



I, Christopher Marullo have read the foregoing pages of a copy of my interview that was held on June 28, 2022. These pages constitute a true and accurate transcription of same with the exception of the following amendments, additions, deletions or corrections:

PAGE NO: LINE NO: CHANGE AND REASON FOR CHANGE

16 12-16 EMD was rather slow to pickup tickets properly. Had to double check often after lifting tickets to ensure paper lift.
Reason: Still shook up from accident at the time did not recall detail at the time.

I declare that I have read my statements and that it is true and correct subject to any changes in the form or substance entered here.

Date: 8/26/22

Witness: [REDACTED]

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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FATAL AMTRAK GRADE CROSSING
COLLISION & DERAILMENT IN MENDON,
MISSISSIPPI ON JUNE 27, 2022

Accident No.: RRD22MR010

* * * * *

Interview of: CHRISTOPHER MARZULLO, Assistant Conductor
Amtrak

Mendon, Missouri

Tuesday,
June 28, 2022

APPEARANCES:

MICHAEL BACHMEIER, Office of the Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

STEVE FACKLAN, Party Spokesman
Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen

DAN BONAWITZ, JR., Party Spokesman
Smart Transportation Division

JOE MORRIS, Superintendent of Operations
Amtrak

PAUL OMARA, System Vice-President of Transportation
Amtrak

MICHAEL COOK, Director of Safety
BNSF Transportation

CHRIS GROOM, Operating Practices Inspector
Federal Railroad Administration

ZACH ZAGATA, Operations Group Chairman
National Transportation Safety Board

JOHN SWINFORD, Local Chairman
Smart Transportation Division

I N D E X

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Interview of Christopher Marzullo:	
By Mr. Bachmeier	6
By Mr. Facklan	8
By Mr. Bonawitz	12
By Mr. Omara	15
By Mr. Groom	16
By Mr. Zagata	17
By Mr. Bachmeier	617
By Mr. Bonawitz	19
By Mr. Morris	20

I N T E R V I E W

(3:54 p.m.)

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2
3 MR. BACHMEIER: Okay. My name is Mike Bachmeier and I'm the
4 NTSB Operations Investigator for this accident. We're here today
5 on 6/28 at 3:54 to conduct an interview with Christopher
6 Marzullo --

7 MR. MARZULLO: Marzullo.

8 MR. BACHMEIER: -- who works for Amtrak. This interview is
9 in conjunction with NTSB's investigation of this grade crossing
10 accident near Mendon, Missouri. The NTSB accident reference
11 number is RRD22MR010. The purpose of this investigation is to
12 increase safety and not to assign fault, blame or liability.

13 Before we begin our interview with questions, let's go around
14 our table and introduce ourselves. Please spell your last name,
15 who you are representing and your title. I would like to remind
16 everyone to speak clearly so we can get an accurate recording.

17 I'll start off and then pass it off to my right. Again my
18 name is Mike Bachmeier, B-a-c-h-m-e-i-e-r and I am the NTSB
19 Operations Inspector for this accident.

20 MR. FACKLAN: Steve Facklan, F-a-c-k-l-a-n, Brotherhood of
21 Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, Party Spokesman.

22 MR. BONAWITZ: Dan Bonawitz, B-o-n-a-w-i-t-z, Smart TD
23 Assistant Director, National Safety Team.

24 MR. MORRIS: Joe Morris, M-o-r-r-i-s, Superintendent of
25 Operations for Amtrak.

1 MR. OMARA: Paul Omara, O-m-a-r-a, Amtrak, System Vice-
2 President of Transportation.

3 MR. COOK: Michael Cook, C-o-o-k, Transportation Director of
4 Safety for BNSF Railway.

5 MR. GROOM: Chris Groom, G-r-o-o-m, FRA Operating Practices
6 Inspector.

7 MR. ZAGATA: Zach Zagata, Z-a-g-a-t-a, NTSB.

8 MR. SWINFORD: John Swinford, Smart Transportation Division,
9 Local Chairman. I'm representing Mr. Marzullo today. Sorry, John
10 Swinford, S-w-i-n-f-o-r-d.

11 MR. MARZULLO: Christopher Marzullo, M-a-r-z-u-l-l-o,
12 Assistant Conductor for Amtrak.

13 MR. BACHMEIER: Okay, thank you.

14 And before I start, I had the date wrong. I didn't read my
15 writing. It is June 28th, 2022.

16 Chris, do we have your permission to record our discussion
17 with you today?

18 MR. MARZULLO: Yes.

19 MR. BACHMEIER: Do you understand the transcription will be
20 part of the public docket? As such we cannot guarantee any
21 confidentiality?

