

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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NATIONAL SALVAGE & SERVICES
EMPLOYEE FATALITY IN DAUPHIN,
PENNSYLVANIA, ON DECEMBER 8, 2021

Accident No.: RRD22LR003

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Interview of: JORDAN SHORT, Spiker 2 Operator
Norfolk Southern Railway Company

Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania

Thursday,
December 9, 2021

APPEARANCES:

TROY LLOYD, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

DR. MICHAEL HOEPF, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

SHANE STIFFLER, Railroad Track Safety Specialist
Federal Railroad Administration

TODD KRAHOLIK, Railroad Safety Investigator
Federal Railroad Administration

JON MICK, Safety Manager
National Salvage and Services

ROY MORISSON, Director of Safety
Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way

SHELDON SWAIN, Vice Chairman
Alliance System Federation
Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division

JOE YOUNG, Manager of Program Maintenance
Norfolk Southern (North)

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I N T E R V I E W

1
2 DR. HOEPF: Okay, we are on the record. All right, my name
3 is Mike Hoepf, today is December 9th and we are in -- how do you
4 say -- Selinsgrove?

5 MR. SHORT: You're okay.

6 DR. HOEPF: Thank you. Interviewing spiker operator in
7 connection with an accident that occurred in Dauphin County on
8 December 8th, 2021. The NTSB Accident Number is RRD22LR003. The
9 purpose of the investigation is to increase safety, not to assign
10 fault, blame, or liability. NTSB cannot offer any guarantee of
11 confidentiality or immunity from legal or certificate actions. A
12 transcript or summary of the interview will go on the public
13 docket. At the interview, we can have one representative of the
14 interviewee's choice.

15 Jordan, do you understand that the interview is being
16 recorded?

17 MR. SHORT: Yes, that's right.

18 DR. HOEPF: Okay, excellent, thank you. And if you could
19 just state and spell your name and I'll ask everyone else in the
20 room to do the same?

21 MR. SHORT: I'm Jordan Short, J O R D A N S H O R T.

22 DR. HOEPF: Okay, thanks, Jordan. Again, I'm Mike Hoepf,
23 that's H O E P F, and I'm human performance systems safety with
24 the NTSB.

25 MR. LLOYD: Troy Lloyd, spelling of my last name is

1 L L O Y D. I'm the track group chairman, I'm with the National
2 Transportation Safety Board.

3 MR. MORRISON: Roy Morrison, last name, M O R R I S O N,
4 director of safety with the BMWED.

5 MR. KRAHOLIK: Todd Kraholik, K R A H O L I K, with the
6 Federal Railroad Administration.

7 MR. STIFFLER: Shane Stiffler, Federal Railroad
8 Administration, spelling of last name, S T I F F L E R.

9 MR. MICK: Jon Mick, M I C K, National Salvage.

10 MR. YOUNG: Joe Young, Y O U N G, Norfolk Southern, manager
11 of Program Maintenance, North.

12 MR. SWAIN: Sheldon Swain, S W A I N, vice chairman Alliance
13 System Federation, BMWED.

14 DR. HOEPF: Okay, great.

15 INTERVIEW OF JORDAN SHORT

16 BY DR. HOEPF:

17 Q. And Jordan, if we could start off, you can tell us a little
18 bit about your railroad career?

19 A. I've got roughly three-and-a-half years on the railroad, I
20 started in 2018. I started this gang, R12, in September and we've
21 been at it for a few months now.

22 Q. Okay, sounds good. So, when you started off, what were you
23 doing?

24 A. I started off as a laborer.

25 Q. Okay, and when did you stop -- when did you start as an

1 operator?

2 A. Operator is May 2019.

3 Q. Okay, great, and how do you feel about the -- do you feel
4 pretty comfortable as a spiker operator?

5 A. I've been on the spiker about a year now.

6 Q. About a year now, okay. All right, sounds good. Okay,
7 great, and so, Jordan, we primarily kind of just wanted this
8 interview as just kind of a witness today, really. It's just kind
9 of what you heard, what you saw and everything. So, can you just
10 kind of give us a rundown of -- just give us the start of your day
11 just from -- you know, did you stay at the hotel?

12 A. Yeah, stayed at the hotel. Woke up, had breakfast -- how
13 much detail?

14 Q. Oh, yeah, just go ahead. We'll ask for more detail if you
15 need it. So, just go ahead and if you can just give us a run
16 through?

17 A. Van ride to the morning meeting, had our morning meeting,
18 break from the morning meeting. Go to my machine, do a
19 walkaround, regular inspection -- daily inspection, start it up,
20 sit in the machine.

