

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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RAILROAD WORKER FATALITY

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AT EVERGREEN PACKAGING PLANT

* Docket No.: DCA-15-FR-007

PINE BLUFF, ARKANSAS

*

APRIL 3, 2015

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Interview of: BRADLEY WILLIAMS

Holiday Inn Express
Pine Bluff, Arkansas

Friday,
April 10, 2015

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice.

BEFORE: JOEY RHINE
Investigator-in-Charge

APPEARANCES:

JOEY RHINE, Investigator-in-Charge
National Transportation Safety Board

GEORGETTA GREGORY, Railroad Division Chief
National Transportation Safety Board

DANA SANZO, Survival Factors Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

ARDELL CARTER, Operating Practices Inspector
Federal Railroad Administration
Region 5 - Arkansas

HOMER GODDEN
(On behalf of Mr. Williams)

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I N T E R V I E W

1
2 MR. RHINE: My name is Joey Rhine, and I am the NTSB
3 Investigator-in-Charge for this accident.

4 We are here today on April 10, 2015, at the Holiday Inn
5 Express in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, to conduct an interview with
6 Mr. Bradley Williams who works for Railroad Switching Services,
7 Incorporated.

8 This interview is in conjunction with NTSB's
9 investigation where an employee of Railroad Switching Services,
10 Incorporated was fatally injured while performing railcar
11 switching duties at the Evergreen Packaging Plant on the evening
12 of April 3, 2015, in the City of Pine Bluff, Arkansas, Jefferson
13 County. The NTSB Accident Reference Number is DCA-15-FR-007.

14 Before we begin our interview and questions, let's go
15 around the table and introduce ourselves. Please spell your last
16 name, who you're representing and your title. I would like to
17 remind everybody to speak clearly so we can get an accurate
18 recording.

19 I'll start off and then pass to my right. Again, my
20 name is Joey Rhine. The spelling of my last name is R-h-i-n-e,
21 and I'm the NTSB Investigator-in-Charge for this accident.

22 MR. CARTER: I'm Ardell Carter, C-a-r-t-e-r, Federal
23 Railroad Administration, Operating Practices, State of Arkansas,
24 Region 5.

25 MS. GREGORY: I'm Georgetta Gregory, G-r-e-g-o-r-y, of

1 the NTSB. I'm the Railroad Division chief.

2 MS. SANZO: My name is Dana Sanzo, S-a-n-z-o. I'm an
3 investigator with the NTSB.

4 MR. RHINE: Okay. Do we have your permission to record
5 our discussion with you today?

6 MR. WILLIAMS: Yes.

7 MR. RHINE: And do you wish to have a representative
8 with you during this interview?

9 MR. WILLIAMS: Yes.

10 MR. RHINE: You can go ahead and announce your name.

11 MR. GOTTEN: I'm Homer Godden (ph.), representing
12 Bradley Williams as support.

13 MR. RHINE: Okay. Thank you.

14 We'll go ahead and get started with Ms. Dana.

15 INTERVIEW OF BRADLEY WILLIAMS

16 BY MS. SANZO:

17 Q. Okay. I'd just like to start with, tell us about
18 reporting for duty at work on April 3rd, and just take us through
19 your day.

20 A. Okay. We had a late start. We were switching the
21 warehouse out and we was a couple hours late on it. We got done
22 switching the warehouse out and I told Kye that I was going to run
23 to the office, because it's right there, and use the bathroom.
24 They would go, go ahead and go out to the yard, and I was going to
25 drive the four-wheeler back out there. Well, the time they got

1 out there and I'm done using the bathroom, I get a text from
2 Justin, which is my site leader, and he said where are you? I
3 said I'm on my way to the yard. He was like, well, Jon just
4 texted me and said come to the yard now. And he's like what's
5 going -- I was like, I don't know, Justin; I'm on my way out there
6 now. And then Justin beat me out there because he lives about 5
7 minutes from the mill, and he was already on his way.

8 And I got out there and I seen Jon laying on the ground
9 crying. And I got off and I said, what happened? And he said
10 Kye's dead. And I said, no, he ain't. He said, yes, he is. He
11 pointed over there towards him and I went over there and seen him.

12 And then we called 911 and then they got there and we
13 filled out a report, and then they took us to the emergency room
14 for a drug screen and then they drove us home. Because Kye, he
15 picked me up from work -- to come to work because I won a bet with
16 him so he had to come pick me up for the rest of the week and --
17 and that's about all. That's about all I know that happened.

