

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

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AMTRAK WORKER FATALITY *

BOWIE, MARYLAND * Accident No.: RRD18FR006

APRIL 24, 2018 *

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Interview of: CRAIG WILSON

Bowie, Maryland

Wednesday,
April 25, 2018

APPEARANCES:

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I N T E R V I E W

1
2 MR. PAYAN: All right. My name is Ruben Payan. I'm an
3 investigator with the National Transportation Safety Board. Today
4 is April 25, 2018. We are at Bowie, Maryland interviewing the
5 train engineer, Amtrak train engineer, in connection with an
6 accident that occurred at milepost 119.2 on April 24, 2018. The
7 NTSB accident number is RRD18FR006.

8 This interview is being recorded. It will be transcribed at
9 a later date, and a copy will be provided to the train engineer
10 for review.

11 I'm going to go around the room and have everybody introduce
12 themselves. Again, my name is Ruben Payan, P-A-Y-A-N.

13 DR. HOEPF: Mike Hoepf, H-O-E-P-F, with the NTSB.

14 MR. PAYAN: (Indiscernible).

15 MR. BULL: Mike Bull, B-U-L-L, OP inspector with the FRA.

16 MR. HURLEY: Jim Hurley, H-U-R-L-E-Y, FRA.

17 MR. HINES: Jonathan Hines, H-I-N-E-S, with Amtrak.

18 MR. STEARN: Steve Stearn, S-T-E-A-R-N, with the Brotherhood
19 of Maintenance of Way Employees.

20 MR. FIELDS: Carl Fields, F-I-E-L-D-S, Brotherhood of
21 Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen.

22 MR. PAYAN: All right.

INTERVIEW OF CRAIG WILSON

23 BY MR. PAYAN:

24 Q. Well, Craig, thank you for coming in for this interview. We
25

1 appreciate it. I know it's not easy. I'd like to get started
2 with just -- if you could kind of walk us through your day, from
3 the time you got up and you got ready for work. And if you can
4 kind of walk us through the day, and insert some times as best as
5 you can.

6 A. Okay. My alarm goes off at 5 o'clock. Get up, go to the
7 bathroom, shower, do what you got to do. Start my truck up about
8 5:35, go out to it about 5:45, go catch the MARC train 407. Stops
9 at Odenton.

10 At 6:24, except for this day, I went to BWI, and started
11 unordinary right there by doing that. But I just -- that day
12 didn't feel right. So I caught 407 there, and that was at 6:16.
13 Got to DC about 6:55, went upstairs to my locker. Came back
14 downstairs. We signed up at 7:45. We met the crew, we talked,
15 you know, we joked. Did our job briefing, talked about the
16 restrictions. And I remember asking -- Fabian Percher (ph.) was
17 the conductor -- several times about the (indiscernible) he told
18 me at briefing. I was like, they're still out there. There's no
19 nothing. He's like, no, okay. No (indiscernible).

20 Went down to the -- waited for the train to come in. Comes
21 in from Richmond. And the day before, that started out at DC
22 because they were doing track work, so -- hey, man, where are we
23 starting out today? You know, it's coming up from Richmond.
24 Okay. I said, by the way, yesterday I pulled off half a car at
25 New Carrollton. Do you want to just -- can you just take the

1 motor off, leave the front door? Okay, cool. He said, on the way
2 back stop by the steps so that, you know, when people get off, it
3 doesn't bunch the people up at the steps. So the ones that's
4 coming from the rear of the train, people get off right there. So
5 I said, okay, I can do that. So that was the extent of our
6 briefing.

7 We leave right on time by 8:40. Stop at New Carrollton.
8 Stop where he wanted me to stop. Normal thing. Wait a couple
9 minutes. Two to go. Crossed on over to 1 track because 2 track
10 -- because it was out of service from Bowie to Grove (ph.), but
11 they just cross you over there at Carroll (ph.) because it's an
12 easier move, because you're gaining speed anyway. It's a 45
13 turnaround. And I'm running, whatever. I said, well, you know --
14 so I take my breakfast out of my grip, put it on the dash. I had
15 my stuff out there, whatever, because I normally do eat my
16 breakfast on the motor. I'm running. I see that big W boards
17 about Bowie, about (indiscernible) north. The big orange boards.
18 So blow long, blow short.

19 I see the first watchman up there by the south end of the
20 station, and I believe there was one on the station. So I start
21 doing my toot-toot, toot-toot, toot-toot. Go around the curve.
22 Guy's up there. So I start blowing my horn some more. And there
23 were people working. Because they're doing tie plates, this --
24 you know, those big (indiscernible) these little green pieces in
25 the track and stuff. And there were people by there. I'm like --

1 and I could see a MARC train coming down south on 3. And he's got
2 the W board up, and he's facing away from me. And he's straddling
3 the gauge.

4 So start blowing the horn again and, if I remember correctly,
5 started reaching for the brake a little more. And I wasn't doing
6 what I could have been doing. There's a 105 curve there. And I
7 started slowing down. Because I get a little antsy around those
8 guys anyway, because I've complained for years that they don't pay
9 attention. And I've had FRA guys riding me to watch them since
10 '89's accident.

