

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

CALTRAIN COLLISION WITH *

CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT NEAR *

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, *

ON MARCH 10, 2022 *

* * * * *

Accident No.: RRD22LR007

Interview of: JEFF MCGREW, Dispatcher
TransitAmerica Services, Inc.

San Bruno, California

Saturday,
March 12, 2022

APPEARANCES:

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National Transportation Safety Board

STEPHEN JENNER, Human Performance Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

FRANK SIMMONS
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ROBERT STABLER
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LOUIE COSTA, Co-Director, National Safety Team
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I N T E R V I E W

1
2 MR. FRIGO: Okay. Good afternoon. My name is Ryan Frigo.
3 I'm an investigator with the National Transportation Safety Board.
4 Today is March 12th, 2022. We're here at the Westin Hotel in San
5 Bruno, California.

6 This is in reference to NTSB Accident Number RRD22LR007,
7 which is a Caltrain Number 506 collision with maintenance-of-way
8 equipment. We're here to speak with Mr. Jeff McGrew, train
9 dispatcher. And we're going to go around the room and introduce
10 ourselves for the benefit of the transcriptionist. So let's spell
11 our last name and identify the agency that you're representing.
12 I'll begin and then pass off to my right.

13 Once again, my name is Ryan Frigo, F-r-i-g-o, NTSB.

14 MR. SIMMONS: Frank Simmons, S-i-m-m-o-n-s, FRA.

15 MR. STABLER: Robert Stabler, S-t-a-b-l-e-r, CPUC.

16 MR. COSTA: Louie Costa, C-o-s-t-a, SMART Transportation
17 Division, National Safety Team.

18 MR. MAYNARD: Jim Maynard, M-a-y-n-a-r-d, BLET Safety Task
19 Force.

20 DR. JENNER: I'm Stephen Jenner, S-t-e-p-h-e-n, J-e-n-n-e-r,
21 with the NTSB.

22 MR. STAHL: Ron Stahl, deputy general manager of operations
23 for TransitAmerica Services, Incorporated, here as an observer
24 only.

25 MR. SMITH: Kevin Smith, S-m-i-t-h, SMART Transportation,

1 National Safety Team.

2 MR. MCGREW: Jeff McGrew, M-c-G-r-e-w, TransitAmerica
3 Services, Incorporated.

4 MR. FRIGO: Mr. McGrew, can we go on a first name basis?

5 MR. MCGREW: Yes, sir.

6 MR. FRIGO: Jeff, thank you. Do we have your permission to
7 record our conversation here today?

8 MR. MCGREW: Yes.

9 MR. FRIGO: And do you wish to have a representative with you
10 today?

11 MR. MCGREW: No.

12 MR. FRIGO: Okay. Jeff, thank you for coming in and talking
13 to us. We're, you know, we're just trying to get the facts and
14 trying to understand what occurred.

15 INTERVIEW OF JEFF MCGREW

16 BY MR. FRIGO:

17 Q. Maybe we'll just start with a little bit about your
18 experience on the railroad. You know, how long have you been
19 working on the railroad?

20 A. Seven years, with TransitAmerica. I've been working the
21 extra board for most of those years. I've only held this shift
22 for -- well, I've worked this shift on and off throughout those
23 seven years, but I've been on this particular shift for a little
24 over two months.

25 Q. Okay. And any prior railroad experience prior to

1 TransitAmerica?

2 A. No, sir.

3 Q. Okay. And your seven years always as a dispatcher?

4 A. Um-hum. Yeah.

5 Q. Okay. And on the 10th, was that a normal? Was it a normal
6 shift for you?

7 A. Um-hum. Yeah.

8 Q. And what's the -- and what is that shift? Is it --

9 A. 5 a.m. to 1 p.m., Monday through Friday.

10 Q. Monday through Friday. Okay. So on the 9th, you were there?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. I was there the whole week prior, yeah.

14 Q. Okay. So when you come in on the 10th, what time do you,
15 what time do you get to the office?

16 A. 4:25 in the parking lot, and then get ready and hop on the
17 desk at about quarter till.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. And, you know, there's a check in process that we have to
20 sign on to get paid for our hours of services, and then there's a
21 briefing between me and the acting MTO in a separate room, and
22 then I enter the floor and have a second briefing with the
23 dispatcher on duty. We go over everything that's going on,
24 anything that's coming up, any safety concerns, stuff like that.

25 Q. Is there only one dispatcher on duty at a time?

1 A. That only happens on the weekends --

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. -- because it's so slow. There's really no need for two
4 dispatchers. So during the week, there's two dispatchers
5 typically on duty for every shift, first, second, third.

6 Q. Okay. And before I forget, how far do you live from the
7 dispatch center?

8 A. I'd say it's about 15 minutes.

9 Q. About 15 minutes. So it's an early start but you're not
10 commuting that far.

11 A. Yeah, yeah. It doesn't take me long to get home to the kids.

12 Q. And the night before, I mean what -- when do you usually go
13 to sleep like?

14 A. 7:30, yeah, and that's my limit, you know. Sometimes it
15 pushes a little bit but, you know, I'm decking out pretty much
16 after dinner.

17 Q. Okay. So let's go back to that turnover. Is it a turnover
18 you have with the dispatcher on duty, or is it, is it -- are you
19 going on duty at the same time as another dispatcher? I want to
20 understand that a little bit more.

21 A. Okay. Well, it's -- for a document. It entails your name,
22 the time you're coming on duty, bulletins in effect at the time,
23 warrants, any speed restrictions that are happening at the time,
24 if there's any crossings that are malfunctioning or anything like
25 that. And then there's a whole section about just notes, that the

1 previous dispatcher can write in. So things that we explain to
2 each other in terms of we understand, such as so and so has track
3 and time here until this time. There's usually a bunch of those,
4 and then you can put in any kind of concerns you have. You know,
5 we had a problem with the switch last night, maybe have somebody
6 have a look at it this morning. Of course, if it's -- the switch
7 is out of service or not working properly, we're going to protect
8 the area and shut it down, and then it's going to be, you know, a
9 call and get them out of bed thing, but if you -- little things
10 that we notice throughout the day.

11 We do switch testing at nights. We go up and down the rails,
12 line up all the switches in both directions. We see anything that
13 looks out of place or just doesn't seem to align, you know, like
14 it should. Then we put that in there. That's basically it. I
15 mean we literally stand at the desk, look at the board together
16 and -- for the turnover, when we do that process. If there's two
17 of us going on at the same time. So I am briefing with the north
18 dispatcher, and my coworker's briefing with the south dispatcher.

19 Q. Okay. So it's north end versus south end, not directional?

20 A. Right, yeah.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. That's what we refer them to.

23 Q. Okay. So you go on duty. Do you -- you have a turnover.
24 You do your briefing. You get set up at the desk for, you know,
25 for your shift, and what starts, what starts going on?

1 A. Well, everybody has their own sign in to the rock system. So
2 the first thing I'm doing is sitting down and signing into my own
3 profile. There is a third check system in that where it just
4 weighs again the forms, active, crossings and restrictions and
5 things like that. There's several boxes that you need to go
6 through and verify that information for all that. The system
7 forces you to do that.

8 The previous dispatcher has already signed out. So after
9 that checks him, and I'm putting my name and a password and
10 signing in. That gives me access to all my profile settings. I'm
11 setting up my board. I'm scanning to make sure that so and so
12 didn't leave me any surprises. So that's what I do, set up
13 everything the way I like it, the radios, check that.

