

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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DERAILMENT OF CSX TRANSPORTATION  
TRAIN K42911 WITH SUBSEQUENT  
HAZARDOUS MATERIALS RELEASE  
IN DRAFFIN, KENTUCKY,  
ON FEBRUARY 13, 2020

Accident No.: RRD20FR002

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Interview of: BENJAMIN CROSSMAN, Assistant Regional Engineer  
CSX Transportation

Hilton Garden Inn  
Pikeville, Kentucky

Saturday,  
February 15, 2020



## APPEARANCES:

RICHARD HIPSKIND, Track and Engineering Group Chairman  
National Transportation Safety Board

JOE GORDON, Assistant Investigator in Charge  
National Transportation Safety Board

DANIEL WILSON, Track Safety Inspector  
Federal Railroad Association

LOU TOMASSONE, Deputy Regional Administrator  
Federal Railroad Association

GREG MELLISH, Chief Engineer  
CSX Transportation

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I N T E R V I E W

1  
2 MR. HIPSKIND: Good afternoon, everybody. My name is Richard  
3 Hipskind, and I am the Track and Engineering Group Chairman for  
4 NTSB for this accident. We are here today on February 15th, 2020,  
5 at the Hilton Garden Inn in Pikeville, Kentucky, to conduct an  
6 interview with Mr. Benjamin Crossman, who works for CSX  
7 Transportation, or CSX, in their engineering department.

8 This interview is part of NTSB's efforts in conducting a  
9 series of follow-up interviews to understand the track inspection  
10 process and procedures and oversight of environmental risk on  
11 CSX's Kingsport Subdivision. The interview is a routine follow-up  
12 to NTSB's investigation of a collision of CSX Train K42911 with a  
13 mudslide that obstructed the safe passage of the train on February  
14 13th, 2020, at milepost CMG 123.8 on CSX's Kingsport Subdivision  
15 near Draffin, Kentucky in Pike County. The NTSB accident  
16 reference number is RRD20FR002.

17 Before we begin our interview and questions, let's go around  
18 the table and introduce ourselves. Please spell your last name,  
19 and please identify who you are representing and your title. I  
20 would remind everybody to speak clearly and loudly enough so we  
21 can get an accurate recording, and also to respect -- and only one  
22 of us talk a time. I'll lead off and then pass off to my right.

23 Again, my name is Richard Hipskind, spelling of my last name  
24 is H-i-p-s-k-i-n-d. I am the Track and Engineering Group Chairman  
25 for NTSB on this accident.

1 MR. WILSON: Daniel Wilson, W-i-l-s-o-n, I'm the Track  
2 Inspector, FRA, Knoxville.

3 MR. MELLISH: Greg Mellish, M-e-l-l-i-s-h, Chief Engineer,  
4 CSX.

5 MR. GORDON: Joe Gordon, G-o-r-d-o-n, Assistant IIC for the  
6 NTSB.

7 MR. HIPSKIND: And, Mr. Crossman, would you introduce  
8 yourself?

9 MR. CROSSMAN: Benjamin Crossman, C-r-o-s-s-m-a-n, Assistant  
10 Regional Engineer, Southeast Zone, for CSX.

11 MR. HIPSKIND: Okay. And in addition to the interview group,  
12 Lou, would you put yourself on the record?

13 MR. TOMASSONE: Sure. Lou Tomassone, T-o-m-a-s-s-o-n-e,  
14 Deputy Regional Administrator, FRA Region 3.

15 MR. HIPSKIND: And Mr. Tomassone is here posting the  
16 interview group. Okay, thank you, everybody.

17 INTERVIEW OF BENJAMIN CROSSMAN

18 BY MR. HIPSKIND:

19 Q. Mr. Crossman, do we have your permission to record our  
20 discussion, our interview with you today?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. And do you wish to have a representative with you at this  
23 interview?

24 A. No.

25 Q. And, Mr. Crossman, do you mind if we proceed on a first name

1 basis?

