21 upset about it because we're friends. That relationship piece is  
22 the most important part of any group working together. If you  
23 don't have a relationship, you can throw coordination and  
24 cooperation out of the room. It's not happening.

25 So when you develop that relationship like we have over the

1 years, the coordination and the cooperation part of it, piece of  
2 cake. Anybody that sits in the room with me, I can call them  
3 right now and say, hey, we've got to do this and -- like, okay,  
4 let's, well, let's get everybody together and let's talk about it.  
5 And --

6 Q. You solve problems?

7 A. We solve them. We solve them. Everything that has come to  
8 us as a group, what we've been challenged to do by the executive  
9 team, we're done it. The PTC, we've done it. We did not -- we  
10 didn't do it in the room, but we were able to get the troops,  
11 rally the troops and get their buy-in; communicate that piece,  
12 hey, look -- when you communicate something to someone -- so I  
13 always talk about the different phases of communications. It has  
14 to be, the communications has to be clear. It has to be concise.  
15 And the person receiving it has to understand what you're saying.  
16 Once they get that, you get their buy-in. So concise is very  
17 important.

18 Sometimes you can communicate things to people and you talk  
19 about it too much and you get -- they get confused. You just be  
20 short, to the point, this is why we're doing it and this is when  
21 it has to be done by, tell me what you need to make this happen.  
22 Do you understand what we've got to do?

23 Now if I've got to talk about that for an hour, I've lost  
24 them in the first 10 minutes.

25 Q. I can see that. I can see that.

1 A. So when you look at the -- I'll give you a perfect example.  
2 You take from March of last year to the end of the year, right,  
3 2017. I mean, it's no secret. Everybody knows what we were going  
4 through. You know, we had a change of command. And -- but if you  
5 look at the work that we did as an organization, you know, with  
6 the PTC steering committee, the PTC working group committee, all  
7 the cutovers we had, we did more cutovers last year than we did in  
8 any year prior.

9 Remember, I was talking about that buffer, right? So you  
10 think, I didn't have guys that were worried about losing their  
11 job? You think I didn't have guys that were bailing out on me,  
12 they were hitting that eject button, pulling that ripcord on that  
13 parachute? Oh, I had some. But the guys that stayed, constant  
14 communication with them on what we were about, the greater good of  
15 what we were trying to achieve, then the contribution that they  
16 were making here with PTC -- I mean this is obviously industry  
17 changing.

18 The things that we're putting in with this project, you know,  
19 50, 60 years from now, people will build on this platform and who  
20 knows what trains will be doing then. But that buffer to keep the  
21 -- to filter the noise, right, and keep my guys focused and  
22 working with the committee, that's why we set records in safety.  
23 We set records in the number of cutovers. We set records of the  
24 number of wayside locations. Our goal was 700. We did over 800.  
25 I mean, with everything going on we still exceeded our goals by a

1 long shot.

2 Keeping guys focused. You got to talk to them every day, all  
3 the time about -- anytime the rumors start bubbling, let's  
4 suppress them, get them on the phone. My guys were coming to  
5 me -- Jamie, John, Steve, Jason -- hey, I'm hearing this out in  
6 the field, boss; I'm hearing this. Okay, who you hearing it from?  
7 You know, okay, let's get a conference call. Let's put them at  
8 ease right now. Get them on the phone, talk to them.

9 And if you don't do that, you're going to lose them. You're  
10 going to lose them. A perfect example, we've got all this work  
11 going on at Richmond. We've got one more cutover at Richmond.  
12 Last week we did a major cutover up there, the AY. You know, I  
13 was up there yesterday for my overlap. Typically that meeting's 4  
14 hours, all the divisions on a conference call.

15 And the division that was hosting it was the Florence  
16 Division. I started out in Norfolk, Portsmouth, Newport News,  
17 finish up in Richmond yesterday. Got on the call, we went through  
18 our stuff. And I said, look guys, I'm going to have to cut this  
19 short today. We've got construction teams in the area that I need  
20 to see before I go back to Jacksonville.

21 So I cut the meeting short, 2 hours short. So I went out and  
22 spent time with those guys. By the time I got back to  
23 Jacksonville, I had emails from three of them, hey, glad you were  
24 able to stop by and talk to us. You know, before I left, I told  
25 the manager, I want you to buy each one of these guys lunch. I

1 said, they've been out here busting their butt for us. It's  
2 raining yesterday in Richmond. It was raining on Tuesday. I  
3 said, when I showed up on-site yesterday, the rain wasn't  
4 bothering them. They were proud to show me what they'd  
5 accomplished. Hey, what you think about this? How does this look  
6 to you?