14 And then I'm logging into my workstation because that's -- at
15 that point, I'm going to go over any track requests for that day.
16 So with electrification in particular, there is a lot of approvals
17 for track and time for that day. So I'll print that sheet out,
18 and go over that thoroughly, highlight things that I'm going to
19 have to look out for at certain times and, you know, know what I'm
20 going to have to start taking signals out of fleet, to get ready
21 for the single tracking. So I just prepare myself on that, and
22 then other than that, I'm watching the trains come in and out of
23 the city and making sure that they're safely getting in the
24 depots, not next to other people that are boarding.

25 When I bring a train in, it creates clutter. So sometimes

1 there's some finagling you've got to do and change the track
2 assignments. I focus on that until about a half an hour out from
3 the track and time approvals. I start getting bombarded with
4 phone calls about I'm so and so, I'm running this crew here, and
5 we are going to pick up this track and time. Be ready for me at -
6 - it's always a set time pretty much all of them 9:30. Okay.
7 Copy that. Next phone call comes in. I'm here, I'm doing this.
8 There's some wheeling and dealing. Sometimes the contractor asks
9 for something, and we've got to try and see if we can figure that
10 out and work with them.

11 Q. So since we're talking about it, let's just keep going. On
12 the -- so on the list that you get that has the work for the --
13 the work planned and approved --

14 A. Um-hum.

15 Q. -- for the day, does that -- help me understand more how that
16 information ties to what you're getting from the field from an EIC
17 what might be -- that will start calling you trying to get track
18 and time? How do these two things line up? Do they have to line
19 up exactly? Is there, is there room to -- if it -- if they have
20 Sierra -- if has on the page for the 10th, between Sierra and
21 Scott let's say, and they have track 1, and let's say they call in
22 and they want track 2. I mean is that part of the maneuvering
23 that goes on or are you locked into what that work plan says for
24 the day?

25 A. There is maneuvering. There's always maneuvering, and then

1 there's time between trains that you can do things. So you've got
2 to use your schedule and know your traffic to say, hey, look,
3 there's a 15 minute window, if you need to set some equipment on
4 and get it where it needs to go, we can do that in this timeframe
5 but I'm going to put an okay time on this track and time that I
6 need you to drop it for that to happen. But those approvals come
7 from our liaisons that are looking at track charts and see where
8 trains crisscross. There they meet. So the approvals are based
9 on the fact that if they hold this track and time here for this
10 set amount of time, it's not going to cause any major delays
11 because they meet at this point or this point. Sometimes they
12 make exceptions, and they'll say, we're aware that it's going to
13 cause, you know, a two to eight minute delay at this point, but
14 we're willing to accept that, and they'll put that in the notes,
15 you know, if they're going to meet at this control point, but this
16 train's going to have to sit there for a little bit.

17 Q. It's part of the approval -- it's part of the planning
18 process for the work?

19 A. Yes, yes.

20 Q. Okay. So again, your role is mainly to take what the plan is
21 and use that for your information but then when you start getting
22 the phone calls in, from the field, who -- where they're actually
23 going to do the work, their requests might be the same or somewhat
24 different than the approval is, and then you try to make it work
25 within, you know, still within the responsibilities of running the

1 trains on time as close to possible?

2 A. Yes. You know, there's some information gets lost in
3 translation between the contractors and the liaisons. They -- and
4 who knows, I'm not privy to that process. All I have is my sheet.
5 I have the data that they've requested and mileposts and whatnot,
6 and then the liaison takes those mileposts and data and translates
7 it into terms that I understand. They want from this point to
8 this point, this control point to this control point, on this main
9 track for this amount of time. Basically I can read it that way.
10 Otherwise I'd be, you know, but I have all of it anyway.

11 If they want to work in a different area than they're
12 approved, they'll ask and they can ask. And sometimes it works
13 because I know the flow of the traffic.

14 Q. Um-hum.

15 A. I can see -- I've worked this limit before. We can probably
16 work something out, but if it's too extreme, then they have to
17 call the liaisons themselves and get some pre-approval.

18 Q. So -- and the reason I'm asking is like I -- the sheet I've
19 seen, I'm just going to pull it up and show you, but so the sheet
20 that I have seen, it's like a single tracking approval snapshot
21 for the day. And it kind of looks like this.

22 A. Exactly, yeah. So this is the crew who's supposed to be
23 working it. This is what I go off of. So the track and time,
24 they're approved to hold main 1 or 2 between those two minutes for
25 that amount of time. And then this is the contractor data over

1 here. We usually ignore that. I mean you can look at it if you,
2 you know, what the heck do they want.

3 Q. That's their info.

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. So on this day, right, so we've got -- so here's the --
6 Robins (ph.), right, the EIC, and you know, either 1 or 2. So
7 that's what you're going off of. You're going off of they're
8 going to request 1 or 2 between Sierra and Scott and that's their
9 time.

10 A. Yeah, and this is a perfect -- this whole scenario is a
11 perfect example of how we can -- I don't want to say manipulate,
12 but we can go outside the approval because -- if I can just delve
13 into the scenario.

14 Q. Absolutely.

15 A. You don't mind?

16 Q. Absolutely, yeah. Absolutely.

17 A. Okay. So it starts on Tuesday, I had a different EIC. His
18 name is Sal Lopez. Okay. He's working the South City project.
19 He's approved to hold Sierra to Center, CP Sierra to CP Center on
20 main track 2 until like 1600 or something like that. So we've
21 seen the flow of traffic. The traffic works. We know we're not
22 going to cause any delays. It's an unusually long section of
23 track, but we saw the flow, and we know the trains meet outside of
24 that section of track. So I know it works. That happens Tuesday
25 and Wednesday.

1 Thursday, the 10th, is Robins. He takes over, and he's, for
2 whatever reason, only approved to hold Sierra to Scott.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. We have a briefing. Me and Robins have a briefing at about I
5 want to say 9 or 9:30, you know, probably earlier than that. And
6 he tells me that, okay, well, I've got this track but I've got to
7 get equipment on and get it to the work location. And I said,
8 look, Sal, we've been doing this for the last two days. What I
9 can do is give you two separate pieces of track and time. We'll
10 give you Sierra to Scott and then the north limit of CP Scott to
11 Center in a separate piece. You'll set your equipment on, get
12 where you need to go, do whatever you need to do, and I think I
13 even told him to take his time because I knew again the needs
14 work. I'm not going to delay anybody. It's going to be fine. He
15 gets a third -- so we set that all up.

16 He gets a third piece of track and time on main 1 between
17 Scott and Center to set his equipment on. This is a protected
18 crossing, get his equipment on the crossing. And that only took
19 about 10 minutes to do that. Drops that track and time on 1. I
20 believe that was 211. So he's got 209 and 210. I want to say
21 about 30 to 45 minutes later, he drops main 2, 210 north Scott to
22 Center.

23 And at the time, I already had southbound 112 lined straight
24 through the area and cross over at Center behind the work location
25 where he had previously had that track time. And I handle single

1 tracking signs set up at San Bruno. So I wasn't going to change
2 that. I let that train go by, but by the time the 506 came
3 around, I had the 503 northbound heading into Millbrae. So I
4 would never have let him go all the way. Now that I have this
5 track back, I'm going to normalize everything. What I did is I
6 fledged Center. So the signals are set to go one to one, two to
7 two, and I dropped him down at Scott because otherwise they would
8 have had a slight meet at Center. It just wouldn't have -- I
9 would have never done that. He's got to cross down sometime. So
10 that's why I did that. And that's when I got caught (ph.).