2 A. Yes. That's fine.

3 Q. Ben, you've been here, and so you know these first couple of  
4 questions I'm going to ask you. So please give us a kind of a  
5 synopsis of your work experience, railroad-related, and take us up  
6 to your present assignment and let us know how long you've been in  
7 that position.

8 A. Okay. I started with CSX in 2007 October, hired into their  
9 management training program, worked in that program until the --  
10 for 9 months, and then I was placed as an assistant roadmaster in  
11 2008 in August in Worthville, Kentucky, working the LCL line for  
12 15 months. Then I was promoted to roadmaster in 2009 in November  
13 in Danville, Illinois, operating the Woodland and CE&D subs, and  
14 Danville Secondary, and the Decatur sub.

15 Worked that job for 2 years, and then was promoted to  
16 Roadmaster II in Erwin, Tennessee, in 2011, and I had the southern  
17 part of the Kingsport Subdivision and the northern part of the  
18 Blue Ridge Subdivision at this time, and held that roadmaster  
19 position for 8 months until 2012 when I was promoted to Engineer  
20 of Track at the same location, Erwin, Tennessee.

21 And then I had -- as the Engineer of Track, I operated the  
22 Blue Ridge Subdivision, the Kingsport Subdivision up to the Z0,  
23 and then I had the CV Subdivisions as well as the Engineer of  
24 Track. Titles changed also, I think in 2014 to ADEs, assistant  
25 division of engineers, and then I was promoted in 2014 to Division

1 Engineer, Louisville Division, in Cincinnati, Ohio.

2 I operated as the Division Engineer until 2018 when a region  
3 change -- was shifted over to Assistant Regional Engineer for the  
4 northeast region in Richmond, Virginia, where we're -- I'm  
5 currently at right now, which is the southeast zone of the  
6 Northeast Region.

7 Q. All right, Ben, and could you kind of take us through your  
8 duties and responsibilities? Kind of paint the picture of the  
9 territory that comes under your management supervision, and let us  
10 know -- build it out kind of the same way that -- you were here  
11 and listened to Aaron, kind of touch on those same kind of points.

12 A. Okay. So as an Assistant Regional Engineer, in a nutshell,  
13 you're basically managing managers who manage managers who manage  
14 craft employees. So looking at it from that side, you have a --  
15 your section of your territory, which is broken down per director,  
16 who has generally five to six roadmasters underneath that  
17 director. And then those roadmasters each have their men.

18 So from my prospect or aspect of it, my job is to make sure  
19 that my directors are taking care of their perspective territories  
20 and their capital programs. I review their capital programs that  
21 they submit, and then once I look at their stuff, then I go out  
22 and I'll look at the track as well and the stuff that they're  
23 wanting to look at, and then I'll be submitting that as well.

24 So I have overview of the budget for my area, what we're --  
25 making sure that my guys are maintaining their perspective



1 headcounts, their overtime, their TSE budgets, everything  
2 altogether, made -- managing that process. Also keeping an eye on  
3 different aspects of the territory, where we're having production  
4 work, where we're having slow orders, making sure it's -- we're  
5 remediating those things in a timely manner, making sure that the  
6 training is being done -- the directors are making sure their  
7 training's done, so I'll oversee and make sure they're doing that  
8 part of it.

9 Also I high rail my territory mainline portions, generally  
10 once a quarter. I require once a quarter for everything over 25  
11 mile an hour and greater than 10 million gross tons, so I'll get  
12 a -- pretty much that's all of my territory once a quarter. Then  
13 I also have an obligation to ride a train also every 6 -- once  
14 every 6 months over the main line for my territory.

15 Also, with the directors and roadmasters, as we do our  
16 geometry testing and making sure that our Sperry testings are done  
17 accordingly as well. In a nutshell.