18 He was cutting -- well, I know what he was doing and but
19 I didn't even have to see it. We was shoving -- we had five more
20 cars to go, to set out, and he was shoving these cars in the clear
21 of 1 track because our next car was going on the 1 track. And he
22 told the operator to give me three on a cut. The operator repeats
23 and he repeats everything we say to make sure we hear it. And he
24 says, he said -- the operator said, all right, shoving three on a
25 cut. He said he shoved it in about a car length, and then so

1 you're supposed to say three, two, one, half a car, and said it
2 was good.

3 Well, he got three and he didn't never get two, and so
4 he started stopping and he hollered for Kye. And he said when he
5 got -- when he shoved one car length, he heard the radio key up
6 and he was hollering for Kye and no answer. He stopped the train.
7 He hung his head out the window hollering "Kye" because, you know,
8 he's only five or six cars down. No answer. So he shuts
9 everything off and he gets down and he walks, and he said he seen
10 blood all over the tracks. And he said he ran down there and
11 that's when he seen Kye under the wheel.

12 And when he was trying to cut that car off, he tripped
13 on the frog and he just tripped the wrong way and fell on the
14 track. And that's what happened.

15 We've been telling them that they need to be getting the
16 lights fixed out there for 6, 7 months now because it's so dark
17 out there and we out there, you know, 3:00 in the morning, and
18 they still ain't fixed them. And that's one of the biggest,
19 because, you know, we looking at our list, looking at car numbers
20 to make sure we got the right ones to set out. And then you got
21 to worry about tripping on all kinds of stuff in the dark. We got
22 a headlight but, you know, it only goes so far. And, you know, I
23 think that's the biggest reason he fell because not enough light
24 and there's so much broken crossties out there you can trip over.
25 And you, like, got to look at your list, look at your cars, talk

1 on the radio, and all that at the same time, and it just caught
2 him off guard.

3 MS. SANZO: Okay. And I'll let others --

4 BY MR. CARTER:

5 Q. Mr. Williams, Ardell Carter with FRA. You said -- you
6 want me to call you Bradley?

7 A. Yes, sir.

8 Q. All right. Going back to your late start at the loadout
9 dock, how many cars do they leave the loadout dock with? How many
10 did you pull?

11 A. How many cars did we pull from the warehouse to the
12 yard?

13 Q. Yeah.

14 A. He pulled one, two -- it was four cars.

15 Q. And that would be four loads?

16 A. Um-hum.

17 Q. Okay. And then you said you knew what the plan was?

18 A. Um-hum.

19 Q. All right. I'm completely in the dark, so to speak.
20 Tell me -- and I apologize if I have to stop you, but walk me
21 through what -- they would have accessed the yard, go across the
22 old Highway 1 or Smart Road with four cars, and where would they
23 go from there to get to the west end?

24 A. It leads you -- when you pulling them, you're dragging
25 them.

1 Q. Yeah.

2 A. And, you know, on that main road, it's got crossovers to
3 stop vehicles. And then, you know, most times 6 switch is lined
4 up to go -- we always shoot down 6 to go down to the west end.

5 Q. So to get the west end --

6 A. It's a straight shot.

7 Q. -- using 6 rail?

8 A. Um-hum.

9 Q. Okay. So he's got the four cars. He goes to the west
10 end of the yard, and you're building the outbound interchange for
11 the UP and the BNSF?

12 A. Um-hum.

13 Q. And do you normally separate them by track? You put UP
14 somewhere and BN --

15 A. Yeah, we put UPs on 103 track and we put our BN on 1
16 track. And the only rail we had to go in was 4 rail, and it was
17 11 deep in 4 rail where he needed to cut off, because we just hung
18 onto the cars we had, so we just -- them what we call no-goes
19 right now because they ain't full cars, so we were going to shove
20 them back in 4. But he done, you know, connected to them on 4
21 rail, and he drug it up 11 on a cut. He cut that last car off.
22 That way he can just start on the inbound. He set one UP out and
23 one BN out by the time I got there, and that was it.

24 Q. Okay. So that --

25 A. And then -- because they was separated, you know, four

1 or five cars apart, so he hooked back into the no-goes and he was
2 just shoving them in the clear of 1. That way, you know, because
3 we got marks out there. And whenever he was trying to cut it off,
4 he tripped on himself.

