

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

*

DERAILMENT OF UNION PACIFIC *

RAILROAD TRAIN UEBLTG 20 WITH * Accident No.: RRD19FR007

SUBSEQUENT FIRE AND HAZARDOUS *

MATERIALS RELEASE, FORT WORTH, *

TEXAS, APRIL 24, 2019 *

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Interview of: JOSEPH LLANES
Conductor

Homewood Suites
Fort Worth, Texas

Thursday,
April 25, 2019

APPEARANCES:

RYAN FRIGO, Rail Accident Investigator
Operations and System Safety
National Transportation Safety Board

DANIEL MEYER, Safety Inspector
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Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)

ADAM GIOVANDO, Deputy Regional Administrator
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JOHN ALLBERRY, General Director, Operating Practices
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KAMRON SAUNDERS, National Safety Team
SMART Transportation Division

STEVE FACKLAN, Safety Task Force
Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen (BLET)

JOHN PROKOP, Safety Task Force
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FERNANDO PAZ, Union Representative
BLET
(On behalf of Mr. Llanes)

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I N T E R V I E W

1
2 MR. FRIGO: Okay, we're on the record. All right, good
3 afternoon. My name is Ryan Frigo. I am an operations and system
4 safety investigator with the National Transportation Safety Board.
5 Today is April 25. We are at the Homewood Suites in south Fort
6 Worth. We're here to talk with Mr. Joseph Llanes?

7 MR. LLANES: Yes.

8 MR. FRIGO: Who was the conductor on the UP train that had a
9 derailment with fire on April 24th at approximately 12:23 in the
10 a.m. in south Fort Worth. The NTSB accident reference number is
11 RRD19FR007.

12 At this time we're going to go around the room and introduce
13 ourselves. Please spell your last name for the benefit of the
14 transcriptionist, and please say what party that you're
15 representing. I'll start and go to my right.

16 Ryan Frigo, F-R-I-G-O, NTSB operations system safety.

17 MR. SAUNDERS: Kamron Saunders, S-A-U-N-D-E-R-S, with SMART
18 TD.

19 MR. FACKLAN: Steve Facklan, F-A-C-K-L-A-N, BLET Safety Task
20 Force.

21 MR. PROKOP: John Prokop, P-R-O-K-O-P, BLET Safety Task
22 Force, posting.

23 MR. IGNACIO: Noel Ignacio, I-G-N-A-C-I-O, FRA, posting.

24 MR. GIOVANDO: Adam Giovando, G-I-O-V-A-N-D-O, FRA, Region 5,
25 posting.

1 MR. ALLBERRY: John Allberry, A-L-L-B-E-R-R-Y, Union Pacific,
2 operating practices.

3 MR. MEYER: Daniel Meyer, M-E-Y-E-R, FRA, operating
4 practices.

5 MR. LLANES: Joseph Llanes, L-L-A-N-E-S, conductor, Fort
6 Worth, Hearne.

7 MR. FRIGO: And Mr. Llanes, do we have your permission to
8 record this conversation with you here today?

9 MR. LLANES: Yes.

10 MR. FRIGO: Great. And do you wish to have a representative
11 with you here?

12 MR. LLANES: Yes.

13 MR. FRIGO: Sir?

14 MR. PAZ: Fernando Paz, BLET, P-A-Z.

15 MR. FRIGO: Thank you, sir.

16 All right, Mr. Llanes, is it okay if we go on a first-name
17 basis?

18 MR. LLANES: Yes. That's fine.

19 MR. FRIGO: All right. Joe, thank you.

20 INTERVIEW OF JOSEPH LLANES

21 BY MR. FRIGO:

22 Q. Joe, can you start out by giving us a history of your work
23 experience on the railroad?

24 A. I've been employed with UP for 6 years. I worked off and on
25 between the yard and the road within that 6-year period, so

1 familiar with yard operations and road operations with UP.

2 Q. Conductor the entire time?

3 A. Conductor -- did a brief period in 2018, between April 2018
4 and August of 2018, as a fireman in the engineer program for Union
5 Pacific.

6 Q. Okay, and you're currently a conductor?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Okay. Any previous railroad experience prior to UP?