11 And he -- you get to that point where you know he's not going
12 to move and it's going to happen. And it starts to slow down.
13 And then -- you know. You dump the train. You do your emergency
14 transmission. And there was a lot of radio chatter. And
15 dispatcher didn't quite understand what I was saying. I was like
16 -- because I believe I said, I hit someone. Because I was shook
17 up. And then I stopped and I said it again. And I said, I hit a
18 track worker. I just said Bowie station. I didn't give the exact
19 mile post, but everybody in the area knows the mile post for Bowie
20 station.

21 And then he kept calling, and I finally -- I pushed the radio
22 button. I was like, just give me a moment. Like, I couldn't
23 talk. And then you start hearing people chatter on the radio,
24 like, yeah, it's back here. And then the conductor started
25 talking to me, and here we are. You know, the rest of the stuff

1 was them trying to find the body or -- didn't know if he was
2 actually dead, whether he was severely hurt. Found the body.
3 Trying to get trains stopped in the area. Couple of the track
4 workers walked up to the motor. You okay, man? You okay, man?
5 No, I'm not okay. I'm still not okay. And they were -- it's not
6 your fault. Someone's dead. And then I looked out. His vest was
7 on the front of the motor. And I had to go back in the motor
8 there. I had to go back, I -- so that's where we are.

9 And you know, it's coworkers. Not like hitting a civilian.
10 I've had other situations, but whether you knew him or not, he's
11 still your coworker, you know? He's part of the family, whatever
12 you want to say. And unfortunately, I had saw something about
13 this on the news or Facebook or whatever it was. And I found it
14 was a kid. My daughter's 25. Just moved up with me from Florida.
15 Five years older than this guy. And you just (indiscernible)
16 like, what the hell was he doing there? Who was watching him?
17 Who trained him? You know --

18 Q. Thank you. Have you gone through this area before?

19 A. Go through every day, five days a week.

20 Q. And then -- with work crews out there?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. With that work crew?

23 A. All the way up and down the line, you have work crews. That
24 work that they were doing had been going on probably about two,
25 two and a half months.

1 Q. Through that area?

2 A. First they had the undercutter. Then they had these guys put
3 these tie plates in. And there were -- when the undercutter was
4 there, there's 80-mile-an-hour speed limits on your TSRBs. Once
5 they move the undercutter, they moved the mile post with your TSRB
6 under 80. So wherever he's at is protected by 80s.

7 But even with the 80 -- it wasn't one that day, but he would
8 have got hit whether it was 80 or not. Because he wasn't paying
9 attention. And it was frustrating for me, because the guy who was
10 in charge protecting those guys was the one who got hit. You
11 know.

12 Q. Yeah. I understand. What's the -- what's your operating
13 practice when you, when you -- once you see the orange W?

14 A. You have to blow a long and a short, and then a periodic doo-
15 doo. Two quick ones in succession. That is --

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Blast, yeah.

17 MR. WILSON: Yeah. I couldn't word it right, but it's two
18 quick ones --

19 MR. PAYAN: Sure. No, no. Okay.

20 MR. WILSON: As you see people. Just as you go through the
21 area.

22 MR. PAYAN: Okay.

23 BY MR. PAYAN:

24 Q. So you're blowing the whole way through --

25 A. Yes. That's what you're supposed to do till you clear the

1 men. I do it all the way till I'm clear, because there's W men
2 before and after for trains coming in the opposite direction. So
3 I blow till I clear all that.

4 Q. I see. Okay. And from your memory from going through here
5 with the, with the work crew, does the number of watchmen change?

6 A. No, it's usually -- they start proceeding where the men are.
7 So it's usually four to five, I would say. You know, you pass
8 this guy. And they have the little airhorn things that they start
9 blowing as a train comes, and they each progressively start
10 blowing till, I guess, they're all blowing. And then there's some
11 live actual workers, and then you pass that, and there's no more
12 -- there are usually no more on that track, but they're over there
13 for -- you know, if it's another track, it'll be (indiscernible)
14 coming up or (indiscernible) or whatever. Train (indiscernible).

15 Q. And what's the, and what's the usual reaction from the
16 watchmen when they see you? Do they look at you or --

17 A. Usually, they have their sign up. They're off to the side,
18 particularly if there's a cat pole there. They tend to be around
19 that, so I guess if the train kicks something off or a rock comes
20 up, they kind of have some protection. But usually they're out
21 there. They got the horn. They'll give you -- you know, they'll
22 wave at you or do something to let you know they see you. They'll
23 move the whistle board to let you know that they acknowledge your
24 presence, you know.

25 Q. Do all of them do that or just -- is that --

1 A. Most of them.

2 Q. Most of them?

3 A. Most of them.

4 Q. Okay.

5 MR. PAYAN: All right. Well, thank you. I'm going to go
6 around the room and have people ask questions. FRA?

7 MR. BULL: I don't have any. I'm going to pass this
8 timeframe. Thank you.

9 MR. PAYAN: Sure.

10 MR. BULL: I might catch something on the way back. Thank
11 you.

12 MR. PAYAN: Amtrak?

13 MR. HURLEY: Well, I got --

14 BY MR. HURLEY:

15 Q. Did you -- going through there prior, have you ever known --
16 noticed issues at that site where the watchmen --

17 A. On that particular site?

18 Q. Yes.

19 A. I can't say yeah, but I cannot say no, because I know how
20 they are. I've had -- there's nothing glaring where I could just
21 say, well, this day, this guy wasn't doing that. You know, where
22 that site was, once you pass the station, there's a little bit of
23 ballast, and then it kind of drops off to, like, a little gully,
24 then you got the campus over there. Bowie State. So I know
25 they're trying to be careful of their footing and everything else.