5 Q. Don't let me put words in your mouth, but after he set
6 out one to 103 and one to 1, he was going to shove 4 rail out of
7 the way, then he was going to pull back with a cut that had to be
8 split up.

9 A. Well, we were still -- I think there was like 35 cars
10 all together when we unhooked in the 4 rail. But he just dragged
11 them out but he hooked back into them after he set them two, and
12 then we're still in the 4 track.

13 Q. Okay. So the 2 set-outs were 11 deep in the 35. So
14 that's why he had to drag them --

15 A. Right.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. So the last five cars -- yeah, the next five cars that
18 we had in a row --

19 Q. Um-hum.

20 A. -- they was all set-out cars. It was two -- he had to
21 set out one more on 1 rail, he had to set one more on 103, and
22 then he had to a 3 blocked up to go back on 1 rail, and it would
23 have been done. And he was shoving the no-goes in the clear.
24 That way when he -- I would've been back out there at that time,
25 and we could've knocked them five cars out because then we

1 would've been in the clear. And then them four cars that we drug
2 from the warehouse, we still had to hook them; would've hooked
3 back into them, shoved them all back in the 4 rail in the clear
4 and then brake and chock it.

5 Q. Okay. Let me ask you a question. You guys -- every
6 move you make, you lace up the air hoses and charge the air on the
7 cars? So even when you're shoving a track like you're talking
8 about, getting it out of the way before you start setting your
9 last five out, you still charge it up and move it back?

10 A. Yeah. Anytime you hook into a car, any cars, you call a
11 red zone and you got to ease your angle cock on to let the air
12 come through, to fasten -- blow it, you know. And then you knock
13 the brake off and pull your chock out the wheel.

14 Q. Okay. Is it reasonable, based on what I know about
15 railroad, when you pulled away with those two set-outs -- and I'm
16 not -- I don't mean you, but if you had been out there, you would
17 let the remaining cars that were hung out of 4 go ahead and
18 bighole, and then when you got back to them, you'd recharge them
19 to shove them?

20 A. Um-hum.

21 Q. Okay. So the bighole --

22 A. Well, see, when we set them out -- he taught me this,
23 too. We'll shove them in -- we'll count our cars and see how many
24 we got, and we estimate, and we'll shove it in enough where we
25 won't have to shove that one in; we can just hook up. The car

1 already is already set up. Go to the next car and cut it off.
2 That way we won't have to shove. We can just set it, come back,
3 set it, and you still got enough room. It's still in the clear.

4 Q. Yeah, the brake's set up and you secure them and --

5 A. Right.

6 Q. Okay. All right.

7 MR. CARTER: I've got several more questions, unless --

8 MS. SANZO: Go ahead.

9 BY MR. CARTER:

10 Q. Lets back up. Thanks for that.

11 A. Um-hum.

12 Q. That's good information. When you were en route, were
13 you able to hear the radio communication between Jon and
14 Mr. Stewart?

15 A. They been working on the radios. You know, we just got
16 bought out, and we had problems with them and you couldn't --
17 like, say, when we changing the warehouse out on the long track,
18 you know, it's, what, 11 cars fits in there. Well, you know, we
19 got somebody riding the bottom end while I'm sitting there at the
20 door watching my moves and then he's counting them in. Well, when
21 he gets on in there, you know, he couldn't hear him. But they
22 fixed that. They brought some towers and put up. But all I can
23 -- when I'm at the office and they're at the west end of the yard,
24 I can't hear them. I hear maybe a static every once in a while.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. And they, you know, they still trying to --

2 Q. Okay. Let me do some -- a little background information
3 on you. You were -- your current position with what was Railserve
4 and now RSS is -- what is your job title?

5 A. I'm a switchman, which is a helper.

6 Q. Right. Do you hold any other job titles?

7 A. Uh-uh.

8 Q. Okay. And you went to work -- when did you hire out
9 with Railserve?

10 A. It was August 18th.

11 Q. Of last year?

12 A. Um-hum.

13 Q. Okay. And what training did you receive to be a helper
14 or do you get training to be a helper?

15 A. Yes, you do. I spent a week watching videos, taking it
16 felt like hundreds of tests. And then after I took all my tests
17 and stuff, then they put -- you know, they put me out there with a
18 crew leader, and all I did was follow them around for another week
19 to learn everything, my tracks and what to do and, you know, they
20 steadily telling you what -- you know, how to do this, how to do
21 that. So they give you real good training before they put you out
22 there.

