

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

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CSX EMPLOYEE FATALITY IN *

CUMBERLAND, MARYLAND *

Accident No.: RRD23FR016

ON AUGUST 6, 2023 *

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Interview of: CAMERON HOSE, DTRCO New Hire Mentor
CSX Transportation

Cumberland, Maryland

Wednesday

August 9, 2023

APPEARANCES:

TODD KRAHOLIK, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

ZACH ZAGATA, Branch Chief
National Transportation Safety Board

DAVID WYATT, Investigator
Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Training

JARED CASSITY, Alternate National Legislative Director
and Chief of Safety
SMART Transportation Division

STEVE AMMONS, Director of Training on the Rules of
Practices
CSX Transportation

JOSH QUILLEN, Railroad Safety Inspector
Federal Railroad Administration

JIM SOUTHWORTH, Mechanical Group Chairman and
Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

ROBERT EDWARDS, Director of Safety and Observer
CSX Transportation

JORDAN GIBSON, Observer
Federal Railroad Administration

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I N T E R V I E W

1
2 MR. KRAHOLIK: My name is Todd Kraholik and I am with the
3 NTSB. We are here today, August 9th, in Cumberland, Maryland, to
4 conduct an interview with Cameron Hose, who works for CSX
5 Transportation. This interview is in conjunction with NTSB's
6 investigation of the accident that happened near Cumberland,
7 Maryland. As a result of the accident, a conductor trainee was
8 fatally injured. The NTSB accident reference number is
9 RRD23FR016. The purpose of this investigation is to increase
10 safety, not to assign fault, blame, or liability.

11 Before we begin our interview and questions, let's go around
12 the table and introduce ourselves. Please spell your last name,
13 who you're representing, and your title. I'd like to remind
14 everybody to speak clearly with an accurate recording. I'll start
15 off and then pass off to my right. Again, my name is Todd
16 Kraholik, the spelling of my last name is K R A H O L I K, and I
17 am with the NTSB.

18 MR. ZAGATA: Zach Zagata, Z A G A T A, NTSB branch chief.

19 MR. HOSE: Cameron Hose, H O S E, DTRCO new hire mentor.

20 MR. WYATT: David Wyatt, W Y A T T, Brotherhood of Locomotive
21 Engineers and Trainmen investigator.

22 MR. CASSITY: Jared Cassity, C A S S I T Y, alternate
23 national legislative director and chief of safety for SMART TD.

24 MR. AMMONS: Steve Ammons, A M M O N S, CSX Transportation,
25 director of training rules and practices.

1 MR. EDWARDS: Robert Edwards, E D W A R D S, CSX director of
2 safety, observer.

3 MR. SOUTHWORTH: Jim Southworth, S O U T H W O R T H, NTSB
4 railroad accident investigator, mechanical group chairman.

5 MR. QUILLEN: Josh Quillen, Q U I L L E N, FRA.

6 MR. GIBSON: Jordan Gibson, G I B S O N, FRA observer.

7 INTERVIEW OF CAMERON HOSE

8 BY MR. KRAHOLIK:

9 Q. All right, Cameron can you please tell us about your railroad
10 history and background?

11 A. Sure, I hired out February 28th, 2011. I have 12 years in, I
12 worked Cumberland West on the pike side, as we call it for nine
13 years. In 2020, I went into Cumberland yard and worked the
14 remaining years as a RCO foreman and just recently in March of
15 this year, they asked me if I wanted to help our other new hire
16 mentor, Jason Kite (ph.), and I agreed.

17 Q. Okay, so as an RCO conductor in Cumberland, were you aware
18 that that end of the yard is a close clearance area, tight
19 centers, anything like that?

20 A. I knew it was tight from my experience working on the pike
21 side, that's Cumberland West. We used to work our helper jobs and
22 we would sit up there on engines, being in position to shove a
23 train up the hill and outbound trains, whenever they were leaving
24 on the freight, we knew it was pretty tight there.

25 Q. I got you. Can you tell me about what you do as a mentor for

1 the new people -- the new hires?

