

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: \*

TRAIN DERAILMENT \* Accident No.: DCA19FR011  
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA \*  
AUGUST 22, 2019 \*

\* \* \* \* \*

Interview of: CHAD BLAIR  
Transportation Supervisor

Sacramento, California

Saturday,  
August 24, 2019

## APPEARANCES:

TOMAS TORRES, Rail Accident Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board

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

MICHAEL ROSE, Operations Inspector  
California Public Utilities Commission

JOHN DARRAGH, Director of Light Rail  
Sacramento Regional Transit District

SHEILA LAWTON, Business Agent  
IBEW

RALPH NIZ, President/Business Agent  
ATU Local 256

PHILIP HERBERT, Accident Investigator  
Federal Transit Authority (FTA)

STEVEN SMITH  
AFSCME Local 146  
(On behalf of Mr. Blair)

DAREN GILBERT, Program manager  
California Public Utilities Commission  
(Observing)

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I N T E R V I E W

1  
2 MR. TORRES: Okay. We'll get started. This is an NTSB  
3 informal interview. My name is Tomas Torres, T-O-M-A-S, T-O-R-R-  
4 E-S. Today's date is August 24th, 2019. We are in Sacramento,  
5 California interviewing the -- what's your title? Control  
6 operator?

7 MR. BLAIR: Transportation supervisor.

8 MR. TORRES: Transportation supervisor in connection with an  
9 accident that occurred at Sacramento, California on August the  
10 22nd, 2019. The NTSB accident number is RRD19FR011. The purpose  
11 of the investigation is to increase safety, not to assign fault,  
12 blame or liability.

13 NTSB cannot offer any guarantee of confidentiality or  
14 immunity from legal certificate actions. A transcript or a  
15 summary of the interview will go in public docket.

16 The interviewee can have one representative of the  
17 interviewee's choice. And you have somebody, correct?

18 MR. BLAIR: Yes.

19 MR. TORRES: Do you understand this interview is being  
20 recorded?

21 MR. BLAIR: Yes.

22 MR. TORRES: Okay. Please state your name and spell it.

23 MR. BLAIR: Chad Blair, C-H-A-D, B-L-A-I-R.

24 MR. TORRES: Okay. And your representative?

25 MR. SMITH: Steven Smith, S-T-E-V-E-N, S-M-I-T-H.

1 MR. TORRES: Thank you. Dr. Jenner?

2 DR. JENNER: Yes. I'm Stephen Jenner, S-T-E-P-H-E-N, J-E-N-  
3 N-E-R. I'm with the NTSB.

4 MR. ROSE: Michael Rose, M-I-C-H-A-E-L, R-O-S-E. I am a  
5 California Public Utilities inspector for Northern California.

6 MR. DARRAGH: John Darragh, J-O-H-N, D-A-R-R-A-G-H. I'm the  
7 director of light rail operations.

8 MR. GILBERT: I'm Daren Gilbert, D-A-R-E-N, G-I-L-B-E-R-T.  
9 I'm a representative of the safety branch of the Public Utilities  
10 Commission.

11 MS. LAWTON: I'm Sheila Lawton, S-H-E-I-L-A, L-A-W-T-O-N.  
12 I'm the IBEW Local 1245 business representative.

13 MR. NIZ: Okay. Ralph Niz, R-A-L-P-H, N-I-Z, president and  
14 business agent, ATU Local 256.

15 MR. HERBERT: Philip Herbert, P-H-I-L-I-P, H-E-R-B-E-R-T.  
16 I'm with the United States Department of Transportation in the  
17 Federal Transit Administration.

18 MR. TORRES: Okay. Tomas here with the NTSB.

19 INTERVIEW OF CHAD BLAIR

20 BY MR. TORRES:

21 Q. Chad, can you give us a brief history of your work history  
22 here at this location, your employment?

23 A. Sacramento Regional Transit?

24 Q. Yes.

25 A. I started in February 2018. And I came out of probation in

1 November 2018. I've worked the road shifts, dispatcher shifts and  
2 controller shifts.

3 Q. And can you give us a little information on the training that  
4 you received for those duties?

5 A. It was a 9-month training period. Well -- I'm sorry -- 9-  
6 month probation period, 6 months of training beginning with  
7 qualifying on the radio at the end of the 6 months. Through the  
8 training I had shifts on radio, dispatch, and on the road.

9 Q. So you had classroom instruction, like rules and stuff like  
10 that or --

11 A. Yes. I qualified rules.

12 Q. And so that's in reference to train movements or vehicle  
13 movements?

14 A. Train movements.

15 Q. And that training you say was what, 3 months?

16 A. The rules book?

17 Q. Yeah.

18 A. That was 5 days.

19 Q. Oh, 5 days?

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. Okay. And the train dispatcher and operator, how long did  
22 you train on that?

23 A. Radio and dispatch was 3 months.

24 Q. Three months?

25 A. Something like that. I don't know the exact because they

1 move you all over the place during your training and the only time  
2 you're at a certain position is at the end when you're on the  
3 radio for training for 4 or 5 weeks.

4 Q. So you hired on February 20 --

5 A. I'm sorry. February 1st.

6 Q. February 1st, '18?

7 A. 2018, yep.

8 Q. And then you completed your training and your probation  
9 period November of 2018?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. And then what have you been doing since?

12 A. For two signups I've been on B radio and the third signup --  
13 I'm sorry. The first signup I was on vacation relief, and then  
14 two signups on B radio, and one on -- one signup, this signup is  
15 on C dispatch.

16 Q. Okay. You mentioned that you were train dispatch and  
17 operator. Can you give us what each one is? Explain to us?

18 A. Here, the dispatcher is paperwork involved. They sit at the  
19 window and they hand out the radios, take in the radios, assign  
20 the operators their jobs, use the extra board wherever I need  
21 help. And doing the C dispatch is I do the nightly paperwork, get  
22 ready some of -- get ready tomorrow, some of tomorrow's paperwork  
23 and finish up the evening's paperwork.

24 Q. So it's mostly getting all the paperwork ready for the  
25 operators, and instructions?

1 A. Yeah. Well, that and the paperwork for the management. They  
2 want a GM indicator report, they call it. And I take all the  
3 information of the day and it gets into one pile and I have to  
4 take that information and put it, some of it in a computer and get  
5 ready for the next day.

6 Q. And that operator part, what does that involve?

7 A. The controller part?

8 Q. Yeah, controller part.

9 A. That's being on the radio talking to the trains, giving them  
10 bulletins, giving them orders, things of that nature.

11 Q. Okay. Can you explain what a bulletin is?

12 A. A bulletin is a -- it goes out to the trains if there's  
13 something not normal on the tracks or there's something going on  
14 near the tracks.

15 Q. So if there's something unusual, you have to advise them?

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. And the orders would be like, are they specific or just in  
18 general?

19 A. Well, they're kind of general. If we have maintenance  
20 working on the tracks, we'll have them -- maintenance working on  
21 the tracks from Switch A to B, you know, with stop signs at  
22 Marconi and Roseville Road, and then the trains will call in when  
23 they get there.

24 Q. So that's the on paperwork when they go on duty and get on  
25 the vehicle, they'll have those orders?



1 A. Well, they have the normal bulletins, which is printed out  
2 the night before and that has all the occurrences that we know  
3 about that goes out to them. Like if there's a track inspection  
4 or people working on the right-of-way that we know about, then  
5 that will be on that piece paper that goes out to the drivers.

6 Q. Okay. So on the day of the accident, what job were you  
7 working?

8 A. I have to do both.

9 Q. You have to do both?

10 A. Yeah. For the first part of the shift I do the dispatching,  
11 the paperwork. I get as much done as I can, and then I take over  
12 the radio for both lines at night. And then in between that, the  
13 radio, I have to finish the paperwork. So I'm doing both jobs.

14 Q. So you have two roles?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. And is that a daily occurrence or is that -- was that  
17 specific to this one day?

18 A. A daily occurrence.

19 Q. So what time did you go on duty?

20 A. 1400.

21 Q. So that 2 o'clock?

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. And how many trains do you monitor or dispatch? How many  
24 trains are on that you know of at one time?

25 A. When it gets to me, I control 10 trains.

1 Q. Ten trains? And you have two lines that you --

2 A. Yeah. Five on each line. Five on the Blue Line and five on  
3 the Gold Line.

4 Q. So on that day, can you describe what it was like as far as  
5 traffic, you know, who you were talking to?

6 A. It was a normal day. It's busy. Once I get the radio -- it  
7 just depends; each day is different. But it's dealing with the  
8 problems with the trains, if they're having electrical or  
9 mechanical issues or they're having problems with the passengers  
10 or fires on the tracks. It's just a whole bunch of different  
11 activities during a shift.

12 Q. Was there any -- prior to the accident, was there anything  
13 unusual that happened?

14 A. Right before the accident, I was dealing with Train 3. He  
15 was having problems with an individual. I was told it's been an  
16 ongoing issue with this guy. And I was trying to get the  
17 information out of him, but I could never find out exactly what  
18 the guy was doing. He called me twice about that during this time  
19 period before the accident.