7 And, you know, my feedback to them is, look guys, what you  
8 are doing is huge. I said, there's a couple things I'm going to  
9 leave you with. I need you to continue to work safe. I need you  
10 to work with -- you know, take care of each other and be proud of  
11 what you are doing, and stand back and look at what you're doing.  
12 So this is nice. It looks good. Very professional. It's  
13 professional because you care about it. It's professional because  
14 you're professionals.

15 So, hand shake and hug, each one of them. That's what I do  
16 when I go out there, and that's what I expect my guys to do, focus  
17 on the people, recognize them. They'll bust their butts for you.

18 So, you know, I know I kind of got off track, but I'm  
19 extremely passionate about the progress we've made with PTC. I'm  
20 passionate about the people that I'm responsible for, that I work  
21 with, and will do anything I can to help them out. And you've got  
22 to understand what's going on with your folks. You've got to know  
23 that you've got a manager whose wife just lost a baby. You've got  
24 to know that you've got a manager that his mom is in hospice and  
25 can go any minute. You've got to know that stuff. Give me a

1 minute.

2 MR. HIPSKIND: We're going to go off record.

3 (Off the record.)

4 (On the record.)

5 MR. PAGE: Okay, this is Page. It's 10:21 a.m. We're back  
6 on the record.

7 MR. HIPSKIND: Okay, Carl. Thank you for all the comments  
8 about communication and personnel and leadership. But right now  
9 I'd like to turn it over to Ricky. He's got a few questions on  
10 PTC implementation and maybe some communication with FRA.

11 MR. WALKER: Okay.

12 BY MR. PAGE:

13 Q. Okay. Good morning.

14 A. Good morning.

15 Q. Thank you, Carl. You were talking earlier about  
16 communication with your people and your other fellow managers. Is  
17 that true in the same -- with other departments, your  
18 communication philosophy?

19 A. Yes, sir. You know, I believe it is. We've -- you know,  
20 we've developed a culture around here where, you know, the  
21 departments have been working a lot closer together, I would say,  
22 over the past 18 months. And it's pretty typical that you would  
23 see heightened communications, more detail and clear communication  
24 between the departments and within the departments now.

25 Q. In Cayce, South Carolina, we had a temporary signal

1 suspension.

2 A. Yes, sir.

3 Q. Are you aware of that?

4 A. Yes, sir.

5 Q. Also, you had a Transportation liaison on duty while the  
6 signal personnel was on duty that interacted with the dispatchers.  
7 That person went off duty at approximately 7 p.m. on a Friday  
8 afternoon along with the rest of the signal people.

9 MR. HIPSKIND: Saturday.

10 MR. WALKER: On Friday or Saturday?

11 MR. PAGE: This accident happened on Saturday, right?

12 MR. WALKER: Sunday morning.

13 BY MR. PAGE:

14 Q. Sunday morning.

15 A. Sunday morning at --

16 Q. I'm sorry. Saturday.

17 A. Yes, sir.

18 Q. Okay. Yeah, forgive me. Saturday.

19 MR. HIPSKIND: Super Bowl Sunday.

20 MR. WALKER: Yeah.

21 BY MR. PAGE:

22 Q. Super Bowl Sunday. The accident happened on Super Bowl  
23 Sunday. Okay. I can remember that.

24 A. Yeah. I was -- yeah.

25 Q. So the Transportation liaison provided by the signal

1 department went off duty approximately 7 p.m. on Saturday along of  
2 the rest of the signal personnel. Did you see any need for having  
3 a liaison there for the rest of the time after the signal  
4 personnel had knocked off due to the hours of service law?

5 A. No, sir. I don't -- here was no work going on and typically  
6 that person works the same time period as the guys out in the  
7 field when they're doing these cutovers.

8 You know, you've got -- I'm sure you've got a lot of  
9 information about what happened up there, and I just think that,  
10 you know, that 12 hours of service during suspension -- I know it,  
11 you know, planned work, but -- and the FRA I think maybe should  
12 take another look at doing something with that with respect to  
13 planned work and when planned work isn't completed within the time  
14 frame of the hours of service, then it should automatically revert  
15 to emergency work, in my opinion, giving the employees a little  
16 bit more time to finish things up. If, you know, because of  
17 whatever extenuating circumstances are preventing them from doing  
18 that work, if they can finish it within an extended 2-hour period,  
19 yeah, I would -- unless -- you know, that's something that  
20 probably needs to get discussed, or looked at.