2 A. Yeah, we greet them day one, we go through an orientation
3 with them, make sure they know their pay, hours of service, make
4 sure all their PPE is there. We give them a tour of the yard,
5 show them where they're going to be reporting. We do all their
6 scheduling and make sure they have an understanding of how to view
7 their schedule and -- on the new hire side. Then we set up
8 meetings throughout their training. We do a big safety summit
9 with them usually about three or four weeks into their training
10 where our assistant superintendent gives a speech and then we
11 spend the afternoon out in the field. We go to the car shop and
12 show them how to -- the proper ways of riding equipment and stuff.
13 We reiterate things that they already went over in Atlanta with
14 them, but we do it in more detail.

15 Q. So, is it just one meeting at three to four weeks or do you
16 have more periodically?

17 A. We have multiples.

18 Q. About how often do you have them?

19 A. I'd say it's about every three or four weeks and then we
20 bring them in for a meeting to do their phase-two testing as well.

21 Q. And how many weeks are they conductors in training from?

22 A. Ten weeks.

23 Q. Ten weeks after they get back from the REDI Center?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. And in these meetings, do you guys let them talk and voice

1 concerns, and questions, and anything like that?

2 A. Absolutely.

3 Q. Has anybody ever voiced any concerns or fears of anything or
4 anything?

5 A. No, I'd say pretty much everyone we get, they're pretty
6 excited to start their new career. You know, I wouldn't say that
7 they're uneasy about anything, you know, they come in fairly
8 confident I would say.

9 Q. And you're a union guy or a --

10 A. I am union.

11 Q. Union, so if they had problems with conductor trainees in
12 Atlanta, would they tell you that or would they only refer to the
13 manager?

14 A. They wouldn't tell us, no.

15 Q. Okay, so do you ever go around and show the new trainees,
16 like, the yard and --

17 A. Uh huh, we do a yard tour.

18 Q. Do you ever teach them how to read the timetable and you go
19 over the stuff like that?

20 A. We touch on the timetable as well, yes.

21 Q. Do you touch on the close clearances in the timetable?

22 A. Not specifically. We have a couple designated close
23 clearances here in Cumberland terminal and their place is, like,
24 (indiscernible) over here. But yeah, we walk through the
25 timetable, show them how to read it, and -- but we don't touch on

1 that specifically. We don't take them to the location to show
2 them.

3 Q. Okay, so if it -- the close clearance that went in the
4 timetable like the known area down there, would you mention that
5 to them or no?

6 A. No.

7 MR. KRAHOLIK: Okay, that's all I have for now. We'll go
8 around the table.

9 MR. HOSE: Okay.

10 BY MR. ZAGATA:

11 Q. Zach Zagata, NTSB. In regards to the training and the
12 trainees, do they ever provide you any feedback as far as how
13 their training goes in Atlanta? Have you ever heard them talk
14 about it?

15 A. Yes, sir.

16 Q. And what kind of feedback do you hear there?

17 A. It's usually terrible. We hear a lot of well, they force so
18 much information on us and it almost seems like they're not
19 learning, they're just memorizing knowledge to pass a test, you
20 know, and they always come back with horror stories of the
21 locations. People are constantly getting their vehicles stolen
22 and things like that.

23 Q. Do they say if they feel like they need more training there;
24 if they're covering everything? Do they say thing like that?

25 A. Yeah, they say that it's just so much information crammed

1 into such a short amount of time and then I tell them whenever I
2 went to conductor school, I spent six weeks down there.

3 Q. Okay, had you worked with Travis before?

4 A. Yeah, Jason and I both had him for orientation and that was
5 July 10th he reported here for orientation and we had him in again
6 for a safety summit on the -- July 26th.

7 Q. Had you been out with him in the yard environment?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. What were your observations there?

10 A. He was just one of the group. Nothing out of the ordinary,
11 you know, just another employee. I didn't see anything
12 detrimental.

13 Q. You didn't see him -- as far as having challenges with
14 anything?

15 A. I didn't.

16 MR. ZAGATA: Okay. All right, that's all I've got for now.

17 MR. HOSE: Okay.

18 MR. WYATT: David Wyatt with the BLET, I don't have anything
19 right now -- any questions right now.

20 BY MR. CASSITY:

21 Q. Jared Cassity with SMART TD. When it comes to riding
22 equipment, in particular the trainees, do they ever convey to you
23 what kind of experiences they had in Atlanta coming up here to
24 actually first being on the property? What I mean by that is do
25 you get a sense of if it's a robust exposure to the varying types

1 of equipment or if it's kind of limited?