20 Q. So it was a passenger that was being difficult?

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. So when you monitor the trains, do you -- do they always have  
23 to talk to you, you know, going through each station, or how does  
24 that work?

25 A. They talk to me when they depart their original departure

1 station. So like on the Blue Line, it'll be Watt/I-80 and CRC  
2 (indiscernible). So they always call me when they're departing  
3 and they tell me if they're late, on time, how many LRVs they  
4 have, which LRV they're running from, and the code they put into  
5 EBIS (ph.) to -- which gives them the proper heading. So, and  
6 then if they're late are our time points, then they're supposed to  
7 call out being late.

8 Q. Do you dispatch the signal locations or is that automatic?

9 A. Well, once they log in it'll be automatic unless there's an  
10 issue, and then I have to advise them what to do, either have them  
11 use the TWC on the train or use the route (indiscernible) board  
12 and signal like that.

13 Q. And what's the TWC?

14 MR. BLAIR: What do you call it?

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Train to Wayside Control.

16 MR. BLAIR: Yeah, Train to Wayside Control, TWC. And what it  
17 does is it comes up on a loop on the track, and they type in -- if  
18 they like a red signal, I'll tell them to use their TWC for their  
19 direction they want to go to find their -- either which normal or  
20 clear diverge or there's another clear diverge too, depending on  
21 which way they're going.

22 BY MR. TORRES:

23 Q. So they have to get down from the vehicle and press the  
24 button?

25 A. That's all right there by where they sit.

1 Q. So that controls that?

2 A. Yeah. Yeah.

3 Q. So, and that's kind of like RMS (indiscernible)?

4 A. Yeah. It sends a signal to underneath the train, the track,  
5 and it operates the lights, I guess.

6 Q. But do you have like a monitor? You know, like do you see  
7 where the trains are at at any given moment, or is it all rely on  
8 verbal, the location?

9 A. Well, they have a -- they call it a consist manager. It's a  
10 computer system the company made up that tells you where the  
11 trains supposedly are. It goes through GPS navigation. When I  
12 took over Thursday, the gal who gave it to me said the consist  
13 manager was messed up pretty much most of the afternoon. I guess  
14 the trains were not in the right -- or cars were not in the right  
15 order.

16 Q. But when it's operating properly, do you monitor that? I  
17 mean, is that information available to you?

18 A. I can. 50/50. If I'm really busy, I won't bring it up.

19 Q. So if you have to, you can or --

20 A. Yeah. On the computer I sit at it's not, it's not on my  
21 desktop, but we'll find and search it and then bring it up. And  
22 then I've worked with it where I have two trains together that I  
23 know are 15 minutes apart and things of that nature. So I don't  
24 put a lot of trust in it.

25 Q. So the information's not accurate all the time?

1 A. No. It's not like -- no, it's not like a real train  
2 dispatch.

3 Q. So when the trains are operating out there, are the tracks  
4 directional, you know, like one way only? Like once they have  
5 stations out, they can only go one direction only?

6 A. They have an inbound and outbound track for most of the, most  
7 of the miles. There's two sections that only inbound and outbound  
8 is one track, and that's at -- past Sunrise, it's Hazel to  
9 Historic Folsom. It's a one track. And then out here from just  
10 outside of Marconi to Watt/I-80 is single track.

11 Q. Okay. So on the day of the accident, there was a maintenance  
12 train that needed to go on there. Do recall that?

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. Can you describe what happened or the communication with him?

15 A. He called me on the phone before he was going to leave and  
16 told me he was going to -- he needed to do some type of testing on  
17 UTDC and he wanted to get out. And I said he could go out after  
18 the outbound train. And he said that he would call me and let me  
19 know when he's at the route selector. He said he was going to go  
20 out to Grand Avenue Bridge and then come back, he said.

21 Q. So, and what outbound train were you referring to?

22 A. Train 9.

23 Q. Train 9?

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. So once he got up to that location where he could go from the

1 yard to the main track, he calls you up?

2 A. Yeah. He called me and asked for authorization to enter the  
3 main line.

4 Q. And did he call you over the radio or --

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. So what is, what does he have to do to get from the yard to  
7 the main track?

8 A. He calls me up and says his number; this is Victor 12, I'd  
9 like authorization to enter the main line, outbound main line to  
10 do testing on LRV -- I think it was 310, out to Grand Avenue  
11 Bridge and back.

12 Q. So, and how do those limits get established? You know, like  
13 do you log it in or is it just --

14 A. He just calls me and tells me what he wants to do.

15 Q. And did you tell him, okay, go ahead and do it?

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. Like the (indiscernible)?

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. And so, when the accident train, the other train was -- was  
20 it Train 3?

21 A. Nine.

22 Q. Nine? No, the one that collided with it.

23 A. Train 9.

24 Q. Train 9? But wasn't he supposed to go out behind him?

25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. But he went ahead of him?

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. So how did he go ahead of him?

4 A. Train 9 was running late, 15 minutes late. And I don't know  
5 what was running through Victor 12's mind or nothing, but I told  
6 him to wait after the train and then phone me for authorization.  
7 And this was the time when I was calling -- Train 3 was calling me  
8 about the passenger.

9 Q. Okay. So 3 was the one with the passenger?

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. That's what it was. So you authorized it to go from the yard  
12 to the main track after Train 9 departed. But he was -- had not  
13 arrived there yet, right?

14 A. Correct.

15 Q. And so he proceeded, Train 9. And did you ever know that he  
16 was out there ahead of him?

17 A. Obviously no, because I had told him to wait after the train,  
18 and normally those guys are pretty good. And I had 10 things  
19 going on at once and so I relied on him to do what I told him to  
20 do.

21 Q. And was this over the radio or --

22 A. Cell phone.

23 Q. When you told him to -- you know, like you've got a main  
24 track behind you, Train 9?

25 A. Well, I told him on the phone when I talked to him, and then

1 I gave him -- when he got to the route selector to go to the main  
2 line, he asked me for authorization to go the main line and I gave  
3 it to him.

4 Q. So you told him to go behind Train 9, but that was done over  
5 the telephone, correct?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Not over the radio. So when you authorized him to occupy the  
8 main track, did you verify where Train 9 was at? Or was there a  
9 way for you to verify his position?

10 A. I did not. And I could have called him on the radio and  
11 asked where he was, but I didn't.

12 Q. So when you instructed him to go behind Train 9, did he have  
13 an understanding or do you remember that exchange between you and  
14 him?

15 A. I just -- he wanted to go after the inbound train, and I told  
16 him no, you can go after the outbound train. That's what I  
17 remember of the conversation.

18 Q. And the inbound train was the one that was going to come into  
19 the station on the other track?

20 A. Yeah. It was going to go past the yard to downtown.

21 Q. And Train 9 never notified when he got to the station? I  
22 know he was running late, but he never told you -- never  
23 communicated with you again as to his location?

24 A. Honestly, the last time I remember talking to him is when he  
25 departed CRC.



1 Q. And how many stations is that?

2 A. I don't know; 20.

3 Q. Twenty?

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: He can refer to the map.

5 MR. BLAIR: Thank you. So he departed here 15 minutes late  
6 and Marconi is right up here. So he had to go through all these,  
7 and downtown and back up through here.

8 BY MR. TORRES:

9 Q. So he left Cosumnes River College late, 15 minutes late,  
10 which is at the far end?

11 A. Yep.

12 Q. The farthest station?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. And then he didn't talk to you again after that?

15 A. I don't remember him calling in his times. He might have.  
16 When they call in their times, they just say "Train 9 departing  
17 Broadway, 15 minutes late." And then I just go, "Copy, Train 9."

18 Q. Oh, okay. So here in the diagram -- it's a diagram. Where  
19 did this maintenance train enter the main track?

20 A. In between Swanston and Marconi.

21 Q. Marconi. So there's some yard tracks over here?

22 A. Yeah. The yard's right here.

23 Q. And Train 9 was going?

24 A. This way. Or this way.

25 Q. So the maintenance train came in and went --

1 A. He went this way.

2 Q. He went that way?

3 A. Yep.

4 Q. Oh, and then back. So what direction do you guys call it;

5 east, west, south, north?

6 A. Outbound.

7 Q. Yeah. Oh, just outbound?

8 A. Yeah. And that's actually north.

9 Q. North? Okay. So geographically --

10 A. He was going north.

11 Q. North. And so was Train 9 when he departed?

12 A. Correct.

13 Q. So he entered here and he -- and how far did the maintenance

14 train go?

15 A. He came up -- it's been between Roseville Road and Marconi,

16 there's a couple little bridges here and then it goes into single

17 track.

18 Q. Okay. So he goes all the way up to the end of double track?

19 And then --

20 A. Yeah. I don't, I don't know how -- what they do actually.

21 Q. So he entered there, just before Marconi, and then he went

22 outbound.

23 A. Yep.

24 Q. North.

25 A. He went to here.

1 Q. And then he was coming back?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. So, and there's -- what's that system again that tells you  
4 the, shows you the location of the trains? Would that have showed  
5 it?