21 Now back to your question about the Transportation employee  
22 that was there. Typically I don't know what he would have been  
23 doing if he was still there after the signal guys had stopped work  
24 out in the field, and so, you know, I don't know what his purpose  
25 would have been.



1 Q. Okay. Thank you.

2 A. Yes, sir.

3 Q. When we had talked earlier about doing a lot of PTC  
4 implementation, so along with that comes temporary signal  
5 suspensions.

6 A. Yes, sir.

7 Q. Is it required for CSXT to make application for a temporary  
8 signal suspension?

9 A. Well, we do the -- we coordinate with our local -- when you  
10 say make application, are you talking to, about to --

11 Q. A temporary signal suspension.

12 A. To the FRA?

13 Q. Do you have to make application? Is it required?

14 A. I don't know if we actually send that in. I'll have to check  
15 on that, but -- Jason typically handles that stuff, but I do know  
16 that he coordinates all these suspensions with our Transportation  
17 and Network partners. They conduct weekly meetings when we have  
18 any suspensions.

19 So I get a packet similar to this, and I go through it  
20 personally, and then once Jason is done with his meeting, he and I  
21 -- if I have any questions, would sit down with him and we go  
22 through it and make sure that everybody's on the same page, you  
23 know, because he's my primary coordinator of all these suspensions  
24 out in the field.

25 Q. I understand. And you meet with other departments about the

1 signal suspension --

2 A. Yes, sir.

3 Q. -- is that correct?

4 A. Yes, sir.

5 Q. And the other departments -- to my understanding the other  
6 departments, especially the Transportation Department, issues the  
7 bulletins and the method of operation, that sort of thing?

8 A. Yes, sir.

9 Q. Do you then review that and give feedback to that, or it's  
10 just an accepted thing once it's sent to you?

11 A. No, what typically happens -- and Jason may have covered  
12 this. They would sit down and go through the suspension limits  
13 and they all agree on the limits. And then the bulletin comes out  
14 and it's reviewed and if there's any discrepancies outside of what  
15 was approved during that meeting, then, you know, they -- we make  
16 the changes or question, hey, why this wasn't what was agreed to  
17 in the meeting, you know.

18 So there is a final review and if there's changes required,  
19 then there's some more discussion.

20 Q. Has there ever been any discussion about, in any temporary  
21 signal suspension, the possibility of a train crew leaving a hand-  
22 throw switch reversed during a signal suspension?

23 A. Not to my knowledge. I've -- no, there's not been, not to my  
24 knowledge, as far as talking about what the responsibilities of  
25 the crew is. I've not participated in that. But I'm sure that

1 the Transportation folks may have advised their people about  
2 making sure the switches are left in the position that they're  
3 supposed to be left in. And we've got the switch position  
4 awareness form that they have that should be filed. But I've not  
5 participated in those discussions, but Jason may have.

6 Q. As the chief engineer, do you have discussions with other  
7 chief engineers of other carriers about signal suspensions of PTC  
8 implementation?

9 A. Yes, sir. Yes, sir, we have a, last week in -- (phone  
10 interruption.) Sorry. Last week in Nashville we met Norfolk  
11 Southern, Kansas City Southern, BN, UP and the CN. CP wasn't  
12 there. And then the week of April 4th or 3rd, I hosted the  
13 Norfolk Southern, hosted the UP; BN didn't show up, and the CN and  
14 CP -- CP didn't show, but CN had representatives here. So over  
15 the past month we've had two meetings.

16 We have quarterly meetings with the eastern roads and then we  
17 have an annual meeting called the North American Signal Engineers  
18 Meeting, which was done last week in Nashville. We talk about a  
19 variety of things. Last week's meeting was primarily about PTC  
20 and the challenges around completing that, getting it done on  
21 time.

22 Q. Do all carriers, to your knowledge, do all carriers use  
23 temporary signal suspensions?

24 A. Not -- I'm not aware of all of them using temporary signal  
25 suspension. I know the Norfolk Southern does -- I can't speak for

1 the other ones -- because we work so closely with them.