9 A. No, just military.

10 Q. Okay. And how long was your tour?

11 A. Five years. Active duty.

12 Q. Five years. Joe, thank you for your service.

13 A. Yes, sir.

14 Q. Joe, we spoke to Vincent, who was the engineer that night
15 and, you know, we're going to ask you some similar questions. If
16 you can just start with when you went on duty, where was that at,
17 and just kind of walk us through the evening of the accident.

18 A. Okay. We were called for 2230, 10:30 p.m., for a unit
19 ethanol train for -- in a yard located in Fort Worth. On-duty
20 time -- I showed up early to print paperwork we needed for our
21 train: train list; track warrant bulletins; a BU, which lays out
22 our information for our locomotives that we have; and tonnage, TPA
23 limits.

24 We waited for about an hour and a half or so for the train to
25 arrive. And we were just there, just talking with the other crew

1 members there in the crew room. When the train arrived, it was
2 stopped directly in the back door where our entry door is for the
3 yard. We did a quick job briefing with the inbound crew, said no
4 issues with the train. There was -- it ran fine. We got up on
5 the train. I started to put our ice up, just normal daily duties
6 we do to get ourselves comfortable within an engine. Started
7 cleaning the desk off. And that's pretty much how we started, you
8 know, before we even left the terminal.

9 And yeah, we just pulled down to the south end of the yard
10 and waited to get our track warrant from the Midlothian sub
11 dispatcher. That took maybe 20, 30 minutes, I want to say.
12 Somewhere in that time period.

13 Q. Can you recall what time you received the track warrant?

14 A. It was at midnight -- I want to say midnight-12, I think it
15 was, on that track warrant when we got it.

16 Q. Okay. And you mentioned, you know, several items paperwork
17 that you review as part of your job as a conductor.

18 A. Right.

19 Q. Anything abnormal that evening with the paperwork, anything
20 unusual?

21 A. No. I mean, we had our temporary slow orders throughout the
22 Midlothian subdivision that we've, you know -- that has been there
23 for -- one of them has been there since early this month; some of
24 them have been there for close to a year. But it was -- there was
25 no abnormal things out of the ordinary that would either delay our

1 train or that would cause us to have to stop and protect crossings
2 or anything or -- for that particular night, there was no Form C's
3 for a flash flood warning that was issued systemwide or just for
4 our location. So, I mean, it was just, you know, normal business,
5 really.

6 Q. Okay. So at 12:12, approximately 12:12, you get the track
7 warrant.

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. What happens next?

10 A. We go to our channel 7878. Talked to our terminal train
11 dispatcher, which controls the immediate area within Fort Worth.
12 We tell him we got our track warrant to ride the branch, is what
13 we specified the Midlothian sub. He's like, okay, well, signal
14 indication, which means he's waiting -- we're going to look for
15 our light, and a good indication for us to proceed on. And we
16 did. It was approximately midnight-27 when we had that signal,
17 when we actually went by it. And we proceeded down the turnout
18 through the Midlothian sub, which starts at milepost 50.3, and
19 that's where our warrant had started.

20 So coming down that hill -- as you get to Highway 35, it
21 starts downhill, the decline into the subdivision. And, of
22 course, the speed limit there is 30. It's a permanent speed
23 restriction there. So we weren't going nowhere near that, you
24 know. We didn't want to break any land speed records or anything,
25 so -- we were making sure -- because we knew the contents of the

1 train, what it was, so we were going to take it easy, take the
2 safe route, ensure that the cargo can get there safely without any
3 issues.

4 But as we started getting towards Echo Park Lake, which is on
5 the south side of the main line, the engineer had noticed that the
6 lake was full. I looked over and I saw that it's like -- yeah,
7 it's a little full. And as we started getting towards the Fort
8 Worth and Western main line that sits above our main line, I see
9 the water rushing on the south side of the track. And as we
10 started getting closer and I could see where the ditch light is
11 coming off that curve, I see the rain, the water was rushing from
12 the north side of the track as well. And I'm seeing, looking to
13 check for ballast to make sure the ballast hadn't been swept away,
14 and I couldn't see anything.

15 And as we got closer to that bridge, I see a section where
16 the water's rushing from the north side of the track to the south
17 side in between the ties, which I've seen before, and there's
18 never been any issues with it. I mean, it's just the ballast just
19 had ran out between the ties. But as we started getting down to
20 the first curve -- it goes downhill to the right on the curve. As
21 we started getting over that area, we didn't feel anything, and I
22 was expecting to feel some type of turbulence, whether the engines
23 start rocking left to right or bounce up and down. There was no
24 indication that something was wrong in that area.