1 So if they look at me and then kind of look down, whatever, maybe
2 try to back away from the track if they were -- felt they were
3 close, whatever, then that might seem like they're not paying
4 attention, but really they know I'm there. But other than that,
5 no, I don't have anything glaring that I could say in the past
6 they've done that.

7 Q. And at that location.

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. Okay. Thanks.

10 A. You know, the biggest problem area with that is -- that I
11 have complained about was between Ham (ph.) and County on the New
12 York division where they're doing the high speed project. Those
13 guys are very lax. Very lax. Every day, you go through an area
14 and it's bad.

15 MR. PAYAN: Is that all you --

16 MR. HURLEY: Yeah. (Indiscernible).

17 MR. PAYAN: Okay. Amtrak?

18 MR. HINES: Yeah, Jon Hines, Amtrak.

19 BY MR. HINES:

20 Q. Craig, thank you for being here today. I appreciate it. I
21 know we had you out there a little bit yesterday, so I apologize
22 for your -- I mean, I apologize for that and appreciate your
23 patience.

24 So approaching the incident scene, you said there was a,
25 there was a (indiscernible) watchman at the station on the

1 platform?

2 A. He was either on -- I believe, and the film would show from
3 the head end, that there was one before the station. There was
4 one standing on the platform. And then there was one -- either
5 another one or that gentleman just proceeding at north. So he was
6 either the third or the fourth guy. He was not the first
7 watchman.

8 Q. Right. And the first watchman, do you remember or recall if
9 he acknowledged when you blew the horn or when you were
10 approaching?

11 A. Yeah, he acknowledged.

12 Q. And do you, do you recall how fast the train was traveling at
13 the time, and what is the track speed on --

14 A. I had got down for the 105 curve to Bowie. And as I went on
15 the curve, I probably was doing 100, 101. I know I wasn't doing
16 -- because I was starting to get ready -- because as you go down
17 that hill, there's a 95 curve up there. So I was just letting it
18 work its way down with a little -- probably minimal reduction on
19 the whatever. And just let it work its way down.

20 Usually, like I said, I tend to go through those guys slower
21 than normal, because I've had previous -- not scares, but you get
22 a little antsy. Because it's tight there. It's in the curve.
23 It's tight. And they don't have a lot of side there to be. So
24 they're usually -- if they're working on track 2, they're all on
25 track 2. You know, they stand in the middle of the gauge in track

1 2 because trains are going either way. I couldn't do that.
2 They're better men than me.

3 But you know, so the guy acknowledged me. I believe the
4 platform guy did. And you know, it's a curve there. The platform
5 itself is curved. So as I come around the curve and you -- that's
6 when I saw him. At first, I wouldn't have seen him until I got
7 till at least the station. And you know, from the first vantage
8 point, you're like, is he -- you know, you're, okay, whatever.
9 And then you realize he's straddling the rail. You know, and you
10 start trying -- you start thinking, maybe I should (indiscernible)
11 blowing the horn. And I mean, I don't know did he have headphones
12 on. I don't know. Like, the hearing protection that muffles -- I
13 don't -- like they have on the runway. I don't know if he had
14 those on. I just know he wasn't facing the movement coming, you
15 know. And there are other guys there, so I don't understand why
16 they didn't (indiscernible). Train coming.

17 The LEDs on the ACSes are very bright. You can't miss them.
18 And they reflect off of everything. So if he was that focused on
19 the MARC train -- but he was protecting 1 track side. He
20 shouldn't have been as focused on 3 track side, where the MARC
21 train was. That's my personal opinion.

22 Q. Sure. Thank you. When you first noticed that the employee
23 was in the (indiscernible), how far in advance do you think, in
24 your best guess, that he was away from the train when you, when
25 you could clearly see?

1 A. When I first saw him? Like, how many car lengths would I
2 say?

3 Q. Yeah. In car lengths is good (indiscernible).

4 A. Maybe two, Jon. Maybe two. But at 100 miles an hour, two
5 car lengths go --

6 Q. Quick.

7 A. Yeah.

8 MR. HINES: Okay. All right. Thank you, that's all I have.

9 MR. WILSON: Yeah.

10 MR. HINES: Yeah.

11 MR. PAYAN: All right, thank you. BMWED?

12 MR. STEARN: Thank you. Steve Stearn, Maintenance of Way
13 group. Thank you for coming in.

14 BY MR. STEARN:

15 Q. Was this your first trip for the day, or were you working --

16 A. Yes, I was heading to New York.

17 Q. And then you would have worked back?

18 A. Yeah, I would go up on Train 86 and come back on Train 85.

19 Q. Did you work the day before?

20 A. Yes, I did. Train 86, Train 85.

21 Q. Same, same.

22 A. Yeah, we had just had what they call optionals, and I had got
23 displaced by a different engineer who wanted the job I had been on
24 for months. So I bumped onto this one. I bumped another junior
25 person. And so I worked the trains before, 86 and 85. So I

1 bumped on this. It conveniently works for my schedule. This is a
2 -- just a half-hour later sign-up, half-hour later getting on.
3 Still get my gym time in, so it works for me and the family.