18 Q. Okay. So back up just a little bit. And when we talked to  
19 Aaron, he had five roadmasters that he oversees. I'm guessing  
20 that you have X number of --

21 A. I have two directors that fall underneath for my zone.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. And they each have five roadmasters. And then I have one  
24 general roadmaster that works for me as well, and then he'll  
25 bounce between both directors.

1 Q. He's kind of a floater?

2 A. He's -- yeah. He basically assists with all major projects,  
3 capital work, assisting major installations of switches, or  
4 projects, or if I have a roadmaster vacancy due to someone being  
5 promoted or resigning, then he'll fill that vacancy until we get a  
6 new roadmaster in that spot.

7 Q. Okay. And then speak in just kind of general terms. How  
8 many states, how many miles, or how many -- what --

9 A. Roughly --

10 Q. -- percentage of --

11 A. Right.

12 Q. -- CSX do you have?

13 A. I have roughly -- at this time, I have roughly 2,000 miles of  
14 territory, and it encompasses South Carolina, North Carolina, and  
15 Virginia, and West Virginia.

16 Q. Okay. And a guess as to how much of that is Amtrak passenger  
17 route?

18 A. On my line, I would say Amtrak is 80 percent of it for my  
19 territory.

20 Q. Eighty percent of all your --

21 A. Of my territory that I have that I'm responsible for.

22 Q. Operates passenger trains?

23 A. Right. And that's -- like I said, my territory is the  
24 southeast zone, so that covers from Montgomery, West Virginia, to  
25 Newport News, and from Richmond to Florence. Richmond to Florence

1 is a passenger route, Montgomery, West Virginia, to Clifton Forge  
2 is a passenger route, and then from Richmond to Newport is a  
3 passenger route.

4 Q. Okay. You already know what's on my mind, right? I'm  
5 thinking that you do. So I've been dialed in to river grade  
6 railroad like what we see at Kingsport, okay? How much of that  
7 same bluff on one side railroad track and bed, and river on the  
8 other -- how much of that is in the -- should I think of your 80  
9 percent of Amtrak route? Is it like what Aaron said that, that  
10 stuff up around Cincinnati is --

11 A. No. I mean, mine -- for mine from Montgomery, West Virginia,  
12 to Clifton Forge, that section of Amtrak is all river and cliffs  
13 and gorges. And then from Clifton to Richmond, it's -- there's no  
14 Amtrak there, but it follows that same precept. There's no Amtrak  
15 on it; it's still river.

16 And then the Richmond South, that's where you don't have  
17 the -- you've -- you cross a few rivers, but everything is now  
18 moving south, the rivers are going east and west. So you don't  
19 have the cliffs, you've got more tangent track, faster speeds, and  
20 less of the --

21 Q. All right. Well let's focus in a little bit on the area that  
22 you described is Amtrak route and looks -- has the look of bluff,  
23 rocks --

24 A. Okay.

25 Q. -- whatever slopes like the Kingsport Subdivision. What --

1 are you having challenges there that are similar to what we're  
2 dealing with on Kingsport? Or what's going on over there that  
3 should make us feel comfortable? What are you doing different  
4 over there?

5 A. I mean, we're inspecting our tracks, and we're doing our  
6 flood runs, and we do go out and inspect -- whether we have gotten  
7 an alert from the helpdesk or not, we have areas that we do go out  
8 and inspect regardless.

9 Q. Hotspots?

10 A. Hotspots, the -- well not necessarily a hotspot. We have hot  
11 subdivisions. The -- pretty much the whole subdivision we will be  
12 out inspecting if we're -- if we see the forecast that we're going  
13 to have rainfall, just because we fall on the bottom of the  
14 mountains and everything flows down. So we're out there looking  
15 all the time. We -- and whether we get a call or not, we're -- we  
16 have inspectors that are inspecting.

17 Q. Do you -- and I'm -- I know we're here talking about this  
18 accident, but I cannot help but talk about your Amtrak route a  
19 little bit, okay? So are you guys -- how should I understand in a  
20 year's time that you have events over there that are -- that fall  
21 short of obstructing or are obstructing? Kind of give me a  
22 number.