22 MR. MARZULLO: Yes.

23 MR. BACHMEIER: As we discussed, you have a representative
24 with you today, Mr. Swinford. Is that correct?

25 MR. MARZULLO: Yes.

1 MR. BACHMEIER: Okay.

2 I'd ask everyone to clearly announce your name and title
3 before questioning.

4 INTERVIEW OF CHRISTOPHER MARZULLO

5 BY MR. BACHMEIER:

6 Q. Chris, could you please give us a synopsis of your work
7 experience taking us up to your present job?

8 A. I've been with Amtrak for four years. Started out as an
9 assistant conductor for about a year and then went for, you know,
10 a conductor promotion training about a year into that. So I'm
11 pretty much worked as a conductor or assistant conductor for the
12 last three years or so.

13 Q. Okay. So, you've been in your current position about three
14 years?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Okay. And then can you describe kind of how your day started
17 yesterday?

18 A. Like every other day, you know. We got in the night before.
19 The night before we got our setback to 7:43 in the morning. And
20 that morning around -- it wasn't quite 6:00 in the morning, a
21 little bit earlier than that, we got another setback that the
22 train was late to about 9:00. So, the morning started like any
23 other day, you know, reviewed our orders, you know, reviewed what
24 we had going on and what not, and just up until then it was pretty
25 much a normal day.

1 Q. Thank you. So, after you had your briefing and everything
2 and got on the road, everything was normal just like any other
3 day?

4 A. You know, for the most part save for -- and of course,
5 obviously being delayed, it was pretty much a normal day. I was
6 in the coaches doing, you know, my normal responsibilities, doing
7 the scans of tickets, make sure that everybody, you know, was
8 taken care of and --

9 Q. Okay. And coming up to the accident site, can you describe
10 how -- what you remember of approaching and --

11 A. I remember, you know, right around -- not precisely 12:40 but
12 right around that, you know, neck in the windows for the time of
13 12:40 p.m. I was in the diner discussing what we were going to do
14 at the next station with the service crew as far as, you know,
15 what car we were going to load people and all that.

16 And, you know, I heard the transmission over the radio from,
17 you know, between engineer Mr. Tuck and my conductor, Brian Marra,
18 that, you know, Brian, 2 to 1 at Mendon. Okay, you know, roger
19 that.

20 You know, not long after that I, you know, felt what seemed
21 like the train going into emergency and then after that felt the
22 impact. You know, and this, you know, a lot of violent bouncing
23 around and rocking, and then, you know, I happened to be on the
24 fireman's side of the train. So, you know, just held on as much
25 as I, you know, I could until, you know. We ended up in the

1 gravel and just, you know, assessing, you know, the reality of the
2 situation.

3 Q. Okay. I know when you're talking about 2 to 1, you're
4 talking about going from main 2 to main 1. Is that what you're
5 talking about?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Okay.

8 MR. BACHMEIER: Steve, I'll pass it on.

9 MR. FACKLAN: Steve Facklan, F-a-c-k-l-a-n, BLET Safety Task
10 Force.

11 BY MR. FACKLAN:

12 Q. You were working as the assistant conductor. Correct?

13 A. Correct.

14 Q. Okay. Briefly, can you just describe your typical duties as
15 an assistant conductor, when you start your day on the train and
16 what you do.

17 A. Typical duties, you know, at the start of the day that pretty
18 much, you know, participate in the job briefing with the conductor
19 and, you know, the engineer. My primary responsibility as the
20 assistant conductor, you know, pretty much, you know, perform
21 everything under, you know, direction and instruction of the
22 conductor, you know, make sure passengers are boarded safely and
23 make sure they're taken care of, you know, collect their tickets,
24 address any, like, direct issues with passengers and, you know,
25 whatever duties that Mr. Marra directs to me. I'll take care of

1 those or, you know, basically we work together.

2 Q. You -- I come from the freight side.

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. I'm usually working with different people every trip. Do you
5 generally work with the same conductor?

6 A. Yes, we've been on this assignment together for about a month
7 now.

8 Q. Okay. You said you were on the fireman's side when the
9 accident occurred. What car were you in? Were you --

10 A. I was in the diner.

11 Q. The diner car?

12 A. The diner.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. At one of the tables near the vestibule door leading into the
15 lounge car.