4 Q. Between trips, how much time do you spend, you know,
5 (indiscernible)?

6 A. Between trips, or you mean --

7 Q. How much time a day does it take you to get in these two
8 trips?

9 A. Well, you sign up at 7:45 --

10 MR. WILSON: Bless you.

11 MR. PAYAN: Thank you.

12 MR. WILSON: And we due back on 86 about -- I mean 85 about
13 6:20, 6:25. And we get to New York about 12:10. Sign back up
14 2:20, 2:25, leave at 3:05.

15 BY MR. STEARN:

16 Q. How many cars did you have?

17 A. Eight. One motor, I believe, was a 625. Or a 629. It was
18 one of those two.

19 Q. Six twenty-five. I'm sorry. Two engines or --

20 A. No, just -- I couldn't remember if it was a 625 or it was a
21 629, but it was just one motor.

22 Q. That was the motor, 625?

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. Yeah, I'm so sorry for your involvement. We can't see you.
25 We can see the train; we can't see you. So we don't know if

1 you're waving or acknowledging us in any way.

2 MR. PAYAN: Thank you. BLET?

3 MR. FIELDS: No. No, thank you. Not at this time.

4 MR. PAYAN: Okay. Mike?

5 DR. HOEPF: Thanks.

6 BY DR. HOEPF:

7 Q. Yeah, I'm -- can we just talk a little bit more on just
8 general terms? You know, you talked about going by, and there's
9 sort of, like, a progression of watchmen as they, you know, blow
10 their horns and everything. So you said they're usually standing
11 by the cat poles.

12 A. If there's one in the area, they tend to stand by them. And
13 I would imagine it's because if a rock flies up or something, they
14 have some type of shielding from it. So if not, then they're
15 standing out in the open, but they're off to the side, but enough
16 where you could see the sign -- you know, when they raise their
17 giant W round board that you could see it, you know.

18 Q. I'm just, I'm just wondering, like, if you -- do you ever see
19 anybody, you know, standing on the track or -- I mean, is that --
20 was that, you know, the first time that you've seen somebody
21 standing on the track as you're coming around?

22 A. Here's the thing. Excuse me. If the track next to the track
23 I'm on is out of service, they may be on that. And I say that
24 because, on the New York side between County and Ham, one track's
25 out of service. So if there's guys working on 3 track

1 (indiscernible) doing something and you're running on 2, they're
2 going to be sitting on 1 or to the side. But they may be in the
3 track, because the track's outside of service by Form D in the
4 written instruction. So they know they have -- they're protected.

5 So this area, no. Because 2 track's out. This is in the
6 middle. And if they're just standing in the middle with the W
7 board, they may not be seen by everybody. So they're -- on the 3
8 track side, there's an access road. So there's plenty of room for
9 that. This particular area, it's real tight. Like I said, you
10 got maybe a couple feet. You know, the ballast slopes down, then
11 you got a couple feet of ground, then it slopes down to a gully.
12 Then you have the parking lot for Bowie State, the college, and
13 this picnic area and stuff like that.

14 Q. Right, right.

15 A. So there's not a lot of room for them to finagle. It's a bad
16 spot, really, in my personal opinion, but if you got to do the
17 work, you got to do the work.

18 Q. I got you. So it's kind of just a -- not a lot of good
19 options in terms of places to stand in that particular --

20 A. Yeah, yeah.

21 Q. -- spot.

22 A. But obviously, standing on the -- in the -- you know,
23 straddling the rail is a no-no. It's not --

24 Q. Yeah.

25 A. -- you know.

1 Q. I mean, you know, like, if you were a watchman, you know,
2 where would -- where do you think you would have been standing if
3 you were, you know, tasked with -- I mean, I know it's not your
4 job, but I'm just saying. Was there, was there somewhere you
5 could see from --

6 A. Well, I can tell you I wouldn't, I wouldn't be straddling the
7 track.

8 Q. Yeah. Well, yeah. Certainly.

9 A. But you know, I don't know. Because it's not just in my --
10 how I'm feeling. He wasn't there by himself. There were other
11 people over there. There were guys that were still working, you
12 know, on 2 track. People saw this beside -- you know, they
13 witnessed this, the track workers. You know, so nobody -- hey,
14 man, get out of the way. You know, run up there and pull him. Do
15 something. You know, even if you all fell down into the gulley,
16 you all would have just got scraped up, not killed.

17 Q. Right. I mean, so as you're driving up, I mean, do you, do
18 you recall what you saw? I mean, you said there was a bunch of
19 guys on 2 track?

20 A. Yeah, they're doing -- since their undercutter left, they're
21 doing -- they have these tie plates. And they have all these,
22 like -- they're like green, like a fluorescent green kind of
23 thing, I guess -- you know what I'm talking about?

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Pads.

25 MR. WILSON: Hum?

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Pads.

2 MR. WILSON: Pads. And they're all laid out up there and
3 they're doing the track. And there was a gondola there with a
4 trackmobile type thing to move it. And there's men standing in
5 that, and there's some -- the tampers and all those other things
6 there in the area. And there's men all over 2 track, and those
7 guys are there to watch their back while they continue working,
8 you know. I don't think they have -- like, the undercutter people
9 and the TLM when the train comes, they're supposed to stop till
10 the train passes. But I don't know if their rules are the same as
11 what the undercutter crews and the TLMs have to do.

12 MR. HINES: I got you.

13 MR. WILSON: So they were doing their thing, and after a
14 while, you know, when you realized this guy's not moving, you
15 really focus on that, so you stop looking at what everybody else
16 is doing, other than the fact I knew a MARC train was coming.
17 Because they have pulsating headlights underneath their main
18 headlights. So it's pulsing.

