

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

\* Docket No.: DCA-13-FR-009

JULY 18, 2013

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Interview of: JOSEPH M. LAMPE

New York, New York

Monday,  
July 22, 2013

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice.

BEFORE: MICHAEL FLANIGON  
Investigator-in-Charge

Mr. Lampe was provided an opportunity to review this transcript for accuracy. He made two corrections:

- 1. Page 7/Line 4 "274" should read "Q 704"
- 2. Page 9/Line 8 "2704" should read "Q 704"

## APPEARANCES:

MICHAEL FLANIGON, Investigator-in-Charge  
National Transportation Safety Board  
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PETER LAPRE, Chief Inspector  
Region 1  
Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)

JOHN LONGOBARDI, Line Superintendent  
Metro-North Operations

KAI PETERSEN, Vice General Chairman  
Local 113  
Association of Commuter Rail Employees (ACRE)

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I N T E R V I E W

1  
2 MR. FLANIGON: Okay. My name is Mike Flanigon,  
3 F-l-a-n-i-g-o-n. I'm the NTSB's Investigator-in-Charge, looking  
4 into the derailment of a CSX freight train that occurred on July  
5 the 18th. Today is July 22 and we're interviewing the rail  
6 traffic controller who was on duty at the time of the derailment.

7 And I'm going to go around and ask everyone to state and  
8 smell -- spell their name -- I've been around the garbage train  
9 too long -- to state and spell their name before we start. I'll  
10 start with you, Mr. Lampe.

11 MR. LAMPE: My name is Joseph M. Lampe, L-a-m-p-e. And  
12 I was the RTC on duty that night on the District C desk, which is  
13 the Lower Hudson.

14 MR. FLANIGON: Okay, and --

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

17 MR. FLANIGON: And?

18 MR. PETERSON: Kai Petersen, K-a-i, P-e-t-e-r-s-e-n,  
19 Vice General Chairman, ACRE 113.

20 MR. LAPRE: Peter LaPre, L-a-P-r-e, with the FRA.

21 MR. FLANIGON: Okay. And just one minor administrative  
22 thing to confirm, Mr. Lampe, that you understand we're going to  
23 record the interview and we'll provide you a transcript?

24 MR. LAMPE: I understand.

25 MR. FLANIGON: Okay, great.

## 1 INTERVIEW OF JOSEPH M. LAMPE

2 BY MR. FLANIGON:

3 Q. I'll start very generally and ask you to basically tell  
4 us the story of what happened that evening from your perspective.  
5 Take all the time you need, just kind of tell us in your own words  
6 and pick the point to start the story where you think it best  
7 tells us what happened.

8 A. Approximately, 8:10 -- 2000 to 2010 hours, I got a call  
9 from -- on the radio from the Q70419, which was the freight train  
10 that was running that night. They called me for permission out.  
11 I verified the information on the coversheet of their paperwork.  
12 We had -- service was rearranged a bit due to circuits being down  
13 from the extreme heat, and so I had to have him wait a little bit  
14 for a couple of trains to go by. Once I got those trains by his  
15 location, I brought him out from CP-8 onto Track 4 from the Oak  
16 Point link, gave him the signal from CP-8 to CP-10.

17 At CP-10, I had to have him wait for the southbound  
18 Poughkeepsie train, 886, who was southbound and I was going to  
19 route him ahead. Train 781 was coming in to doing the station  
20 work in the Bronx and had informed me that his conductor had had a  
21 problem with a passenger's pet dog that bit him. He requested  
22 police and EMTs at Marble Hill. So I stopped 781 at Marble Hill.

23 Once 886 cleared the interlocking at CP-10, I then gave  
24 the Q704 the signal at CP-10 to go from Track 4 to Track 2 and  
25 then right up and through CP-12 from Track 2 to Track 1 so that he

1 could continue on north.