23 Q. And you said you actually had to take -- you took
24 written exams over the videos and stuff?

25 A. Um-hum. On every video I took -- I mean, I watched, I

1 had to take a test on it.

2 Q. And you are -- are you on a regular shift?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. You are. So you work night, the second trick, 7 to --

5 A. I've been on nights almost between 7 and 8 months. When
6 I first started, I was on days; that's because I was training.
7 And then I volunteered to go to nights to give the night people
8 that's been on there a break because it's rough on nights for a
9 long time. And that was Kye's first night back in, I would say, 6
10 months. That was his first night back.

11 Q. Oh, he just rotated off of days onto nights?

12 A. Um-hum.

13 Q. What in your schedule this particular night was what
14 night for you? Was it your first, second or third of your week or
15 can you tell me what your schedule was?

16 A. No. How he made it, me and Kye came back the same day.
17 We worked Thursday and then Friday -- so Friday, Saturday, Sunday,
18 Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, was rest nighttime.

19 Q. Well, how much -- okay.

20 A. We work 8 days straight and off 6 days whenever we got a
21 whole full crew.

22 Q. So you're on 8 and off 6?

23 A. Um-hum. I was on my second night.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. Kye was, too. He was -- Jon was, too.

1 Q. And how many days of rest before you got to your second
2 -- when you started the day Thursday, how many days of rest
3 previous to that had you had?

4 A. Let me see. I got off about 5:00 Thursday, went to bed
5 about 8:00, and I slept all day that day, you know, Friday,
6 because I didn't have to be there till 5:00.

7 Q. You're telling me you turned around after daylights in
8 24 hours? You worked Thursday --

9 A. I worked Thursday and then I had to come back Friday
10 night. So I had plenty of time off between them, though.

11 Q. How many days in a row up to Thursday had you worked
12 daylight?

13 A. None. I was off for my 6 days.

14 Q. Okay. So you went -- after your 6 days, your first
15 shift back was a daylight shift.

16 A. Um-hum.

17 Q. And then you rotated the next afternoon to nights?

18 A. Um-hum.

19 Q. Okay. All right. Okay. Give me -- tell me your --
20 give me your opinion about the conditions in the class yard,
21 anything and everything you can think of.

22 A. Are you talking about preventing it to happen again
23 or --

24 Q. That's up to you. I just want to know -- let me see how
25 -- a better way to put this. Conditions in the class yard. Tell

1 me about the track, the toe paths, the lighting, the switches, if
2 you have any issues or you don't.

3 A. I got issues with the lighting. We've been asking them
4 for 6 months, you know. But, you know, they -- we just got bought
5 out and they're working on that now. Tracks, you know, you never
6 know, they can go bad just like that, break, you know, definitely
7 during the wintertime. That's something you've got to keep your
8 eyes out on.

9 And another main thing, and he knows this, too, we out
10 in the middle of the woods. You got to keep an eye on coyotes,
11 bears, possums, raccoons, anything. You see them every night walk
12 right up on you, and it's dark out there, you know. And if you're
13 looking at your list or something, they sneak -- that train's
14 loud. You can't hear something, you know, and you're worried
15 about that, too. I always try to carry around a pocketknife out
16 there but, you know, other than that, you know, you just got so
17 much stuff to worry about out there.

18 Q. What about the walkways? Any issues with the walkways
19 where you walk between, you know, between the rails?

20 A. Yeah, what I was saying earlier. There's so much
21 broken --

22 Q. Debris.

23 A. -- debris, crossties, just metal pieces, you know, from
24 where they repaired tracks; you know, a bunch of stuff to trip
25 over. Dips, you know, in the rocks. Some -- you know, sometimes

1 you got a pretty good dip. But the lighting and all the debris
2 around is my main goal that they need to fix.

3 Q. Daylight shift standard is 6 a.m. to?

4 A. 4 p. -- daytime is 6 a.m. to 4 p.m.

5 Q. All right. And nighttime is 1700 or 5 p.m. to --

6 A. 5 p.m. to 3 a.m.

7 Q. Okay. So 1700 to 03 a.m. And you said in your
8 rotation, that Friday morning when you went to sleep, you slept
9 well?