11 Q. So from your perspective, when that authority is given up,
12 they're out of there.

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. So we were just briefly talking before we -- two things I
15 want to cover right now. They kind of -- they're related, but
16 when we were talking about the colors that we see on the CAD
17 display --

18 A. Um-hum.

19 Q. -- I'll just call it the magenta (ph.), but there's one
20 screenshot we see where it's like a red over blue. It appears
21 magenta.

22 A. Um-hum.

23 Q. And that's within that -- within the 210. I'm just checking
24 my notes.

25 A. Probably when he was setting the equipment on at the crossing

1 is typically when that shunt will happen.

2 Q. And to you -- I should have asked my second question first,
3 but to you, that's not abnormal to see?

4 A. Right.

5 Q. In this type of scenario.

6 A. That's correct.

7 Q. Okay. And it's -- is it normal or abnormal to then have that
8 disappear in this situation?

9 A. Normal.

10 Q. It's normal. Okay. We also hear, and this is what I should
11 have asked you first, but when we're listening to the audio, we
12 hear you use the word shunting. We hear Robins use the word
13 shunting. Sometimes it is --

14 A. Permission to shunt.

15 Q. -- permission to shunt. Help us understand that.

16 A. Absolutely. So it's part of the (indiscernible) briefing.
17 It's an office policy. If a track worker is going to get into a
18 piece of track and time and shunt the track, it has to be stated
19 simply because, especially if you're shunting with inside control
20 points. So where the crossover are. A shunt within a control
21 point can affect outer opposing limits. For instance, this is the
22 control point, and you have a signal line towards that control
23 point, you shunt the control point and it knocks that signal down
24 because the system says, hey, there's something going on here.

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It's being occupied or --

1 MR. MCGREW: Yeah. And it's a safety mechanism. Now, if you
2 shut within a block, so between two control points, we call that a
3 block, it doesn't affect -- you wouldn't have signals lined in the
4 first place because you're dropping track and time on it, but it
5 won't affect the signals on the other sides of those two control
6 points, if you get what I mean. But it still has to be stated
7 that you're going to shunt that track every time we get a track
8 and time.

9 BY MR. FRIGO:

10 Q. And when Robins responds by saying permission to shunt, what
11 is that telling you?

12 A. That he can shunt his track and time and all be okay. If I
13 see it, I'll be aware of it. I know we've had a briefing about
14 it. It could shunt at any time. It could go away. It could
15 whatever. If I see a shunt on there, it's fine. Now, if I have a
16 job briefing and he says he's not going to shunt the track, and he
17 does shunt the track, that's a rules violation.

18 Q. On his end?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. So it's really a we should interpret that exchange between
21 you and Robins as Robins has the ability to shunt if needed or
22 necessary or whatever is occurring with the type of work he's
23 doing.

24 A. That's correct. All the time that he has that track and
25 time, he can shunt up and down the track, and I'll just think,

1 that's fine. I won't think anything of it.

2 Q. From your perspective, if you never see an indication that
3 shunting is occurring, that's -- it doesn't mean anything to you
4 either?

5 A. Well, yeah, essentially. I don't know what's going on there.
6 If I don't see a shunt on the track, a lot of our vehicles do not
7 shunt. It's not a requirement, yeah, like I said, I'm not wiser.
8 If I do see a shunt and he tries to re-piece (ph.) the track and
9 time, and there's a shunt within track and time, I won't allow it.
10 I'll say, no, I'm sorry, I can't release this. You've got a track
11 indication within there. You have to deal with that.

12 Q. Some type of occupancy going on.

13 A. It could be a malfunction, you know, if an IG (ph.) goes up,
14 who knows what.

15 Q. You don't know?

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. Okay. And when you're -- so when you're -- and we should
18 cover this, too. So when you're applying the -- for the track and
19 time, and you're applying a block, a manual block, you're
20 inputting information into the system such as -- are you inputting
21 the authority number or you're not? I don't want to put words in
22 your mouth. I'm just trying to understand what your process is
23 manipulating the system when you're getting that call in for track
24 and time authority within a block.

25 A. Here I go. So there's an initial briefing. We talk about

1 the area that he's trying to get track and time under. Usually
2 there's a train nearby. So it's like, you know, you've got to
3 wait for the next one to go by. I have to set up the signals so
4 there's no signals in there. It can't delay any trains. So I've
5 got to check that. Once the area's completely clear, I select the
6 track manually and select track and time as a command. It bring
7 up a track and time box with a randomly -- not a random. It just
8 counts down.

9 Q. Um-hum.

10 A. A number on there is the track and time number which isn't
11 revealed until we officially start reading it. We discuss how
12 much time he wants on it. I'm inputting his name in manually.
13 And the time and his at location at the time. Then we have an
14 initial briefing. I essentially read everything but the authority
15 number to him, and ask him if these limits are correct. We
16 discuss shunting, and at that point, I ask if this is all correct?
17 Are you ready to copy? Then we start going through it and then I
18 give him the authority number and identify him, the track and
19 time.

20 Q. And that's what's his --

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. -- track and time authority log, right, in his book?

23 A. Um-hum.

24 Q. Okay. Now, we're looking at the, we're looking at the
25 authority from, you know, the day of the accident in the accident

1 location. Is there any time where you get into -- as the
2 dispatcher, where there's an area for multiple work employees?
3 And to me, my interpretation of this area is where the employee in
4 charge would have a communication with anyone else within the
5 authority he's holding prior to talking to you. That's my
6 interpretation of this area, and that's -- we don't hear that on
7 the radio. We don't hear any of that information within that work
8 briefing essentially to you. I mean is that -- am I interpreting
9 that correctly?

10 A. Yes. He gets the track and time is essentially authority to
11 own that segment of track. Once he owns that segment of track, he
12 can put multiple individuals on it and doesn't need -- he doesn't
13 have to tell me about that. All I care about is that the track is
14 clear, that he's done with his time, and that he's ready to
15 release. The only exception to that is like I said, if I see a
16 shunt on the track, I'm going to stop the process and make him
17 deal with that first before releasing the time, but as far as
18 other folks within his time, what they're doing there, what
19 equipment they have, where they're going, that's unnecessary for
20 me to know that. Going forward maybe, but yeah.

21 Sometimes we have discussions about -- I mean we always ask
22 them what exactly they're doing. You know, I want to know roughly
23 what they're doing. I don't want to get into the nitty-gritty but
24 I need to know things like if, for instance, I need that track
25 back in case of -- some things come up, you know. If I know that

1 he has equipment on the track, I'm not going to call him and ask
2 him to clear it because I know you just can't do that, you know,
3 getting equipment off the tracks. It's not easy. So there will
4 be discussions like that sometimes, but most of the time -- I mean
5 especially at 9:30 in the morning, there's just so much going on
6 that I, you know, I don't need to hear from him about who he's
7 working with, who's getting on, what they've got and where they're
8 going and it just too much phone time.

9 Q. So with the -- we talked about Tuesday. We talked about
10 Wednesday, and then we get to Thursday. Is there anything
11 different between those days from your perspective as to what they
12 were going to be doing out there or does it all -- aside from that
13 change in approval, does it all look the same to you?

14 A. Yeah. I mean other than the approval, yeah. In fact,
15 sometimes I think I've got to help these guys along because I'm in
16 there all week and somebody was running it yesterday and now he's
17 running it today. And so I was like, well, this is what we did
18 yesterday as far as the track and time was involved, and this is
19 how he did it. This is what he told me. This is what I can do to
20 work with you to get what you need done or where you need to go,
21 exceptions I can make.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. That's the wheeling and dealing part I was talking about
24 earlier, you know, being familiar with the flow of traffic, I can
25 give them options.