2 Q. The Norfolk Southern does?

3 A. I'm pretty sure that they do.

4 Q. Have temporary signals?

5 A. Yes, sir. I can verify that but I'm pretty sure that they  
6 do.

7 Q. And in your conversations with other carriers and with other  
8 departments, were you aware that a collision happened on March 14,  
9 2016 in Granger, Wyoming due to a reverse switch during a signal  
10 suspension?

11 A. 2016?

12 Q. Yes, sir.

13 A. There was -- was that the -- I think that came up last week  
14 at our meeting, because we were -- we talked briefly about this  
15 one and then, was it the BN guy or the UP guy mentioned --

16 Q. It was a UP train.

17 A. Yeah. They mentioned that they had a similar incident and  
18 that was -- I mean, we really didn't get into any discussion about  
19 it, but I'm pretty sure that was the one because they said in 2016  
20 we had one similar to this. Yeah. It wasn't a -- like I said, it  
21 was just a mention. It wasn't any detailed conversation about it.

22 Q. How many temporary signal suspensions -- and I'm not asking  
23 for a specific number, but how many do you think you may have that  
24 require the signal personnel to go back to the motel because of  
25 the hours of service law and you start again the following day?

1 Does that happen very often?

2 A. It has not happened that often. It'd be a very low  
3 percentage and I can't tell you what that number is, but --

4 Q. I understand.

5 A. Yeah. This was -- yeah, this one, in this case, this is what  
6 happened there. Obviously you know that. But we try to wrap it  
7 up during the time frame that we're allotted. And then we've had  
8 some where we had brought in some additional shift, you know, and  
9 people work another shift. You know, like Richmond this past  
10 week, you know, we had a second shift come on and stuff like that.  
11 This one, we weren't expecting the work to go past 12 hours.

12 Q. The one in Cayce was not expected to go past 12 hours?

13 A. It was not.

14 Q. Other testimony has said that it was a planned 2-day  
15 operation, and that was going to be my next question. Why didn't  
16 we plan -- why didn't CSXT plan for additional personnel to finish  
17 it up?

18 A. Well, I think the work that was being done -- and this is,  
19 you know, conversation afterwards. You know, the work that they  
20 had performed during the day, they came close to being finished  
21 and they only needed the short period of time to wrap it up and  
22 they would have been completed. Because if you look at what was  
23 done, when they were able to get back in there, how much time it  
24 took to finish it up, it was just a matter of, you know, a few  
25 hours, so, you know.

1 MR. PAGE: Thank you, sir.

2 MR. WALKER: Yes, sir.

3 MR. PAGE: I've got no further questions at this time.

4 MR. AMMONS: Yeah, I've got one.

5 MR. HIPSKIND: Steve.

6 MR. AMMONS: Just one follow-up question there based off of  
7 what Ricky's last question was.

8 BY MR. AMMONS:

9 Q. So, Carl, it was my understanding that the signal work that  
10 was planned there in that Cayce cutover was thought to be able to  
11 be completed within a day's time but there was 2 days scheduled in  
12 case --

13 A. Yeah. Yeah, you're -- that's accurate.

14 Q. Is it?

15 A. That's right.

16 Q. How much -- do you recall how much time the signal  
17 suspension, the workers there involved in the cutover were delayed  
18 on that Saturday waiting for that train that was -- there were  
19 several circumstances there that happened that caused that delay,  
20 correct?

21 A. Yeah. There was -- yeah, and Steve, the number 5 comes into  
22 mind. They were about 5 hours of -- that that train was sitting  
23 there because it -- that kind of comes into mind. If you remove  
24 that from the situation, we would have been done with hours to  
25 spare.

1 MR. AMMONS: That's all I've got.

2 MR. WALKER: Yeah. Yeah, you're right about that. It was 2  
3 days, but we were in position to it in 1.

4 MR. HIPSKIND: This is Dick Hipkind.

5 Carl, are you still good to go? Want to keep talking?

6 MR. WALKER: Yes, sir.

7 BY MR. HIPSKIND:

8 Q. Well, I want to feed off of the recent conversation and I  
9 want to -- here's where I originally wanted our dialogue to go.  
10 When CSX or any railroad for that matter, we're all aware  
11 that there is a huge commitment to complete these PTC  
12 installations.