23 A. It varies year to year, but I would say on a wet year like we  
24 currently have, we're probably looking at -- we may have six to  
25 eight times that we're going to be -- that we'll have a slide

1 that's going to impact the track. Or we may have one to two times  
2 where we're actually going to have water -- standing water. We're  
3 trying -- where it's too much water or too short amount of time to  
4 get it to flow out, and it takes a little bit of time for it to  
5 get out in certain one or two spots. Nothing for a whole area,  
6 but --

7 Q. So on the Amtrak route, is it fair to say you haven't seen  
8 anything like what we were out there the other day standing on the  
9 south side of that mudslide?

10 A. Come close. Probably not that much wet slop in one pile. I  
11 mean, we've had some rocks that have been -- that would have  
12 slowed, and we had to get, you know, equipment in there to move  
13 the rocks out. Trees, of course trees all the time. We have  
14 trees fall down every other day.

15 Q. Now some of what you just characterized I want to put in a  
16 category. Let's call them stop short of obstructing the operating  
17 window. Is that mainly what you're characterizing to me?

18 A. No. We're actually -- where you can't run something until  
19 you clear it?

20 Q. Yeah. Let's be clear about that. Is it six to eight times  
21 where there's something you're going to remove it before they run?

22 A. Probably, no. It would be less than that. Six to eight is  
23 going to get you right in there close, you can get by, you can get  
24 them over it. But I would say you're probably looking at five to  
25 six times that we have to actually go out there and clear it ahead

1 of the train.

2 Q. Okay. And I want to be clear about -- how were you out there  
3 and cleared it before the train? What caused you to know about  
4 that? Was it a track inspector out high railing another train?  
5 How should we understand that?

6 A. I would say the -- I would say it's almost a split 50/50  
7 between notified by train and track inspector.

8 Q. And an Amtrak route I'm guessing is probably double main  
9 track?

10 A. The majority of it is double main track.

11 Q. So not unusual for another train --

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. -- to report that?

14 A. To see it, yeah.

15 Q. Yeah, okay. All right. On the Amtrak route, sorry to pin  
16 you down on this, but slide fences or no slide fences?

17 A. There are slide fences on that territory -- those  
18 territories.

19 Q. All right. Same question I asked Aaron. How should I  
20 understand the number of times, say in a year, that a slide fence  
21 is activated by something ongoing?

22 A. Okay. On those that -- since I've had that for the last 2  
23 years, in a year's time, our slide fences have probably been  
24 activated single digits, five or six times, but generally -- and  
25 more of that is due to a tree falling on the fence than it is a

1 rock. I'd say one to two times we've actually had a rock hit the  
2 fence. Majority of the time it's trees that have fallen and hit  
3 the fence.

4 Q. Okay. All right. Anything else you want to say about the  
5 Amtrak route in general?

6 A. Huh-uh.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. Not that I can think of.

9 Q. Do you ever interface with Amtrak employees or managers about  
10 the routes that you have on your territory?

11 A. I've rode with them a couple of times, but no, not to where  
12 they're directly talking to me. Now they have -- like they would  
13 call the roadmaster or they report something that they've seen and  
14 they --

15 Q. Right.

16 A. -- they could report. But no, it wouldn't necessarily come  
17 to me.

18 Q. Okay. When you say that you've rode with them --

19 A. I've rode head-end of Amtrak on --

20 Q. Oh, okay.

21 A. -- a couple of territories.

22 MR. HIPSKIND: Okay. All right. I think that's all I've got  
23 for right now. Let's see what's on Danny's mind.

24 MR. CROSSMAN: Okay.

25 MR. WILSON: I don't have much. Again, he's covered a lot.

1 BY MR. WILSON:

2 Q. But is there any new technology that CSX is working to  
3 address any type of special inspections?

4 A. I mean, other than upgrading ITIS, I don't know of any.  
5 Mr. Mellish might know more, but I don't.

6 Q. Can you -- what -- I've heard a little bit about the -- it's  
7 called Engineering -- My Life Engineering (ph.) is the new ITIS.  
8 Can you tell me about that? Or --