19 So you got that in your peripheral. You see it pulsing. And
20 you know, then you start focusing on, hey, this crew's not going
21 to move, and you just kept waiting for him to move and he never
22 moved. And it seems like it was going slow, but really -- and
23 when I come around the curve and at the station, it's only a
24 matter of seconds, really.

25 BY DR. HOEPF:

1 Q. Oh, yeah. So it's pretty quick. I mean --

2 A. Yeah, yeah.

3 Q. -- by the time you, by the time you come around that curve,
4 you're --

5 A. At 100 miles an hour, where he was, maybe a couple car
6 lengths north of the station. If he had looked back and saw, that
7 would have been too long for him. He wouldn't have been able to
8 look back and physically move at the same time. So somebody
9 should have known -- when I started blowing the horn at Bowie at
10 the interlocking, somebody should have pulled him out of the way.
11 Because he obviously was still standing that way even before I got
12 there. He was just there, like -- you know, I just -- like I say,
13 he was -- just seemed like he was focused on that MARC train.

14 Q. Yeah. So he didn't even -- it didn't even seem like he
15 reacted to --

16 A. I thought he kind of looked back, but then I was thinking
17 maybe he just looked over. Like, somebody had probably tried to
18 yell at him. But because my horn was blowing, they were blowing
19 their horns for the W men, the other ones -- the MARC train
20 obviously was blowing also, because he's coming down on 3 track.
21 There was a lot of noise going around, that maybe he just didn't
22 get the message.

23 Q. How's the, how's the Amtrak horn sound by comparison to the
24 MARC train horn?

25 A. Two totally different horns, and the horns on the ACS-64,

1 which is what I was running, were pretty loud. They're pretty
2 loud. I think the only (indiscernible) horn in my 20-something
3 years between here and freight that I thought was louder than the
4 ACS was the E60. I love those horns.

5 Q. So you said the guys were blowing the horns on the equipment?

6 A. Yeah, they're like -- you ever see people at, like, a sports
7 game? They have those little horns, and they can -- you know,
8 when they're cheering -- they're, like, handheld. Yeah.

9 Q. I got you. So it's not like --

10 A. No, it's not --

11 Q. -- attached to the machine. It's like --

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. -- just the guys that are --

14 A. Yeah, they're -- when they put their board up, they're
15 blowing that little horn, and you can hear it, you know.

16 Q. So you can hear it, and you can also hear the watchmen blow
17 their horns. So you're --

18 A. I can't hear them in the cab, but I know that's what they're
19 supposed to do. So I assume they're doing what they're supposed
20 to do. I'm doing what I'm supposed to do: blowing my horn.

21 Q. Right, right.

22 A. Yeah. You know, my horn, obviously, will trump their little
23 horn. But they're supposed to start blowing that in advance of
24 me, you know.

25 Q. I got you. I got you. So you can hear the horn from your --

1 you know, in the cab, you can hear your horn, but you can't hear
2 the little air horns that the --

3 A. Yeah, that's right.

4 Q. Okay. But you can hear the air horns that the guys are using
5 on the equipment? Or you can't hear those; you just see them
6 doing it?

7 A. Well, they -- like some of the -- I think the track machines
8 do have horns. And I can't necessarily hear them. But if I was
9 stopped, I could hear, obviously, because now I don't have the
10 sound of the moving locomotive behind me. But yeah.

11 Q. And you probably see where I'm going. I mean, I'm just kind
12 of wondering -- you know, it seems like, you know, the watchman
13 was looking at the southbound MARC train and, you know, there's a
14 lot of horns going on. And you know, maybe --

15 A. Well, that's what I'm saying. There was a lot -- obviously
16 there's a lot of noise in the area, you know.

17 Q. Right, right. How was the, how was the visibility?

18 A. It was a beautiful day. Yeah, it was beautiful.

19 Q. So no issues with seeing?

20 A. No, no, no. Wasn't like it was foggy or anything like that.
21 Wasn't like that.

22 Q. Any other challenges or anything going on?

23 A. Not for me. I mean, they may have had -- maybe they were
24 under production -- like, they had to step up the production and
25 behind on the project or something like that, but I wouldn't know

1 that. You know, I just know that for me there was nothing going
2 on.

3 It was going off as a routine trip. I mean, we'd been
4 through that area for the last couple months when they were
5 working. So it was like -- I was thinking, okay, get to New York.
6 You know, get my newspapers, read what the Mets did last night,
7 you know. Call the wife when I get there; let her know I got
8 there all right as I always do. And come on back. Go to the gym.
9 Go work out. I was thinking that the Sixers, the Sixers were
10 playing that night, so I wanted to try and get home enough where I
11 could go work out a little -- at least get a little something in
12 and still see part of the game, you know.