6 A. Consist manager?

7 Q. Yeah.

8 A. It would have showed Train 9. It wouldn't have showed the  
9 maintenance train unless I put it in.

10 Q. Oh, you have to enter the symbol?

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. And you didn't do that?

13 A. No.

14 Q. I mean, is there a requirement to enter it or is that a  
15 judgment call or what?

16 A. Normally they don't put it in because he's just going out and  
17 back. He should be done in 10 minutes. But --

18 Q. Do you keep any logs, like in this case, where this  
19 maintenance train went out, did you log anything down? Like is  
20 there a book as to who you authorized onto the main track?

21 A. It'd be on the control log.

22 Q. It will?

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. And do you put any comments in there or just --

25 A. We would just say, Victor 12 from Metro Yard, and then I

1 would put like UTDC testing to Grand Avenue Bridge to the yard.

2 Q. But you don't put the time he entered the main track, but  
3 just --

4 A. Yeah. I would give the authorized time. I would put it in  
5 the control log.

6 Q. Let's see. You gave him authority to occupy the main track,  
7 but you didn't know where Train 9 was located at that time?

8 A. Correct.

9 MR. TORRES: Okay. At this moment I will to pass it off to  
10 Steve Jenner. Dr. Jenner?

11 BY DR. JENNER:

12 Q. This is Steve Jenner with the NTSB. I'm just going to bounce  
13 around a little, just for some clarifications. Could you help me  
14 out -- you mentioned I think it was consist monitor? Is that the  
15 right --

16 A. Consist manager.

17 Q. Consist manager.

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. If you could describe what that is and -- yeah, first  
20 describe what it is, please.

21 A. It's a computer program that tracks the trains by GPS.

22 Q. Okay. And how -- that's something that's displayed on a  
23 screen that's in front of you?

24 A. It can, yeah.

25 Q. It's something you can access --

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. -- with the right buttons.

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. How frequently do you rely on that?

5 A. I rarely use it at night.

6 Q. Do you use it during the day?

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. Okay. What's the difference? Why rarely at night and --

9 A. Normally I'm just -- I've got a lot of stuff going on with  
10 the radios on the trains and the phones and the operators coming  
11 to the window and the paperwork, I just -- I don't have time to  
12 pull it up a lot.

13 Q. So the nighttime shift, is that a higher workload overall?

14 A. It keeps you busy. It can. And then if something happens,  
15 I'm all by myself so I've got to, I've got to do everything. It's  
16 not like during the daytime, you have another controller and the  
17 dispatcher to help you put signs out or make calls or, you know,  
18 ask questions, too, or anything of that nature. You're by  
19 yourself.

20 Q. So during the day you have more people resources?

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. What time does that end? What time does like the nightshift  
23 begin?

24 A. I'll be on my own at -- I can't remember when they leave.  
25 One leaves at 2030 and the other one leaves at, I think, 1930.

1 Q. So then your -- basically your duties increase after they  
2 leave?

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. When you were receiving training on these tasks, did you work  
5 different shifts? First, if you could explain to me how the  
6 shifts work? Are there two shifts in a 24-hour period or three  
7 shifts, or how does that work?

8 A. For the radio or --

9 Q. For the radio.

10 A. The radios have two shifts, and they'll start at 3:15 in the  
11 morning, the first radio person comes in. And the second radio  
12 comes in at 3:45. And then there'll be two controllers all the  
13 time until -- it varies a little bit, if you're on the weekend or  
14 whatever, I think. But 1930 and then 1920, they're all done.

15 Q. 1930 and --

16 A. Or 2030. 1930 and 2030.

17 Q. So two shifts, so I'm hearing the first one starts at 3:15.

18 Q. It's actually four shifts. First -- the first two operators  
19 come in at 3:15. Or one comes in at 3:15 and the other comes in at  
20 3:30. Then the third and fourth shift is 11 o'clock and 12  
21 o'clock.

22 Q. Okay. And how long is a shift?

23 A. Radios are 8 hours.

24 Q. And dispatch is?

25 A. Ten hours.

1 Q. So at night you're -- once the two leave, you're performing  
2 both duties?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. What do you think of that?

5 A. It's fine if everything goes good.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. If it doesn't, you're in a whole lot of trouble.

8 Q. How often do things not go well?

9 A. Well, last night was the first really, really -- or Thursday  
10 was the first really, really bad night I've had. But I have  
11 nights where I've actually been on the radio for an hour straight  
12 and I don't even answer the phone or anything because I get call  
13 after call after call after call after call.

14 They're giving me departure times. They're having issues.  
15 They've got fire trucks on the tracks. They've got passengers  
16 that are having issues. Just a whole range of things. The train  
17 breaks down and we get a -- we get a lot of those, where they get  
18 faults and stuff, so we have to walk them through the fault  
19 process to clear up. And then if that doesn't work, then  
20 maintenance has to go track them down.

21 Q. Okay. So I'm going to use your words, "really, really bad  
22 Thursday night." And I think earlier you described some of the  
23 events that were going on. You had an unruly passenger and two  
24 calls came in from a train operator because of that.

25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. But what other issues were you dealing with?

2 A. Well, then I get the -- I get people at the window all the  
3 time dropping off their radios and stuff. Maintenance comes up  
4 and talks to me a couple times a night.

5 Q. And just, I'm talking particularly this Thursday night, what  
6 you recall?

7 A. Oh, okay. They came up and before I took over, they wanted,  
8 they wanted something like 10 cars back so they could do weekly  
9 maintenance things. So I talked to the maintenance guy and we cut  
10 it back because I had to make two cuts to fill up the yard at 13th  
11 Street in order for them to have cars in the morning. So we got  
12 that figured out, and we got all the cars back he wanted. It's  
13 just that type of thing. Some nights are better than others.

14 Q. And this was not a good night?

15 A. Not after 2100, no.

16 Q. Not after 2100, yeah. Now back to the consist manager, I  
17 thought I heard you say it was messed up most of the afternoon?

18 A. That's what I was told, that it wasn't -- I don't know. It  
19 sounded like it was the cars and stuff weren't in order or they  
20 got off on a -- it wasn't updated or something. And I said, okay,  
21 that's fine because I won't have time to sit down and put them all  
22 in order.

23 Q. So that tool was really not available to you?

24 A. No.

25 Q. But during the day, if it's working, it is something that you



1 access?

2 A. Yeah. But I don't -- I access it and it's up on the -- up on  
3 one of the computer screens with me, but normally I just rely on  
4 the map and -- it is useful when I have to turn around trains. I  
5 can see exactly where they are, so I don't have to -- I've got a  
6 general area where they are, so I don't have to call them.

7 Q. We talked to a couple of the operators earlier today, and  
8 when they were calling in I think for Train 9, he's operating on  
9 different parts of the system and he would have to call in. And  
10 so, he described that he would call in periodically to say he was  
11 running 15 minutes late. But if I understood it, sometimes he  
12 speaks to different radio people.

13 A. Not when I'm there. It's just to me.

14 Q. Just to you? So every time he would call in, he would -- you  
15 would be the person he talks to?

16 A. Right.

17 Q. Not a --

18 A. Right.

19 Q. And is that the case even in the afternoon and at night?

20 A. Yeah. They'll have a specific person they talk to for their,  
21 those shifts.

22 Q. Okay. So you recognize that -- so he described to us that he  
23 was running 15 minutes late much of his shift. How do you make  
24 note of that? Is that something you plug in the system? Is that  
25 a paper report? Is that something you remember?

1 A. The controller tells me when she leaves if there's any issues  
2 going on. She passed on that he was 15 minutes behind and I had  
3 to make some cuts to fill up the yards. That was pretty much the  
4 pass-down.

5 Q. So the controller who was going off duty and you were taking  
6 over?

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. And what time would that have been?

9 A. 2020, 2015, right around that area.

10 Q. And -- okay. So now you have a conversation with the  
11 operator of Train 9 who wants to enter the main line. He calls  
12 you on the telephone, on your cell phone.

13 A. He's -- Train 9, no. He's on the radio.

14 Q. Oh, not Train 9. I'm sorry. The maintenance, the  
15 maintenance train.

16 A. Yeah, he called me on the phone.

17 Q. Why on the phone versus the radio?

18 A. A lot of times they'll call on the phone to make sure that  
19 they can get out or if there's a specific time I want them to  
20 leave, whatever is convenient basically. So they'll call and ask,  
21 hey, I got this to do; can we go out at this time? Or when did  
22 you want me to go out or --

23 Q. Okay. Okay.

24 A. And then when he's ready, he's on the train, and then he  
25 calls me on the radio.

1 Q. Okay. And at that time you still were mindful that Train 9  
2 was 15 minutes behind?

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. And so your instruction was you can enter the main line after  
5 Train 9?

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. Okay. What's the process for verifying? And this was done  
8 -- this discussion happened on the cell phone, or on the  
9 telephone?

10 A. What's the process --

11 Q. When he called, when he called you in the -- he called you on  
12 the telephone and you discussed after Train -- for him to enter  
13 the main line after Train 9.

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. Okay. Can you walk me through the protocol, that he makes a  
16 request and you respond and there's back and forth?