1 Q. Okay. So this is, this is going to be a tough question to
2 answer because you've had, you've had time to think about after
3 the event, and I'm sure you've kind of heard through the rumor
4 mill and, you know, telephone, telegraph, telerrailroad (ph.),
5 right? But I want you to, I want you to try and answer this
6 question with the knowledge that you had right before this event
7 occurs, okay. What was, what was your knowledge of the work that
8 they were going to do that day?

9 A. Limited. I knew that they needed to get from Point A to
10 Point B. For whatever reason, they insisted on using Center
11 Street crossing. I knew they had used that crossing in the past
12 to travel north somewhere. When they had the entire section of
13 track from Sierra to Center, I just assumed that there was a group
14 working in Scott to Center and another group working Sierra to
15 Scott, but since today, or the 10th, it wasn't approved. I knew
16 that he would -- and he told me he needed to get equipment, I just
17 assumed that he was going to use one of those crossings and like
18 he said over the phone, I'm going to get them into the time or the
19 work location. So it seemed strange that they didn't approve that
20 same piece of track and time. But I just, you know, I go off the
21 approvals and I just said, look, I can't -- I can let you do what
22 you need to do but it's forcing us to single track at a station.
23 It's causing passenger disruption. Let's get what you need done
24 and then drop it and just hold what you're supposed to do.

25 Q. So -- and again, this goes back to before the accident

1 happens. Did you have any assumption that this -- that a work
2 group needed to take time to load poles from the right-of-way?

3 A. No, I was not -- I did not know what they were doing. I knew
4 that a crew needed to get from Point A to Point B. I had an idea
5 of roughly how long that would take, but I was, I was not job
6 briefed on what their work was that day, who that crew was, what
7 they had and what they were doing.

8 Q. So as far as you're -- from what I'm getting from your -- I'm
9 trying to capture this all accurately.

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. From your position as the dispatcher, your assumption is that
12 they are going to -- they need to set on and then they need to get
13 from Point A to Point B, with Point B being the Form B. Is that
14 -- am I saying this correctly?

15 A. I want -- my assumption was that they had come on, that he
16 needed to set equipment on in another area and bring them in
17 because there was probably going to be another work group that
18 was, forever whatever reason, blocking them from getting on at
19 Linden. There's another crossing between Sierra and Scott. I
20 don't know why they can't use that, but typically it's because one
21 work group is blocking the other work group, and they need to come
22 in from a certain direction to line the equipment up or get
23 whatever they need to go without impeding each other.

24 Q. Okay. And in your conversations with Mr. Robins, the morning
25 of the accident, did he talk about -- what do you remember about

1 him -- what he told you?

2 A. I remember him saying that he did need to pick up the time at
3 Sierra and Scott, and that he stated that he needed to get
4 equipment on. He didn't say a crossing, but he said -- I believe
5 he said a crossing, but north of his work location. He just set
6 equipment on and traveled and said, okay, got it. And I believe
7 then we talked about the limits, how he was shortened that day
8 versus the last two days. We briefed about -- I'm trying to
9 recall, but I believe we briefed about Sal, how he had run it.
10 I'm sorry, Mr. Lopez had run it the last couple of days, and what
11 he had talked about him doing. And so when he mentioned
12 equipment, I was like, okay, well, this is the same as yesterday,
13 except a little bit different. We've just got to drop the time
14 behind and make a traveling move.

15 Q. Okay. Did you talk to Mr. Hidalgo at all that morning?

16 A. Not at all.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. I didn't hear him on the radio, no phone calls, nothing. I
19 had no idea he was there.

20 MR. FRIGO: Okay. Are you guys okay if I keep going?

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah.

22 MR. FRIGO: Okay. All right. So I'm going to keep going,
23 and then we'll break out.

24 BY MR. FRIGO:

25 Q. All right. So the -- what is your first indication that

1 something's gone wrong out there?

2 A. The yelling on the radio. Unfortunately I was in the middle
3 of a brief with the VP which was truly unfortunate, and it was
4 probably too long of a conversation I had with him, but as soon as
5 I took my foot off the pedal is when I heard it.

6 Q. Okay. And what, what are you hearing from the field from
7 your recollection?

8 A. They hit the contractors, fire, you know.

9 Q. So are you -- and what are you doing in response to that
10 information from the field?

11 A. Protecting the area as quick as possible.

12 Q. So you're applying manual protection so that no other trains
13 come into that area?

14 A. My first instinct was to stop normal traffic. There was a
15 train approaching that had a signal lined into the area.

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I heard you ask if you could drop the
17 signal too. So.

18 MR. MCGREW: Yeah, I believe I asked her to stop at Millbrae
19 first and then asked for the signal back.

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Um-hum.

21 MR. MCGREW: So I was trying to contact the 506 crew. I
22 don't know if Mr. Hidalgo, yelling so much, I couldn't get through
23 to them, but nobody would answer me. So at that certain point, we
24 decided, just take the signal back from the 506 and I'm just
25 trying to apply blockage and protect the track as quick as

1 possible because the assumption is both tracks are compromised,
2 whatever.

3 BY MR. FRIGO:

4 Q. Did you call emergency services? Was that you who did that?

5 A. I called Transit once, maybe a couple of minutes after the
6 event. I knew that my peers were making phone calls as well. So
7 we were working together throughout the room. I put in a second
8 call to Transit. I remember her saying, we canceled the call.

9 Q. Um-hum.

10 A. So I had to re-give her the information and by the time I got
11 off the phone with her, I heard the fire department was already on
12 scene. So I don't know what happened.

13 Q. Okay. All right. I'm going to pass it on. Jeff, thank you.

14 A. You're welcome.

15 BY MR. SIMMONS:

16 Q. I'm Frank Simmons from FRA.

17 A. Hi, Frank.

18 Q. So, Jeff, I've crossed so much stuff off my list. Thank you.

19 A. You're welcome.

20 Q. I'm going to get straight to it. What do you think happened
21 out there?

22 A. I think there was a miscommunication between Mr. Hidalgo and
23 Mr. Robins.

24 Q. Could there be any way that he was piggybacking off of his
25 Form B?

1 A. You know, that was my initial thought. Maybe Mr. Hidalgo had
2 hopped on the track somewhere. I knew there was a spur track
3 around there. I thought -- but he would have had to have opened
4 up a switch. I would have seen a shunt. So it took me a while to
5 kind of process it, but it's quite obvious to me now what had
6 happened.

7 Q. Okay. So there was no way -- so he would have to, you know,
8 throw a switch and bolt, lock you out and you'd be going what the
9 heck is going on in this area.

10 A. The only exception would be is if he would have done that
11 with track and time still in place, I would have thought nothing
12 of it. And if he had done that, occupied the rail for some
13 reason, told Mr. Robins that I was clear and then Robins dropped
14 the track and time.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. That's the only other scenario I can think of, it getting by
17 me, but again shunt on the track, not lifting (indiscernible).

18 Q. Okay. So thank you, Jeff.

19 A. Um-hum.

20 Q. So we listened to the tapes.

21 A. All right.

22 Q. So we basically know what happened. He gave up that
23 territory. He gave up that area, and once a person gives up the
24 area, then the dispatcher, that's my track.