9 A. I just know it's going to be web-based.

10 Q. Web-based?

11 A. So I don't know. I haven't got the down-low on it yet or  
12 anything, so --

13 MR. WILSON: That's it.

14 MR. HIPSKIND: Greg?

15 MR. MELLISH: I don't have any questions.

16 MR. HIPSKIND: Joe?

17 MR. GORDON: Joe Gordon, NTSB.

18 BY MR. GORDON:

19 Q. I'm familiar with a lot of your territory. I've had some of  
20 the same territory both railroad and FRA, so good characterization  
21 there. On the -- some of the questions that Dick was asking about  
22 the Amtrak route in particular, in your time, you know, with your  
23 knowledge of the area that you're assigned now, have you guys had  
24 any incidents where a freight train encountered the -- so you get  
25 a notice of a rockslide or something because a freight train



1 encountered it? Just happened to be a freight train ahead of an  
2 Amtrak scheduled train? Have you run into that?

3 A. I think so. But I've also -- we've also encountered it ahead  
4 of Amtrak. So -- where we, an inspector or a freight train has  
5 seen it or Amtrak has seen and -- ahead of a freight train.

6 Q. Okay. And any instances where you've had a freight train  
7 versus rock incident -- freight train versus slide where the  
8 freight train derailed on an Amtrak route?

9 A. Yes. We had -- well, we had that on the New River. A New  
10 River freight train hit a rockslide and derailed the head of the  
11 lead axle.

12 Q. Okay. And was that on a single main track?

13 A. It was on the double main. It was there in the gorge.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. New River Gorge.

16 Q. Okay. How long ago has that been?

17 A. It was a month, 2 months maybe. I'm not --

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. It was not too long ago.

20 Q. Okay. All right.

21 A. Caught a big -- caught a rock underneath the cowcatcher and  
22 it lifted the front wheel up.

23 Q. Okay. And that's the only incident that you can think of?

24 A. That I'm aware of, yes.

25 Q. Okay. We talked a lot about the AccuWeather reporting system

1 and what kind of triggers the special weather response from  
2 talking to your manager that reports to you. He's not really  
3 involved in that, so I'm assuming you're not involved in the  
4 notification process?

5 A. No. I would see it when I pull up the tickets from the night  
6 before then. I'll see what went out there, then I'll be -- we  
7 have a call every morning and we talk -- go over incidents.

8 Q. Okay. And as far as the criteria that -- so AccuWeather's a  
9 contractor. You know, you guys tell them, this is when we want to  
10 get a notice of, you know, high winds, this is when we want a  
11 notice of rainfall, different criteria, and I'm sure that, you  
12 know, that's part of the contract, is this is what you -- we want  
13 you guys to do for -- or your company to do for us. Do you know  
14 who sets that criteria?

15 A. No, I do not.

16 Q. Okay. Yeah, that's not something that you have a hand in?

17 A. No. Not that I'm aware of. I mean, I'll -- we get -- their  
18 overview will get sent out, and we'll look at it. And of course,  
19 we're -- you know, that gives you one picture, but you know, what  
20 really helps to drill down -- and when we talked amongst -- for  
21 our part of the region, the weather is so different from one end  
22 of it to another. You know, when you're in West Virginia compared  
23 to being in South Carolina, you know, you've got to get the eyes  
24 on there and say, okay, what are you dealing with here, and what  
25 are you dealing -- and what's your local weather saying you're

1 going to be dealing with the next few days? So that's kind of how  
2 we round it out to make sure we've got a better picture.

3 Q. Okay. And with all of the -- you, you've got a lot of  
4 territory. With all of the territory that you've got, when you  
5 got notified of this incident, were you surprised that you had an  
6 event of that magnitude in that area?