10 A. Friday morning? Oh, yeah.

11 Q. Okay. Have you -- since you've worked with Railserve,
12 which is now RSS, have you ever received any kind of training or
13 information on what we call fatigue awareness, about getting rest?

14 A. I don't remember anything on that.

15 Q. What is your understanding today of the cell phone
16 policy with either Railserve or RSS?

17 A. No cell phones allowed except for the crew phone. The
18 crew phone you got to have because you got -- you know, if they
19 need an emergency switch, we got to do it or, you know, or we call
20 the warehouse, see if they're ready, what they need, or answer it,
21 you know.

22 Q. And --

23 A. Or if something happened like what happened Friday, you
24 know.

25 Q. Are there any special provisions if you have to use the

1 crew phone, like you can only do it under certain conditions or is
2 it just --

3 A. Well, you come on the radio and you say, take 2. And
4 he'll -- the operator, he'll stop, he'll put it in protect mode,
5 and he'll wait till whoever said take 2, he'll wait for them to
6 say when they're ready or not. You know, it could be 5 minutes,
7 10, you know, we just say take 2, and that means he need to shut
8 down.

9 Q. Okay. Let me see here. What about -- as a helper, does
10 anybody ever come out there and test you to see if you're doing --
11 complying with the rules? Or do you -- are you as a helper ever
12 in a position to observe somebody else and test them for
13 compliance?

14 A. During dayshift they do, but nightshift, when we're out
15 in the yard, I don't never see nobody out there. You know, you
16 can't see out there and, you know, if they did -- if somebody did
17 come out there and, you know, try to watch us, they have to have a
18 light and we'd be able to see them. That's why I'm saying, they
19 need light.

20 Q. Do you as a helper working night, do you use -- are you
21 guys exclusively on radio or do you carry a lantern?

22 A. We have radios on us at all times. At Railserve, we had
23 lanterns but they was all POSes. We got headlamps on our hardhat
24 that we use; a lot brighter and hands free. You really need to be
25 hands free doing what we do.

1 Q. So your opinion is you would rather have the headlamp
2 than a half working lantern?

3 A. Right. A lantern period.

4 Q. Period.

5 A. You have to carry it.

6 Q. Yeah. Okay.

7 A. You know, if you're carrying a lantern and your switch
8 list and all that, and then trying to throw a switch, something's
9 going to go wrong.

10 Q. Okay. What's your understanding of the Railserve
11 transition to currently under RSS, are you allowed to wear any
12 kind of footwear that you want out there or is there --

13 A. No, we all have our -- they have certain stuff. Since
14 -- you got to wear pants, no holes in them, steel toe boots at
15 least 6 to inches tall.

16 Q. Do they have to be lace-up or can they be --

17 A. They got to be lace-up.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. They got to have a heel in them. You got to have your
20 vest. You got to have your safety glasses, your hardhat. They
21 make sure, you know, you have that because we block a lot of
22 crossings out there. A lot of them truck drivers, they don't want
23 to see you. They try to run right over you. And that's one of my
24 main goals is in crossings.

25 Q. So I understand you, that if I'm going to work out

1 there, I have to have a set of lace-up boots, 6 to 8 inches in
2 height --

3 A. Correct.

4 Q. -- with a defined heel, and that's all that's
5 acceptable?

6 A. You got to have your -- before you can even walk in the
7 gate, you got to have your hardhat on, your safety --

8 Q. No, I'm just talking -- excuse me. I'm just talking
9 about my boots.

10 A. Oh, your boots?

11 Q. Yeah.

12 A. As far as I know, as long as they're steel toe, heels on
13 them, and 6 to 8 inches, lace-up boots.

14 Q. Yeah, that's the thing. They need to be laced up is
15 what I'm asking?

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. Yeah, they make sure they laced-up.

19 Q. Last question, and I -- listen, I appreciate your
20 patience, because you know a lot more than you thought you knew
21 and now I know something.

22 A. I can remember everything, you know. Like I said, I
23 want everything to work out and that's why I'm going with all this
24 stuff. I want to get this over with. I want to quit talking
25 about it really, you know.

1 Q. What is -- what was Railserve or what is currently now
2 RSS's drug and alcohol policy?

3 A. They have randoms all the time. They do not allow that.
4 They pick randoms, what, once a month. And then anytime any
5 incident happen, don't matter what it is, if you derail, run
6 through a door, hit a bumper, you got to go take a drug test, no
7 matter what.