16 Q. Were there passengers in the dining car at that time?

17 A. There were passengers having lunch. There was the dining car
18 staff was present, serving lunch at the time.

19 Q. Okay. I want to touch briefly on the emergency response.
20 You said you heard the -- did you hear the communication with the
21 engineer and the dispatcher and the conductor right after the
22 accident? Did you have a radio with you --

23 (Crosstalk)

24 A. Yes, I have my radio.

25 Q. Did you hear those conversations?

1 A. Yes, once the engineer started, you know, talking with the
2 dispatcher. I heard that. And, you know, at the time assessing
3 the situation and then, you know, ascertaining the location --
4 where my conductor was and, you know, he's okay and my engineer
5 and then, you know. After that, we tried to look for the safest
6 way possible out of that car.

7 Q. About the impact, did you -- I'm sure it knocked you to the
8 floor. Did it -- did you sustain any kind of head injury,
9 concussion or that you felt or anything that dazed you at that
10 point? Were you knocked unconscious at all?

11 A. No, not unconscious. I just -- I did, you know, bump my
12 head.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. Just, you know, got thrown around a little bit.

15 Q. The -- for the emergency response, to the best of your
16 knowledge, do you remember when the first outside help arrived,
17 about how long that took?

18 A. I don't recall the exact time when in between -- when, you
19 know, we finally ended up where we were and I know by the time
20 that, you know, we safely identified a way out and got out on the
21 ground that emergency help was already there. It was a very --

22 Q. Quick?

23 A. -- very, very, very efficient and fast response, I think.

24 Q. And then follow-up help?

25 A. Um-hum.

1 Q. They kept coming as well?

2 A. Um-hum.

3 Q. Okay. As far as helping the passengers out and going through
4 that, what do you -- did you have first aid kits? Were you able
5 to get to first aid kits easily, have access to those?

6 A. Yes, they were easily accessible.

7 Q. Okay. What -- were you inside opening windows to get people
8 out?

9 A. I was near one of the -- I was near the end door going from
10 -- that was going to the lounge car and there was -- fortunately,
11 there was enough space to safely crawl our way out. Because the
12 only other alternative would have been opening the emergency
13 windows and get on top of the car, but we had -- I ascertained
14 that that probably wasn't a good idea because not like we have
15 ladders, you know, readily available to get people down. And we,
16 you know, between me and my OBS crew that was present, we
17 ascertained that that was safest way to get everybody out quickly
18 as possible.

19 Q. Okay. That was another thing, you mentioned tools. Did you
20 -- outside of first aid kits, were there things that you wish you
21 had or tools, anything that you felt was needed as far as
22 equipment that you didn't have?

23 A. I mean, I definitely do think that we could -- and this is
24 just not just for myself, everybody -- we could benefit from more,
25 you know, more hands on training. And, of course, like I said,

1 ladders. That, considering the condition the train was in, that's
2 a big thing, you know --

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. -- having ladders readily available.

5 Q. You touched on training. How often do you have safety
6 training?

7 A. Every year that we go to block training.

8 Q. Every year?

9 (Crosstalk)

10 Q. What's that training consist of for you? I mean, as far as
11 videos, classroom?

12 A. Video, classroom, you know, some scenarios.

13 Q. Any --

14 A. Different types of scenarios that could happen and, you know,
15 how would you respond to them.

16 Q. But you mentioned you could use more training?

17 A. I think a little bit more hands on training would benefit
18 everybody.

19 Q. Hands on training as in real-life simulations, that type of
20 thing?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Okay. That's all I have right now.

23 MR. BONAWITZ: Dan Bonawitz, B-o-n-a-w-i-t-z-, Smart
24 Transportation Division.

25 BY MR. BONAWITZ:

1 Q. Just sticking with where he left off, if you don't mind,
2 talking about training, evacuating. Have you ever physically
3 opened one of those windows prior to this incident?

4 A. Since training, no.

5 Q. When you were in your initial training, you were given an
6 opportunity to open one of those windows?

7 A. Yes, I recall, but I don't remember exactly. I don't want to
8 speculate, but I'm pretty sure that we did.

9 Q. Okay. Did you open any windows during this event?

10 A. No, one of my dining car attendants was close to where he
11 started opening the window, and then we identified, you know, the
12 way that I described was the best way to get out or put everybody
13 on top of the car until help arrived.

