

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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CSX TRAIN DERAILMENT

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BRONX, NEW YORK

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Docket No.: DCA-13-FR-009

JULY 18, 2013

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Interview of: KENNETH PITT

Kearny, New Jersey

Sunday,  
July 21, 2013

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice.

BEFORE: MICHAEL FLANIGON  
Investigator-in-Charge

Mr. Pitt was afforded the opportunity to review this transcript for errors. He responded that there were none

## APPEARANCES:

MICHAEL FLANIGON, Investigator-in-Charge  
National Transportation Safety Board  
490 L'Enfant Plaza East, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20594

PETER LAPRE, Chief Inspector  
Region 1  
Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)

JOHN LONGOBARDI, Line Superintendent  
Metro-North Operations

ARTHUR KING  
CSX

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I N T E R V I E W

1  
2 MR. FLANIGON: My name is Mike Flanigon, F-l-a-n-i-g-o-  
3 n. I am the Investigator-in-Charge of the accident involving a  
4 CSX train in the Bronx, New York that occurred on Friday, July --

5 MR. PITT: That was actually Thursday.

6 MR. FLANIGON: Thursday, July 18th -- do I have that  
7 right?

8 MR. PITT: Right. Yes.

9 MR. FLANIGON: July 18th. And we are interviewing  
10 Mr. Kenneth Pitt, P-i-t-t, who was on that train. And I'll go  
11 around the room and ask the other folks here as part of the  
12 interview panel to identify themselves and spell their last name.  
13 We'll start with --

14 MR. MACHNIK: Jeff Machnik, M-a-c-h-n-i-k, Terminal  
15 Manager for CSX.

16 MR. LONGOBARDI: John Longobardi, L-o-n-g-o-b-a-r-d-i,  
17 Metro-North Operations.

18 MR. LAPRE: Peter LaPre, FRA; L-a-P-r-e.

19 MR. KING: Arthur King with CSX, K-i-n-g.

20 MR. FLANIGON: Great, thank you.

21 And, Mr. Pitt, if you would start -- well, before I ask  
22 you a question, let me just confirm that you understand we're  
23 going to tape record the interview and get you a transcription to  
24 look at?

25 MR. PITT: Right, I understand.

1 MR. FLANIGON: Great.

2 INTERVIEW OF KENNETH PITT

3 BY MR. FLANIGON:

4 Q. I am going to start with a general question to ask you  
5 to simply walk us through what happened that night and take your  
6 time and kind of in your own words just describe what happened,  
7 and pick the spot to start the story where you think it makes the  
8 most sense.

9 A. Okay. I was assigned as engineer trainee on a Q70419.  
10 It was -- sign up time was July 18th, 1830. We picked up 5  
11 garbage cars from Oak Point, came down the link to Harlem River  
12 and picked up an additional 19 cars. After our roll-by, brake  
13 test roll-by, we proceeded out the link to CP-8, towards CP-8, and  
14 the engineer called the Central District C dispatcher, RTC, and  
15 advised we had 24 cars, all garbage, 16'6" in the height, good  
16 roll-by, and we were ready to go to CP-8.

17 We waited for one train, I believe it was southbound,  
18 and we got the signal on CP-8 and began to pull. Came out CP-8  
19 somewhere in the neighborhood of 8:20, 2020, and proceeded north  
20 on Track 4. As we were proceeding north on Track 4, we were  
21 passed by a local Metro-North train. I believe it was 781. I  
22 could be wrong about the number, but proceeded north on Track 4  
23 and a Metro-North train was proceeding north on Track 2.

24 Then there was a long conversation between Central  
25 District C and -- I don't know if it was the conductor or engineer

1 or both on the 781. Essentially the Metro-North Train had -- the  
2 conductor was bitten by a dog. The dog did not have tags for  
3 rabies shots and the lady who owned the dog did not have an ID  
4 with a current address.

5 So as they were pulling north, they made -- I believe  
6 they made a stop at Morris Heights, University Heights, and  
7 Central District C said he would hold them at Marble Hill and to  
8 leave the doors closed until police arrived.

9 So we proceeded up Track 4 and the cab dropped to a  
10 limited and then medium and then we got a restricting as we were  
11 coming towards Marble Hill. So the engineer was preparing to stop  
12 for CP-10 because we had all red. We were just about stopped. I  
13 can't -- I thought we actually stopped, but maybe we didn't; maybe  
14 we were a couple miles an hour. And the -- there had been a  
15 southbound just before we -- on Track 1, just before we reached  
16 Marble Hill, and we were almost stopped at CP-10 when the light  
17 came up, so then we started to pull through the rock cut.

18 Our head end was right about, I would say maybe eight  
19 cars south of the platform at Spuyten Duyvil when the Metro-North  
20 train sitting on Track 2 of Marble Hill said, "CSX, I see sparks.  
21 I think you're dragging something." The engineer applied air.  
22 And then he said, "I think you're on the ground," and right after  
23 he said that we went in emergency.

24 I got my radio out of my bag and I proceeded to walk the  
25 train. I was about two cars north of the conductor, who was

1 already out walking, and inspected and I saw the 11th car was on  
2 the ground and between the 11th and 12th car there was a  
3 separation. The 12th car was basically detrucked and all four  
4 containers were off the car. And the next eight cars were also on  
5 the ground, not necessarily every truck, but at least one truck on  
6 each car was on the ground. Some were inside the rail, some were  
7 outside the rail, and the rear four cars were still on the rail  
8 and they were just north of CP-10.