25 And as we started our downhill descent, we passed our first

1 intermediate signal. It's at -- I want to say it's 48.5 is our
2 first intermediate signal. We started going downhill. We see a
3 pallet -- I see a pallet on the north side of the track, laying
4 there. And it had some debris on top of it, and we hit it, and it
5 made a loud bang noise, which of course -- you know what I'm
6 saying? That we hit it. Well, as we passed it, the train had ran
7 into emergency. And I had thought that it was the pallet that
8 hung up and got an air hose, which does happen occasionally,
9 because it was all bind up with metals and everything.

10 So when we got stopped, finally stopped, we had stopped on
11 the bottom of the hill, of a steel span bridge. And we didn't
12 feel anything. We didn't feel no jump, no jerk, no pullback in
13 the train slack pulling out. Nothing. It just came to a quick --
14 just a nice easy stop like anybody would want. The engineer
15 turned and looked back. He said, we derailed and we're on fire.
16 As soon as he said that, I looked out the window, and I could see
17 the flames shooting above the train immediately after it happened.

18 So he dialed 911 on the radio, which is our emergency call.
19 And I announced on the radio, emergency, emergency, emergency.
20 UP2677's in emergency, milepost -- I believe we were at milepost
21 48.25. That's where our head-end location was. And the
22 dispatcher had answered, and I told him, UP2677, we're in
23 emergency; we derailed and we're on fire. And he -- I gave him
24 the location where we were, which was 48.25. At that time I was
25 grabbing my gear at the same time, and I immediately -- and the

1 engineer had told me, hey, we need to pull the pin, the pin lifter
2 on the engine and the first car we had. Soon as he said that,
3 there was no hesitation, I ran out the back door and ran through
4 the second and third engine to pull the pin and turn the angle
5 cock, which cuts off the air, the main train line air. Which is
6 kind of difficult where it was, because I had to tippy-toe on the
7 edge of the ties on that bridge to turn the angle cock to cut the
8 air off. But when I pulled the pin, the engineer was still in
9 panic mode, trying to reset the air. So we had to wait a minute
10 to reset the air before we could move.

11 By the time -- he gave me a countdown. I got -- to reset the
12 air I got 60 seconds. Said I got 30 seconds left. By the time
13 the air had reset, he took off and went to the first crossing,
14 which was 48.35. It was Butler Street. And I had got off the
15 train and called the MYO, which was Shane at the time, and let him
16 know what was happening. And I couldn't get a response, so I went
17 to channel 78 and told the MYO, I was like, hey, we're in
18 emergency; we derailed and we're on fire here. I need you to meet
19 me here at Butler Street if you can.

20 I was like, all right. So I went back to 37, told the
21 engineer -- I was like, hey, give me a train list so I can go meet
22 fire department and try to give them the information they need
23 about this train. And that was my first priority, to try to get
24 them that hazardous material response guide that we get on our
25 train list. That way, they -- because I don't know what was

1 there. I don't know how many houses or who was around. So that
2 was my main concern, was trying to get the plan for them so they
3 can start to get the public -- either they need to get out of the
4 way, evacuate, or so they know how to put the fire out. And I ran
5 from Butler Street to Yuma Street, where the command center was
6 actually at. And I gave them -- I told them the contents of the
7 car was ethanol or alcohol that was in it. And, you know, at that
8 time when I told them, the MYO had showed up and he had another
9 copy that he made for the fire department to give to them as --
10 for them to keep. And that's when the manager gave me a ride to
11 the rear end of my train to find out -- give an idea how many cars
12 are actually derailed and, if I can, see how many were actually on
13 fire.

14 As close as I could get, I was able to get to the 58th --
15 41st car in our train, and I counted down from there. I saw --
16 what I saw was still six cars that were still sitting on the track
17 going -- looking south. The seventh car that I saw was turned
18 sideways, and the fire was beyond it, maybe about another 150 feet
19 beyond it, and shooting up above the cars. And I came back with
20 him to the MYO to pick me up. And after that, it was just -- so
21 much had happened within such a short little time. It was nothing
22 I had ever seen before. And it was a first-time event for me,
23 so --

24 Q. Joe, thank you for that detailed recollection there.

25 A. You're welcome.

1 Q. One of the things you mentioned was that you -- prior to the
2 -- I believe that you said prior to the area where the water was
3 rushing over, there was another spot that you've seen previously
4 where you would see water.