21 Q. How was the job briefing, do you remember what was talked
22 about?

23 A. Not specifically. I remember we talked a little about
24 machine inspections. I don't remember exactly what we talked
25 about in the safety briefing. It's kind of fuzzy now.

1 Q. Yeah, that's okay. I don't want you to speculate, you know,
2 and nobody expects you to remember everything, you know, perfectly
3 or anything like that. So, how was the day going, any challenges
4 or anything like that, was it just kind of a normal day?

5 A. Normal day from all I remember.

6 Q. Yeah, okay. So, yeah, I mean, let's just go ahead and it's
7 kind of tough to talk about, can we maybe just go ahead and talk
8 about the accident sequence? So, what was -- when was the first
9 point when you noticed something was not right? When was the
10 first time something odd kind of popped out to you?

11 A. Well, I was doing my job like normal, just looking down,
12 spiking. I usually glance up to make sure no one's in front of me
13 before I move on to the next towing, normal spiking procedure.
14 When I looked up, I saw Helbert facing off to the left and as I
15 looked up he was going down, he'd gotten hit by the spiker because
16 that's pretty normal for Ben to be backing up to me to help me get
17 caught up because I was about a hundred and -- probably a hundred-
18 and-twenty-five yards -- feet behind him. It's pretty standard
19 procedure.

20 Q. Got you. So, you work with Ben pretty regularly then?

21 A. Right.

22 Q. Okay, and so it's usually -- I guess we talked about this off
23 the record, but let's just kind of clarify. Can you talk about
24 the spiker sequence, you know, just in terms of the -- so, it's a
25 gauge spiker, which we'll call spiker one?

1 A. Okay, so the gauge spiker, he does about every fourth rail
2 spike, Ben, behind him, does all the rail spikes that the gauger
3 doesn't do. Behind Ben, I do all the anchor spikes, so Ben is
4 usually faster than me because he's only doing three out of every
5 four, so he usually backs up and helps me get caught up whenever I
6 fall behind.

7 Q. Got you. Okay, and so when he helps you catch up, what do
8 you think in terms of -- how far ahead do you think he usually
9 gets? I think you said 125 feet or something like that, is
10 that --

11 A. Yeah, something like that.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. He usually gets -- he tries to get caught up to Frankie, the
14 gauger spiker and then whenever he gets caught up, he'll --

15 Q. Oh, okay.

16 A. Typically, that's how it goes.

17 Q. Got you. So, let me ask you about National Salvage and their
18 role. What is their role generally, you know, how many of those
19 guys are part of the group and what do they do to the extent that
20 you know?

21 A. To the extent I know, Helbert -- Mr. Helbert, he usually goes
22 in front of us and works from the front, back marking the rail for
23 them to cut and then Wes is behind us in the material truck. I've
24 seen him with the magnet and the rail -- I don't know a whole lot
25 about what he does, but I see Helbert pretty regularly throughout

1 the day.

2 Q. Okay, so you see Helbert pretty regularly. I mean, so when
3 you say that, is that sometimes he's in front of you, sometimes
4 he's behind you? Is he usually between you and Ben or is he --

5 A. He's almost never in between us. I can't say that I've ever
6 seen him between us other than this time.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Can you -- I'm sorry, can you say that
8 a little louder?

9 MR. SHORT: I don't know that I've ever seen him between me
10 and Ben like he was yesterday.

11 DR. HOEPF: Oh, okay.

12 MR. SHORT: That might be a first.

13 DR. HOEPF: Oh, wow, okay.

14 MR. SHORT: That I've noticed.

15 BY DR. HOEPF:

16 Q. So, it's not just atypical, it's just you don't know if
17 you've -- you can't think of a single time that he's been located
18 between?

19 A. I can't think of any.

20 Q. I guess we'll just say spiker one, two, and three, so I guess
21 you'd be two and Ben would've been -- or you would've three, he
22 would've been two, yeah. So, you can't think of a single time
23 that you've seen Helbert between you guys?

24 A. Between the spikers, no.

25 Q. Okay, so that was definitely not a normal place for him to

1 be?

2 A. Not normally, no.

3 Q. That's interesting. So, do you know what he was doing there?

4 A. I have no idea.

5 Q. Interesting. So, when you saw him around, you know, can you
6 just -- I mean -- just kind of -- you know, obviously, we weren't
7 there, we're just trying get kind of, like, a mental picture of
8 how this was going. Can you -- I mean, like, can you just kind of
9 talk about where you were seeing him around?