14 Q. He hit on training and you think you said yearly block
15 training. Is that how you described it?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Is any of that scenario-driven? When I say scenario, do you
18 have an example that you read from to discuss what occurs, what
19 happens to car A, B, C, engine, if you hit somebody at a crossing,
20 what each -- what would be a standard operating procedure for each
21 crew person to do in that event?

22 A. I'm trying to think of one. I can't really speculate right
23 now.

24 Q. Okay. But do you watch a video of a derailment?

25 A. I don't -- I think we did.

1 Q. Do you see a computer-based video or simulation where a
2 computer-based system conductor acts --

3 A. I believe it was computer-based.

4 Q. Okay. Thank you. Staying with the yearly training, how long
5 a time period is that training each and every year? Is it one
6 hour, four hours, one day, one week?

7 A. One day.

8 Q. One day.

9 A. On that specific topic or you mean in general?

10 Q. In general.

11 A. Then three.

12 Q. Three days --

13 A. Three.

14 Q. -- and so maybe --

15 (Crosstalk)

16 Q. -- once -- one day on emergency response?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. Okay. Earlier, you talked about setback. Was that a common
19 occurrence?

20 A. When the train becomes more delayed than it was initially,
21 yes.

22 Q. How do you adjust for that to get your rest?

23 A. I go back to sleep.

24 Q. Are you always able to go back to sleep?

25 A. Most of the time.

1 Q. Okay. That's it for now. Thank you.

2 MR. MORRIS: Joe Morris, Amtrak, M-o-r-r-i-s.

3 Chris, we interviewed your other members of the crew. I
4 really don't have any questions other than I want to commend you
5 guys on a job well done and working as a team.

6 MR. MARZULLO: Thank you.

7 MR. OMARA: Paul Omara, O-m-a-r-a, Amtrak.

8 BY MR. OMARA:

9 Q. Chris, just for my clarification, so when you exited the car
10 you found out, was that on the engineer's side through the side
11 vestibule door or --

12 A. I'm sorry, what was the question?

13 Q. So, you said you exited the car and you didn't go out through
14 the emergency window. You found another route?

15 A. Correct.

16 Q. Where -- what was that route?

17 A. There was enough space between -- when the car was on the
18 side, on the engineer's side. So, we're talking, you know, from
19 the fireman's side there was enough space to get out safely
20 between that area, between the vestibules.

21 Q. So, it wasn't the side door. It was where the two vestibules
22 meet?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. There was a gap there?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Okay, that's what I wanted --

2 (Crosstalk)

3 A. -- clarify that. You didn't go out the vessel --

4 (Crosstalk)

5 A. -- without having, you know, to ascertain what I have, not
6 putting anybody in further danger of getting them on top of the
7 car, that that was the best way --

8 Q. So, you went the gap between the two cars?

9 A. Correct.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. Correct.

12 Q. Thank you. One other item. You mentioned in your duties
13 that, you know, you scan tickets, pick up tickets with your EMD.
14 Were you able to scan all your tickets? Was your EMD working
15 properly and were you able to scan all the tickets from the
16 previous stop before the derailment?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. Everything was working. Okay. Thank you. That's all I've
19 got.

20 MR. COOK: Michael Cook, BNSF, C-o-o-k. No, I have no
21 questions for you.

22 MR. MARZULLO: Okay.

23 MR. GROOM: Chris Groom, G-r-o-o-m, FRA OP.

24 BY MR. GROOM:

25 Q. Just a follow-up on the passenger piece. So, you scanned

1 tickets. Did you have a good passenger count departing Kansas
2 City or do you -- did you have any extras on board that wasn't
3 accounted for at the time or did you try to catch up head counts
4 or did you have a good head count before arriving at La Plata, or
5 what was the process?

6 A. I don't remember the exact count.

7 Q. So, you don't know if you had a good count out of Kansas City
8 or you were just trying to work on it or --

9 A. It was more than 200 passengers.

10 Q. Okay. Again, thank you for what you did out there.

11 MR. ZAGATA: Zach Zagata, Z-a-g-a-t-a, NTSB.

12 BY MR. ZAGATA:

13 Q. So, just to clarify, all in all, how do you feel the local
14 responders did when they arrived? Did you feel like it was
15 organized and it went well?

16 A. I mean, overall, between, you know, what we did on our part
17 to try to preserve, you know, as much life as possible and make
18 sure we got everybody out as quickly as possible. And then, you
19 know, response from the local, you know, local EMD, then, you
20 know, local authorities. I think we did everything that we -- on
21 our part that we possibly could to make sure we preserve as much
22 life as we could.