17 A. Like when he calls me, he just wants to know when would be a  
18 good time to go out and do the testing. Normally it's high-speed  
19 testing or brake testing or something of that nature. I don't  
20 know exactly what they do. He just asked me what a good time  
21 would be to go out.

22 Q. Okay. And you said?

23 A. I said pretty much any time. I said, just go after the  
24 outbound train.

25 Q. Okay. Now what is his responsibility? I mean, just after

1 the outbound train, what is his responsibility? Is he supposed to  
2 repeat exactly what you said? What's he going to reply to you?

3 A. He's on the phone. Well, he just goes okay.

4 Q. Not on the phone, but what if it were on the radio?

5 A. I would just tell him to go after Train 9.

6 Q. Okay. But --

7 A. Or the outbound Train 9.

8 Q. I'm just trying to understand is the radio protocol different  
9 if it's on the cell phone versus on the radio?

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. So on the radio, what is his responsibility? Is he  
12 responsible for repeating exactly what you said?

13 A. Well, the time is, the time -- specific instructions, yes,  
14 they will.

15 Q. But he's not responsible for repeating if he's on the cell  
16 phone?

17 A. No.

18 Q. Any reason for different protocol if it's radio or cell  
19 phone?

20 A. Just the way we do it. I don't know. When he's on the  
21 phone, he's not supposed to be on it, you know, when he's in the  
22 yard or anything. So I was assuming he was in his office.

23 Q. So -- I'm sorry. He's not supposed to be on the phone in  
24 what occasion?

25 A. Like in the yard or if he's on a train.

1 Q. So he enters, he enters the main line. If this were -- a bit  
2 of a hypothetical question. If this happened during the day,  
3 would you be inclined to pull up the consist manager or any tool  
4 to see where he is, if he did follow your instructions, or --

5 A. I would've -- the consist manager would have been up already.

6 Q. Okay. Now would you have been able to access that and see  
7 where he was?

8 A. Train 9?

9 Q. Yeah. Where he was in relation to Train 9?

10 A. Yeah. It would have been, it would have been one of the  
11 screens that I always have up.

12 Q. Okay. So if there were -- if he did enter at a time that he  
13 didn't request, it's more likely during the day that you would  
14 have detected that?

15 A. Yeah.

16 DR. JENNER: I think that's the questions I have for now.  
17 Thanks very much.

18 MR. TORRES: Do you need a break before we continue?

19 MR. BLAIR: It ain't going to get any cooler. No, I'm fine.

20 MR. TORRES: Okay. Then we'll (indiscernible).

21 MR. ROSE: Good afternoon, Chad. Michael Rose, CPUC.

22 MR. BLAIR: Hi.

23 BY MR. ROSE:

24 Q. Well, let's stay along the same lines here. My first  
25 question for you would be, from the initiating phone call from the

1 maintenance employee who took the train out, how long from the  
2 phone call until he called you on the radio? What was the time  
3 parameter in between the two calls?

4 A. It was less than 15 minutes.

5 Q. So I'm going to -- might double around just a little bit.  
6 While you were training and you were doing your OJT, on-the-job  
7 training, and you were sitting in with the other controllers, did  
8 they teach you to use consist manager and were they efficient in  
9 it and showed you how to use it and -- what was that like?

10 A. No. That wasn't -- that didn't exist.

11 Q. Didn't exist? When did that come into being?

12 A. Early 2019.

13 Q. So on a normal night in the middle of your shift, say, if you  
14 have to issue a bulletin when a train's entering into the main  
15 line, why don't you walk us through that procedure of how the  
16 bulletin would go into effect, who you notify, and just take it  
17 step by step.

18 A. During the -- when I'm a dispatcher?

19 Q. Yes. When you're -- no, when you're a controller, on the  
20 radio.

21 A. Well, it's the same process either way, but as a dispatcher  
22 that I'm working, I have to walk and go around to one of the other  
23 desks to sound the alarm. That's the only difference.

24 So you would get your information, sound the alarm over the  
25 radio. And then whichever line was affected or both lines were

1 affected, you would issue the bulletin and then the trains would  
2 respond to you.

3 Q. Do you call off the trains or do they call you?

4 A. No. They're pretty good about going in order and calling  
5 back when they're supposed to. Sometimes you've got to go back  
6 around and talk to them and see if they caught the bulletin.

7 Q. So that night when the test train came out, did you issue a  
8 bulletin?

9 A. I did not.

10 Q. Is there any specific reason why?

11 A. I got busy with the calls from Train 3 and -- I just got busy  
12 and he was almost halfway done with it by the time it settled down  
13 a little bit.

14 Q. When you do issue a bulletin, is there a procedure where you  
15 know it was issued and something you write down? Is that --

16 A. We write it on the control log.

17 Q. Control log?

18 A. What the bulletin was, what time you issued it, and the  
19 trains that responded to it.

20 Q. So it would go into the control log, time, who and where? So  
21 when you were talking to the maintenance train that was in the  
22 yard and you gave him permission after Train 9 passed their  
23 location, how would the maintenance crew know which train Train 9  
24 would be?

25 A. He would go outbound, past him.

1 Q. There's no signifying mark or --

2 A. There's a 9 in the -- as you're looking at the train, there's  
3 a symbol in the left windshield what train it is.

4 Q. Would they be able to see that at night? Is it illuminated?

5 A. It's illuminated.

6 Q. You said it's in the lower front windshield?

7 A. Yeah. On the -- as you're looking at the front window, it's  
8 on the left side.

9 MR. ROSE: So -- that's all I have for now. Thank you.

10 MR. BLAIR: Sure.

11 MR. DARRAGH: All right. This is John Darragh.

12 BY MR. DARRAGH:

13 Q. Hi, Chad. Have you regularly issued bulletins in the map or  
14 (indiscernible)?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Can you walk me through the process of when you've done  
17 (indiscernible) not just a (indiscernible) selection, but when a  
18 train is approaching? Walk us through the steps?

19 A. The train asks for authority to enter the main line and you  
20 give them the authority. And then right after that process, you  
21 give out the bulletin. You'll give the alert beeps on the radio  
22 and then you'll tell the trains that there's a bulletin. And tell  
23 them what it is -- an extra consist on the main line from Metro  
24 Yard to 13th Street. And then ask the trains to respond. And  
25 then they'll come back, each individual train will say, Train 1



1 copied the bulletin or Train 3 did not copy, Train 5 copied. That  
2 type of thing.

3 Q. And so when they're responding you keep track of who's  
4 responding, that kind of thing?

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. And if a train did not respond, what would you do?

7 A. You go back and call them. You'll go back and say, Train 3,  
8 did you copy the bulletin? And they'll say, no, Metro. And then  
9 I'll repeat the bulletin for them. And then they'll say, Train 3  
10 copies.

11 Q. And there's a call back operator? You said you call back the  
12 operator?

13 A. Yep. Yes.

14 Q. Now once all of the operators have acknowledged that they've  
15 heard the bulletin, then what do you do?

16 A. Nothing. It's -- they're ready to go. They're either on the  
17 main line now or they're waiting to get onto the main line.

18 Q. You stated earlier that Train 9 had reported to CRC that they  
19 were 15 minutes down?

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. Did you expect Train 9 to make up any time from CRC?

22 A. No.

23 Q. With that understanding, when did you expect Train 9 to be  
24 passing Marconi platform or getting out to Marconi?

25 A. Well, 15 minutes later than what they normally would be.

1 Q. And knowing that, how does that coincide with the request  
2 from the maintenance train to enter the main line?

3 A. Well, as I said, I asked him to depart after the outbound  
4 train, Train 9.

5 Q. Did you repeat that request to him over the radio?

6 A. No.

7 MR. DARRAGH: I have no further questions at this time.

8 MS. LAWTON: Hi, Chad. My name is Sheila Lawton.

9 MR. BLAIR: Hi.

10 BY MS. LAWTON:

11 Q. Hi. I just have a couple of questions. Your consist  
12 manager, is there a policy in place about utilization on shift?

13 A. They want us to use it.

14 Q. So does that mean there's a policy or there is not?

15 A. They want us to use it. There's no policy that I know of.

16 Q. Okay. So it's just a, if you feel like it, you use it. If  
17 you don't --

18 A. Well, during the daytime, they tell you to use it because  
19 it's Henry Li's petproject.

20 Q. I'm sorry? You said, Henry Li's pet project?

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. Okay. All right. Is there a policy on issuing bulletins?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. So the district has an SOP for issuing bulletins?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. So is it a -- can you explain to me what's in that policy,  
2 that SOP?

3 A. Basically it's when there's something different going on  
4 other than the normal traffic, the trains -- either maintenance of  
5 way or an extra consist or things of that nature, then you give  
6 out a bulletin so that the trains affected know.

7 Q. So would it -- would you say it would be a requirement to put  
8 out a bulletin in this particular instance?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. If a -- what's the time frame from when a bulletin goes out?  
11 So when you had that radio call with the maintenance train, how  
12 long would do you say it takes before the bulletin goes out?

13 A. Normally it's as soon as possible.

14 Q. So then, if a bulletin would go out -- would have gone out  
15 and there was another train on the line, they would've had an  
16 opportunity to call, right, saying "I'm out here"?