2 As the Q704 passed the threshold where I could see him  
3 go beyond CP-11, the engineer on Train 781 had contacted me on the  
4 radio saying that he saw sparks and smoke from the freight train.  
5 Shortly after that, I saw the circuit go down on Track 1, between  
6 CP-10 and CP-11. And shortly after that, the engineer from the  
7 Q704 gave the "emergency, emergency, emergency" call over the  
8 radio and that's when I knew something was up. That was  
9 approximately 2030 hours that night on the 18th.

10 And after that, I tried to ascertain what was the extent  
11 of it, what was the problem. I had had the conductor from Q704  
12 get down on the ground on the Track 4 side of his train, on the  
13 river side, so that he could look at it while being safely away  
14 from the Track 1 side. And then that's when he told me that he  
15 had cars derailed and he gave me the different car numbers, which  
16 I marked on the paperwork of the train, and told me that there  
17 were containers that had fallen off one of the cars.

18 And then, just went on going through getting the  
19 information required, getting the power shut off on the tracks on  
20 the third rail, and went on from there as required by the chief  
21 and whatnot.

22 Q. Okay, about what time -- you mentioned a time that you  
23 gave him permission out to --

24 A. When I initially gave him permission off the Oak Point  
25 link, it was about 8:00, 8:10, somewhere in there, in the evening,

1 2000 to 2010 hours.

2 Q. Okay. And on a normal night, without a derailment, the  
3 CSX train would go how far north?

4 A. They go from the Oak Point link -- 274 normally goes  
5 from the Oak Point link at CP-8 all the way up through CP-75,  
6 where he goes into -- I think it's Amtrak territory now, north of  
7 CP-75.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. I get them out on my territory and hand them off to  
10 District D at CP-33.

11 Q. Okay. So, your operational plan before the derailment  
12 occurred was -- well, just describe it for me. What was your  
13 plan?

14 A. Because we had the circuits down on Track 2, it had  
15 locked the direction of traffic on Track 2 between CP-8 and CP-10  
16 in a northbound direction. So, we were going north on 2, south on  
17 1. I had been moving trains across because they're normally  
18 coming south on the Track 4 side, so I was having to criss-cross  
19 them over to get them to go down one.

20 And with the northbounds already passed by, the only  
21 thing I had to wait for was Train 781. When he reported to me  
22 that he was going to need police and EMTs for the conductor, I  
23 realized I would have the time to get the Q704 out of the way and  
24 off of Track 4, which is what I've been using for the express  
25 trains so that not everybody was going through the speed

1 restriction of the downed circuits.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. So, I was going to get him out and through before the  
4 next southbound local. And the reason why I had waited until 886  
5 was clear was so that I had the opportunity to run both the  
6 freight train and 781, should 781 finish with what they were doing  
7 with the police and whatnot at Marble Hill.

8 Q. Okay, great. And, you mentioned radio communication you  
9 had with the CSX train when they got permission and --

10 A. When they initially --

11 Q. -- got lined up, you know, 8:00, 8:10. From that point  
12 until the derailment, did you have any communications with the CSX  
13 train?

14 A. No.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. Once I verified their paperwork, I gave them the signal,  
17 brought them out, and was focusing on other locations and didn't  
18 speak with them until they called -- made the "emergency,  
19 emergency, emergency" call.

20 Q. Okay. Anything stand out in your mind as being in any  
21 way unusual before the derailment, other than the circuit down and  
22 the dog bite?

23 A. No, they came up in good shape between CP-8 and CP-10.  
24 They only had 24 cars total, of the garbage cars. And based on  
25 the timing between the southbound local, I knew I was going to be



1 able to get him out of the bottleneck, which is between CP-10 and  
2 CP-12, so that I can get him through and not interrupt the  
3 northbound or southbounds. I had a window of opportunity to get  
4 all the trains through and get him through at the same time.