5 A. Yeah, it was on the north side of the track. Is that what
6 you're talking about or --

7 Q. I just thought I heard you -- I thought I heard you say
8 something that there was a -- right before you got to the area
9 where --

10 A. Oh, it was the lake. It was Echo Park Lake that we had
11 noticed it. Because around that curve, when you come to 35,
12 coming over the bridge you see the lake on the right-hand side.
13 And as you get closer to where the first crossing is, he -- that's
14 when he noticed the lake was full. And then I looked up and saw
15 the lake was actually full. But it wasn't until we got further
16 down that we noticed that it was actually overflowing the banks
17 and running down the side, south side of the track.

18 Q. And I'm going to -- the past 6 years, your experience, has it
19 been on this territory?

20 A. It's been on -- I've done time on the Midlothian sub, did
21 time on the Fort Worth -- or the Fort Worth sub, Dallas sub
22 between Arlington and Fort Worth. I've been Fort Worth to
23 Denison, which is north Texas close to the Red River. I've been
24 to Fort Worth and Sweetwater, which is west Texas, and Sweetwater
25 to Monahans, which is in far west Texas.

1 Q. Is this the first time you've ever seen something like this?

2 A. Yes, it has.

3 Q. Okay. And in your 6 years of experience, have you -- I think
4 you said it was a Form C that --

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. -- would inform you that there was a flash flood alert --

7 A. Correct.

8 Q. -- from the dispatcher. Have you received those in the past
9 6 years?

10 A. I have never seen them, but I've heard other crew members
11 talk about, you know, having them and they're Form C's.

12 Q. Okay. Okay. And do you know -- if a Form C was issued to
13 you, do you know -- can you just walk me --

14 A. Not to our train specifically.

15 Q. But in the event that there was one issued to your train,
16 what are the steps you might take?

17 A. When we're looking through -- overviewing our actual track
18 bulletins to see the track conditions that were on our territory,
19 we'll flip over and it says, you know, from this milepost to this
20 milepost, comply with procedure FF, which is flash flood, for this
21 specific location. All it means is for us to be prepared to stop
22 for low-lying areas, bridges and culverts. Just in case if a
23 washout does happen, we're able to stop before we get to it to
24 prevent any damage or cause injury to anybody.

25 Q. Okay. Joe, thank you for clarifying that for me.

1 A. Yes, sir.

2 MR. FRIGO: I don't have any other questions.

3 MR. SAUNDERS: Kamron Saunders, SMART TD. I have a couple
4 questions.

5 BY MR. SAUNDERS:

6 Q. You said you went to fireman training. You're actually a
7 promoted engineer working as a conductor?

8 A. Yes, sir.

9 Q. Okay. The other question I have is about this lake. Was it
10 -- is it not normal to see it that full, or have you seen it that
11 full before?

12 A. I have seen it -- not that full, not to that level, but in
13 the past, my last trip, it was high, but not nearly as high as it
14 was that day.

15 MR. SAUNDERS: Okay. All right, that's all I have.

16 MR. FACKLAN: Steve Facklan, BLET Safety Task Force.

17 BY MR. FACKLAN:

18 Q. When you got on your -- when you got on the train, what was
19 the weather like outside? Raining?

20 A. It was raining, maybe a little bit of lightning and thunder.
21 It was enough if you stood outside for at least 10 minutes, you
22 would be soaked, so --

23 Q. So it was a good --

24 A. It was a good downpour.

25 Q. Okay. The train routing. My understanding, it was a Fort

1 Worth sub, a Midlothian sub; is that correct?

2 A. Correct.

3 Q. Is it common for you to go to Midlothian side or the Fort
4 Worth side, or is it just 50/50?

5 A. The majority of our southbound track to Hearne will go down
6 the Midlothian sub.

7 Q. Is that mainly a routing issue, or as far as --

8 A. For directional traffic, yes. To relieve -- just in case for
9 congestion. The Fort Worth side is CTC territory with -- and a
10 lot of the traffic coming from the southbound area -- southern
11 area to Fort Worth will travel north on the Fort Worth side.