17 A. Correct.

18 Q. Are there -- can you kind of say whether or not -- so we know  
19 no bulletin went out now. So would it be -- is that necessarily  
20 unreasonable or does occasionally, especially on the evening  
21 shift, that that could occur from time to time?

22 A. Yes. Depending on how busy I am.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. You know, dealing with the other trains, you know, if trains  
25 break down or -- you know, just depending on what I get bombarded

1 with at that particular moment in the shift.

2 Q. Earlier on you said about that Thursday was a really bad  
3 night. Can you explain what was bad about it? I mean, was that  
4 leading up to when this happened or was it just encompassing the  
5 entire evening?

6 A. After -- or before this happened, it just -- I'm just talking  
7 about the accident and that type of stuff. It wasn't a horrible  
8 night, but it was, it was busy still. I never had any, you know,  
9 major issues that night, such as turning around trains or anything  
10 like that. But it was just a constant, the little stuff, issues  
11 here or I've got an electronic fault or something of that nature.  
12 So it wasn't a totally crazy night, but busy enough.

13 Q. Just one other question. Would it be unusual for you to have  
14 a regular call called that would be different from a maintenance  
15 person, would be different than what get's called over the radio?

16 A. They're generally the same. We kind of go over he wants to  
17 go out and do this and that. And then I say, yeah, that's fine; I  
18 don't have a problem with that. Normally I try to tell them what  
19 train to go behind, when to go out.

20 Q. Just educate me little bit here. Sorry. I don't work for  
21 RTA. So are they on the same -- is the operator on the revenue  
22 train and maintenance on the same radio frequency?

23 A. That night, yes. During the day they'll be on Channel 1,  
24 which is the Blue Line.

25 Q. Okay. So communication, they can hear each other's

1 communications? So when the maintenance is asking for access --

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. -- other trains should be able to hear that --

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. -- general on the radio, right?

6 A. Yes. Yes.

7 MS. LAWTON: That's all I have. Thank you.

8 MR. NIZ: Hi. Ralph Niz.

9 BY MR. NIZ:

10 Q. Chad, I've got a few questions here for clarification  
11 purposes, sir. Okay. So you were hired on by Regional Transit on  
12 February 2018?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Okay. And normal probationary period is how long?

15 A. At that time, 9 months.

16 Q. Nine months? And how long were you on probation total?

17 A. Nine months, 2 weeks.

18 Q. Nine months and 2 weeks. Okay. So prior to you arriving  
19 here at Regional Transit, and this question's not important, how  
20 much light rail experience did you have? I'm not just talking  
21 about dispatching.

22 A. Light rail, none. I worked for, I worked for three heavy  
23 freight railroads.

24 Q. Heavy train railroads?

25 A. Yep. Union Pacific, Montana Rail Link, and Canadian Pacific.

1 Q. And dispatching, did you have any --

2 A. Five years for Canadian Pacific dispatching?

3 Q. Okay. So in here when -- dispatching here, and we all know  
4 when you come on duty it entails a lot. Okay? Like you said, it  
5 could be an easy day; it could be a hard day, but it can get  
6 overwhelming.

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Because you have to take sick calls, you have to get the  
9 board, make sure the board is correct, correctly laid out for  
10 today. You have numerous obligations that you must do on top of  
11 everything else, and then you have to not only dispatch but you  
12 have radio control.

13 A. Correct.

14 Q. Now that night, you said that it wasn't really a hard, bad  
15 day, but was it overwhelming?

16 A. At times it can be because you have to get everything done by  
17 midnight-30. So what I try to do in the first part of my shift is  
18 I try to get all the paperwork I can done up to that point. Once  
19 I do that, as I'm on the radio, amongst the other things, I try to  
20 finish up the paperwork.

21 Q. But if you're left alone, it can become overwhelming?

22 A. Oh yeah, very much so.

23 Q. So that's my point.

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Okay. Because I know you work -- you have to dispatch and I

1 know, okay, that if you're doing radio control, you know, it is --  
2 you say that the last time Train 9 contacted you was at CRC  
3 telling you he was 15 minutes late?

4 A. Right. He might have, he might have called in --

5 Q. After that?

6 A. -- after that, saying he was 15 down, but I honestly don't  
7 recall.

8 Q. Yeah. We understand. We understand. You know, because of  
9 whatever is going on, because you stated that he called you, had  
10 already (indiscernible) to say he was 15 minutes late. But, you  
11 know, you being by yourself and getting overwhelmed like that, you  
12 know, I -- we understand.

13 That's all I have, sir. Thank you.

14 A. Thank you.

15 MR. HERBERT: Phil Herbert from the Federal Transit  
16 Administration.

17 BY MR. HERBERT:

18 Q. Chad, I just -- you said earlier about sounding the alarm for  
19 bulletins. Is that -- you had (indiscernible) tones, is that one  
20 and the same?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Okay. Just to clarify that. When -- your communications  
23 with, I believe it was Victor 12, did you specifically tell him  
24 Train 9 or did you just say the outbound train?

25 A. On the phone?

1 Q. Well, at any time?

2 A. At any time. On the phone I communicated with him that he  
3 would have to follow the outbound train, and I told him I believe  
4 it's Train 9.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. So yes.

7 Q. So he knew it was Train 9? Or he should have known it was  
8 Train 9? Okay. I know Mr. Niz just asked you, you know, can it  
9 be overwhelming. Specifically, that night, was it overwhelming  
10 for you?

11 A. At times.

12 Q. At times?

13 A. Like I said, there's segments where I can go an hour and I'll  
14 get, I'll get, you know, four trains calling in their departure  
15 time because everything's going all right. And then like, and  
16 other times I'll be on the radio straight for an hour, I can't  
17 even answer the phone or talk to anybody. I'm just one right  
18 after another.

19 Q. But specifically, Thursday, was it that kind of a day?

20 A. Not all night, no.

21 Q. Not all night.

22 A. Right prior to the incident it was busy. I was hopping. You  
23 know, I didn't have time to sit there and look out the window or  
24 anything.

25 Q. You had talked about consist manager. And correct me if I'm



1 wrong, did you have to -- if Victor 12 was going to go wayside or  
2 go out, did you have to physically enter that information into  
3 consist manager that he was out there?

4 A. Victor 12?

5 Q. Yes.

6 A. Yes. You would have to --

7 Q. You would have, you would have to go in and physically enter  
8 that?

9 A. Yeah. I'd have to find the car and put it in the proper  
10 section it would go in. I would have to make an extra train and  
11 then put the car in there and then the GPS should catch it.

12 Q. So that said, had you not done that and you had pulled up  
13 consist manager, would that train have been there?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. It would have?

16 A. The train -- the maintenance train?

17 Q. The maintenance train? Only --

18 A. Yeah. One thing --

19 Q. Only if you entered it?

20 A. Right. Once it got on the main line.

21 Q. Right. But if it went out -- in other words, it went out and  
22 you didn't enter it and you pulled up consist manager, that train  
23 would not appear?

24 A. No.

25 MR. HERBERT: Okay. I just wanted to clarify that. That's

1 all I have.

2 MR. BLAIR: There would be no -- like on your freight  
3 railroads, you'll have an indication in occupancy, but this  
4 doesn't have that.

5 MR. HERBERT: Right.

6 MR. BLAIR: Okay. Only if you put it in, then the train will  
7 follow the track.

8 MR. HERBERT: Okay.

9 MR. NIZ: I just have one more.

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We're going to go back around. He'll  
11 go back around, so --

12 MR. TORRES: Go ahead and ask.

13 MR. NIZ: Okay. So I have one more question for  
14 clarification.

15 MR. TORRES: Your name?

16 MR. NIZ: Oh, Ralph Niz.

17 BY MR. NIZ:

18 Q. Okay. Is there a difference between a bulletin and an  
19 advisory is treated? And what is the difference?

20 A. A bulletin is a, something is basically occupying the tracks  
21 or hindering the tracks. An advisory is like a potential hazard,  
22 like men working on the right-of-way, in between stations advisory  
23 type thing.

24 MR. NIZ: Okay. Thank you, sir.

25 MR. TORRES: Okay. Tomas with the NTSB.

1 BY MR. TORRES:

2 Q. I think you answered this one, but I guess I need to  
3 understand this. When you give a train operator authority to  
4 occupy the main track after the arrival or behind another train,  
5 there's no method or anything in process for them to verify when  
6 that train goes by?

7 A. Visually.

8 Q. Just visually? But he doesn't have to report that to anybody  
9 or --

10 A. Not as long as he sees it. A lot of times they'll say, Train  
11 9's went by; Victor 12 would like authorization to enter the main  
12 line. Sometimes they say that, sometimes they don't.

13 Q. So the operator of the maintenance train, he communicated  
14 with you twice, right? Once over the radio?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. And then when he pulled up to the signal, he called you again  
17 from his cell phone?

18 A. No. He called me on his cell phone first, probably when he  
19 was in the office. Then they went out on the train and called me  
20 on the radio asking for authority to enter the main line.