5 Q. Okay, good.

6 You mentioned talking to the conductor. Was it the CSX  
7 conductor?

8 A. 2704. Once they had come to a stop, I had asked him to  
9 take a look and see if he can, to see which cars, if any, were on  
10 the ground. When he said he saw cars on the ground, I had asked  
11 him if he can get me the car numbers so I know what the car  
12 numbers were and where they lied [sic] in the train.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. And that's when he began reading off the cars numbers  
15 as, I guess as he was walking alongside.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. And that's when he gave me the car numbers and what was  
18 what.

19 Q. And you somehow marked those down; those are captured  
20 somewhere?

21 A. I checked them. As I was looking through the consist  
22 with the car numbers, I checked off as he read off the car numbers  
23 to which ones were on the ground and which one had lost the  
24 containers.

25 Q. Okay. Is that piece of paper somewhere, we could get a

1 copy?

2 A. When -- last I understand, the chief had asked for it.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. So, I don't know if he still has it or if it's with the  
5 train sheet of that night.

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Freight sheets.

7 MR. LAMPE: The freight sheet?

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah.

9 MR. FLANIGON: Okay. Okay. That's great. I'm going to  
10 ask you just another question, but I want to, before we sort of  
11 leave the incident itself, I want to give Peter a chance to see if  
12 he had any questions to ask you.

13 BY MR. LAPRE:

14 Q. Yes, Peter LaPre. Joseph, you said that 886 had  
15 cleared?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. And that you let Q704 go and Q704 proceeded past CP-10  
18 and then you said he took CP-11?

19 A. Yeah, he went from Track 4 at CP-10, from 4 to 2, and  
20 then from 2 to 2 at CP-11. Once he passed through the block and I  
21 could see that, at least according to indication that I saw on the  
22 board, that he was through CP-10, it was just after that that  
23 781's engineer had reported seeing the sparks and the smoke.

24 Q. But when you say he took CP-11, he showed up on your  
25 board as being in the circuit?

1 A. Right.

2 Q. The front of his train --

3 A. Had gone beyond CP-8 and was on Track 2 between CP-11  
4 and CP-12.

5 Q. So, yeah, the front of the train was in-between 11 and  
6 12.

7 A. Right.

8 Q. Okay. Thank you.

9 A. Because I remembered noting that just because I knew  
10 with 24 cars that he wasn't going to be clear yet, so he couldn't  
11 be asking me if he was clear. And I figured he would know that.  
12 And then when the engineer on 781 had mentioned the sparks and the  
13 smoke, and then I saw the circuit go down and I knew it wasn't  
14 good.

15 Q. Yeah. The conductor reported to you that Track 1 was  
16 blocked?

17 A. That his train was on the ground and that the -- I think  
18 he said the first four cars -- the first cars he saw, he could see  
19 there were four of the cars on the ground. After that, he walked  
20 a little farther, I'm assuming, because he was able to give me car  
21 numbers to tell me what exactly was on the ground, because I was  
22 trying to get an idea so that I could relay the information to the  
23 chief.

24 Q. Okay. Did he say specifically anything about Track 1?

25 A. Once he started relaying car numbers, I had asked him if

1 Track 1 was blocked because of the circuit going down, and that's  
2 when he had told me that there were containers that had come off  
3 the one car. And I had asked him how many containers and he told  
4 me all four containers off the car.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. At that point I asked him if that was the only car that  
7 had containers that had fallen off and he said as far as he could  
8 see, yes, and that one car was leaning but the containers were  
9 still on it.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. And that's what he told me from what he saw.

12 Q. Very good, thank you. Nothing further.

13 MR. FLANIGON: No?

14 MR. LONGOBARDI: Nothing, thank you.

15 MR. FLANIGON: Okay, I'm going to kind of change the  
16 subject here.

17 BY MR. FLANIGON:

18 Q. Can you describe for me how trouble reports that would  
19 come in from trains are handled? I mean, if I'm the engineer and  
20 I say, "Boy, there's really a rough spot at milepost XYZ," what do  
21 you do with that information?

