

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of:

*

*

CSX EMPLOYEE FATALITY

*

ACCA YARD, RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

*

Docket No.: DCA-15-FR-006

APRIL 1, 2015

*

*

* * * * *

Interview of: JAMES HOBBS

CSX Acca Yard
Richmond, Virginia

Thursday,
April 2, 2015

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice.

BEFORE: MICHAEL FLANIGON
Investigator-in-Charge

APPEARANCES:

MICHAEL FLANIGON, Investigator-in-Charge
National Transportation Safety Board

STEPHEN JENNER, Ph.D., Human Performance Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

GERY WILLIAMS, Vice President - Mechanical
CSX Transportation

DONALD CASHMAN, Operating Practices Inspector
Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)
Richmond, Virginia

SHANE RICHARDSON, Operating Practices Inspector
Federal Railroad Administration
Baltimore, Maryland

LARRY KOSTER, Manager Florence Division
CSX Transportation

DON GRISSOM, General Vice President
Brotherhood Railway Carmen Division

WILLIAM BATES, Lead Investigator
SMART/UTU

TROY BRYANT, Local Chairman
Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen
(Representative on behalf of Mr. Hobbs)

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>I N D E X</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Interview of James Hobbs:		
By Mr. Flanigon		5
By Dr. Jenner		8
By Mr. Williams		12
By Mr. Koster		13
By Mr. Grissom		14

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, with the NTSB. It's April the 2nd. And we're interviewing
4 Mr. James Hobbs, H-o-b-b-s, who is an engineer who was a witness
5 to the incident we're investigating that occurred at Richmond,
6 Virginia on April the 1st about 2:50 in the morning.

7 Before we go around the room and have everybody state
8 and spell their name, I want to make sure that you understand
9 we'll record this interview. I'll provide you with a transcript.
10 You can look at it, tell me if you think it's right, before it
11 goes anywhere else.

12 MR. HOBBS: Okay.

13 MR. FLANIGON: You understand that?

14 MR. HOBBS: I understand.

15 MR. FLANIGON: Okay, good.

16 Well, let's go around the table. I'll ask everyone to
17 state and spell their last name and the organization that they're
18 with. Starting with Troy.

19 MR. BRYANT: Troy Bryant. Last name Bryant,
20 B-r-y-a-n-t, BLET, Local chairman, Richmond, Virginia.

21 DR. JENNER: Stephen Jenner, J-e-n-n-e-r, with the NTSB.

22 MR. CASHMAN: Don Cashman, C-a-s-h-m-a-n, FRA.

23 MR. WILLIAMS: Gery Williams, W-i-l-l-i-a-m-s, VP
24 Mechanical for CSX.

25 MR. KOSTER: Larry Koster, K-o-s-t-e-r, Florence

1 Division.

2 MR. GRISSOM: Don Grissom, G-r-i-s-s-o-m, vice president
3 for the Carman's Union.

4 MR. BATES: William Bates, B-a-t-e-s, SMART/UTU.

5 MR. RICHARDSON: Shane Richardson, R-i-c-h-a-r-d-s-o-n,
6 with the FRA.

7 MR. FLANIGON: Okay.

8 INTERVIEW OF JAMES HOBBS

9 BY MR. FLANIGON:

10 Q. Well, I want to start with a general question, then
11 we'll probably ask you to nail things down a little closer
12 depending on what you tell us. But just generally, if you can
13 kind of walk us through what happened that night; what you saw,
14 what you heard, what --

15 A. All right.

16 Q. Just tell the story in your own words at your own pace.
17 Take your time.

18 A. Well, the carry-all dropped us off, you know, shortly
19 before 3 a.m., and we grabbed our bags and we were heading over to
20 4 main. And you had the Q401 that was on 3 main and they had just
21 started pulling.

22 So we walked over and got between 3 main, and O2 main.
23 There's a little area there that's -- if you look on your maps --

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. -- you'll see there's some space there. And that's

1 where we were; right in there.

2 Q. Okay. I'm going to turn this around so it kind of --
3 I've got the map here, then we'll attach to your transcript. So I
4 don't think the main tracks are on here, but if -- they're just
5 kind of over here, if I'm correct?