13 A. Yes, sir.

14 Q. Congress wants it, the public wants it, the industry. We're  
15 trying to get to a goal. And signal suspensions cutover, that's  
16 the nuts and bolts, that's the real world.

17 But when you're having these planning meetings at your level  
18 and with your counterparts, do you all sit down and go through a  
19 list of risk? Do you go through a list of, well, what if? And I  
20 will tell you, this is the first I've heard -- I've often wondered  
21 what went on out there on the Saturday that they didn't get their  
22 work done.

23 And if now we're bringing to light that there was a hiccup in  
24 a train operation, like for a few hours or 4 or 5 hours, my  
25 question is, well, we know we're going to operate trains, so I'm

1 wondering at the planning level, how do you combat that? How --  
2 do you just accept it or is there like a Plan B? As the Plan B,  
3 should I think of that as, well, if we can't get it done, we'll go  
4 to Day 2? Help me out with that.

5 A. Well there are planning meetings that, you know, try to  
6 mitigate the risk. And in this case, you know, after the fact we  
7 find that the crew went on the law right in the suspension zone.  
8 So they stopped it, and I think -- they stopped the train, I  
9 should say. And in particular, you know, what should have  
10 happened is they shouldn't have entered the zone and then they  
11 could have continued to work.

12 But looking at the global picture of trying to mitigate risk,  
13 we've not had many issues with the cutover. Sometimes, you know,  
14 we run into problems with the testing on-site. But, you know,  
15 more recently, you know, this thing -- this incident brought a lot  
16 more discussion in light about, you know, not having these type  
17 reoccurrences, you know, parking or even getting close to a  
18 suspension zone or, you know, where we have these suspensions and  
19 keep the train outside the zone or not running through it at all.

20 And the biggest challenge prior to this, you know, for us is  
21 just making sure that we had the right resources and the proper  
22 communications was conducted prior to these signal suspensions.  
23 We've not had many issues that I can recall over the past year  
24 anyway where we've had, you know, situations that pose a risk to  
25 us for not being able to complete a cutover.



1           And if you look at, you know, you look at the numbers -- and  
2 I'm sure Jason may have covered this with you. So if you look at  
3 the numbers in 2016, the number of cutovers that we completed,  
4 112. That was a record. Then last year we broke that record,  
5 117. So, you know, the numbers alone pretty much answers the  
6 question because if you had all these risks that you were dealing  
7 with and you didn't handle them up front, there's absolutely no  
8 way that you could get these numbers, this number of cutovers  
9 done.

10           You know, so -- you know, 2011 -- from 2011 through 2017, 68,  
11 96, 109, 101, 107, 112, 117. Those are huge numbers and the goal  
12 this year is 119. So the coordination that takes place prior to  
13 these suspensions, I think they do a good job of trying to  
14 mitigate all risks associated with it. And in this case, just the  
15 -- something didn't go as planned, I guess is the best way to wrap  
16 it up.

17 Q. Well, let me, let me -- and thank you for that answer. Let  
18 me say something and you tell me whether I'm understanding this or  
19 not. Do all of you look at that a signal suspension, in and of  
20 itself, is an inherent risk? Is that a true statement?

21 A. Oh, yeah.

22 Q. And that's because you're taking away the signal system?

23 A. Exactly.

24 Q. Okay. All right. I'm with you on that. And so, is one  
25 mitigation strategy that we want to diminish the duration of the

1 signal suspension time? Is that a goal? In other words, if you  
2 plan a 12-hour, and you can get it done in 9 hours, that's a good  
3 thing, and you've mitigated or you've eliminated 3 hours of risk?

4 A. Exactly. That's a good thing.

5 Q. I'm understanding this, right?

6 A. Yes, sir. You are.

7 Q. Okay. And our discussion about a train that gets into a  
8 signal suspension limits -- not the Signal Department's fault, not  
9 the Operations Department's fault, but if it gets stuck there,  
10 that's a bad thing because it causes additional time for the  
11 signal suspension?

12 A. Exactly.

13 Q. Okay. Fair to say, lesson learned in Cayce?

14 A. Yes, sir. Fair to say that. Correct.

15 Q. And so I don't want to put words in your mouth, but now when  
16 you have the more global meetings, top echelon people, we say,  
17 you've got a train on short time, you stop it below, outside the  
18 signal limits and we'll take care of business there?

19 A. Yes, sir. That is happening.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. That's been a primary focus since this incident.