8 Q. Well, Bradley, that's all I have, and I thank you.

9 MR. RHINE: Joey Rhine, NTSB. I've got one quick
10 question.

11 BY MR. RHINE:

12 Q. I've been railroading for a while, but I wasn't a
13 switchman, and you were referring to a couple times when Kye was
14 shoving into 4.

15 A. Um-hum.

16 Q. You said you know what he was doing.

17 A. Um-hum.

18 Q. And you said that he was trying to cut it off. Could
19 you define cut it off?

20 A. Cut it off just means separating the cars.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. I mean, you turn your air off. When you turn the air
23 off, you pull the pin and then you tell them clear, drag it out,
24 and they'll drag it. And then you'll count them all, how many
25 cars you got to go over. That's my job is count them over to the

1 next switch and what rail I need him to go into.

2 Q. Do you guys, when you're switching, and say, you're
3 riding the car, the side of the car?

4 A. Um-hum.

5 Q. When you're doing this cut it off, are you riding the
6 side of the car?

7 A. Oh, no. No, no. We're at a dead stop before we cut it
8 off.

9 Q. When you pull the pin --

10 A. Call a red zone.

11 Q. -- and shut the angle cock, pull the pin and shut the
12 angle cock, when would you do that in this process?

13 A. What would you do first?

14 Q. Just tell me the process if you're going to cut it off.
15 You have to pull the pin and shut the angle cock, right? Where in
16 the process would you do that? Before you go to shove them in
17 or --

18 A. All right. For example, he will say "give me three on a
19 cut," and the operator will say, "okay, shoving three on a cut."
20 He'll start shoving, and then you say "two more, one more time,
21 half of it, 20 feet, 10 feet, 5 feet, good." Or -- yeah, that's
22 on cuts. When you're hooking up, you just say "set of wheels
23 good," at the end of it. But you count him in all the way, and
24 then you say "5 feet, good," and he stops. Red zone, tie the
25 brake, close your angle cock off, pull your pin. Red clear, drag

1 it out.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. That's what that is.

4 Q. That's exactly what I want to know. I appreciate that.
5 That's all I have.

6 A. And then when you say drag it out, you tell your
7 operator B&C. That means you've got it braked and chocked. That
8 way it won't go anywhere until you get back to it.

9 Q. So you use -- besides a handbrake, you chock them down
10 there?

11 A. Um-hum. We chock them -- we chock them with broken
12 chocks. But our new company's done bought us the real chocks now
13 since that car rolled through that door.

14 But, yeah, we have to brake and chock them. And if they
15 chocked and I drag them over to switch, well, my crew leader, he
16 will say "give me three on a hook," stop it short while I get
17 these chocks. Because, you know, you can try and walk with the
18 train or you can ride it and then tell them to stop it short to
19 take your chocks out. That way you won't bust through the chocks.

20 Q. Are you guys allowed to make a joint while you're
21 riding?

22 A. Are you talking about making a hook?

23 Q. Yeah.

24 A. No. That's why I say you got to stop it short to get
25 down. When Railserve -- there's a lot of stuff different now.

1 Railserve owned us, there was no allowed of getting off or on
2 moving equipment. Now you can -- they said that you can get off
3 and on at 4 miles per hour. Is that what they said? Four?

4 Q. Who said that?

5 A. That's what I heard.

6 Q. Okay. You talked about going through this door. Could
7 you kind of give us the synopsis on this incident where the car
8 went through a door?

9 A. Oh, a door?

10 Q. Yeah.

11 A. Well, you all ain't from around here, are you? Well, we
12 had a real bad sleet storm.

13 MR. CARTER: I was here. I'm here.

14 MR. WILLIAMS: Yeah, that sleet, it was sleeting so bad,
15 you know, and sideways. Well, whenever he cut them cars out -- I
16 wasn't there. I worked the next morning. And he tied -- it was
17 three cars or two. It was two or three cars. Anyway, you tie
18 every brake on, on every car. If you go leave them hanging there
19 for overnight, for the morning people to -- you know, because they
20 could use them too, tie a brake and then you chock them.

21 Well, they saying it was a weather accident. Ice got
22 built in between the brakes. He tied the brakes but it didn't
23 work and it -- when you've got ice all over your chocks and stuff,
24 it pushes them out the way and it just rode down like there wasn't
25 nothing on there.