10 A. At the time that he got hit?

11 Q. Well, let's -- yeah, let's back up just a little bit. Okay,
12 so what time do you think you had the job briefing?

13 A. Probably 7:30 in the morning maybe. I'm honestly not sure.

14 Q. That's okay, it doesn't have to be precise. So, you've
15 had -- there were probably three or so hours -- or four hours or
16 so in the morning that you were working, is that -- okay. And
17 then, I mean, again, I know it's tough with memory, but just, I
18 mean, if you had to guess, how many times do you think you saw
19 Helbert in that --

20 A. In that time?

21 Q. Yeah, in that time slot?

22 A. I don't even remember seeing him in the morning briefing,
23 honestly.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. I just don't remember.

1 Q. Yeah.

2 A. When we were pulling plates at the start of the job, I want
3 to say I saw him and -- yeah, that's -- I did see him walking back
4 because I was walking back to my machine and I said good morning
5 to him. That's the only time I remember seeing him between me
6 starting spiking and that point.

7 Q. Okay, so as you were going about your business of operating
8 the spiker throughout the morning, you didn't see him at any other
9 point between you and spiker two?

10 A. No.

11 Q. Okay, do you know what they're doing when he's doing the
12 marking of the rail? Do you know, like, anything about the color
13 coding or, like, what --

14 A. I have no idea. I imaging it means something to them, but I
15 have no clue.

16 Q. Okay, so you're not involved -- yeah, I get it, you know,
17 that's kind of how am if it's not my job, I don't -- you know,
18 Troy's track and engineering. It's, like, I don't have any
19 expertise in what he does.

20 A. Right.

21 Q. So, I know this is kind of tough to talk about --

22 MR. STIFFLER: Mike, do you mind real quick --

23 DR. HOEPF: No, go ahead. Yeah, go, Shane.

24 BY MR. STIFFLER:

25 Q. So, we didn't really talk about the sequence with you. We

1 talked about it with Mr. (indiscernible). So, you guys were in
2 the hole, you pulled out of the hole, backed up past the beginning
3 of the job, had a talk about when you guys got out of the hole,
4 backed up, stopped what you did, and kind of correlate that with
5 when you'd first seen Helbert?

6 A. So, backed up to the start of the job. I always get out and
7 inspect my spike, tighten up any loose bolts, anything like that.
8 I genuinely don't remember seeing Mr. Helbert at that point.

9 Q. You had mentioned about pulling plates, when was that?

10 A. So, when the spike pullers get up to the start of the job, we
11 pull up behind them, I turn off, like, the tram and everything
12 only machine, then I walk up and help the laborers with the plates
13 up front near the spike pullers.

14 Q. So, you haven't began spiking yet?

15 A. No.

16 Q. But Helbert was around there?

17 A. He was I guess around the middle of the job and I had passed
18 him because we had finished pulling plates that the end of the job
19 and I was walking back to my machine, and I passed Helbert on the
20 way and said good morning to him.

21 Q. You were walking?

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. Was Helbert amongst any other machines at that time or was he
24 like kind of ahead of the gang?

25 A. I think we were ahead of the spike pullers at that point.

1 Q. Were you lining plates or bringing the plates over for the
2 grove?

3 A. We were lining plates. Yeah, lining them in the gauge up
4 from.

5 Q. Okay, so ahead of the spike pullers?

6 A. Ahead of the spike pullers.

7 Q. Excuse me, the rail was already out of the track?

8 A. No.

9 Q. You was lining plates --

10 A. Before anything even happened, before the spikes were even
11 pulled, we were ahead of the entire gang pulling -- lining plates.

12 Q. So, would you say you were in front of all the machines,
13 then?

14 A. Yes, that's right.

15 Q. So, there was -- the gang was behind you?

16 A. Yeah. We were --

17 Q. When you and Helbert -- they were pulling plates then?

18 A. Yeah, we were --

19 Q. Was he helping pull plates?

20 A. No, he was painting.

21 Q. He was painting? Okay.

22 A. Yeah.

23 MR. STIFFLER: Thank you very much for that.

24 DR. HOEPF: Okay, yeah, so --

25 MR. STIFFLER: Sorry, one more thing.

1 DR. HOEPF: No, go ahead, you're fine.

2 BY MR. STIFFLER:

3 Q. You talked about a train passing, you guys had to wait for a
4 train -- you had to clear out?

5 A. I was already back at my spiker at that point.

6 Q. So, when you backed up past the beginning of the work, you
7 came to a stop -- the whole gang came to a stop?

8 A. Right.

9 Q. Is that where you waiting for the training to pass? Did the
10 foreman say then hey, we need to clear up, wait for a train, and
11 then go line plates? How did that work?

12 A. We had already lined all the plates and I was already back in
13 my machine when we were starting to clear up for the train coming.