6 A. Well, let me see.

7 Q. See, we're over here. Looking down the yard thataway.

8 A. Okay. Here's your 3 track, 2, 1, O2 main, and then you
9 would have 3 main, and 4 main, right?

10 Q. These are not the mains. These are yard track.

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. This is old main -- this is old main 2 --

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. -- track 1, 2, 3, 4.

15 A. Yeah, they call it O2 main here. Well, yeah, you don't
16 have your main line on here.

17 Q. So the main lines --

18 A. I thought I saw another map.

19 Q. Yeah, just draw them in where you think. I put one
20 there.

21 A. Okay.

22 Q. Wherever that would be.

23 A. You got your 3 main here -- well, 4 main. Now 3 main.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. All right. This 2 main is actually kind of straight.

1 But you got an area right in here, in this area here, where you
2 can stand. These are actually side by side.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. And that's where we were at. Right in there.

5 Q. Okay. I'm going to mark that with the X. So that's
6 where you're standing?

7 A. Yeah, just north of this number 1 switch. It goes on
8 up. All right. Now, while we were standing there, we saw the 391
9 job start to come south.

10 Q. That was on 1 track or --

11 A. He was on O2 main.

12 Q. O2 main?

13 A. Right.

14 Q. O2 main.

15 A. Right. He's coming south.

16 So Mr. Davenport saw the first car inspector, Erwin, and
17 yelled to him that the 391 was coming up. And Mr. Erwin had
18 acknowledged us. And as we were standing there we just followed
19 -- the engine passed us. And it was in -- it had to be in notch
20 8, because it was digging, and it's loud.

21 So we just followed it as it went by us. And that's
22 when I picked up Kevin heading for this switch. I probably saw
23 him for a total of 3 seconds. And it was like he never saw the
24 train coming. He just kept heading for the switch.

25 And at that point the engine blocked my view, and I

1 said, man, I hope he got out of the way. Because he had stepped
2 into the gauge and he still had not looked.

3 Q. Yeah.

4 A. He was just heading for that switch. And then when the
5 train went by, you know, we lost view of him.

6 Q. Yeah.

7 A. Had no idea if he made it or not. So at that point, the
8 401 had cleared and we got up on the engine and we saw that the 91
9 job had stopped. I told Mr. Davenport, I said, I don't think he
10 made it. And so that's what we saw.

11 Q. Okay. Have you had any previous interactions with
12 Kevin, the carman?

13 A. I did not know him at all.

14 Q. No? Okay.

15 A. I had never met him.

16 MR. FLANIGON: Okay. I think I don't have much more.
17 Steve?

18 DR. JENNER: Yes.

19 BY DR. JENNER:

20 Q. Steve Jenner, NTSB. The first thing -- just a recap.
21 Mr. Davenport, is that the conductor you were with?

22 A. That was my conductor, yeah.

23 Q. He yelled to Ervin [sic], like a heads up?

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. About where was Ervin at that moment?

1 A. It looked like he had just put the flag up on -- I think
2 he was working 2 track. So he was -- he might have been 50 feet
3 away from us.

4 MR. FLANIGON: So looking at this chart, somewhere --

5 MR. HOBBS: Somewhere right in here.

6 MR. FLANIGON: Okay.

7 MR. HOBBS: Is about where they would put the flag.
8 Just -- it's right around the clearance point.

9 MR. FLANIGON: Put F for flag. Okay.

10 MR. HOBBS: Yeah, and I didn't even see -- we didn't
11 even see Kevin until after the 391 was coming by us. And like I
12 said, we just followed the engine. And that's when I picked up
13 Kevin.

14 MR. FLANIGON: Okay.

15 BY DR. JENNER:

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. So at that point he's like -- he was like 100 feet away
18 from us.

19 Q. I heard you say 50 feet, is it -- what do you think it
20 was?

21 A. I think Erwin was about 50 feet away from us.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. All right. And that switch is probably about 100 feet
24 from where we were standing where Kevin was coming up to it.

25 Q. Okay. So I'm just first referring to Erwin who was 50

1 feet. How many times did you have to -- did Mr. Davenport call
2 out to him, for him?

3 A. It was just the one time.

4 Q. Just the one time?

5 A. Yeah. And we pointed --

6 Q. And he turned and looked at you?

7 A. -- and he acknowledged us.

8 Q. Okay. How loud -- when did you first notice 391 moving?

9 A. As soon as he cranked up on the engines. He was 10, 15
10 car lengths down in the track somewhere -- about that. And you
11 can hear them engines coming. There was no doubt he was coming.