1 BY MR. RHINE:

2 Q. Oh, I see. Okay.

3 A. That's --

4 Q. So icy conditions led --

5 A. That's how that happened.

6 Q. I see. Okay. I appreciate you telling me that.

7 MR. RHINE: That's the only questions I have.

8 MS. SANZO: Anybody else?

9 MS. GREGORY: Yes, I just have a couple of really quick
10 ones.

11 MS. SANZO: Sure.

12 MS. GREGORY: This is Georgetta Gregory.

13 BY MS. GREGORY:

14 Q. You said that when you first went to work for Railserve,
15 you had to watch a bunch of videos?

16 A. Um-hum.

17 Q. What were they about?

18 A. It was a bunch of safety videos, and then telling you
19 all your -- you got a bunch of different chemical signs that's on
20 these tank cars and stuff.

21 Q. Um-hum.

22 A. And just like on your tractor-trailer trucks, even
23 though you got a handbook that tells you what all them numbers
24 represent.

25 Q. Um-hum.

1 A. So a video about that and, you know, because some of
2 them's real bad flammable and stuff, to be really careful with
3 them.

4 Q. Um-hum.

5 A. And don't let nothing -- I watched a safety video about
6 not getting sidetracked, being on your phone, like you mentioned
7 about. Because I watched it, and this guy was -- he was putting
8 up a -- what do you call them things -- scaffolding. He was
9 putting up scaffolding. Well, he got on the phone and he never
10 tightened them up. And then he got off of it and then somebody
11 walked up and started -- his boss walked up and why are you doing
12 on your phone; didn't I tell you if you was on your phone, I was
13 going to fire you? And then the boss leaned against that
14 scaffolding and fell about three stories down and killed him while
15 a woman was jogging down there; it almost fell on top of her.
16 That's why you never can get sidetracked.

17 Q. Um-hum. Did any of the videos pertain to railroad
18 switching though to your job?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Okay. And you went to work for Railserve in August of
21 2014. What did you do before that?

22 A. I worked at Knox Nelson Oil Company.

23 Q. And what was your job there?

24 A. I was maintenance.

25 Q. Okay. And then I'm still a little confused on your

1 schedule. Thursday was your first day back after your days off?

2 A. Correct.

3 Q. And you worked the daylight shift?

4 A. Um-hum.

5 Q. And you got off at 5 -- at 4 p.m.?

6 A. Correct.

7 Q. And then you didn't come back until 5 p.m. Friday night?

8 A. Correct.

9 Q. So when did you sleep? Did you sleep Thursday night or
10 did you wait and sleep Friday?

11 A. Yeah, I went to sleep Thursday night --

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. -- and then slept most of the day Friday.

14 Q. All right. Thank you.

15 A. Because my wife, she goes to work, and my kid goes to
16 daycare, I've got that bed by myself.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. I'm taking advantage of it.

19 Q. Thank you.

20 MS. GREGORY: Okay. Your turn.

21 BY MR. CARTER:

22 Q. Bradley, Ardell Carter, FRA. Let me see if I have this
23 right, what you put as the sequence. You came over -- they came
24 over to the class yard with four loads from the warehouse.

25 A. Correct.

1 Q. Went to the west end via 6 rail. Went against 4 rail
2 and pulled out 11 to set one to 103 and one to 1.

3 A. Correct.

4 Q. They were in the process with nine cars going back to 4
5 rail to make a hook, shove it, and then come off with how many
6 additional cars?

7 A. Is that the switch list?

8 Q. Yes, it is.

9 MS. GREGORY: But Bradley wasn't down there with them.

10 MR. WILLIAMS: See, this is mine anyways. I gave him
11 this to copy for you all, because I kept it.

12 So when he hooked in 4 rail, he had ahold of 15 cars
13 total whenever -- this is 4 rail. When we hooked in 4 rail, he
14 drug it up until that car that's highlighted was in the clear and
15 he cut that one -- he cut this AOK off to stay there. And then he
16 pulled out -- he counted him over the switch, he set that one out,
17 and then he shoved these four no-goes that ain't highlighted back
18 into 4. And then -- no, there's five cars that he shoved in, but
19 that didn't allow him enough room to clear 1 rail up for this car.

20 So when he hooked back into them, you know, they all
21 connected. So he just had to shove it all in the clear because
22 these last three cars -- well, he had that car and then set
23 another one out, because that's why he was clearing it up because
24 he had that one more no-go set over there after he set that one on
25 1. And then that three block -- yeah, this three block, this all

1 went on 1 rail, and then we still had them four loaded cars hooked
2 back into the rest of the no-goes and shove them all in the clear,
3 and we would've been done.