2 A. Very limited. They say that everybody only gets one chance
3 to do each task down there. But usually because they say there's
4 so many in the class that -- and we've gotten a lot of complaints
5 this summer due to it being so hot. They say oh, we're standing
6 around in the yard waiting for everyone to do this task and
7 usually, everyone gets to complete it once from my understanding.

8 Q. Okay, have you -- in your role as DTRCO, have you observed or
9 witnessed any of the trainees struggling with the proper way to
10 ride here on the property?

11 A. I haven't.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. No.

14 MR. CASSITY: That's all I have for right now.

15 BY MR. AMMONS:

16 Q. Steve Ammons, CSX. Cameron, just to make sure I understand
17 correctly, you're saying that you didn't have any knowledge or had
18 never noticed anything -- any issues with Travis as far as
19 mounting or riding equipment?

20 A. Not with my own personal observations, no.

21 Q. Did you have any knowledge?

22 A. Oh, I'm sorry, this came later -- at a later date just
23 starting Monday. I did get -- receive some new information that
24 came from other trainees. I thought maybe a question was going to
25 come up later about that. So, on Monday, I received a phone call

1 from MTO Kelker (ph.) and this was the day -- I had an orientation
2 on Monday in Colnosville (ph.). So, I'm in Colnosville, MTO
3 Kelker calls me. He says hey, I got Crowder (ph.) with me. I
4 said Jason, he said yes, I said okay. He said is he supposed to
5 go home now and I said well, from my understanding, they're
6 taxiing all trainees home. I said the -- he could either probably
7 stay in the hotel and taxi home in the morning, because it was in
8 the evening, or you can just taxi him home now. Kelker said
9 great, I will taxi him home now. He said well, Crowder just
10 informed me that Bradley fell off moving equipment while in
11 Atlanta, did you -- do you know anything about that? I said no,
12 this is the first I'm hearing about it. He said, okay, well,
13 maybe I'll get Crowder to write a statement. I said great. We
14 hang up the phone, end of the conversation.

15 Last night, I wanted to hear Crowder's side of the story, so
16 I called him and he did not answer. So, I report to work this
17 morning and I am on three yard, about to pull up, RCO pops because
18 we've got to track getting out there. Mike Smith (ph.) calls me
19 and says hey, can you get all our trainees in here for a meeting?
20 I said yeah, what time? He said 1200. I said okay, well, it's
21 kind of a drive for some of them. He was like well, see if you
22 can make it happen. As I'm calling our trainees, I get to Crowder
23 and I call him and I ask him -- I said hey, bud, I know it's short
24 notice, but can you be here for a meeting 1200 hours? He said
25 yeah, that's no problem.

1 I said while I got you on the phone, I said what is the story
2 with Conductor Bradley that you told Kelker, did he fall off
3 equipment? Jason says yes, he fell off equipment while trying to
4 mount moving equipment. I said okay, I said did you see it
5 personally? He said no, I was in the other group. I said all
6 right, but everyone was talking about and they said he face
7 planted pretty bad, I said okay. He said then the very following
8 day was the ladder hang and he couldn't complete the ladder hang
9 because he claimed he had -- Mr. Bradley claimed that he had an
10 injury from the elliptical at the hotel. So, they sent him home
11 for one day for him to rest and I said okay, all right, well
12 thanks for sharing that with me. I said I'll see you at noon, he
13 said okay.

14 Just as trainees were arriving here at noon today, Conductor
15 Spiker (ph.), who I knew hired out with Bradley, was sitting in
16 the conference room and I said Travis -- his name is Travis Spiker
17 and I said Travis, can I ask you -- I said did you ever hear
18 anything about Mr. Bradley falling off moving equipment? He said
19 oh, yeah, he fell off and he said he couldn't hold on, it was just
20 so hot. I said okay, I said did you see it? No, he was in the
21 other group. I said okay, it was just hearsay.