25 A. That's correct.

1 Q. I mean so I -- and you've got a lot on your plate, too,
2 because you've got trains going this and that way, and this is why
3 we have personnel out there because I have to rely on you to do
4 your job. You have to rely on me to do my job, so on and so
5 forth. So you started talking about this corridor manager or you
6 guys don't have that there. What type of managers do you have or
7 because you said you brief with other dispatchers in the morning,
8 the off going one --

9 A. Um-hum.

10 Q. -- and you say, hey, this switch, you know, I was having
11 trouble aligning it last night or this is a problem, you know.
12 I've got this going on. Hey, they're still working on this or
13 whatever it may be.

14 A. Um-hum.

15 Q. Is there another guy looking at it like a corridor manager
16 with you or --

17 A. Yeah, our version of the corridor manager is the manager of
18 train operations, MTO. They over see the -- they manage the room.
19 They manage the dispatchers, the fix (ph.) desk, the help desk,
20 everybody in the room.

21 Q. Where are they physically located in your dispatch room?

22 A. Right behind me.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. Okay. So basically they are the corridor managers then.

1 Okay. So let's take you to the briefings with them. You get a
2 sheet in the morning that says this individual is probably going
3 to ask for track and time during this and that, and this guy's
4 going to need work -- to work on the electrical wires here and
5 here and here and here. And it's up to you to try to manipulate
6 because I know how it is. So you're going to have to line people
7 around and say, I've got to hold you for a couple but, you know,
8 time is money on passengers, you know.

9 A. Um-hum.

10 Q. You've got to, you know. So I understand that. So I know
11 what you're saying by, you know, rerouting the system and doing,
12 you know, things like that. So -- and I just wanted to ask you
13 again, okay.

14 A. Um-hum.

15 Q. So in your professional opinion, what happened?

16 A. Like I stated earlier, I believe there was a disconnect, a
17 communication breakdown between Mr. Hidalgo and Mr. Robins.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. It seems to me that Mr. Hidalgo was probably still riding on
20 Mr. Robins' track and time and assumed he was protected. Mr.
21 Robins either forgot or neglected or -- and this is just my guess
22 because I don't know exactly what happened, but that's what --
23 that's the only logical explanation to me.

24 Q. Okay. No, I mean because this is just a fact finding thing
25 right here because, Jeff, we want to make sure this doesn't happen

1 again.

2 A. Absolutely.

3 Q. And because this could have been ugly, I mean really, really
4 ugly.

5 A. It's a miracle.

6 Q. That's right. It's a miracle. So this is our job by bopping
7 heads, and what do you think, what do you think, what do you
8 think, listening to all your tapes yesterday and, you know. So
9 okay. That's all I've got, Jeff, because -- yeah, that's all I've
10 got.

11 A. Okay. Thank you.

12 Q. No, thank you.

13 MR. STABLER: Robert Stabler, CPUC.

14 BY MR. STABLER:

15 Q. Jeff, I just have a couple of questions for you. So do
16 contractors who work with (indiscernible) call in and brief with
17 you like we're in this track and time and we're just checking in
18 and this is what we're doing?

19 A. No, no, that's all coordinated with the RWIC as far as I
20 know. They may put in some phone calls to the liaison, but they
21 never talk to dispatch directly or the MTO or anybody in our
22 office. That goes through the liaison.

23 Q. Is the liaison in the office with you or are they somewhere
24 else? Are they dispatchers? So do they know what you guys have
25 to go through?

1 A. The building next door.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. Yeah, they're a quick walk away and they'll come in sometimes
4 and brief with us if it's a particularly complicated project or,
5 you know.

6 Q. Jeff, the last question I have is you said that when he gave
7 up his track and time that before the train hit, you mentioned you
8 had a southbound going or -- yeah, you already had 118, I
9 believe --

10 A. 112.

11 Q. -- 112 going through there. So did they actually go by the
12 area within their unprotected? So if you were to change the
13 lineup, would they have --

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. -- struck them first?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Okay. And because all the conversations have been
18 (indiscernible) you're not hearing them give up their track and
19 time. So when they went by there, you're not like they're
20 supposed to be out here?

21 A. Yeah. Unfortunately, I would have wished it was the 112 that
22 went through there first because San Bruno is a delayed and
23 block --

24 Q. Station.

25 A. -- station. They would have been delayed and block, going

1 restricted around the corner and they would have seen it and had
2 plenty of time to stop. So it was a chain of events that were
3 unfortunate that we had an express train going through there.

4 Q. Um-hum. Jeff, that's all my questions. Thank you for your
5 time.

6 A. Thank you.

7 BY MR. COSTA:

8 Q. Hey, Jeff. Louie Costa with SMART-TD. So just on that
9 subject, San Bruno is delayed and blocked. Where's -- the next
10 signal is beyond the curve, before the curve?

11 A. You know, I haven't been (indiscernible) for a long time. So
12 I can't verify that. I would just assume that it's the next or
13 intermediate, if there is one there. Ron, maybe you can help me
14 out here.

15 MR. STAHL: Yeah, so (indiscernible) San Bruno and comes down
16 (indiscernible) intermediate.

17 MR. MCGREW: That's what he called out. Wasn't it clear?

18 MR. STAHL: No -- oh, yeah, at first it was approach limited
19 and then limited and then clear. Yeah, closed, limited --

20 MR. MCGREW: I'm trying to get it --

21 MR. STAHL: -- and then limited clear at the intermediate.

22 BY MR. COSTA:

23 Q. Okay. And then I was going to ask about delays -- the
24 liaisons, too, just for clarification purposes. They are TASI
25 employees or Caltrain employees or --

1 A. TASI.

2 Q. TASI.

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. And they work with the subcontractors in figuring out what
5 the work is going to be that day?

6 A. That's correct.

7 Q. Okay. And when you said you called Transit, then you had to
8 call them again, and they said they had canceled the call. Who
9 was Transit? Who were you calling?

10 A. I'm sorry, it's San Mateo County Transit --

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. -- police.

13 Q. Police.

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. Okay. I was just trying to figure out, you know, I would be
16 calling the police or the fire department first. Who was Transit
17 exactly? Okay. Thanks for clarifying that. So -- and then you
18 also said that normally when they set on, and you may not know
19 this knowledge, I don't know about shunting either, but when you
20 said when they set on at crossings, that they normally shunt the
21 track.

22 A. Yeah, and I'm not exactly sure why that happens. Sometimes
23 they may use jumpers to manipulate the arms to protect them to get
24 the equipment on, or it may be the truck itself when it's getting
25 -- I'm assuming it's jumpers. And it just allows the process to

1 be easier. They have people protecting the area --

2 Q. Right.

3 A. -- keep the things up so they can safety get their trucks on
4 there and load them on. So. And you'll see a shunt on both
5 tracks. It's a tell tale indication that they're putting
6 equipment on --

7 Q. Right.

8 A. -- the track.

9 Q. And is it safe to say that if they had been shunting while
10 they were working, this would have been prevented?

11 A. If they had have been shunting while working, if that truck
12 would have been shunting the track --

13 Q. Yeah.

14 A. -- again I would --

15 Q. I would not have lined that train through there even, even,
16 even if the track and time was released prematurely, but the
17 equipment's still out there, and you would have seen the magenta
18 or the, you know, the track indication I think is the proper
19 terminology.

20 A. That's correct.

21 Q. And you would have seen that and you would have said, no, I'm
22 not releasing this track and time number, you know, to 210 I
23 believe. Something's going on. I've got a track indication. Let
24 me know what's out there, go figure it out before I --

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: At least make more calls.