14 Q. Okay, so you guys did a little bit of handwork -- groundwork
15 and then cleared up, a train went by, and then the machine start
16 rolling. After the train gets by, you another authority, the
17 train starts rolling?

18 A. That's right.

19 MR. STIFFLER: All right, sorry.

20 DR. HOEPF: You're okay. You're fine.

21 BY MR. LLOYD:

22 Q. For the purpose of the record, for the readers that are going
23 to be seeing this, define lining plates?

24 A. So, using a tool to move the plates such that we can fit the
25 new row inside the gauge and the plates are lined next to the new

1 rail that will be going in. Is that a good explanation?

2 MR. LLOYD: I understand it. I'm trying to break it down so
3 when reads the transcript, that they understand.

4 MR. YOUNG: This is Young. So, the typical process for our
5 rail gang is at the very start as Mr. Short stated, like, he might
6 be in the back, a couple pieces of equipment, the laborers will go
7 up ahead of the spike pullers and the plates are already preplaced
8 in the gauge of the track. But underneath train movement, and
9 maybe a couple weeks beforehand, they get a little skewed. So,
10 the gang laborers, anybody on the ground will go up ahead of the
11 spike pullers, even before the rails could be threaded in and
12 they'll line the plates so they could fit the new rail that's off
13 the heads of the ties into the gauge of the track. And then from
14 that process, you know, the plates are lined very nicely,
15 uniquely, down through that area. It has enough room for the new
16 rail to sit in the track and then it gives also enough room for
17 the old rail to come out to come out during their process on the
18 right of way. I don't know if that explains it.

19 MR. LLOYD: No, I understand what you were saying. I know
20 people's going to be reading and when you hear line plates.

21 MR. YOUNG: Yes, that's at the very beginning of their --

22 MR. LLOYD: Right.

23 MR. STIFFLER: This is Stiffler. So, just to clarify, you'd
24 seen him before he began working up front, when was the next time
25 you'd seen Helbert?

1 MR. SHORT: When he was going down behind the spiker.

2 MR. STIFFLER: Thank you very much.

3 BY DR. HOEPF:

4 Q. Yeah, so, I mean, you know, while we're on it, kind of
5 getting back to what I was saying, I know it's a little bit
6 difficult to talk about it, but that's kind of why we asked you to
7 come here today. Can you kind of just break down into as much
8 detail as you can that -- I know it was probably pretty graphic to
9 see, you know, a friend in that position. But, you know, we're
10 just trying to get a handle on what happened. So, just kind of
11 from the first moment you remember Helbert entering your field of
12 view, you know, to that? If you could just kind of relay that to
13 us in as much detail as you can? I appreciate it.

14 Q. Okay, I'd spiked the last tie I worked on and I looked up to
15 be able to pull forward to the next tie and as I looked up,
16 Helbert had been struck by the spiker and had gone -- had fallen
17 to the ground and the spiker kept moving. I immediately grabbed
18 the radio and said Ben, stop, stop, stop, and I immediately jumped
19 out of my spiker and ran up to see if Helbert was okay. I said
20 Helbert, are you okay? I got down next to him and all I could
21 hear was a groan and then nothing. He wasn't responding. I could
22 see the top of his head, but I couldn't see anything else.

23 Q. Yeah, I'm really sorry for your loss. You know, there's
24 really no words to describe. I'm sorry you had to go through
25 that. So, I -- you know, just to kind of clarify, I mean, it kind

1 of sounds like you were engrossed in work and then you kind of
2 just looked up and saw the accident as it was happening. It
3 doesn't sound like you really saw a lot of tangential sort of
4 activity in terms of what Helbert may or may not have been doing,
5 you know, prior to the point of impact. Is that kind of an
6 accurate assessment or did you see what direction he was coming
7 from or anything? I mean --

8 A. I just saw which direction he was facing, which was away from
9 the river, to the left.

10 Q. Okay, so he was facing away from the river, he was
11 facing -- okay --

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: So, he was facing the siding?

13 MR. SHORT: Yeah, facing the siding.

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Facing east.

15 DR. HOEPF: Okay, and then did you see, was he kind of
16 centered, or was he on the right side, or the left side, or
17 anything?

18 MR. SHORT: I don't remember.

19 DR. HOEPF Okay.

20 MR. SHORT: I think he was in the center, but I honestly
21 don't remember.

22 DR. HOEPF: Okay, Jordan, that's all the questions I have for
23 right now. I appreciate it. I'm going to give these other guys a
24 chance to ask any clarifying questions.