22 So, then I asked him -- I was like was there anybody in the
23 other group that I could talk to and no, nobody for these
24 locations that we deal with directly. Okay, I said well, who was
25 his instructor with the other group and they gave me a name of

1 Darryl (ph.) -- a black guy named Darryl. He didn't know his last
2 name. I said all right. Then Travis Spiker said when he was
3 riding equipment, they even sped the engine up so he didn't have
4 to ride as long -- Conductor Bradley, they didn't want him to have
5 to ride as long because he was struggling. I said okay, thank you
6 for the knowledge and that was it.

7 Q. Have you ever personally witnessed or been told -- have
8 knowledge of Mr. Bradley having difficulties mounting equipment?

9 A. I have been told --

10 Q. Other than what you just told me there from the REDI Center?

11 A. No, sir.

12 Q. Have you ever approached a manager or supervisor about your
13 concerns about him mounting equipment? Having to use his need to
14 brace himself to mount equipment?

15 A. No, sir.

16 Q. Okay, just out of curiosity, are you aware that we have
17 washed students out at the REDI Center for failure to do those
18 same tasks properly?

19 A. Yes, sir.

20 Q. Okay, that's a known -- you understand that that --

21 A. Yes, sir.

22 MR. AMMONS: Okay. All right, that's all I've got.

23 MR. QUILLEN: Josh Quillen, no questions.

24 BY MR. KRAHOLIK:

25 Q. Todd Kraholik with the NTSB. You said you got six weeks in

1 Atlanta, how long do the trainees get now in Atlanta?

2 A. I believe it's five.

3 Q. Five?

4 A. Well, four -- it is four weeks, but I think they're talking
5 about extending it to five.

6 Q. So, Bradley would've had four weeks in Atlanta and then he
7 would come here for --

8 A. Ten weeks.

9 Q. Ten weeks, do you feel that that's adequate timing for --

10 A. No, sir.

11 Q. Why do you say that?

12 A. Just there's so much information, there's -- I mean, this --
13 there's just so much information and learning and to wedge it all
14 in and take your test every week, that's -- I feel -- as I stated
15 earlier, I feel like these guys are just memorizing their main
16 stuff just to pass a test. Whenever they get up here, they know
17 what things are, but they don't really know how the railroad works
18 yet.

19 Q. I'm sorry, you might've said this, but do you ever watch and
20 perform the tasks that -- whatever, riding cars, throwing
21 switches, all that?

22 A. Uh huh.

23 Q. You watch them do that?

24 A. Yeah, we've seen them.

25 Q. What happens if somebody, in your eyes, doesn't do it good

1 enough? What would you do then? Let's say they failed to ride a
2 car correctly or improperly threw a switch, what would you do at
3 that point?

4 A. Correct them and I would show them myself how to properly
5 ride a car and then have them demonstrate it for me.

6 Q. Is there ever a possibility of sending them back to Atlanta
7 for more training there?

8 A. I think that comes down to our railroad officials if they
9 wanted to do that and I feel like they would if need be.

10 Q. Have you ever went to a manager of a problem with an
11 individual that couldn't get a task, or couldn't get a job
12 assignment, or something?

13 A. I haven't, no. Most guys are good. We deal a lot with
14 trainees miscalling. We keep tabs on -- like I said, we do all
15 their scheduling, and we keep tabs on them, and making sure they
16 stay available, and not giving missed calls, and sick mark offs,
17 and making sure they come to work.

18 Q. So, when you say you make their schedule, you just -- you
19 don't assign them conductors, correct, you just assign them jobs?

20 A. We assign them to the different pools and jobs.

21 Q. And there's -- you can't pick which conductors can and can't
22 get a trainee?

23 A. No.

24 MR. QUILLEN: Okay, I don't have any further questions.

25 BY MR. ZAGATA:

1 Q. Zach Zagata, NTSB. Are there certain tasks that a trainee
2 has to complete when they're out here with you?

3 A. I wouldn't say that we have a checklist. Our managers have
4 an RQS checklist that they complete over the course of the ten
5 weeks -- that our trainees -- and it involves everything from
6 riding equipment and hanging EOT (ph.), coupling air hoses, making
7 different movements, radio chatter. But managers complete the
8 RQses.