1 MR. MCGREW: That's exactly right, sir, yeah.

2 MR. COSTA: Okay. I think that's about all I've got. I mean
3 you've covered it pretty well.

4 MR. MAYNARD: Jim Maynard, BLET. Just a couple quick
5 questions.

6 BY MR. MAYNARD:

7 Q. So do you guys do most of your tracking over the cell phone?

8 A. It's a recorded line.

9 Q. Right, I understand it's a recorded line. But mostly over a
10 cell phone or that type of -- instead of the radio, you're on a
11 cell phone?

12 A. They are on a cell phone. I'm on a recorded line. It can be
13 done on a radio transmission. It has to be recorded.

14 Q. Correct. Okay.

15 A. Yeah. So the radio's recorded. The phone's recorded. Those
16 work.

17 Q. Right. The reason I'm asking is a lot of time, we as train
18 crew, we hear what's going on and can react, you know, I mean if
19 that, that southbound or whatever would have heard him give that
20 up and see, just like somebody else had said, see them out there,
21 then they would kind of know.

22 A. Uh-huh.

23 Q. Is that --

24 A. Yeah. You know, I really try to stay off the radio as much
25 as I can because the crews need to talk to each other. They've

1 got stuff going on, and when I key up, I'm walking over everybody.

2 So, right.

3 Q. So that then kind of flows into my next thing. Do you -- are
4 you -- have you ever used a tone in feature --

5 A. Where they --

6 Q. -- where you get a flag that says, hey, you need to answer
7 this radio tower or whatever?

8 A. No.

9 Q. Or a 911.

10 A. No, it's all per ear.

11 Q. Okay. All right. And then you said there was -- you thought
12 there was some place that they actually could have cleared up in
13 there, right, like a spur track or something? Do you remember?

14 A. I'm not 100 percent familiar with it. I heard discussion
15 about it after the event.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. I knew that there was an old San Bruno Station south of San
18 Bruno. I was not aware entirely that there -- exactly what was
19 there.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. All right. Well, thank you for your time --

23 A. Thank you, sir.

24 Q. -- for sharing.

25 A. Thank you.

1 DR. JENNER: All right. Steve Jenner, Safety Board. Just a
2 couple of questions.

3 BY DR. JENNER:

4 Q. Had you, as a dispatcher, worked with Mr. Robins before?

5 A. Many times. Mr. Robins has been on our property for -- I
6 think I wasn't even born yet. He's been around a long time.

7 Q. Okay. Has his communications been professional and accurate
8 the way you would expect?

9 A. Yeah, he's been a very professional worker. I've never had a
10 problem with him with track and time, you know. We have a short
11 list of people that we know we've got to take a little more time
12 with and make sure that they know what they're talking about and
13 where they're working. But Mr. Robins isn't one of them.

14 Q. Got it. And that day, did he sound any different to you?
15 Did it cause you pause or concern the way you two were
16 communicating?

17 A. No, I was a little perplexed again as to why he didn't have
18 the entire segment of track and why we had to do this finagling to
19 get him where he needed to go. It seemed to me that it had worked
20 the last two days. Why isn't it approved today? But I, you know,
21 it just -- it is what it is. So I guess that was a little -- the
22 other thing is that he hadn't been running the crew for the last
23 little while. He wasn't -- he's very familiar with that area.
24 For some reason, he's always in South City running that project
25 there, but today he had -- that day he hadn't been there for a

1 while, and so he was -- I could tell that he was trying to wrap
2 his head around what exactly was going on there, who he was
3 working with and what he needed to do. So in those instances,
4 that's why I kind of backtrack with them and try to give them an
5 idea of what I've seen the last couple of days.

6 Q. Right.

7 A. And how I can help him achieve what he needs to do or get
8 where he needs to go, just to give him options, you know, give him
9 idea of what he could use, what he might be able to do to, you
10 know.

11 Q. Okay. Did the decisions which he was making, which was a
12 little different than what had gone on the previous days, did that
13 give you concern?

14 A. I didn't feel like he was making any decisions that were
15 wrong. If I ever felt like somebody was doing something that was
16 maybe putting them or their crew in danger, I think I would have,
17 I would have said something or -- I definitely would have said
18 something.

19 Q. Sure.

20 A. I definitely would have steered him in a different direction.
21 No, to answer your question. I felt that he was a little stressed
22 because he was running a crew that he was unfamiliar with. It's
23 always stressful for an EIC to run a crew in one section and then
24 to have something going on in a completely different area where
25 you don't have eyes on it.

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Um-hum.

2 MR. MCGREW: So I felt that over the phone.

3 BY DR. JENNER:

4 Q. You raise an interesting point. So he was not on scene when
5 you're communicating with him. He was at a remote location. He
6 was not on the site though of where the poles were being loaded.

7 A. No. As far as I understood, he -- well, he was running a
8 Form B. So he would have to be somewhere in the middle of that
9 Form B so he could communicate with traffic in both directions. I
10 assume he did -- well, what am I talking about? He had to put an
11 at location on his track and time which I think was just a control
12 point. Usually they're close to a control point. Some like to
13 get specifics with exact mileposts, but I knew that he was in the
14 vicinity of South City.

15 Q. Right, where our understanding was the vicinity but not on
16 the site the way Mr. Hidalgo was --

17 A. Correct.

18 Q. -- who was the eyes. So now there's a communication flow of
19 Hidalgo to Robins to you.

20 A. Um-hum.

21 Q. Is that common?

22 A. Yes, very.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. Yeah. The -- I can hear them talking over the radio
25 sometimes. They have to check in with each other, of course, to

1 do a radio check and come to think of it, I can't remember if I
2 heard a radio check or not. You know, there's just so much going
3 on. I can't process it all, but I would assume they would have to
4 have some kind of communication with each other to know where they
5 are, to report in the clear. Hey, I'm doing this. Hey, I'm doing
6 that. Authority to move north, you know, whatever.

7 Q. Right. We understand that there was -- we looked at some
8 phone logs and we see some calls between each other. We don't
9 know the content. We don't know what was said.

10 A. Okay.

11 Q. So we can only guess, you know --

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. -- what may have been said given the times that they
14 communicated with you. So, okay. So this on scene to someone
15 who's a little off scene to you is common and you're okay with
16 that.

17 A. Well, I -- I mean like I said. It does cause some stress but
18 these -- a lot of guys are, you know, they're vets. They know how
19 to -- they've got watchmen protection, things like that, other
20 redundancies to keep them protected, the work that they're doing
21 and, of course, the track and time system where they're supposed
22 to be protected under another authority which gives them absolute
23 protection.

24 Q. Sure.

25 A. We have these systems in place to prevent this kind of thing.

1 So.

2 Q. Right. Mr. Hidalgo, have you worked with him as a
3 dispatcher?

4 A. Yes, sir.

5 Q. How has that gone in the past?

6 A. Fine. You know, he's never been really one to run a huge
7 site, you know, and this is a rather plausible (ph.) crew. He's
8 usually doing something small. You know, I don't know what goes
9 on over there as far as maintenance-of-way but just as far as
10 tracks that he's got from me, the work that I've seen him do, it's
11 usually secondary type stuff.

12 Q. Okay. Do you recall any problems with your communication in
13 terms of preciseness and thoroughness?

14 A. No. No, sir, I don't.

15 Q. Okay. Changing a bit, I just need a better understanding.
16 I'm sure you gave it but for my clarification, permission to
17 shunt. So when someone asks you permission to shunt, is your
18 expectation that you will see something on your screen that they
19 will be shunting on it and something will appear on your screen to
20 indicate that or is it saying that we may be doing something that
21 may end up shunting?