22 A. If we get a report of a rough spot on the tracks, first  
23 thing I make sure I know exactly who I'm talking to, ascertain  
24 specifically which engineer, which train. And then I'll find out  
25 as best I can where exactly he's referring to. Going by at 60

1 miles an hour, for some of the guys it's kind of tough to spot.

2 Q. Um-hum.

3 A. I'll find out where he's talking about, what location,  
4 on what track, and at that point I'll relay this information to  
5 the assistant chief or to the chief, while talking to the next  
6 train behind him to try and get me more exact or more detailed  
7 location as to where this problem is, unless it's something really  
8 bad, at which point we stay off the track.

9 But if we get a report of like a dip in the rail or  
10 something like that, I'll talk to the next train behind them to  
11 try to get an even more exact location as to where the problem is  
12 and then I'll relay the information again to the chief or the  
13 assistant chief so they can start the ball rolling with whatever  
14 needs to be done.

15 Q. Okay. And then wherever it goes from there, that's  
16 beyond you, I guess?

17 A. Well, if once they -- depending on what the problem is,  
18 we'll either be told stay off the track until we can get track  
19 personnel or whomever there to take a look at it, or just put just  
20 locals or whatever to minimize usage of that track so that it  
21 doesn't get it any more abuse than what it already has.  
22 Depending, of course, on what is reported to us.

23 Q. Yeah, okay. Is this your regular shift and regular desk  
24 that you were working that night?

25 A. Second shift is my regular shift and the desk I

1 currently own is the 2P. I was working 2C. I had gotten moved  
2 over -- vacations and whatnot.

3 Q. Yeah, okay. How long had you been working that desk?  
4 Just the one night?

5 A. I had been on the 2C for a couple of nights that week  
6 because of the guy is on vacation.

7 Q. And did you receive any reports of rough track or -- in  
8 the area between CP-10 and CP-11, any -- on 2 track?

9 A. Not that I can recall offhand.

10 Q. Okay. Okay, I think that's it for me?

11 MR. FLANIGON: Anything you've thought of you want to  
12 ask, Peter?

13 MR. LAPRE: Yes. Peter LaPre.

14 BY MR. LAPRE:

15 Q. Can you recall, regardless of whatever territory that  
16 you're working, frequency of reports of rough rides or problems  
17 out on the track? Does that occur very frequent or does it occur  
18 just occasionally?

19 A. Well, with the heat, we've been having a lot of problems  
20 with heat kinks and such. Especially last week, it was very hot  
21 so that was -- seemed to be an issue. And with the heat we also  
22 get problems with insulated joints being, I guess, either  
23 compromised or overrun with the ribbon rail expanding due to the  
24 heat. So those things are a problem that occurs more often in hot  
25 weather than anything else. Other problems, they happen every now

1 and then --

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. -- as the weather and situations change.

4 Q. Okay. Thank you, nothing further.

5 MR. FLANIGON: Okay.

6 MR. LONGOBARDI: I'm good.

7 BY MR. FLANIGON:

8 Q. Okay, one last question. In terms of the operational  
9 plan if there had been no derailment, did I understand it that  
10 both the passenger train that was held at Marble Hill and the CSX  
11 train would have eventually been run up Track 2 on the -- between  
12 CP-10 and CP-11?

13 A. No. The main reason why I waited for to let the Q704 go  
14 until after 886 passed was that with 886 clear of CP-10, Murphy's  
15 Law usually dictates that if I run something and I'm holding a  
16 train, the other train's going to call out "ready" when I'm not  
17 expecting him to. So I planned ahead and waited until 886 cleared  
18 so that should 781 call "ready" before I had planned initially,  
19 that I would be able to run the Q704 from Track 4 to 2 at CP-10  
20 and the 781 from Track 2 to 1 at CP-10 at the same time. That way  
21 I could run them both and not get either one in the other's way.

22 Q. Got it. Okay, understood. Great.

23 MR. FLANIGON: That's it, I want to thank you and I will  
24 turn this off.

25 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

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 Joseph M. Lampe

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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Leigh Dempsey  
Transcriber