9 MR. ZAGATA: Okay, no additional questions, thank you.

10 MR. WYATT: No questions, thank you.

11 BY MR. CASSITY:

12 Q. Jared Cassity, SMART TD. You've made mention a couple times
13 about students memorizing the information in Atlanta. Do you see
14 them struggling with the applicability of what they've memorized
15 to the real world of -- on property or on the job training? What
16 I mean by that is I guess can you walk me through the transition
17 for these new hires and what you're seeing as a DTRCO with them
18 coming out of the REDI Center and going into the field? Is it
19 almost like a fresh start all over? Or does it look like they're
20 comprehending some of the stuff at least?

21 A. I would say they comprehend a little bit of it. But it is
22 new. A lot of them, actually, come up with the understanding that
23 they don't realize that they have to answer every phone call and
24 work all kinds of crazy shifts. When it comes to knowledge in the
25 field, I would say whenever something gets pointed out to them,

1 then it clicks, like oh, this is why we do this. Then they're
2 like oh, okay, well I remember in conductor school, they said
3 this, but I didn't really know what it meant.

4 Q. Okay, Cody Green, who is the conductor when Travis,
5 unfortunately, was killed, did you take any exception to him
6 during training or anything like that?

7 A. I was not in this position when Cody Green was training.

8 Q. Okay, I apologize for not putting that together.

9 A. No, that's okay.

10 MR. CASSITY: That's it for me. Nothing else, thank you.

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I don't have any questions.

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I don't have any.

13 BY MR. KRAHOLIK:

14 Q. Todd Kraholik, NTSB. Cameron, do you have anything you want
15 to add or any recommendations to prevent this from happening in
16 the future?

17 A. I don't know, I just had this conversation this morning of
18 what -- like what could we do different. But I would say maybe
19 just more time training, go back to six weeks like I had in
20 Atlanta and whenever I came to on-the-job training, I believe I
21 had, like, five months maybe of training. It was quite a while
22 back then.

23 MR. KRAHOLIK: I got you. I understand.

24 BY MR. AMMONS:

25 Q. Yeah, I'm sorry -- I thought of one follow-up question.

1 Ammons from CSX. Earlier, you mentioned that you knew of the
2 tightness in that area where the incident happened?

3 A. Uh huh.

4 Q. But you really -- you guys don't really typically tell
5 trainees about that area?

6 A. Right.

7 Q. Are there any other areas in your jurisdiction where you
8 train these conductors that are similar to that that CSX needs to
9 be made aware of?

10 A. No, sir, not that I'm aware of.

11 MR. AMMONS: Okay, thank you.

12 MR. HOSE: Yes, sir.

13 BY MR. CASSITY:

14 Q. Jared Cassity with SMART TD. I apologize for not thinking of
15 this a second ago. I'm going to put you a little bit on the spot,
16 do you have an opinion on employees or conductors with less than
17 12 months experience training new hires -- or trainees?

18 A. I don't think it's a good thing. At the same time, at our
19 location, we have so many new employees that it would be almost
20 impossible to line all our trainees up with a seasoned conductor.

21 MR. CASSITY: Okay, thank you.

22 BY MR. KRAHOLIK:

23 Q. All right, thank you, Cameron. If we have any follow-up
24 questions, do you mind if we get a call -- contact you?

25 A. No, that's fine, sir.

1 MR. KRAHOLIK: All right, on behalf of the NTSB, I'd like to
2 thank you for your time and cooperation.

3 MR. HOSE: Yes, sir.

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Go off the record now.

5 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

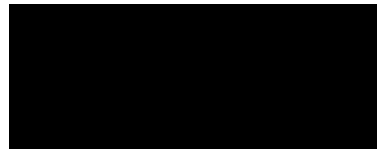
IN THE MATTER OF: CSX EMPLOYEE FATALITY IN
CUMBERLAND, MARYLAND ON
AUGUST 6, 2023
Interview of Cameron Hose

ACCIDENT NO.: RRD23FR016

PLACE: Cumberland, Maryland

DATE: August 9, 2023

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.



Carolyn Hanna
Transcriber