4 MR. CARTER: Thank you.

5 MR. WILLIAMS: See, when you work with somebody for a
6 while, you know what they thinking, you know what they're going to
7 do without them telling you. But we always still go over on what
8 we're doing. Before we leave the office, we'll make a game -- the
9 crew leader, he'll make the game plan with me and I go through my
10 list marking on what we're going to be doing. That way I know
11 what we're doing and I know what he's doing.

12 But that's about -- yeah, that's about it. We already
13 went over on what we was going to do.

14 MS. SANZO: How are you doing in this so far? Need a
15 break or --

16 MR. WILLIAMS: No, I'm fine. I can finish up.

17 BY MS. SANZO:

18 Q. Okay. I will try to be as quick as I can about this
19 then. Back a little bit we talked about on scheduling and --
20 prior to coming back on duty for this dayshift and the 6 days off,
21 were you on the nightshift that previous -- it would have been 8
22 days?

23 A. Well, I worked that Thursday -- well, I ain't worked
24 since that last Thursday behind that, and all of them was nights.

25 Q. Okay. And then, as was talked about a little bit

1 earlier about walking through the previous 3 days of really the
2 sleep and awake schedule, if we go back to that. So let's see.
3 So this would have been that Tuesday, which would have been March
4 31st.

5 A. Um-hum.

6 Q. At least in -- I'll say on that Tuesday and Wednesday,
7 do you remember the approximate hours of sleep you had in those
8 days?

9 A. Years of sleep?

10 Q. I'm sorry.

11 A. Did you say years of sleep?

12 Q. Hours. Sorry.

13 A. Oh. Oh, okay. You said Tuesday and Wednesday?

14 Q. Um-hum. If you can't remember, that's fine. We can
15 just pick up with Thursday.

16 A. You want -- I'm confused here now. Ask me that again.
17 I'm sorry.

18 Q. That's okay. It was a very poorly worded question. I
19 think, you know, perhaps I'll just save these questions until
20 we're done with this part.

21 A. Okay. Were you trying to say how much sleep I got --

22 Q. What's typical for you?

23 A. -- between them 2 days before I came back to work?

24 Q. Um-hum.

25 A. Oh, 8 to 10 hours.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. You know, I get my sleep.

3 Q. And --

4 A. That's why I like nightshift because I get to sleep
5 during the day and my wife's at work and the kid's at daycare. So
6 I get my sleep.

7 Q. And Thursday, you had mentioned that was a daytime shift
8 for you?

9 A. Right.

10 Q. Is there -- is it common to start off with the dayshift
11 before heading back into the nights or is it unusual?

12 A. No, it's not the first time. Really, you know, I kind
13 of like it. That way -- because I actually get to see stuff
14 during the day, you know, looking at, you know, bad spots in the
15 track. I can see them and then that will give me an idea of when
16 I go back to nights on where to keep my eyes out on. So I kind of
17 like that in that way. Because when you're on nights, you really
18 can't, you know, see your bad spots. You don't know where to look
19 really. But, you know, he try to keep everybody rotated, you
20 know, put some people on nights for this while of time and he'll
21 rotate them out, you know, just section by section. But, you
22 know, I volunteered to go on nights. So --

23 Q. Okay. Thank you very much.

24 A. Um-hum.

25 Q. And I'm going to end my questions right there.

1 A. Okay.

2 BY MR. RHINE:

3 Q. That's all we have. Do you have anything that you would
4 like to add?

5 A. I think I basically covered everything.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. That's about it. That's all I know.

8 Q. If we have any follow-up questions, would you mind if we
9 contacted you?

10 A. Sure, you can contact me anytime.

11 Q. On behalf of the NTSB, I'd like to thank you for your
12 time and cooperation in coming.

13 MR. RHINE: That's it.

14 (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: RAILROAD WORKER FATALITY
 AT EVERGREEN PACKAGING PLANT
 PINE BLUFF, ARKANSAS
 APRIL 3, 2015
 Interview of Bradley Williams

DOCKET NUMBER: DCA-15-FR-007

PLACE: Pine Bluff, Arkansas

DATE: April 10, 2015

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.

Kathryn A. Mirfin
Transcriber