21 Q. Oh, I see. I thought it was the other way around.

22 A. No. I'm sorry.

23 Q. So when he was in the office, that's when you told him behind  
24 Train 9?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. It was not when he was at the signal?

2 A. Right.

3 Q. And you mentioned the consist -- what is it, train consist?

4 A. Yeah, consist manager.

5 Q. Consist manager. So when you enter a symbol -- you have to  
6 create a symbol to put into the system so it can track it?

7 A. You have to go in and make an extra train on whatever line  
8 you're on, and then you go in and find the train in the yard or  
9 the car in the yard and put it on that line that you made an extra  
10 consist on.

11 Q. And how does that show or how does it know when it's  
12 traversing the territory, you know, like in this location? How  
13 does it keep track? I know you mentioned GPS, but how? I mean,  
14 do you kind of, just kind of like click there and know --

15 A. Yeah, that's it, GPS. And then it will show up on the screen  
16 when it's out on the track.

17 Q. Yeah. But if it goes to another location, does it track it  
18 or does that symbol stay there?

19 A. There's no yard tracks on it or --

20 Q. No. But I mean on the main track. Once it goes onto the  
21 main track?

22 A. Yeah, it's --

23 Q. How does this consist manager actually track --

24 A. The train?

25 Q. -- that location?

1 A. From the GPS signal it sends out over the internet, I guess,  
2 like your Verizon phone. Like --

3 Q. So it has a transponder --

4 A. Like Google maps.

5 Q. So it has a transponder on the car?

6 A. I think so. I'm not exactly sure. But the way I understand  
7 it, it's like Google map follows you where you're going. It does  
8 that, pretty much same thing, I guess.

9 Q. Well, I guess I'm curious. What activates it, you know, the  
10 GPS for it to be, get tracked?

11 A. I don't know. They don't tell me. They just say it.

12 Q. It's not track service, right?

13 A. No, no, no. It's all GPS. Nope.

14 MR. TORRES: Okay. That's all for that now. Okay.

15 DR. JENNER: Hi, this is Steve Jenner.

16 BY DR. JENNER:

17 Q. I need to change directions on you. As part of our protocol  
18 we -- I'm interested in your work and off-duty activities on the  
19 days leading up to the day of the accident. So this incident  
20 happened Thursday. Can you tell me about your Tuesday and  
21 Wednesday activity? Did you -- what is your normal work week? Do  
22 you have assigned days off?

23 A. Yeah, my -- for this signup, my normal days off are Monday,  
24 Tuesday, Wednesday, and I work C dispatch Thursday, Friday,  
25 Saturday, Sunday.

1 Q. Okay. So Tuesday and Wednesday you were off?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Okay. What did you do Tuesday? Can you just tell me about  
4 your day?

5 A. I stayed at home. I don't normally go out and do stuff. I'm  
6 kind of working on my house, so I'm doing at least stuff around  
7 the house.

8 Q. And what time did you go to bed on Tuesday night?

9 A. Well, I normally don't go to bed until 4 or 5 in the morning.  
10 And then I sleep -- it depends, because I normally keep my work  
11 schedule all the way through so I don't go to bed until later.

12 Q. Right.

13 A. I stay on my schedule.

14 Q. Got it.

15 A. And then I, then I normally get up around 11 or 12.

16 Q. Okay. And so, Wednesday's also a day off. Do you recall  
17 what you did Wednesday?

18 A. Yeah. My sink flooded in the kitchen, so I was doing that  
19 for half the day.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. Home maintenance. So now it's Wednesday night and did you  
23 keep your sleep pattern?

24 A. Um-hum.

25 Q. So technically you went to bed Thursday --

1 A. Thursday morning. We'll lay in bed and watch TV and then  
2 when I fall asleep, I fall asleep.

3 Q. And that's about 4 or 5 a.m.?

4 A. 4 or 5, yeah.

5 Q. And what time did you get up later Thursday?

6 A. Well, it was probably 11:30, maybe 12.

7 Q. Okay. And you went on duty, you said?

8 A. Two o'clock.

9 Q. Great.

10 A. I leave my house normally 12:45. I live an hour away.

11 Q. Do you always maintain this type of like schedule?

12 A. I've worked in the railroad for over 15 years and I'd be on  
13 call, so I would never know when I'd go to work. So I would sleep  
14 when I could, or when I had a stable job it was normally night  
15 (indiscernible).

16 Q. Okay. How long were you doing dispatch in the railroad, in  
17 the freight railroad industry?

18 A. Five years.

19 Q. Five years?

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. And I heard CN, was it also?

22 A. Canadian Pacific.

23 Q. Yeah. CP, okay. Have do you compare the dispatches, CP  
24 versus this?

25 A. Do you want to know honest truth?

1 Q. I do.

2 A. I thought Canadian Pacific was below standard until I got  
3 here. And the first day I walked in I said, where's the computer  
4 system and they said, we don't have any; we have magnets. I go  
5 how do you keep track of your trains? Magnets and the timetable.

6 It's pathetic in my opinion. In fact, I won't let my wife  
7 ride the light rail. She wanted to a couple months back. I said,  
8 no.

9 Q. If you had -- I'm just learning about this, this morning.  
10 Can you walk us through the magnet process?

11 A. The magnets are on a magnet board and they stay up there  
12 pretty good as long as no one touches it. I've had them all fall  
13 on me one time. But you have numbers on -- for example, the Gold  
14 Line from Sacramento to Folsom, you have Trains 21 through 28.  
15 And they'll start out in normal order, 21 through 28, and then  
16 each time they go to Folsom, you have to flip them. So 21 becomes  
17 22, 22 becomes 21, 23 becomes 24, 24 becomes 23, blah, blah, blah,  
18 et cetera.

19 So you do that all day long. And in your consist manager,  
20 you're supposed to change them because it won't flip them. So you  
21 have to do that in the consist manager. So, and then -- so that's  
22 all day long. And then after it gets down to me, when I get it, I  
23 normally have six or seven trains on it. And then two more go  
24 away and then I have 21, 23, 25, 27 and 29. And they stay in that  
25 order then.



1           And then -- but to get in that order, they do some really  
2 weird stuff, like Train 22 becomes 23, 24 becomes extra Train 27,  
3 28 becomes 29. It's just -- if you don't do it a lot, you won't  
4 know what you're doing. You really won't.

5 Q.   How much time are you dedicating to maintaining or updating  
6 this magnet board?

7 A.   Once I get down to my final 10 trains, I don't have to touch  
8 the magnets.

9 Q.   You don't have a use for them?

10 A.   Right.

11 Q.   Okay.

12 A.   They stay in that same particular order because they're down  
13 to half-hour service so they won't switch numbers anymore.

14 Q.   Is it something you have to give a fair amount of attention  
15 to, a fair amount of time to, to keep it accurate in the way it's  
16 updated?

17 A.   Yeah. Yeah.

18 Q.   Do you -- it's an unusual system. Do you find it -- how  
19 helpful do you find it?

20 A.   What?

21 Q.   The magnet, the magnet system? Do you find it helpful?

22 A.   Yeah. Because that's the only way you can, honestly, keep  
23 track of the trains because the computer system -- you can put  
24 them in, but if you put them in wrong, that's the wrong train.  
25 You know, and you're not going to know about it unless you call

1 the operator, or they call it in and you'll be going, well, you  
2 should be on Train 111; why are you on 104? You know, that type  
3 of thing. So it's the better of both worlds, the magnets compared  
4 to the consist manager, in my opinion.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. It happens to me a lot.

7 Q. I like your description there. I have to ask one more series  
8 of more personal kind of questions.

9 A. Can I grab my water real quick?

10 Q. Of course.

11 A. Okay.

12 Q. I'm going to ask you about your overall health and any  
13 medical issues you have. So I'll just -- how is your overall  
14 health?

15 A. It's pretty good. I don't -- I've got some, or not asthma  
16 but sinus stuff going on.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. I'm on -- I take like Prilosec for stomach acid type stuff,  
19 and I'm on Singulair and Zyrtec.

20 Q. And --

21 A. Zyrtec.

22 Q. Yeah, if you can remind me what those are for?

23 A. Just allergy.

24 Q. Okay. How -- do those affect you?

25 A. No.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. No side effects.

3 Q. Okay. Any other chronic-type conditions? High blood  
4 pressure, seizures, anything like that?

5 A. I have high blood pressure and high cholesterol.

6 Q. What do you have to take?

7 A. I don't know what they are right offhand.

8 Q. Okay. But daily medications for that?

9 A. Um-hum.

10 Q. Okay. Okay. When you wake up, how's the quality of your  
11 sleep?

12 A. My sleep's pretty good. I wake up a couple times a night  
13 because this sinus stuff's kind of going on now.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. Other than that, I sleep good.

16 Q. Yeah. Have you ever been diagnosed with any type of sleep  
17 disorder?

18 A. No.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. No.

21 Q. I see you're wearing glasses now. Do you wear those during  
22 the shift?

23 A. Um-hum.

24 Q. Okay. And you were wearing those Thursday night?

25 A. Yep.

1 Q. Okay. Any other non-prescription medications or anything  
2 besides allergies?

3 A. I take an occasional Ibuprofen for a headache or whatever,  
4 but nothing --

5 Q. Okay. Of all the things that you've listed, do you feel that  
6 it has any type of sedating effect on you or alertness or  
7 anything?