9 Q. Okay. Well, great, thank you. Where were you -- you  
10 were not operating the engine?

11 A. No, I wasn't.

12 Q. And where were you sitting?

13 A. Excuse me?

14 Q. Where were you sitting?

15 A. I was in the second seat on the conductor's side. You  
16 have the engineer's seat on the right-hand side and then you have  
17 two seats on the left-hand side. The conductor trainee was in  
18 front of me and I was in the second seat towards the back of the  
19 cab.

20 Q. Okay, and was there a conductor?

21 A. Because there's only three seats, he was in the second  
22 unit.

23 Q. Okay. As you left CP-10 or did the -- if I'm  
24 remembering the layout there, you were on the outside track, the  
25 river side track --

1 A. Right, that's Track 4.

2 Q. -- and then there's a turnout and --

3 A. Yeah, it goes down the two tracks.

4 Q. It goes down the two tracks and --

5 A. We came out on Track 2.

6 Q. Yeah. From the point where you entered Track 2 from  
7 Track 4, did you observe anything unusual about the track, feel  
8 anything unusual --

9 A. Not at all. As a matter of fact, when he said, "I think  
10 you're dragging something," I thought it was kind of strange  
11 because we felt no tug, nothing. It wasn't until just before we  
12 went into emergency you got a little, you know, grab.

13 Q. Yeah.

14 A. So --

15 Q. Okay. And when you say the engineer applied the brakes  
16 when he first got that call, was that the train brake, the air  
17 brake --

18 A. Automatic brake, yeah.

19 Q. Okay. And do you recall about where -- how hard you  
20 were pulling at that point? Did you have any sense of, was it all  
21 the way open or --

22 A. Oh, I can't see. I don't know, I would guess maybe  
23 notch 3, maybe notch 4.

24 Q. Okay. We'll dig into the event recorder when we get  
25 that, but I just wanted a sense of -- and you felt no tug, no



1 run-in, no --

2 A. Nothing at all.

3 Q. -- run-out?

4 A. No, he had it stretched so it was, you know --

5 Q. Okay. I think that's it.

6 MR. FLANIGON: Typically, what we'll do is we kind of  
7 take turns, go around and then we will wrap up. Let me see if  
8 Arthur wants to ask anything.

9 MR. KING: I have nothing for him. I brought up the  
10 files for you though. I got permission to give you whatever you  
11 want.

12 MR. FLANIGON: Okay.

13 MR. KING: So the event recorder and local cam files.

14 MR. FLANIGON: All right.

15 MR. KING: I will give them to you right on a flash  
16 drive so you can have it.

17 MR. FLANIGON: Okay, super. Pete?

18 MR. LAPRE: Yes.

19 BY MR. LAPRE:

20 Q. When you said that the ride, there was nothing -- you  
21 didn't anything unusual; there was no tug or anything like that  
22 before the derailment. But prior to the derailment, was there  
23 anything unusual about the ride?

24 A. No, absolutely nothing.

25 Q. Okay, also you said that there was a separation between

1 the 11th and -- or, I'm sorry, the 11th car was on the ground --

2 A. That was the first car on the ground, right.

3 Q. And then there was a separation between the 11th --

4 A. And 12th.

5 Q. -- and 12th cars?

6 A. Right.

7 Q. So the 11th car that was on the ground was still  
8 attached to your train?

9 A. It was and it was just a rear truck that was off on the  
10 11th car.

11 MR. LAPRE: Okay, nothing further. Thank you.

12 MR. FLANIGON: Okay.

13 MR. LONGOBARDI: No, I'm all set, thank you.

14 MR. MACHNIK: I'm good. No.

15 MR. FLANIGON: Okay. Just a couple quick things from  
16 Mike Flanigon here.

17 BY MR. FLANIGON:

18 Q. The separation between the cars, was that a big  
19 separation? You know, estimate -- 10 feet, 20 feet, 5 feet?

20 A. No, it was -- if I had to guess, I'd say 50.

21 Q. Fifty feet? Okay. And lastly from me, can you run down  
22 your experience? You're an engineer trainee. Did you hire in  
23 as -- in another capacity with the railroad?

24 A. Yes, I hired -- I was a conductor.

25 Q. Okay. How long you been a conductor?

1 A. Since 2007, so about 6 years.

2 Q. Very good.

3 MR. FLANIGON: Okay, I think that's it for me again.

4 Anybody else?

5 MR. LAPRE: Yeah. Sorry.

6 MR. FLANIGON: That's all right. Say your name again.

7 MR. LAPRE: Peter LaPre.

8 BY MR. LAPRE:

9 Q. So the 11th car was still attached; there was a 50-foot  
10 separation. And the separation between the 11th and 12th car, did  
11 you happen to notice anything with regard to the knuckles?

12 A. Actually, both knuckles were intact and both of them  
13 were closed, which is kind of odd. But, you know, being the long  
14 drawbars in a curve, I assume they just popped off. Plus the fact  
15 that you had about 3 feet of ballast under the D truck car right  
16 at the rear truck which wasn't attached. So I'm assuming that's  
17 what basically, you know, caused the separation.

18 Q. Okay. And the position of the 12th car as it related to  
19 the rest of your train, could you describe that?

20 A. What do you mean?

21 Q. The 12th car, was it leaning or --

22 A. Well, it was leaning and all four containers were off on  
23 Track 1, so --

24 Q. Okay. Thank you.

25 MR. FLANIGON: All right. I want to thank you for

1 coming in and talking to us. Any questions you have for us before  
2 I end this?

3 MR. PITT: No.

4 MR. FLANIGON: Okay.

5 (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: CSX TRAIN DERAILMENT  
BRONX, NEW YORK  
JULY 18, 2013  
Interview of Kenneth Pitt

DOCKET NUMBER: DCA-13-FR-009

PLACE: New York, New York

DATE: July 22, 2013

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.

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Michelle Smiroldo  
Transcriber