7 A. I was. I mean, this territory, I had this territory as a  
8 division engineer a couple of years ago, so I'd high railed this  
9 regularly at, you know, during that timeframe. And so when I got  
10 notified at Kingsport of the CMG side, I was surprised, because I  
11 don't recall ever having issues there.

12 My issues are always down between Elkhorn City and Dant or  
13 from Dant to Saint Paul or down around -- down on the mountain to  
14 the Blue Ridge. So those are the parts I remember of the  
15 Clinchfield, so when I got told Kingsport up here, I was a little  
16 shocked and -- when we asked me to come over. But --

17 Q. Right. I believe that's -- well, one more question. Do you  
18 report directly to Mr. Mellish?

19 A. No. I used to. Now there's -- Mr. Daniels is between me and  
20 Mr. Mellish.

21 Q. Okay. Randy Daniels?

22 A. Um-hmm.

23 MR. GORDON: Okay. All right. Thank you.

24 MR. HIPSKIND: That's it, Joe? All right. You still good to  
25 go?

1 MR. CROSSMAN: I'm good.

2 MR. HIPSKIND: Okay. We're in the homestretch here.

3 MR. WILSON: Can I take a bathroom break?

4 MR. HIPSKIND: So --

5 MR. WILSON: Oh, go ahead. I'm sorry.

6 MR. HIPSKIND: No, we can take a timeout if you want to.

7 MR. WILSON: No, I'm good for -- until you finish with him.

8 I thought you were done with him.

9 MR. HIPSKIND: Oh, no. Not quite yet. But we're going to  
10 get there.

11 BY MR. HIPSKIND:

12 Q. So do you know if CSX -- I hear you keep talking about  
13 tickets. And I took -- I take that to be a significant event  
14 that's happened someplace that somebody might enter into a  
15 database. If there was an incident of an obstruction of the track  
16 or something came down, it was a fall short, it was in the ditch  
17 line, but -- would any of that be tracked?

18 A. It --

19 Q. Is that something that we could ask about?

20 A. For those TCIS tickets, it could or could not get put in  
21 there depending on who reported it. Most of the time, you're  
22 going to get vehicles on the track on that, track lights on that,  
23 flood warnings would be on that, but not necessarily trees falling  
24 or rocks. If it doesn't impact the flow of traffic, it would not  
25 make it on there.

1 Q. Okay. But the blockages? And I -- we've talked about this  
2 tree thing before, and I'm not so sure that, that's where we want  
3 to go. Our focus is on rock falls, mudslides, things of that  
4 nature. Is it true that there would be some numbers on those  
5 where there's been actual blockages -- interruption of service?

6 A. Yeah. If -- I know they would be listed on the -- if a train  
7 is impacted at any kind of slide and had any kind of damage, then  
8 yes. Because it would have entered into the system, because  
9 they've got to fix the damage. Other than that, there may be  
10 where it was called in saying that there was a slide or -- close  
11 to the track, and we have to go inspect it. You might see  
12 something on the state of the railroad list they put out. But  
13 other than that, I don't know.

14 Q. Okay. Well the whole thing here, and maybe we haven't  
15 mentioned it enough, is safety. Employee safety, train crew  
16 safety, public safety where we've got Amtrak routes. So if we  
17 want to ensure that, that's at a high level, maybe I should  
18 introduce this.

19 How should I understand how you think about risk  
20 identification? And I do want to keep it to bluffs, slopes,  
21 mudslides, rock falls. Where you've had events, I think in  
22 general, you've put up some kind of a slide fencing, or where  
23 you've probably had events, you've gone in and worked up away from  
24 the track to remove any loose rock or vegetation, or put a bench  
25 shelf in there or something like that. I get all of that.

1           But what do you think about risk identification where you  
2 don't know it's going to happen to you? Is this an impossible  
3 conundrum?