13 Q. Right, right. Yeah. Just a routine day.

14 A. Yeah. Yeah.

15 MR. PAYAN: You good?

16 DR. HOEPF: Good.

17 MR. PAYAN: All right. You still good, or you need a break?

18 MR. WILSON: No, I'm still good.

19 MR. PAYAN: All right. We're almost done.

20 BY MR. PAYAN:

21 Q. So your train goes into emergency, you come to a--

22 A. I placed it in emergency.

23 Q. You put it in emergency.

24 A. It didn't go into emergency.

25 Q. Came to a complete stop. How many -- what was your passenger

1 load? Was it full load, partial --

2 A. I think it was about -- I think we transferred about 250
3 people. Because we transferred them to Train 182.

4 Q. Okay. So after the stop, anybody report any injuries on the
5 passengers?

6 A. Not that I know of, no.

7 Q. Okay, and your crew was okay?

8 A. Well, the conductor walked off, and the flagman. And that
9 flagman come from Zone 5, so he's dealt with road crossing stuff,
10 as I have done also. When they -- when we saw the vests and there
11 were pieces of -- small pieces of stuff underneath the vest,
12 that's when it got to them. You know, because we lost HEP after
13 we hit him. The cable, the cables, whatever. And because now you
14 can't touch nothing till the police and everybody get there.
15 People were sitting in the dark for as long as it took to get
16 transferred. There was no air conditioner, no heat, no nothing.
17 No lights.

18 Q. And about how long did it take to get the people off?

19 A. It was a while. It was at least an hour.

20 Q. How did they do that? Did they bring another train or did
21 you walk them --

22 A. Yeah. Several trains went by. And I heard them tell the
23 crew, and they told Trey (ph.), Trey and Superintendent Downs
24 (ph.), that 182 is getting ready -- because they were holding
25 trains as it was, so when they said, when I release 182 out of DC,

1 he's -- they're going to pick up the people. And I'll let you
2 know when they leave, and when they hit New Carrollton, I'll tell
3 you again so you can start getting the people ready for the
4 transfer.

5 My crew was a pretty good crew. They had already started
6 moving people towards the middle where the transfer was going to
7 take place. So they -- I think Vicki (ph.), the middle brake,
8 moved everybody from, like, the business class and the
9 (indiscernible) car. Moved them up so it wouldn't take as long to
10 get them off the train. And there were Trainmasters Mohica (ph.)
11 and Trey and several other people, I think. There was an Amtrak
12 policeman helped assist with the transfer from track 1. They had
13 to cross over track 2 with their luggage to get to the train on
14 track 3.

15 Q. Okay. And so they were brought back southbound.

16 A. No, that train was going to New York. So they just -- the
17 people -- my train was going to New York. They were going to New
18 York, so they just put them on that train and they get to wherever
19 they had to go.

20 Q. Okay, they were, they were --

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. There weren't any trains surrounding it.

23 A. Well, yeah. They had -- they tried to run trains through
24 there at restricted speed. Mainly the Acelas could go through,
25 but you can't transfer to an Acela across another track because it

1 -- you know, it's the makeup of the train, it's --

2 Q. Okay. And everybody got transferred over safely? Nobody had
3 injuries?

4 A. Yes. As far as I know, there was no injuries. A lot of the
5 -- Trey and those guys were helping people with their bags, and
6 they were carrying the bags for them as they just kind of told the
7 people to concentrate on walking over without their stuff. And
8 then as they walked up, you know, then we would hand -- they would
9 hand their bags to them.

10 Q. Okay. And then how long were you on scene after that?

11 A. I didn't get out of there till probably 12:45. And we had to
12 get to Concentra in Lanham to do toxicology, blood and urine, so
13 -- and I didn't get done with that till 3:00-something, and we had
14 to go back to Odenton to talk to an EAP guy. You know, so it was
15 almost like a full workday, you know.

16 Q. Okay.

17 MR. PAYAN: Well, thank you. I'm going to go around the
18 room. FRA?

19 MR. BULL: Yeah, Mike Bull, FRA. I want to thank you for
20 explaining the horn blowing situation. That's important.

21 MR. WILSON: I think you've rode once or twice with me
22 (indiscernible).

23 MR. BULL: I think I did, and --

24 MR. WILSON: Yeah. I think you were checking trackmen.

25 MR. BULL: Yeah. Because that scares me too.

1 MR. WILSON: Yeah.

2 MR. BULL: When you're going by these folks and -- the more
3 noise you can make, I think, the better. And I've had -- I've
4 never had a problem with anybody yet when I've been riding with
5 them, so that's a good thing. So keep up that good work.

6 BY MR. BULL:

7 Q. One other thing I did want to ask was, you went to see the
8 EAP counselor and --

9 A. Well, they made the entire crew go. They had the guy set up
10 in the Odenton maintenance of way (indiscernible). And they made
11 us all talk to him. And I already had told them that I had
12 already -- I have a therapist from my last one two years ago that
13 I deal with, that I got through Cheyenne Gavin (ph.), who was in
14 charge of the EAP, or whatever she does. She's the best. And you
15 know, like I said, I had a meeting. Was supposed to go see my
16 therapist yesterday, but we had set this up and I had to cancel,
17 so --

18 Q. We appreciate you being here.

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. So they offered you time off, then, to recover?

21 A. I was technically told I was off at -- once I was done with
22 the EAP thing, that I was off under the Care (ph.) program, and
23 this was Tuesday. And between yesterday and today, I -- it's like
24 I'm still on duty. I haven't had no time to really try and
25 process this or, you know -- it was -- this is, this is rough.

1 This is rough for me, you know.

2 Q. Yeah. We understand. We appreciate you being here.

3 A. From what I understand, this is protocol when you have an
4 employee, so it had to be done.

5 MR. BULL: That's all the questions I have for now. Thank
6 you.

7 MR. PAYAN: All right. Thank you. Amtrak?

8 MR. HINES: Jon Hines again. Amtrak.

9 BY MR. HINES:

10 Q. Craig, just one follow-up question. Monday, you operated
11 through 186.

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. Same time?