12 Q. Somebody had mentioned earlier that there was another -- a
13 coal train?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. And it was going the same direction. I mean, it was heading
16 the same direction as you.

17 A. Right.

18 Q. But did it go to the Midlothian sub?

19 A. No, it didn't. When I got there, I heard on the radio that
20 they were going to the Fort Worth side, which is the Fort Worth
21 subdivision which goes to Waco, Marlin, those towns that are
22 south, away from Hearne. So totally an entire different
23 subdivision from where we went.

24 Q. Was there any -- do you know of any reason why that one went
25 to Fort Worth side and you went the other?

1 A. I have no idea why they rerouted it.

2 Q. Okay. I think they might have touched on this. Weather
3 warnings. Have you -- when you got on the engine before you
4 started on the Midlothian sub, did you have any weather warnings?

5 A. None. None at all.

6 Q. Okay. Were there any -- during your whole tour of duty, did
7 you hear of any weather warnings issued?

8 A. There was one issued to us, to our subdivision, which
9 happened -- the dispatcher had gave it to us at 0336, was the okay
10 time. And that was from milepost 50 to milepost 46. And it was
11 for -- to comply with FF, which is flash flood warning.

12 Q. Okay. And that -- and this was after --

13 A. This was after the fact, yes.

14 Q. -- the derailment?

15 A. Yes. About 3 hours, approximately, after the --

16 Q. That was given to you guys specifically? Your train?

17 A. Yes. And then as I went back to the crew office, the crew
18 room, I heard the terminal train dispatcher issuing flash flood
19 warnings to other trains within the terminal that were coming in.

20 Q. Yes. You've worked the Midlothian sub before. Within the
21 past few months, had you noted any kind of track work going on out
22 there in that area?

23 A. Yes, I have. There was -- there's been track laborers going
24 there to weld frogs, from what I understand, from the last ones
25 that we went by. I mean, it's --

1 Q. Did you note anything in that area that was --

2 A. No. I mean, normally time -- if it's a bad track, we'll feel
3 it. You know, the engine will bounce or, you know, sway to the
4 left or right. But in that area where he was, we didn't notice
5 anything that would be -- cause an alarm or an issue.

6 Q. So you didn't -- there wasn't anything -- in your previous
7 trip, you hadn't noted that as a problem area?

8 A. No, none at all.

9 Q. Okay. And you were a key train?

10 A. Yes, that's correct.

11 Q. You'd mentioned just before that you'd given your paperwork
12 to the EMS, informed them that you were an ethanol train. And
13 then someone instructed you to go back and check the -- what was
14 on fire, how many had derailed?

15 A. Well, when I looked back -- the dispatcher actually asked if
16 you have any idea how many cars had derailed. And I told him I
17 had no idea, but I looked back and saw the rest of our train that
18 had detached from us, from the rear of our train. I told him we
19 had approximately still 20 cars that we had a hold of at that time
20 when we got derailed. Those cars weren't on fire. From what I
21 saw, they were still actually on the track. And I later found out
22 that actually two cars on that rear portion were actually -- that
23 had derailed.

24 Q. Okay. I might have misunderstood it. Because I was thinking
25 somebody instructed you to go back there --

1 A. No, no, no.

2 Q. -- to where the -- okay. Good. Okay. Have you had any
3 training on how to respond to an accident like this?

4 A. No, not at all.

5 Q. No?

6 A. Not like this, no. It's just one of those events that you
7 really, can't really train for. I mean, they show us training
8 videos as far as tanks blowing up, BLEVEs -- meaning, you know, a
9 tank blowing up and shooting out like a rocket. They'll show us
10 those safety videos, you know, during our rules test, but --

11 Q. Had you in the military had, kind of --

12 A. Not critical incidents like this. As far as fires, we never
13 had training with the fire department, how to respond to it. The
14 only thing that UP actually trained us on was to get away from a
15 fire, go as far as you can to safety, whether it be -- go upwind
16 from whatever chemical it is. And take your paperwork with you,
17 because it has your emergency response information on it, the
18 contents of your cargo. And when it happened, that's immediately
19 what snapped in my head; I need this information.