22 A. I would say 10 to 15 percent of the time I'll actually expect
23 to see a shunt. But the rest of the time, we're just doing it to
24 protect them from getting a rules violation. You never know when
25 a piece of rebar is going to fall out of somebody's back pocket

1 and shunt the track or, you know, who knows? Things can happen.

2 Q. Just to understand, the 10 to 15 percent means 10 to 15
3 percent of the time it will show up on your screen that something
4 is being shunted. So that means the majority of the time, there
5 is no shunting actually going on.

6 A. I mean what I expect, like 10 to 15 percent of the time after
7 the briefing, I expect to actually see a shunt.

8 Q. Right.

9 A. I'll be anticipating it. The rest of the time, I'm not.
10 possibility?

11 A. That's correct. Q. So they're just asking permission to let
12 you know that it's a

13 Q. Okay. I don't want to ask questions beyond the area that
14 you're comfortable talking about, but what I'm not -- what I don't
15 know why -- I think there are actions they can take out there to
16 ensure that shunting is going on --

17 A. Um-hum.

18 Q. -- right. Under what conditions would they do, take an
19 action, to make sure shunting is going on versus it may happen
20 versus may not happen?

21 A. You mean like when they deliberately shunt the track?

22 Q. Right.

23 A. You know, I can't think of an instance where they would
24 deliberately shunt the track to force me to let them keep the
25 track and time. It's just not something that we discuss or do or

1 that would kind of be like maybe a confrontation, you know, that
2 maybe somebody's trying to pull one so they can stay there longer
3 and get -- yeah, that just never really happens. It's mostly with
4 the C&S guys, the signal guys --

5 Q. Um-hum.

6 A. -- that we see most of the shunt stuff happen.

7 Q. Fair enough. In sidebar conversations, sometimes shunting is
8 discussed almost as a safety backup.

9 A. Um-hum.

10 Q. So if they're deliberately shunting, it's for their
11 protection as well. So if all else goes wrong, we've still got
12 this to fall back on.

13 A. Um-hum.

14 Q. I'm not looking at it as someone's trying to trick the system
15 and you. They're looking at it for their own safety.

16 A. Um-hum.

17 Q. So with that in mind, there's an option to shunt versus not
18 shunt for their protection.

19 A. There is an option to shunt. I think with our property in
20 particular, with the amount of crossings that we have, may cause
21 problems particularly with the hi-railers when they go from the
22 south end of the track to the north end of the track for
23 inspection every other day. If they were shunting the track,
24 they'd be bringing crossings down left and right.

25 Q. Got you.

1 A. We'd be getting phone calls. It would be a nightmare.

2 Q. I see. So you're talking about the disincentive to over
3 shunt.

4 A. Yeah, but that, you know, that's just with the hi-railers.
5 You know, if it was a maintenance crew, they could -- they would
6 need more than just a maintenance crew to deal with that shunt.
7 They would need a signal person to deal with any crossings in the
8 area that reacted to the shunt on the track, yeah. If all of our
9 trucks shunted, yeah, we get calls all the time of, you know,
10 somebody's working here. Well, so and so, Grandma from down the
11 street, the crossing's been going off for hours. Of course, we
12 have to protect it immediately, and we have to investigate.

13 Q. Got it.

14 A. Yeah. So.

15 Q. Thanks for explaining that to me.

16 A. No problem.

17 Q. Okay. That's the questions I have. Thanks very much.

18 A. Thank you.

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I've got one follow up.

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah, I don't. Thank you. Thank you.

21 MR. MCGREW: You're welcome.

22 BY UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

23 Q. When you gave Mr. Robins his two pieces of track and time for
24 the 1 and 2 to set his equipment on, you gave him 210 until
25 called, and then 211, I believe you said I need that back because

1 I have traffic coming and you're not approved for both tracks.
2 And he gave that back to you. And then when he gave back 210 on
3 the recordings, I don't want to quote him, but he's like, we had
4 to do some maneuvering. We got it done and got it back quickly to
5 you. Did that seem odd that he was kind of in a hurry to release
6 the 210 when you gave it to him until called?

7 A. I did notice that he was a little excited that day. We was
8 jabbering on about how he was doing it, you know, these maneuvers.

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Should sit at a desk by you and he
10 was --

11 MR. MCGREW: Yeah. And there was some back and forth --

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'm doing great. I should -- next
13 thing you know, I'll be sitting there next to you.

14 MR. MCGREW: I guess, right.

15 BY UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

16 Q. The last question is -- I don't know. Once he gives up the
17 time, you're not really looking at your screen in that area.
18 You're done with that area. So like once he gave up the time
19 where the crew was, if indication did flash up where it's shunted
20 quickly, you're not -- I don't know if that's like right in front
21 of you or you have to bring up that screen.

22 A. Oh, no, it's right in front of me. I think I've got eight of
23 them, and then I've got them all up on the big board for everybody
24 to see.

25 Q. So after he gives up his time, there was no like shunt or

1 momentarily and then went away or anything like that?

2 A. No. I would have noticed it. It would have knocked out the
3 signal I just put in. It would have caused an event on the
4 recorder.

5 Q. I didn't know how much time it took or it's like there's
6 something out there, we're knocking down control points. That's
7 why I was asking.

8 A. Yeah, it would cause the signal to go and times flash red and
9 -- yeah, we would have -- and I was focused on the area at that
10 time after releasing because I was trying to normalize everything,
11 getting all the signals back into it. So I didn't see any shunt
12 or anything that caused me any kind of alarm whatsoever.

13 Q. That's all the questions I have.

14 A. Okay. Thank you, sir.

15 BY UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

16 Q. Just to clarify on the 112, the other southbound, prior to
17 506. Did they go through that area after the release?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. They did?

20 A. I believe they were somewhere around south San Francisco at
21 the time I was releasing that track.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. And then like I said, they were already lined in, had
24 their --

25 Q. So you just let them go on 1 because you already had it all

1 set up and everything.

2 A. And moreover, I had signs set up at San Bruno for all of my
3 pedestrian traffic to be on the northbound side to change that
4 last minute and ask them to run over would have been chaotic, and
5 we would have missed people and --

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. -- and Ron's office would have flooded with emails.

8 Q. That's all. Thank you very much. I appreciate your time.

9 BY MR. SIMMONS:

10 Q. If something shows an occupancy, you'll have to override
11 that, right? Because I mean like all of a sudden, it will not
12 allow you to run the train into another train or if something's
13 shunting a certain track, because you're saying, well, if I saw
14 that, I wouldn't allow it. Will your computer system allow you to
15 do that?

16 A. No, sir. It immediately drops the signal --

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. -- or any signal line into that area, and it shows up as a
19 solid red. You cannot line signals into it --

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. -- from that point.

22 Q. Okay. That's what I assumed.

23 A. Sometimes -- I'm trying to think of a scenario when you can.
24 I mean the way the system works is if you have a train moving in a
25 particular direction, they occupy a block. The system recognizes

1 the movement of that train and the direction of the shunt. It
2 will allow you to line a signal in the same direction as that
3 train, but not in an opposing direction.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. So that -- and we need that to say stack trains in a depot or
6 in the same block, you know, they're traveling behind each other.
7 That's how that works. So.