22 Q. Okay. So there is a positive change?

23 A. Absolutely.

24 Q. Okay. And I don't -- again, if you know the answer, fine if  
25 you don't. That just never came up in the hundreds, if not almost

1 a thousand, signal suspensions?

2 A. Oh, I'm sure it did. I can't tell you that I've been part of  
3 that, but I'm sure that has come up. Prior to this incident, is  
4 what you're talking about?

5 Q. Right.

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. And maybe those were more of an inconvenience but they -- the  
8 project and the signal suspension and the completion of signal  
9 work still went on successfully, safely?

10 A. Right. And in the duration of the train being in the limits  
11 may not have been as long as this one and with -- you know, those  
12 other ones didn't jeopardize the window that we had to complete  
13 the suspension, I would imagine.

14 Q. Okay. So one of the things when you guys are planning these  
15 signal suspensions out is you do need that commitment, you do need  
16 that cooperation --

17 A. Yes, sir.

18 Q. -- communication, coordination for the following reason:  
19 Yes, Amtrak trains are going to be running on a territory.  
20 Freight trains are going to be running on territory. Foreign  
21 freight trains are going to be running on the territory. You guys  
22 can work under train operations, but what is desirable is that  
23 they don't impede or take away so much time that you can't get the  
24 work done?

25 A. Yes, sir. Yes.

1 Q. And ideally you would rather it get done in a day, and not  
2 have to go to a second day?

3 A. Yes. Ideally.

4 Q. Provided that you can get the work done and check it out and  
5 know that you're putting the system back in with integrity?

6 A. Yes. Yeah, provided we can get it done, you know, with  
7 integrity and putting the system back in. But, you know, we do a  
8 lot of testing, pretesting, which has helped us with the time  
9 limits on these suspensions; all the work that we put in on the  
10 forefront, it does help out. But any type of interruption when  
11 we're getting ready to cut the new system over, that doesn't help  
12 obviously.

13 Q. Okay. And just help me out if you know the answer to this.  
14 The presence of the local that was out there switching the auto  
15 plant and all that, that didn't impede the completion of that  
16 first day's work, did it? Or do you know?

17 A. No, I don't know. I think the primary reason that impeded us  
18 was the train parked there within the limits.

19 Q. The dwell time of that recrewling?

20 A. Yes, sir. The local, I don't think had any impact on that.  
21 I'm not -- that was not the primary reason, no.

22 Q. Okay. And, you know, I'm going to ask you this question last  
23 so I'm just going to pull it forward. You're aware that FRA put  
24 out a 12-page safety advisory?

25 A. Yes, sir.

1 Q. Can you characterize, where are you guys at with that at your  
2 level studying that or have you made any decisions or --

3 A. So, no, we've not and -- you know, it came out late last week  
4 and then this week all of us were out traveling. This is the  
5 first day back in the office. So tomorrow we'll sit down, I'll  
6 get with Chip and Jason and we'll kind of go over, review it in  
7 depth. But we've not -- I've read through it, but as a group,  
8 we've not discussed it yet because we just haven't -- we were, you  
9 know, out.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. You know, out on the railroad, you know.

12 Q. Well, I'm not trying to trick you or trip you up here. NTSB  
13 is a federal agency, too, and a couple of months ago, or maybe  
14 longer than that, we put out a urgent recommendation. Are you  
15 aware of that?

16 A. I remember that came out, that was basically the -- was it  
17 similar to the -- it was similar to the one that came out from the  
18 FRA with the switch position, we should -- yeah, yeah.

19 Q. Okay. Do you have any thoughts on that?

20 A. I think as far as, I think it should -- I think it's a good  
21 thing, quite honestly. You know, I don't think that -- it just  
22 adds another level of, you know, checking to make sure that these  
23 switches are not in the wrong position. You know, I don't think  
24 it's a bad thing, you know, but --

25 Q. It's still under consideration?

1 A. Yeah, but, I mean, I don't know -- I think the one that the  
2 FRA sent out, the one that you guys sent out, I don't -- when I  
3 read through that, I don't recall, and you know, and I might be  
4 wrong on this, you know, were you looking for -- it was a  
5 recommendation, you know, and I think that --

6 Q. Not to the railroads, to FRA.

7 A. Yeah. So, and then the FRA came out with theirs. You know,  
8 it wasn't asking for input or -- from C&S, I don't believe. Was  
9 it? I don't recall reading that in there. So I don't know, I  
10 guess I don't know what you're asking me. If you're asking me  
11 should I send something back to the FRA and say, hey, you need to  
12 go --

13 Q. No, no, no.

14 A. Okay. So I'm just --

15 Q. Let me clear that up, Carl.

16 A. Yeah, clear it up for me then.

17 Q. I just want to get some feel for is it on the railroad's  
18 radar of things that you're considering, things you're looking at?