8 A. No. No, not at all.

9 DR. JENNER: Okay. I appreciate that.

10 MR. ROSE: Hey, Chad, Michael Rose, CPUC.

11 BY MR. ROSE:

12 Q. So the first question I have you is, when was the last  
13 previous shift you worked before the incident?

14 A. It would have been Sunday night.

15 Q. The date, please?

16 A. So that was the 22nd -- 17th, I think. Sunday, the 17th.  
17 I'm not sure if that's the right date.

18 Q. What was the, what was the purpose of the absence?

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: 18th.

20 MR. BLAIR: Oh, 18th. Thank you.

21 BY MR. ROSE:

22 Q. Being in between shifts?

23 A. It was just my days off, 3 days off. I work four 10s, so I  
24 get 3 off.

25 Q. So when you're in the control room and you're dispatching and

1 also monitoring the radio, are those two separate locations or are  
2 you in one centralized location?

3 A. I'm in one location. I sit behind the window. But like the  
4 alert notice and stuff like that, and if I needed to change the  
5 radio channels on the big radio, I'd have to go to one of the  
6 radio desks.

7 Q. Going back to your training, since you completed probation  
8 and you're on your own, have you received any further training  
9 since that point?

10 A. They have put me on, what do you call it, put me on a PIP,  
11 it's a performance something. I don't know.

12 Q. PIP as in P-I-P?

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. If you were to guess, what is that acronym for?

15 MR. BLAIR: John?

16 MR. DARRAGH: The acronym's Performance Improvement Program.

17 MR. BLAIR: Yeah. Thank you.

18 MR. ROSE: Thank you.

19 BY MR. ROSE:

20 Q. With the, with PIP, what kind of training have you received  
21 under that program?

22 A. I spent a week with one of the senior -- or senior radio  
23 operators.

24 Q. What were the events that led up to you being put into the  
25 PIP plan?

1 A. Well, they called me in the office one day and said, we're  
2 going to put you on this performance plan because you've had  
3 issues not responding to the trains because you keep asking,  
4 please repeat. And there was, I don't know, there was a couple of  
5 other things. Yeah, to be honest, it was all brought on me at  
6 once. No indication beforehand or anything like that and -- so --

7 Q. Do you know roughly what time of the year that was that you  
8 were put into that 1 week of PIP program?

9 A. Well, it was just the 1 week of training. It was a 3-month  
10 process. But that ended in -- I got off the radio this signup, so  
11 the performance plan ended because I was no longer on the radio,  
12 so that went off my radar, which would have been June.

13 MR. BLAIR: Is that when our new signup was, June?

14 MR. DARRAGH: Mid-June we changed.

15 MR. BLAIR: Mid-June was the new signup. So I -- yeah, I got  
16 off the radio.

17 BY MR. ROSE:

18 Q. So it'd be fair to say that was back in April you were put  
19 into that program?

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. I got no feedback from that whatsoever.

23 Q. That was going to be my next question was --

24 A. Nothing. It was brought on super quick. I didn't even know  
25 that I was going to be in this new program they had. And then so

1 they put this on me and then no response or feedback.

2 Q. So you were put into a performance improvement plan and never  
3 told what you needed to improve upon? You were put into a  
4 performance improvement plan but never told where your performance  
5 needed to be improved?

6 A. Well, they went over -- I spent a week with a senior  
7 dispatcher and we talked about a whole bunch of stuff and talked  
8 about some things that I could work on, and I realized that one of  
9 the things I was doing -- for example, a train would call me, and  
10 it's not that I wasn't doing anything. I wouldn't answer them  
11 right away because I was looking at the cameras to see where he  
12 was and then I would answer them. But they would always, they  
13 would always call and go in -- you know, this is such and such  
14 train; I'm at such and such signal. So I just tried to work on  
15 that, speed that up a little bit, so there's an instant answer for  
16 them, that type of thing.

17 Q. Okay. Under that program, did you have any documents that  
18 you signed or --

19 A. Yeah, I signed a document stating that I was in this program  
20 and it would be off my record, cancelled, after I was off the  
21 radio or 3 months.

22 Q. What about for the training, did you sign anything for the  
23 training that you received for that, for the PIP? Were you given  
24 an evaluation sheet or --

25 A. No.

1 Q. -- anything like that?

2 A. Nothing.

3 Q. Other than that, no other training since?

4 A. No.

5 Q. Okay. So before the incident though, you weren't, you  
6 weren't off any extended period of time?

7 A. No, sir.

8 MR. ROSE: That's all that I have. Thank you.

9 MR. DARRAGH: Hi, Chad. John Darragh.

10 BY MR. DARRAGH:

11 Q. So we talked about the consist manager as far as specific  
12 locations for the trains, you had (indiscernible). Can you see  
13 the Blue Line trains from the control booth?

14 A. You could, yes, when they go past the yard. Yeah.

15 Q. So when the Blue Line trains are passing the control room,  
16 you can see that looking down and out, then, correct?

17 A. You can, yes. The shades were closed, though.

18 Q. Okay. So that evening the shades were closed. You did not  
19 look to see where Train 9 was at through the windows?

20 A. No. They keep them closed because of the air conditioning.

21 Q. So they keep the blinds closed because of the air  
22 conditioning?

23 A. Yeah. Because as the sun goes through the windows at night,  
24 you get roasted in there, especially on the D operator or D  
25 controller.



1 Q. So you're saying in the evening due to the sun, they're  
2 keeping the blinds closed on this side of the road? Are you  
3 saying the big track?

4 A. There's two sets of windows, this side and the back side, and  
5 they keep them closed.

6 Q. We talked about the switching of the consist numbers on the  
7 Gold Line for the consist manager. Do the Blue Line train numbers  
8 switch?

9 A. No.

10 Q. The magnet board, you also spoke about the magnet board. Now  
11 the magnet board, does it provide you location information?

12 A. No, it does not.

13 Q. So the purpose of the magnet board is then for what? Can you  
14 describe that for us?

15 A. It tells you the LRVs on each particular train.

16 Q. For each car in the consist?

17 A. Yeah. If they're set up right.

18 Q. You spoke about the performance improvement plan. Did you  
19 ever speak with the superintendent after the performance  
20 improvement plan?

21 A. I went up and asked Lorne once and I said, what's going on  
22 with this performance plan, and he goes, it's fine. I go, okay.  
23 And he said, (indiscernible) we talked about it.

24 Q. Did you -- you said you had training with one senior radio  
25 controller. Did you also have training with anyone else?

1 A. Yep. I went down to the LRV maintenance and they went  
2 through some clearing faults and doors issues. And that was for  
3 like 2 hours.

4 Q. Did you have any training with a trainer?

5 A. No. But he might have set in with Dave for a half a day or 4  
6 days, I mean. But I don't recall that.

7 MR. DARRAGH: I have no further questions.

8 MR. TORRES: Okay.

9 MS. LAWTON: I don't have anything further.

10 MR. NIZ: Okay. Ralph Niz.

11 BY MR. NIZ:

12 Q. Just for clarification purposes, this performance program --

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. -- that you were put into without your knowledge till later,  
15 did this put you under undue stress knowing that the outcome of  
16 this evaluation you could be terminated?

17 A. Yes. Well, I don't know if --

18 Q. What would have been outcome if you were unfavorably be  
19 evaluated?

20 A. I'm not, I'm not exactly sure they would have disciplined me  
21 at some point, but --

22 Q. I'm not talking about discipline. I'm talking about  
23 termination.

24 A. It could have led up to that, yeah.

25 Q. Yes, it could have. And I know it could have because I know

1 their policies. Okay? So that's why I asked.

2 A. And I was the first individual lucky enough to be on the new  
3 program.

4 Q. I know. Okay. So my other question to you, in leading to  
5 John's, you know, can you see the Blue Line through the windows,  
6 you know, whatever. I would think that you're doing your job and  
7 you wouldn't be sitting there looking for a train, trying to, you  
8 know, look and see where Train 9 was or looking to see whoever  
9 because you're busy doing your job. Right?

10 That's all. Thank you very much.

11 A. Did I miss the question?

12 Q. Oh, I'm sorry. Would you have been doing that? Would you  
13 have been sitting there looking out for a train through the  
14 windows?

15 A. No.

16 MR. NIZ: Thank you.

17 MR. HERBERT: Phil Herbert from the Federal Transit  
18 Administration.

19 BY MR. HERBERT:

20 Q. I just have two questions. Going back real quick to the  
21 consist manager. It's a GPS-based system. Can you tell what  
22 track the train is on? I mean, obviously we would know direction,  
23 but would you know what track it is on?

24 A. No.

25 Q. Why?

1 A. It's a bar and they're either on top or bottom. One goes  
2 this way, one goes that way.

3 Q. Okay. Going --

4 A. It looks kind of like you've got a line and then you got --  
5 let's say if it's going this way, they've got a little car here  
6 and if it's going that way, you've got a little car here. But it  
7 doesn't differentiate between the tracks and if -- unless you were  
8 watching it, the movement, you will -- unless you assumed it was  
9 on the bottom, and then what happens if you assume?