23 Q. Okay. I appreciate it. That's all I've got.

24 MR. BACHMEIER: Okay.

25 BY MR. BACHMEIER:

1 Q. You were talking about the dining car and your escape route
2 there. What car did you -- was it -- you know the dining car --
3 was it the car towards the head end or --

4 A. As far as relation to where the engines were?

5 Q. Yes.

6 A. Engine, engine, two sleeping cars, and then the diner. So,
7 behind the last engine. That's one, two, three cars.

8 Q. So, go then between the dining car and between that second
9 sleeper? That's where you --

10 A. It's the two sleepers and then the dining car where we were,
11 and then lounge and then the coaches.

12 Q. Okay. So, you --

13 A. About in the middle.

14 Q. And you escaped between the middle of the --

15 A. Diner and the lounge.

16 Q. Okay.

17 MR. FACKLAN: Steve Facklan, F-a-c-k-l-a-n, BLET Safety Task
18 Force.

19 BY MR. FACKLAN:

20 Q. Just a few general questions here. How long is your typical
21 trip from -- you're going from Kansas City to Chicago, Chicago to
22 Kansas City. How many hours?

23 A. On paper -- on a perfect trip?

24 (Crosstalk)

25 Q. What's typical?

1 A. About seven hours and 20 minutes.

2 Q. Okay. And on your layovers, how much time do you have off
3 typically?

4 A. On a normal day, about eight and a half hours.

5 Q. Eight and a half hours?

6 A. Eight and a half, yes. A little over, but approximate eight
7 and a half.

8 Q. Okay. And also were -- after the -- with the -- were you
9 relieved yesterday after the, you know, with the emergency
10 response, were you relieved at the same time as the conductor?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Do you remember roughly what time that was?

13 A. I don't.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. I don't remember the exact time.

16 Q. But you were relieved together?

17 A. We were relieved together.

18 Q. Transportation to the hotel?

19 A. Correct.

20 Q. Okay. Do you feel like you were treated well by Amtrak?

21 A. Yes, I think so.

22 Q. As everybody else has said, thank you and amazing job for
23 just being in the situation you were in. That's all I have.

24 MR. BONAWITZ: Dan Bonawitz, B-o-n-a-w-i-t-z, Smart TD.

25 BY MR. BONAWITZ:

1 Q. Just two quick questions.

2 A. Okay.

3 Q. Did anybody offer you medical treatment?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. And earlier you said you guys did the best you could to
6 provide first aid. Have you ever been given trauma training?

7 A. Have I ever been given trauma training?

8 Q. At Amtrak.

9 A. I believe so, but it doesn't hurt to have, like I said, more
10 hands on training.

11 Q. Okay. Like everyone else, appreciate everything that you did
12 and I want you to walk away from here knowing that you guys did a
13 great job.

14 A. Thank you.

15 MR. MORRIS: Joe Morris, Amtrak.

16 BY MR. MORRIS:

17 Q. Chris, would you describe the number of round trips you make
18 and to what locations as far as your regular position that you
19 currently hold?

20 A. Within a week, within a month?

21 Q. Within a week, or you're on a --

22 A. Three round trips. We do one to Quincy, Illinois and then we
23 do two Kansas City.

24 Q. Thank you.

25 A. Yes.

1 MR. OMARA: I have nothing else, Chris. Thanks.

2 MR. COOK: Nothing else from me.

3 MR. ZAGATA: Nothing else, I appreciate it.

4 MR. BACHMEIER: Chris, do you have anything you'd like to
5 add?

6 MR. MARZULLO: No.

7 MR. BACHMEIER: If we have any follow-up questions, would you
8 mind if we contacted you?

9 MR. MARZULLO: Sure.

10 MR. BACHMEIER: On behalf of the NTSB, I'd like to thank you
11 for your time and cooperation. And one other thing, is there
12 anything you know of that could have prevented this accident?

13 MR. MARZULLO: No, I don't think so.

14 MR. BACHMEIER: Okay, thanks again. This ends our interview.
15 (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: FATAL AMTRAK GRADE CROSSING
COLLISION & DERAILMENT IN MENDON,
MISSISSIPPI ON JUNE 27, 2022
Interview of Christopher Marzullo

ACCIDENT NO.: RRD22MR010

PLACE: Mendon, Missouri

DATE: June 28, 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.



Maria Socorro R. Abellar
Transcriber