4 A.   Well, I know -- well, I can look back, and just from the past  
5 several years, I mean we brought out -- I know in some of the  
6 territories I've had, we brought out contractors to do slope  
7 assessment and drainage issues for the slopes and to give us an  
8 idea, when can you tell us this slope is going to fall? Or when  
9 is this rock going to fall?

10           And a lot of times the answers would come back, it could fall  
11 tomorrow or it could fall in 100 years. So it's kind of hard to  
12 go out there and say, what do I do about this rock that may never  
13 fall or may fall tonight? So it's kind of hard to come out with  
14 an assessment that way when you get people that are experts in  
15 that telling you that kind of timeframe.

16           But, you know, you can't -- you know, we go out and we try to  
17 do our best to clean back ditches where you have a -- generally  
18 when you have the slide in one area, and you -- that's just like  
19 it. When you put that slide fence back up, you may never have  
20 another thing fall there but a tree because it's gone. It's  
21 already fell.

22 Q.   It's spent.

23 A.   So it's -- yeah, it's empty. And to be able to identify that  
24 is kind of a challenge. I mean, you may be able to go to a top of  
25 a ridge and see where you're getting a fall -- a crack, but

1 without that being on that property, it's not -- you know, you're  
2 trespassing on someone else's property generally when you're  
3 trying to look for that kind of stuff.

4       So it's kind of a hard thing to do, I mean, other than being  
5 able to go down your right of way and look at your right of way  
6 and see if you can see any telltale signs to be able to put out a  
7 message for a lookout, or get a ditcher in there to start working  
8 to clean up an area or to cut back an area to make it a little bit  
9 deeper or further away from the track.

10 Q. Well, Ben, let me -- and I appreciate the detail of that  
11 answer. Is -- should I think about the territory that you're  
12 responsible for, do you have people out there doing some  
13 mitigating type work at maybe some suspect areas for rock falls  
14 and mudslides?

15 A. I don't --

16 Q. Is that something that's ongoing this year?

17 A. I've had it -- I -- no. I don't have anything currently.  
18 But I have in the past. We have done that in the past. Different  
19 territories. But I haven't -- the territory I currently have, I  
20 do not have other than our normal ditching work. We do have  
21 ditchers spaced at territories that have -- are prone to have  
22 issues such as areas like the New River Gorge. But, you know,  
23 there's -- we do have guys that operate that type of equipment on  
24 a daily regular basis.

25 Q. But -- and you can tell me if I'm wrong, but when I hear

1 ditching, I'm thinking down below the ballast line, and I'm  
2 thinking drainage and water flow.

3 A. Well we're -- well mostly with this kind, what I'm talking  
4 about is having the ditcher -- of course he's only got so far a  
5 reach while he's on the track. But it's not just the ditch  
6 itself, but it's also the bank, the side of the bank, and then  
7 water flow, making sure that, you know, you don't have extra  
8 things that are falling in that bank -- the ditch bank.

9 Q. Is some of what you're doing there to increase the capacity  
10 in case there's a mud -- a lack of reservoir --

11 A. Some locations, yeah.

12 Q. -- type thing?

13 A. Right. Some places you have a lot of shell, so you're going  
14 to have stuff cracking and cracking off on a regular basis. So he  
15 has to clean that up and get it farther back away so if it does,  
16 it's not going to impact the right of way.

17 Q. Okay. Do you have any spots right now that you're worried  
18 about or losing sleep over?

19 A. I'm not losing sleep over. We have spots that we're always  
20 ditching and cleaning.

21 Q. Okay. Do you think that the people down below you, the  
22 Directors of Track and the roadmasters, are they pretty much on  
23 the same page with you when it comes to this short list or however  
24 long the list is in terms of hotspots? Everybody knows where to  
25 go --



1 A. Yeah, absolutely.

2 Q. -- during rain events and all of that?

3 A. Absolutely. They're -- because that's how they sleep at  
4 night was in making sure their territories are good. And the ones  
5 that have been there have all been in there -- with the exception  
6 I think of one territory I have, the roadmasters have all been  
7 there for a couple of years plus. So they all are aware. And  
8 their track inspectors are -- all have been there several years,  
9 so they're all familiar with their spots that they keep an eye on.