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. You know what I'm saying?

12 Q. Um-hum.

13 A. So I --

14 Q. So it's -- and I don't want to -- is it similar to, like GPS  
15 tracking, and you were saying, you said Google maps. If you're  
16 traveling along, let's say, Interstate 5 here, your pinpoint for  
17 your cell phone on Google maps may show you traveling south in a  
18 northbound lane. Is that a fair --

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. Okay. And then moving forward to your performance  
21 improvement plan. You had said that there was a statement made  
22 that you were not hearing trains and --

23 MR. HERBERT: Steve, I'm going to defer to you because it was  
24 -- you ask the question all the time, and I don't think if you  
25 asked it, if he had any hearing issues.

1 BY MR. HERBERT:

2 Q. Do you have any hearing issues?

3 A. No. Well, my wife says different. No, I do not have any  
4 hearing issues.

5 Q. Any diagnosed hearing issues?

6 A. No. I have my ears tested every year.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. And I am -- it's all perfect. A lot of the problems you have  
9 is you have 10 different people out there and they can be from all  
10 different parts, backgrounds and stuff, and a lot of them just,  
11 really fast. Some you can't really understand because of the  
12 dialect. It's difficult. And that's why I go, could you repeat,  
13 because they come on the radio, they go Metro, blah, blah, blah.  
14 And you're trying to, you know, find out, okay, who's this, You  
15 know? and sometimes they'll speak fast or you can't really  
16 understand them, and that's why I have to go, can you repeat?

17 Q. So is it fair to say that at times radio transmissions are  
18 not clear --

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. -- and accurate? Or I don't want to say accurate, but clear  
21 or distorted because of the way --

22 A. That is accurate. And to add to that, they've switched  
23 systems to a digital system, I think it is.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. And it's gotten worse. I used to wear an earpiece. I have a

1 hard time hearing the people with it so I just have my open mike.  
2 But it's -- you know, there's individuals out there that, I'm not  
3 going to name names, but you have no idea what they're saying.  
4 But you get bits and pieces of it, so you understand what they're  
5 saying, but you can't really understand everything they said. You  
6 know, and a lot of it is getting to know the individuals.

7 And you, you know, you know certain operators -- one  
8 individual you just can't understand, and I spent 6 months on the  
9 radio talking to him every day, so okay, this is such and such and  
10 he's at T-9 department. You know, but if you listen to it, the  
11 radio, you'd be going, what the heck did he say, you know.

12 Q. And they use positive for repeat back here? You give  
13 instructions and it's repeated back, your instructions?

14 A. If I give them instructions, yes.

15 MR. HERBERT: Okay. I have nothing else.

16 DR. JENNER: Steve Jenner.

17 BY DR. JENNER:

18 Q. If I can just get, just a couple of names in the dispatch, in  
19 that setup. When you were under the PIP program, you were sitting  
20 with a senior person for a week.

21 A. That was just on the radio, when I was on the radio.

22 Q. Okay. Who was that person?

23 A. Dave Phillips.

24 Q. Who else was -- when you were in the training process for the  
25 supervising you spent time training with?

1 A. When I first started or for this --

2 Q. Throughout.

3 A. You get tossed around to everybody.

4 Q. Okay. Who did you have the most exposure to?

5 A. At the time -- the one guy's retired. I spent a couple of  
6 weeks with him. Pam Michener (ph.), I spent 4 weeks with her,  
7 those are the daytime. And nighttime -- one gentleman has left  
8 already. I don't remember during the -- you know, from noon to 8,  
9 or whatever it was, I don't remember who I was with very much  
10 there.

11 Q. So the PIP process is generally a 3-month period?

12 A. I believe so, yes.

13 Q. Did you find it beneficial?

14 A. I did when I was working with Dave. We kind of took what was  
15 going on, and it took him watching me to see what I was doing to  
16 make a couple of things click to become better. So in that sense  
17 it was beneficial. Yeah.

18 Q. And I heard you say you were off the radio for a period of  
19 time.

20 A. Yep.

21 Q. But what was that period when you were off the radio?

22 A. Well, I was -- when I came out of probation, I was on  
23 vacation relief so I worked the radio once or twice or a handful  
24 of times during that time. And then I spent on the radio and then  
25 I was dispatch, so I'm on the radio half the time and doing

1 dispatch.

2 Q. But being -- so your radio exposure was reduced for a period  
3 of time? Is that what I hear you saying?

4 A. After I got out of training, yes.

5 Q. After the PIP training?

6 A. After the original training to finish my probation I was on,  
7 I was filling in where I was needed.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. And I only worked the radio once or twice, or three times,  
10 just a small amount. It wasn't every day.

11 Q. And what time frame are we talking? What months are we  
12 talking there?

13 A. So, it would have been November through January, and then I  
14 went to the radio.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. 2018 to 2019, January. Yeah.

17 Q. So from January on, then you were more regular with the  
18 radio?

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. Okay. From January to this time?

21 A. Yeah.

22 DR. JENNER: Okay. Okay. Thanks for clarifying. That's all  
23 I have.

24 BY MR. ROSE:

25 Q. So was your reassignment to the night shift after the PIP?



1 A. During.

2 Q. During?

3 A. Once you change jobs, it was supposed to end and go away.

4 Q. Did you recently attend the PC832 class?

5 A. Yes. Last week.

6 Q. Last week?

7 A. Yep.

8 Q. And were you off duty for that?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. So you missed, how many -- how many days of work were you off  
11 doing the PC832 class?

12 A. Five days. Six days, sorry. I had the Sunday off before.

13 Q. Did you work any time between the PC832 class and the time of  
14 the incident?

15 A. No. Oh, yes. I worked -- I'm sorry. I worked Sunday.

16 Q. So you only had one shift in between?

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. So you had one shift in roughly 10 days before the incident?

19 A. Yes.

20 MR. ROSE: That's all the questions I have. Thank you.

21 MR. DARRAGH: Hi, Chad. This is John Darragh.

22 BY MR. DARRAGH:

23 Q. You described your radio shifts prior to being issued the  
24 PIP. Those radio shifts are how long?

25 A. Eight hours.

1 Q. And you had those shifts how many days a week?

2 A. Five days a week.

3 Q. So with the new shift that you took in June, compare that  
4 shift now, how much time are you on the radio?

5 A. Five hours at least a night. Yeah, right around there.

6 MR. DARRAGH: I've got no further questions.

7 MS. LAWTON: I don't have any questions.

8 MR. NIZ: Okay. Ralph Niz.

9 BY MR. NIZ:

10 Q. So you stated with the radio, it's hard for you to understand  
11 people at times? Right?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. So my questions to you is that do you believe that the radio  
14 is being handled professionally to the extent that, is there too  
15 much chatter on there? Do operators break in all the time? Do  
16 other people break in all the time? Is it a controlled situation?

17 A. Yes and no. And let me explain. If everything's kind of  
18 quiet, everyone's kind of snap to and they get to their point,  
19 reporting this and that. You've got a couple operators that might  
20 kind of like to hear themselves talk or they get frustrated and a  
21 lot of unnecessary chatter.

22 I do my best to calm it down. I don't blatantly say, you  
23 know, only important stuff. I'll just check them, you know, on  
24 the radio so they know that I'm listening, but I really don't want  
25 to hear all the unnecessary garbage.

1           And it's usually has to do with passengers, you know, and  
2 that type of thing. At night I get a lot of, I get a lot of radio  
3 garbage from the maintenance, with one maintenance talking to the  
4 other maintenance telling them to switch over to their channel.  
5 So it's kind of weird.

6 Q.    Because then I noted that you say it's gotten worse and  
7 that's why I wanted the clarification.

8 A.    Yeah. The worst is it's harder to understand people since  
9 they switched over the radio, whatever they did. Everyone's kind  
10 of all monotone and like in a, like listening in a tube, if you  
11 would. The other system they had you could really differentiate  
12 between the people's voices so you kind of knew who they were when  
13 they were calling. And that would automatically set you up to,  
14 okay, this is Train 4, and I knew that before even said anything,  
15 you know, because like I said, each individual has a distinct  
16 voice. But they're all kind of the same now.

17           MR. NIZ: Thank you.

18           MR. BLAIR: I don't know if --

19           MR. TORRES: Okay. Tomas with the NTSB. No further  
20 questions. This will conclude the interview. Thank you.

21           MR. BLAIR: Thank you.

22           (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

23

24

25

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

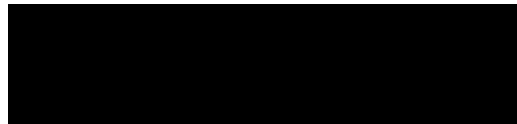
IN THE MATTER OF:            TRAIN DERAILMENT  
                                     SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA  
                                     AUGUST 22, 2019  
                                     Interview of Chad Blair

ACCIDENT NO.:                DCA19FR011

PLACE:                         Sacramento, California

DATE:                         August 24, 2019

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.



Romona Phillips  
Transcriber