20 MR. FACKLAN: That's all I have for right now.

21 MR. ALLBERRY: John Allberry, Union Pacific.

22 BY MR. ALLBERRY:

23 Q. And you did remember the training you've had to go upwind and
24 grab your --

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. -- paperwork and all that?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Not really a question, just wow, your recollection of that.
4 I think a lot of us in this room would like to work with
5 conductors like you. That's the first thing I thought.

6 A. A lot of guys were telling about that too. It was like, I
7 can't believe that's -- you were able to remember that with such
8 high-stress situation. It's just -- I think it was the military
9 training that they gave me to help me do that stressful situation.
10 Because they taught us that you stay in the fight until the very
11 last breath. That ended up really what happened and it showed
12 it's -- it paid off.

13 MR. ALLBERRY: I'd take 20,000 conductors like you.

14 MR. MEYER: Daniel Meyer, FRA OP. How you doing?

15 MR. LLANES: Good.

16 BY MR. MEYER:

17 Q. What's your regular job assignment?

18 A. Conductor, (indiscernible) conductor.

19 Q. Okay. So is it on this pool?

20 A. It's on the -- yes, Fort Worth to Hearne pool.

21 Q. Is this the normal route that you would go?

22 A. To Hearne, yes. Majority of the time, yes.

23 Q. How familiar are you with this territory? Midlothian sub.

24 A. I've been off and on this territory maybe about 3 months. I
25 did my OJT as a new hire on the territory, I want to say, for

1 about a month as a new-hire conductor. And then I did another
2 month and a half as a fireman on the subdivision. And then I came
3 back as a conductor. I want to say it was maybe about January
4 when I came back. Late January.

5 Q. You said fireman. What's a fireman?

6 A. It's an engineer-in-training.

7 Q. Engineer-in-training?

8 A. Yes, sir.

9 Q. Okay. You said the lake was full on your last trip?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Do you remember when your last trip was?

12 A. It was April 15th.

13 Q. April 15th?

14 A. Yes, sir.

15 Q. And you said that you were -- when you went around or you
16 were going down the tracks, I believe you said you were looking
17 for ballast.

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Is that right?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Did you say that you saw water going across the tracks?

22 A. It was underneath the tracks where I had saw it. Because the
23 engineer had mentioned like -- he said the water looked like it
24 was over the rail, and I was looking for it to see, but I couldn't
25 tell with it being so dark. Even the ditch lights -- I tried

1 looking to the -- to lean to the left to see the glare off the
2 rail to see if I could see the water over the rail, but I couldn't
3 really distinguish it.

4 Q. Did you ever see that before?

5 A. No, not like that. As far as --

6 Q. Have you ever seen any water at that location?

7 A. No. Not through that area, no. Not right there
8 specifically, no.

9 Q. Okay. You said that you saw a pallet on the track.

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Is that right?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. Was there water by that pallet?

14 A. No, there was none. It was dry in that area. Well, besides
15 it being rainy, but there was no water under there, right there.

16 Q. All righty. And when you went on duty, you were talking
17 about getting paperwork. Did you talk to the dispatcher on the
18 phone at all?

19 A. None. No, I didn't.

20 Q. So you got your paperwork. Was there any communication with
21 the dispatcher at all about weather or any unusual -- anything
22 unusual?

23 A. Not over the phone. Even when we got our track warrant, he
24 never mentioned anything about weather.

25 Q. Okay. And did you review your restrictions with your

1 engineer --

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. -- before your trip?

4 A. Yes, we sat down together. We overviewed it. And we knew
5 that our first temporary speed restriction was going to be
6 approximately about 10 miles away from where we were.

7 Q. Okay. Did you notice anything unusual on the trip?

8 A. For the first 2 miles, I'd just say just that flooding right
9 there where that lake was. Like I said, I have never seen the
10 water rush that, you know, with that -- such a volume that would
11 cause a track to derail like that or wash out, whatever happened.

12 Q. All right. You said that you're a qualified engineer?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. All right. Do you know -- did your train seem like it was
15 acting normal up until the derail?

16 A. No, it was actually rolling smooth. We had a brand new
17 engine. Dynamics were working good as we started down the hill.
18 They were strong. They worked like they were intended to. The
19 engineer never used any air to keep the train under control.
20 Dynamics held the entire train, so it was -- it was smooth.

21 Q. So that seemed like it was -- okay. Smooth?

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. And then at this location -- my last question. Have you ever
24 noticed anything unusual at this location?