10 MR. HIPSKIND: Okay. That's all I've got. Gentleman, any  
11 other additional questions?

12 MR. WILSON: Daniel Wilson, FRA. What's the -- what's your  
13 Amtrak timetable speed in your territory?

14 MR. CROSSMAN: Well for Richmond South it's 79 for the  
15 majority of it. Going west, Clifton I think it's 60 for the most  
16 of the way to the Kanawha. And I'm not sure once you get to  
17 Russell. I think to Cincinnati and stuff, I used to have that, I  
18 think it's 70, I think, if I remember right going to Cincinnati,  
19 but I don't have that anymore.

20 MR. WILSON: That's it for me.

21 MR. HIPSKIND: Greg? Joe? Anything?

22 MR. MELLISH: I don't have any questions, no.

23 MR. HIPSKIND: All right. Well, Ben, with your permission --  
24 oh, keep those on for right now. Let me do the closeout things.  
25 Is there anything that you'd like to add or change on the

1 discussion we had --

2 MR. CROSSMAN: No.

3 MR. HIPSKIND: -- today? Are there any questions we should  
4 have asked or topics to cover that we did not?

5 MR. CROSSMAN: Not that I'm aware of.

6 MR. HIPSKIND: Okay. And do you have any suggestions for  
7 preventing a reoccurrence? And I'm talking specifically about  
8 mudslides like what we're dealing with out at 123.8. Come on,  
9 Ben, what's the answer?

10 MR. CROSSMAN: Buy all of the mountains. No. I mean,  
11 it's -- I mean, really with the water and nature, it's kind of  
12 hard to forecast where something's going to happen --

13 MR. HIPSKIND: When it hasn't happened there before.

14 MR. CROSSMAN: -- when it hasn't happened before. And even  
15 once it's done -- happened, and then, you know, you're playing  
16 cleanup anyways. But putting the pipe in generally, because if  
17 you look at that spot, you got two grooves over here, you got a  
18 pipe that's there, now we have a new groove, and then we're going  
19 to be putting in a new pipe. So if it wasn't there before, now it  
20 is.

21 MR. HIPSKIND: Okay. And is there anyone else that you think  
22 we should interview other than who we've interviewed? And you  
23 know we're going to talk to Greg here in a little bit.

24 MR. CROSSMAN: No.

25 MR. HIPSKIND: All right. With that --

1 MR. GORDON: I've got one more question.

2 MR. HIPSKIND: Joe.

3 MR. GORDON: You --

4 MR. HIPSKIND: You're coming in under -- just under the wire.

5 MR. GORDON: Just under the wire.

6 MR. HIPSKIND: Go ahead.

7 MR. GORDON: Joe Gordon, NTSB. Do you know of any technology  
8 that CSX may be looking at as far as sensing any type of abrupt  
9 shift or impact to the track?

10 MR. CROSSMAN: I don't know of any.

11 MR. GORDON: You don't know of anything right now? All  
12 right. That's all I've got.

13 MR. HIPSKIND: Ben, you did a fine job. Thank you for  
14 everything, and thank you for being part of the group and  
15 supporting our effort here.

16 (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:                    DERAILMENT OF CSX TRANSPORTATION  
   TRAIN K42911 WITH SUBSEQUENT  
   HAZARDOUS MATERIALS RELEASE  
   IN DRAFFIN, KENTUCKY,  
   ON FEBRUARY 13, 2020  
   Interview of Benjamin Crossman

ACCIDENT NO.:                        RRD20FR002

PLACE:                                 Pikeville, Kentucky

DATE:                                  February 15, 2020

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.

A black rectangular redaction box covers the signature of Christy Wilson. Above the box, there is a faint, handwritten signature in purple ink.

Christy Wilson  
Transcriber