12 Q. So your first indication was auditory?

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. You first heard him?

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. So 10 to 15 car lengths away?

17 A. At least, yeah.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. Yeah. He was down in that track a ways.

20 Q. So you got the impression that Ervin was aware of the
21 situation. And then -- I'm sorry -- who called -- in terms of
22 Kevin, who tried to -- did you try to notify Kevin?

23 A. We didn't see Kevin until the engines had gone by us.
24 And like I said, I turned and followed the engines and then that's
25 when I saw Kevin. And even if you yelled and screamed to him, he

1 never would have heard you over those engines.

2 Q. Okay. All right. Did you see Ervin call out to Kevin?

3 A. The engines were going by us.

4 Q. Oh, okay. So not in your vision?

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. So you don't know what happened after --

7 A. No. No.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. We didn't see point of impact because the engines
10 blocked our view.

11 Q. When you first saw Kevin, where was he? The first time
12 you saw him.

13 A. He was walking up to the switch. He was probably
14 several steps away from the track. And I watched him step over
15 the track and into the gauge.

16 Q. Which track was that?

17 A. That would be right there at the switch at the number --
18 the number 2 switch there going up the lead.

19 Q. Did the way he was moving, was anything unusual about
20 that?

21 A. The only thing I noticed that it was like he was fixated
22 on the switch. That was what he was looking at.

23 Q. Did you see him -- were you in a position to see him
24 turn his head left to right before crossing over the switch --
25 over the track?

1 A. Like I said, I only saw him for less than 3 seconds.
2 From the time I saw him to the time I lost him out of my view.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. And the only thing I saw him look at was that switch.
5 So if he looked before, I have no clue.

6 Q. Okay. So -- okay. Fixated on the switch, and nothing
7 -- in the brief time you saw him, nothing else got his attention
8 as far as you're concerned?

9 A. That's right. Yeah, and you would think that that was
10 weird as loud as those engines were coming down that track.

11 Q. Do you have any idea of, from his vantage point at that
12 moment, could he have seen the train coming or was there another
13 obstruction blocking his view of it?

14 A. There wasn't anything in our way. It was clear. From
15 where we were standing to that switch, there's nothing in the way.

16 Q. From his perspective, from where he was at that time,
17 could he have seen the train at that moment?

18 A. If there's nothing between me and the switch, then
19 there's nothing between him and the switch.

20 Q. Just to be clear.

21 A. Yeah, yeah.

22 DR. JENNER: Okay, thanks for clarifying. Thank you.

23 MR. HOBBS: Okay.

24 MR. CASHMAN: I got nothing.

25 BY MR. WILLIAMS:

1 Q. Gery Williams with just a clarification. You said
2 earlier that the 391 was coming of O2 main.

3 A. O2 main, yeah.

4 Q. That's where you thought it was coming out of, was O2
5 main, versus 1?

6 A. Yeah. There was cars in number 1 track. We were
7 between 3 main and O2 main, and that job was coming out of O2
8 main.

9 BY MR. KOSTER:

10 Q. This is Koster. A statement was made earlier, in one of
11 the earlier interviews, that the locomotives were beginning to
12 stop whenever the yardmaster hollered at him to stop. Did you
13 only hear the locomotives revving as pulling, or did you hear them
14 begin to decelerate or anything?

15 A. I heard, you know, the engines when they went by us, and
16 they -- it looked like they stopped maybe 10 cars past the switch.

17 Q. But you --

18 A. I -- well, we --

19 Q. Your recollection was that they were pulling hard?

20 A. Yeah. When they went by us, yeah.

21 Q. Okay. From where you first seen Kevin, had he looked
22 north and looked south, he would have been -- that locomotive
23 would have been visible to him?

24 A. Yes. Yeah, it --

25 Q. All right.

1 A. It just appeared like he never even knew they were
2 coming. Like I said, I only saw him for a very, very brief time
3 and it was like he never even knew they were there.