25 A. No.

1 MR. MEYER: Okay. Thanks.

2 BY MR. FRIGO:

3 Q. And Joe, I just want to -- you gave us such a detailed
4 description before. I want to go back to -- before this
5 assignment, when was the last day you worked?

6 A. April 15th.

7 Q. It was the 15th?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Okay. And can you just recall what you did the day of -- I
10 guess it would have been the 23rd, when you had to report to duty
11 that evening? What were your activities that day?

12 A. I was at home all day because I knew I was going to end up
13 working that night. So I stayed at home just to rest up as much
14 as I could, because being tired on the railroad won't work. So I
15 made sure that I was rested and wide awake. Going to sleep on the
16 road is a big safety issue for us and the public, with the amount
17 of chemicals and material that we haul around daily. So that's
18 just not what I was trained to do. And in the military, too, as
19 well too, I mean, if you sleep, it can be a life-or-death
20 situation in a war zone. I mean, you sleep, you don't know what's
21 going on, so --

22 Q. So would you say that you got a good night's sleep the night
23 before?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. How many hours is a good night's sleep to you?

1 A. About 10 hours.

2 Q. Okay. And good for you.

3 A. I sleep like a rock.

4 Q. And are you taking any medication?

5 A. None at all.

6 Q. Do you have any health problems?

7 A. No.

8 Q. Okay. So you're pretty healthy?

9 A. Pretty healthy, yes.

10 Q. Feel good?

11 A. Yeah. I take -- I do what we call a PHA, a physical health
12 assessment, almost yearly, just to check those vitals, so --

13 Q. Anything over the counter, you know, within the days before
14 this --

15 A. No.

16 Q. -- accident?

17 A. No.

18 Q. Any herbal teas or anything like that?

19 A. Green tea.

20 Q. Green tea. Okay.

21 A. That's it. But nothing like that.

22 MR. FRIGO: Joe, thank you. I don't have any other
23 questions.

24 MR. SAUNDERS: Kamron Saunders. I don't have anything.

25 MR. FACKLAN: Steve Facklan. I don't have anything.

1 MR. ALLBERRY: John Allberry. Nothing.

2 MR. MEYER: Daniel Meyer, FRA.

3 BY MR. MEYER:

4 Q. You said that you had previous hazardous materials training,
5 and that training instructed you to go upwind --

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. -- if you saw something like this.

8 A. It will --

9 Q. Is that right?

10 A. We train just for general hazmat material, whether it be
11 anhydrous ammonia, chlorine, crude oil or, in this case, ethanol.
12 See fire, see smoke, see cloud, run away. That was their first
13 step to do, get to a safe location. Because at that point, the
14 freight is no longer important. It's about life.

15 Q. All right. And is that why you pulled the pin and moved your
16 engines?

17 A. Yes. That was the first -- the engineer said, we need to
18 pull the pin; we need to get out of here. So I ran out the door
19 and pulled the pin.

20 MR. MEYER: All right, thank you.

21 MR. FRIGO: Is there anything that you need to clarify, sir?

22 MR. PAZ: No, sir.

23 MR. FRIGO: Okay. And Joe, I'd like to thank you for your
24 detailed recollection.

25 MR. LLANES: You're welcome.

1 MR. FRIGO: It's going to help us out here in the work we're
2 doing this week. Is there anything that you could think of that
3 we should have asked you but we did not ask you?

4 MR. LLANES: No, I can't think of anything.

5 MR. FRIGO: Anybody else that -- we spoke to your engineer.
6 Anybody else that you think we should speak to?

7 MR. LLANES: No, not at all. No one I can think of off the
8 top of my head, no.

9 MR. FRIGO: Okay. And with that, we will go off the record.
10 Thank you, Joe.

11 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD


IN THE MATTER OF: DERAILMENT OF UNION PACIFIC
RAILROAD TRAIN UEBLTG 20 WITH
SUBSEQUENT FIRE AND HAZARDOUS
MATERIALS RELEASE, FORT WORTH,
TEXAS, APRIL 24, 2019
Interview of Joseph Llanes

ACCIDENT NO.: RRD19FR007

PLACE: Fort Worth, Texas

DATE: April 25, 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.


Eileen Gonzalez
Transcriber