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. Same time.

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. Do you recall if you -- if there was a southbound MARC train
18 coming through at the same time?

19 A. I think the MARCs were jacked up on Monday.

20 Q. On Monday.

21 A. I think they were a little off. Yeah.

22 Q. Okay.

23 MR. HINES: Thank you. That's all I had.

24 MR. PAYAN: All right, thank you. Mr. Stearn?

25 MR. STEARN: Steve Stearn from Maintenance of Way Group. Any

1 general orders, bulletin orders, TSRBs that had specific
2 conditions for the Bowie area for that day --

3 MR. WILSON: No.

4 MR. STEARN: -- you're aware of?

5 MR. WILSON: No. No, the TSRB for the Wilmington dispatching
6 office side, which is really the Washington side, we had a 30 from
7 Carroll to 128, which we can't get to because there's no switch
8 from 2 to 1. We had a restriction at Bush. I think 110 at Wood
9 or 60 -- I think they dropped to the 60. And we had something at
10 Bush. We had a 30 around Martins on A track, and you had 15 in
11 Philadelphia track 10. Other than that, there was nothing for
12 track 1 outside of the Carroll or the 128, which is south of that
13 location.

14 MR. STEARN: Thank you.

15 MR. PAYAN: Thank you. Mr. Fields?

16 MR. FIELDS: Carl Fields, BLET. Just one, Craig. Prior to
17 the incident, did you take any exception to the performance of the
18 locomotive?

19 MR. WILSON: No, I've had the 625 several times. It ran like
20 it -- ran, you know, what it should. The random brake test was
21 good. The brakes felt good stopping at New Carrollton. They felt
22 good getting down for the 105, which -- you don't have to do that
23 much. The terrain can you bring you down to 105 because of the
24 little hump north of Bowie to get you down anyway. You know that.
25 But I had no issues with the performance of the train whatsoever.

1 That train is scheduled to go to Boston, and when I met the
2 outbound engineer in New York, I would have told him I had no
3 exceptions to it.

4 MR. FIELDS: Okay, thank you.

5 MR. PAYAN: Yeah. All right, thank you. Mike?

6 BY DR. HOEPF:

7 Q. Just a, just a couple of follow-up questions on a couple of
8 things you mentioned. You know, you said sometimes you get, you
9 know, a little antsy because guys, you know, aren't paying
10 attention out there. Can you elaborate on that comment a little
11 bit? I mean, just in terms of the, you know, workers out there
12 while you're going by.

13 A. Well, when I, when I say "get antsy," like, you know, you
14 just -- you know there's men out there. You're watching them.
15 They may not be -- they're doing a job. You don't want somebody
16 to just suddenly walk out. And so you might have an 80 mile an
17 hour on a TSRB. You might do it at 75 or 70. You know, or your
18 hand might be closer to the brake than it normally would. You
19 just, your focus is higher because you know there's activity. So
20 when I say "get antsy," it's just, you're just, okay -- you know,
21 when you're running in the middle of nowhere and there's nothing
22 going on, you're just running. Now when -- you know, you get
23 antsy coming to a station stop, because you know, we've had people
24 jump off stations in front of trains. So you come in looking out.
25 Somebody's slipping. Somebody falling. So you get antsy coming

1 to a station, you know. Doesn't mean that, you know, you're,
2 like, scared or anything like that. But you just, you're on
3 higher alert. I guess that's the better way to say it.

4 Q. I got you. I got you. Yeah. You're just -- it's a --
5 there's a more hazard --

6 A. Yeah. Yeah, you know.

7 Q. Potential hazards than -- yeah.

8 A. And I feel like that's what you're supposed to do. You know,
9 where there's activity, where there's things going on, you need to
10 be on higher alert.

11 Q. Right, right. So you said, you know, sometimes you go a
12 little bit under the speed limit when you're coming around --

13 A. Yeah. How I run as an engineer, I can make that up. So
14 there's so much fat in these schedules that, you know, if you just
15 go slower just for your own self -- even if I slow down through a
16 work area because it's just for my own self -- you know, like,
17 okay, we got through that to that. Whatever. There's enough time
18 where -- you see the stations waiting for time sometimes anyway,
19 so you could make anything you lose from that going a little
20 slower. You make up. The train still is on schedule. But you
21 feel better.

22 Q. Okay. So you feel better just because you're kind of
23 mitigating some of that hazard by slowing down a little bit?

24 A. Yeah. You know, whether it's just psychological. And then
25 after 20-something years, whatever gets you through this.

1 Q. Right. Maybe give the guys a little bit more time to react.

2 A. There you go. There you go.

3 Q. Yeah. Yeah, I was going to -- I was also going to -- I mean,
4 along the same vein, I was going to talk -- you know, you said
5 that there's an 80-mile-an-hour slow-by when an undercutter is out
6 there?