4 Q. Had he stopped to look north, how far, in your
5 estimation, could he have seen -- could he have seen that 20 car
6 lengths into that track where they -- because they started about
7 20 car lengths in, according to the RCO operator. Would he have
8 -- from that point that you see him, would he have been able to
9 see that 20 cars had he stopped and looked?

10 A. Well, from the time I saw him to the time he stepped in
11 that gauge, I would say them engines were probably 75, 80 feet
12 from him at that point.

13 Q. So time to get out of the way?

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. Okay. Do you recall if the headlights were on, the bell
16 was ringing? Were the lights flashing, the strobe lights?

17 A. I know the lights were on. I did not hear a bell. And
18 there was nothing -- I don't recall any strobing.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. But the lights were definitely on.

21 MR. KOSTER: Okay. That's all I have.

22 BY MR. GRISSOM:

23 Q. This is Don Grissom. Did you just say when Kevin
24 stepped into the gauge the locomotive was about 80 feet away from
25 him at that time?

1 A. When he was coming up. When I first saw him, the
2 locomotives were probably about 80 feet away from him because they
3 had just passed me. And like I -- I turned to watch the
4 locomotive go by me and that's when I picked him up. So when I
5 saw him -- from the time I saw him and the engines going by me, it
6 was probably 75, 80 feet. And then I watched him step in the
7 gauge. The engines went by me. I lost sight.

8 Q. When he stepped in the gauge, do you know how far the
9 locomotive was away from him at that time?

10 A. Probably less than a car length.

11 Q. At that time -- and that's when you lost vision?

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. Basically when he stepped in --

14 A. Well, when he stepped in, I ended up losing vision. And
15 I turned to Mr. Davenport and I said, I hope he got out of the
16 way.

17 Q. So at that time when you lost vision when he stepped in
18 the gauge was the engine still pulling hard?

19 A. Yeah. It was pulling hard all the way out of there.

20 Q. Do you know where Kevin stepped in the gauge, was the
21 engine pulling hard through that point before it started slowing
22 down?

23 A. It pulled hard all the way through. My guess, is it was
24 pulling hard until someone contacted him.

25 Q. Did you see Kevin park the truck or how he got there

1 or --

2 A. I only saw Kevin those brief few seconds.

3 Q. The first time you seen him --

4 A. That was the first time I saw him.

5 Q. -- was he across the first set of tracks or was he --

6 A. He was stepping up to that -- to go to that number 2
7 switch. That was when I first picked him up. And I seen him lift
8 his leg up and step into the gauge, and then I lost sight of him.

9 MR. GRISSOM: Okay, thank you.

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No questions.

11 MR. FLANIGON: I don't have anything more.

12 Okay, I think we're done. I'm going to turn this off.

13 Thank you very much.

14 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded)

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: CSX EMPLOYEE FATALITY
ACCA YARD, RICHMOND, VIRGINIA
APRIL 1, 2015
Interview of James Hobbs

DOCKET NUMBER: DCA-15-FR-006

PLACE: Richmond, Virginia

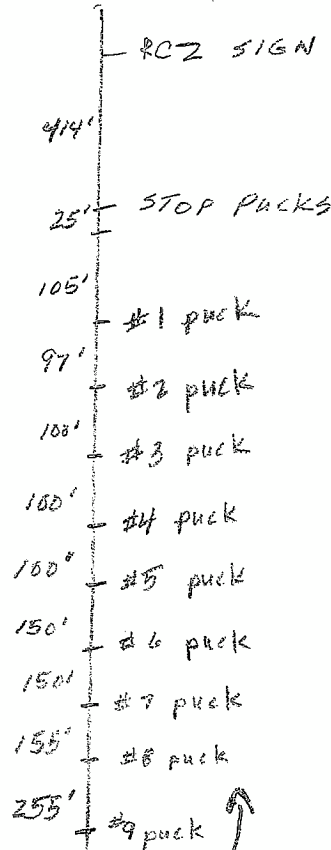
DATE: April 2, 2015

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.

Keith J. Maurer
Transcriber

HOBBS

↑ SOUTH



X - Locomotive Stops

IMPACT TO LOCATION ENGINE
STOPS - 927'

IMPACT TO 1ST PUCK - 2924'

BRIDGE

IMPACT

F = FLAG
X = WHERE
HE WAS
STANDING

↓ NORTH

TRAIL

3

2

3 main

4 main