8 Q. Do they inspect the track every morning, the hi-railers? Do
9 they --

10 A. It's every other day.

11 Q. Every other day.

12 A. Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturday, Sunday.

13 Q. Because I mean in general, this is just your opinion, is
14 there a lot of work going out on -- in your -- on your piece of
15 track that you dispatch, a lot? I mean do you have a lot of
16 workers out there? Because then I can understand why we don't
17 shunt. I can't -- then I really can because if there's a lot, but
18 there's just -- I don't know. I just, you know, was trying to
19 shake my head because I mean, you know, had we known that he was
20 out there by some form of shunting or something, because even the
21 big crane, you know, when we looked at it, had a shunting device
22 on it, you know. I mean so it wasn't only the hi-rails that would
23 be out there, you know. So somebody could have been shunting, you
24 know, and they weren't and it just -- that's the hardest thing for
25 me to get, you know, because we had such a close call, and it's

1 all because we don't shunt here, you know, and --

2 A. Yeah, like I said, I was trying to explain it in terms of I
3 understand and that is the crossings and how --

4 Q. And even that makes sense now to me that you were saying that
5 because you're basically in a large city, large corporate, you've
6 got so many different crossings, and it makes sense to me. It
7 does. It's just that there's got to be, you know, and I know when
8 I -- you know, we used to, you know, we called them shunts. You
9 call them jumpers. When we used to do lights out for when we're
10 testing crews and we used to do all that, right, and then they
11 used that to get on the track, and I understand that, you know,
12 yeah, because this may take 5 minutes, the bars are going to be
13 down, but how far away? Isn't it 30 seconds from the crossing if
14 you're not in there? Then it doesn't activate the crossing, does
15 it?

16 A. I think it depends on the amount of mileage or speed of the
17 track. It's a calculation between the speed, actual track speed,
18 distance --

19 Q. Because I don't, I don't know that. I really don't. I just
20 -- okay. But that's all I have.

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Jeff, I would just like to say thank
22 you for your attentiveness during this incident. A lot of times
23 you guys are the ones that are forgotten on the crew, you know,
24 because like it or not, we all work together. And thank you for
25 your time. I appreciate you coming out.

1 MR. MCGREW: I really appreciate that, yeah.

2 DR. JENNER: Yeah, Steve Jenner again.

3 BY DR. JENNER:

4 Q. Can you just capture real quickly interactions you had post-
5 accident with emergency responders?

6 A. Post-accident. Well, honestly not a lot. I put in that
7 initial call to San Mateo County. I know it was brief. It wasn't
8 -- I was more like a location, what I know which wasn't much, and
9 I remember trying to -- we don't have access to a map. So when
10 we're trying to coordinate with emergency, it's like pulling
11 teeth. I've got mileposts, crossings, overpasses and underpasses,
12 but I can't coordinate with them as far as an access road and
13 that's simply tied to the fact that they don't want us on the
14 internet or anywhere around the internet while we're on duty. So
15 it's -- and it's a frustration for management as well, you know.
16 Of course, we'd all like to access all the tools we can but it
17 only takes one person to screw that up. But there was that
18 initial call and then, you know, like I said, the second call
19 where it sounded like they had canceled the original which was
20 perplexing to me.

21 But again, there's other people making phone calls in the
22 room for us. We've been working together for a while. So they
23 know to -- if I'm focused -- they can just hear my radio. If I'm
24 focused on what I'm doing, they know to make the other important
25 calls that I need to. And on that particular day with the

1 severity of event, I didn't have time to go around the room and
2 tally up who had called who. I just knew that I knew Transit at
3 least to know because I know that they'll do all the calling to
4 fire, EMS, based on what I tell them. So as long as -- I knew as
5 long as I got that call in, I believed it was going to get taken
6 care of as far as first responders from that initial phone call.

7 Q. We're very early in the investigation. So we're getting a
8 little clarity about what may have happened and we're a long way
9 from why it happened. So this may be a premature question but is
10 there anything from your end in terms of procedures, equipment,
11 training, any other resources that would help you do your job
12 either pre-accident or post-accident?

13 A. I think the briefings are okay. I mean as far as the
14 authority on the track and what he gets and is able to control,
15 I'm not sure if him giving me a rundown of who he's got and where
16 he's going and what he's doing, I mean like I said before, we do
17 have a briefing about the work that he's going to perform, but I'm
18 not going to pretend like I know what those guys do. That's not
19 my profession. So he could tell me stuff that's just wasting my
20 time because I have no idea what he's saying.

21 Q. Right.

22 A. I'm not sure if maybe just a quick, I'm going to have this
23 person working with me, kind of thing might work. I'm not sure if
24 that's -- if that could be recorded on the initial track and time,
25 but then that would, that would put responsibility on the

1 dispatcher. I'm not -- without us being in the field and seeing
2 what's going on, I'm not sure if that's a good route to go but I
3 think you guys are all kind of touching on something here with the
4 shunting. If I had seen that shunt on the track, obviously I
5 would not have released that track and time. Or, if there's a way
6 to do that without disturbing local traffic and creating all kind
7 of havoc, I'd like to see that happen.

8 Q. Right. And again, we're talking about it just coming from an
9 outsider's perspective, and we do not have a position or opinion.
10 So we're asking questions so we can educate ourselves.

11 A. Understood.

12 Q. But if it's worth future conversation, then so be it. So
13 I'll encourage you, if there's any way as you give this further
14 thought, if there's something you think of that could help --

15 A. Um-hum.

16 Q. -- you mentioned the maps. Maybe that could be opened again.
17 Just run it up the chain to our people. See if there's any safety
18 improvements we can make.

19 A. I'm happy to be here. I don't want to see something like
20 this happen again, sir. I really appreciate what --

21 MR. SIMMONS: Thank you.

22 MR. MCGREW: -- we're all gathered here to do, and if you
23 ever need me to come back for another one, I'm available.

24 DR. JENNER: I appreciate that. That's all I have.

25 MR. SIMMONS: Jeff, what is the address?

1 DR. JENNER: Let's just keep the --

2 MR. SIMMONS: Yeah, we'll keep it going.

3 MR. STAHL: Real quick, for the record, Ron Stahl, observer,
4 but I have a comment. Jeff, I know you're not there on the scene
5 with the chaos and with what's going on, but you're not forgotten.
6 It is a traumatizing event for you as well. I was there at
7 dispatch when the first initial call came, and you continued
8 working through that. So I just want to make sure to reach out to
9 you, to take advantage of that. That's your choice. It's there
10 for a reason, if you need to talk to someone. We just want to
11 make sure we take care of you. You did a great job. Everyone's
12 obviously gone through all of your work with the IT phone and it
13 appears to be like your professional the way you do. And you've
14 already proven that to me, and now you're proving it to them. So
15 thank you and make sure you get help if you need it.

16 MR. MCGREW: Thank you, Ron. I appreciate, and I've got a
17 lot of support from the whole team outside the organization and
18 within. It's been great. And I have been contacted.

19 MR. FRIGO: Jeff, this is Ryan Frigo, again with NTSB. I
20 just want to thank you again for coming in and having a thorough
21 discussion with us. We really appreciate it. You've helped to
22 fill I some of the blanks and, you know, just, you know, again
23 thank you. Thank you for your time.

24 And, with that, we will go off the record.

25 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

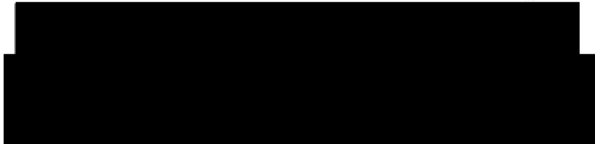
IN THE MATTER OF: CALTRAIN COLLISION WITH
CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT NEAR
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA
ON MARCH 10, 2022
Interview of Jeff McGrew

ACCIDENT NO.: RRD22LR007

PLACE: San Bruno, California

DATE: March 12, 2022

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.



Kathryn A. Mirfin
Transcriber