19 A. Oh, well, I can't speak for Transportation, okay, because it  
20 was a Transportation employee that threw the switch. But the  
21 brief discussion that we've had internally with in the C&S  
22 Group -- and I say brief, when we got the message I asked Jason, I  
23 said, hey, take a look at this and then we'll talk about it next  
24 week when we're back in the office. And he did. But we don't  
25 have any issue with what's written. I think it's a good idea,

1 quite honestly. Now, I don't know if you've got any inside scoop  
2 on that --

3 MR. AMMONS: Could I, could I --

4 MR. HIPSKIND: Just -- this is Dick Hipskind. Just for  
5 clarification, Steve, would you chime in on this?

6 MR. AMMONS: Yes, because Mr. Walker was traveling last week  
7 and even yesterday. We did have our first, what I would call our  
8 first meeting yesterday in regards to the FRA advisory, the draft  
9 advisory, and the fact that we've got approximately just a touch  
10 under 60 days to, if we have any questions that we want to enter  
11 into that.

12 MR. HIPSKIND: Commentary.

13 MR. AMMONS: Yes. So we did have our first meeting yesterday  
14 and it included several groups, including the Engineering Group,  
15 which Carl falls up underneath and Mechanical and Transportation  
16 and Network Operations.

17 So that is -- we are starting that process of meeting to  
18 discuss that, along with the NTSB advisory to the FRA. And in  
19 addition, you know, as has been shared with the NTSB and the  
20 entire group that's investigating this accident, we had already  
21 made some of those changes that the FRA had put in their advisory  
22 on some of the operating rules and things like that. So we are  
23 meeting and discussing weekly on that now.

24 MR. HIPSKIND: It's not stagnant. It's ongoing --

25 MR. AMMONS: Absolutely.

1 MR. HIPSKIND: -- and dynamic. Okay.

2 MR. AMMONS: Absolutely.

3 MR. HIPSKIND: Sometimes it takes two people to get the  
4 better answer, the best answer.

5 MR. WALKER: Yeah. Yeah.

6 MR. HIPSKIND: Okay. Carl, that's all I've got.  
7 Ricky, any follow-up questions from you?

8 MR. PAGE: No, I don't have any further questions.

9 MR. HIPSKIND: And Steve?

10 MR. AMMONS: No, sir.

11 MR. HIPSKIND: With your permission, I will begin the  
12 closeout.

13 MR. WALKER: Yes, sir.

14 MR. HIPSKIND: All right. Wait a minute.

15 Ms. O'brien, do you?

16 MS. O'BRIEN: I do not have any questions.

17 MR. HIPSKIND: All right. Thank you, Erin.

18 Carl, is there anything you would like to add or change to  
19 any of the discussion that we've had today?

20 MR. WALKER: I don't have anything to add or change.

21 MR. HIPSKIND: I do want to let you know that's the most  
22 thoughtful pause in all the interviewing I've done. So I  
23 appreciate that you thought about that.

24 Are there any questions we should have asked but did not? I  
25 know we went down many avenues, so is there something else that's



1 on your mind that we should probably talk about?

2 MR. WALKER: No, I think, I think we covered everything. I  
3 just -- I would just leave you with this, and not, you know,  
4 belabor it, you know, any further discussion is that, you know,  
5 we look at all these assets that we have, and the people are the  
6 most important and we've got to remember that.

7 MR. HIPSKIND: I couldn't agree more.

8 If there are no other further questions or comments, we will  
9 close the interview.

10 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD


IN THE MATTER OF: COLLISION OF AMTRAK TRAIN #91 AND  
A STATIONARY CSX TRANSPORTATION  
TRAIN NEAR CAYCE, SOUTH CAROLINA  
FEBRUARY 4, 2018  
Interview of Carl Walker

ACCIDENT NO.: RRD18MR003

PLACE: Jacksonville, Florida

DATE: April 26, 2018

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.

  
Romona Phillips  
Transcriber