7 A. When an undercutter or the track layer machine is out there,
8 they usually either have a Form D or it's on your TSRB that -- 80
9 miles an hour. And there's signs for it. And ACSES. Now we have
10 the ACSES. It'll get you down to it if you don't do what you're
11 supposed to do anyway. So you know, they're --

12 Q. I got it.

13 A. For those who don't know, the ACSES is, like, our positive
14 train control, so --

15 Q. Okay, I got you. I got you. So is there something special
16 about, like, an undercutter and track laying machine that, you
17 know -- like, what --

18 A. Well, guys are not just around equipment. Sometimes, like
19 the track layer in particular, they're under their -- underneath
20 stuff. And so they might stick a leg out while they're trying to
21 do something and reaching under there. They're really under and
22 about the equipment. So that's to give them a little bit more
23 protection in case something happens also. Like, I'm
24 (indiscernible) already on my own in other spots. That's done by
25 a TSRB or Form D. They have a little bit more protection.

1 Q. I got you. And so, I mean, is 80 -- is that slow enough, you
2 think? Or I mean --

3 A. For me, in reality, it's kind of -- like I said, if I was
4 doing 80, I still would have got this guy. Eighty miles an hour
5 is like the maximum speed off corner. So if you -- it's slow for
6 up here, but when you're doing 80 off corner, you're getting
7 there. You're moving. So yeah, 80 miles an hour, I don't think
8 it's slow enough, but that's the best they do for them. And then
9 you have the protections of the W man. Should be okay, if
10 everybody's doing what they're supposed to do. You know, and
11 that's the engineer, the W men and the employees are where they're
12 supposed to be, you know.

13 Q. Yeah. Yeah, I mean, I understand going that -- you know,
14 going along at 100 doesn't really give you a lot of, you know,
15 reaction time. What's -- I mean, what's it like operating a train
16 going in excess of 100 miles an hour? I mean, is that -- is
17 there, like, a fatigue with staying --

18 A. No.

19 Q. -- vigilant when you're out, or just get used to it or --

20 A. No. To be honest with you, as a guy who did -- who operated
21 freight trains at 70 miles an hour, which is maximum speed for
22 truck trains, trailer trains, that seemed at times faster than
23 running 120. Because there's a lot more vibration and a lot more
24 things going on in a freight train. And terrain comes into play,
25 and the length of your train, and you just -- it's a lot more

1 intense than what we do up here. I always say this is Candy Land.
2 You know, in my personal opinion and my experience.

3 Q. Got you.

4 A. But things still happen. My reason I came over here was to
5 get away from road crossings. I had four road crossing accidents
6 down south.

7 Q. Four?

8 A. Four.

9 Q. Wow. I'm sorry.

10 A. You know, I had -- one of my mentors out of Richmond, where I
11 worked out of Richmond, he had 13 fatalities.

12 Q. My gosh. Wow. Well, thanks for coming and talking to us. I
13 appreciate it.

14 DR. HOEPF: That's all the questions I've got.

15 MR. PAYAN: All right, thank you. I'm going to finish up
16 here. Any follow-up questions for anybody? No?

17 All right. Well, that's it. I just have some boilerplate
18 stuff I need to collect.

19 BY MR. PAYAN:

20 Q. Can you state your full name and spell your last name,
21 please?

22 A. All right. My full name is Craig Alan (ph.) Wilson. W-I-L-
23 S-O-N.

24 Q. All right. And your current employer?

25 A. Number?

1 Q. No, who are you employed by right now?

2 A. Amtrak.

3 Q. Amtrak. And your current position?

4 A. Locomotive engineer.

5 Q. Okay. And can you tell us a brief history, from the date you
6 were hired and the positions you've had to your current position?

7 A. You want just with Amtrak?

8 Q. Just with Amtrak, yes.

9 A. Okay. I came over here from CSX in 2003 as an engineer.

10 Q. Okay. And you've been an engineer since?

11 A. That's all I've ever been.

12 Q. Okay. Good enough. For your current position, what
13 certifications -- railroad certifications -- do you hold, and are
14 you up to date on all of them?

15 A. Yes. Would you like to see my certification card?

16 Q. No, just --

17 A. Oh, okay.

18 Q. Can you just give us a brief --

19 A. Yeah, I just -- I have an FRA certification card for
20 locomotive engineering. It's good till 2019.

21 Q. Okay. And you're certified on the book of rules?

22 A. NORAC rules, AMT III, AMT II. All the Amtrak stuff, I'm up
23 to date and current.

24 Q. Okay, very good. You ever get efficiency checked, like for
25 at work zones?

1 A. I had just I -- not for work zones, but I had just gotten
2 tested by Road Foreman Hanbreth and Road Foreman Herring on Train
3 19 last Thursday, I believe it was, where I had to get
4 (indiscernible) by the signal at Paul, and they had the tunnel.
5 Came into there, and then they had to simulate an obstruction
6 device in the track, comply with it, talk to dispatch. I got
7 permission to go south once it was ruled. Got released by the
8 road foreman. Went into the station in Baltimore. And then we
9 got to do a restricted speed. And it was a proper test.

10 Q. Okay, very good.

11 MR. PAYAN: That's all the questions we have. I'm going to
12 give you my business cards -- business card when we're done, and
13 if you think of anything that might help us, any suggestions,
14 ideas, please give us a call.

15 And with that, it is 9:27, and we're off the record.

16 (Whereupon, at 9:27 a.m., 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: AMTRAK WORKER FATALITY
 BOWIE, MARYLAND
 APRIL 24, 2018
 Interview of Craig Wilson

ACCIDENT NO.: RRD18FR006

PLACE: Bowie, Maryland

DATE: April 25, 2018

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.


Eileen Gonzalez
Transcriber