25 BY MR. LLOYD:

1 Q. So, Jordan, give me the big spill on everything you do. You
2 get up in the morning -- I want from the time you get up, you
3 leave here, what do you do at the hotel? Talk about the drive on
4 the way there, when you get to the job site and you get to your
5 machine, what do you do, what are you required to do? Just tell
6 me about everything up to the point before the accident occurred?

7 A. Okay.

8 Q. So, just take all the time you need.

9 A. Okay, wake up, use the bathroom, eat breakfast, I get in the
10 van. Most of the time I'm just playing on my phone, look up every
11 once in a while, make sure we're not running into something or
12 trying to keep an eye on traffic. Do our morning meeting, do our
13 calisthenics, walk to the machine, unlock everything. Usually,
14 before I even start it up, I check the oil, just regular stuff,
15 make sure it's got coolant in it. I start the machine, usually
16 when I'm in the hole, I'll put it in work, make sure it's driving
17 right, make sure everything's working properly. Check the
18 headlights, the rear lights, the horn, all that, make sure
19 everything's working. Put it in travel, turn off the pump until
20 we're ready -- we get a track authority, we're good to go.
21 Obviously, write down the track authority, got our track
22 authority, pull out forwards, wait for them to line the switch,
23 back up. That's basically where we left off at the start of the
24 job there.

25 Q. So, you come out of the hole and you back up, you're at the

1 beginning of the job site, take me from there. So, what do you
2 do -- what does Jordan do?

3 A. Okay.

4 Q. What is Jordan's everyday routine?

5 A. Backed all the way up until we stopped, wait for the cranes
6 to get the rail in position and everything before I walk up there.
7 Stay back there, mess around with the spiker a little bit, I
8 tighten all the bolts. Then once the cranes and everything got
9 the rail squared away, all their stuff and the spike pullers are
10 back at the start of the job, that's when I pull up to wherever
11 we're stopped and then walk up to the start of the job and start
12 lining plates.

13 Q. You can go on.

14 A. Okay, get the plate stick I guess is what you'd call it from
15 the badger, continue walking up to the start of the job, line
16 plates all the way until the very end, and then turn around, start
17 walking back, which is when I said good morning to Helbert about
18 halfway through the job. Then walk -- put the lining
19 stick -- plate stick back on the badger, walk back to my machine,
20 and pull up until the spike -- until we start spiking.

21 Q. Okay, so the rail's threaded out, right?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Rail's threaded out, rail get threaded back in, plates are
24 out of there, and you guys start doing your job, right?

25 A. We start spiking, right.

- 1 Q. Talk to me?
- 2 A. Okay, start spiking, normal day, nothing changed really.
- 3 Q. Ben's out in front of you?
- 4 A. Ben's in front of me.
- 5 Q. You're behind Ben?
- 6 A. Yeah.
- 7 Q. So, what's Ben's job versus what you do?
- 8 A. So, Ben, he rail spikes, the spiker in front of him, Frankie,
9 he spikes every fourth tie to gauge it.
- 10 Q. Okay.
- 11 A. Ben rail spikes the three in between his -- the three
12 remaining. He does all the rail spikes and then I'm behind him, I
13 do all of the anchor spikes.
- 14 Q. Okay.
- 15 A. And I mean, it's typical for me to fall behind, my spiker
16 runs a little slower than Ben's and I have to spike every tie,
17 whereas he's spiking every three out of four.
- 18 Q. Okay, identical machines?
- 19 A. Identical machines.
- 20 Q. Okay, so Ben's usually out -- like you said, he works a
21 little bit faster than you because it's -- I don't want to say
22 less work.
- 23 A. No.
- 24 Q. We're doing -- right, so he's out. Talk to me about when
25 he's out, you're doing your thing, you're falling behind him,

1 right, so what's that distance -- what's the furthest he gets away
2 from you?

3 A. Normally, I'd say the farthest he gets from me is 200 foot.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. That's roughly.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. And then he usually comes back and helps.

8 Q. So, from that point on, he gets to his point, what he's
9 doing, pick it up from there and just work yourself backwards?

10 A. Okay, so Ben works up tight to Frankie, and then once he
11 get's tight to Frankie, he backs up to where I am, and does every
12 other anchor spike, that way I'm -- we're going a little faster.

13 Q. So, you're moving forward. From that point that Ben starts
14 backing up, just think. Close your eyes if you have to and just
15 tell me everything that you've see -- everything that you saw took
16 place? Just take your time, that's why I'm trying to work your
17 way back slow. You're working up, Ben stops, then he's going to
18 do his thing -- his normal thing and he's going to come back and
19 he's going to help you pick the pace up, right? He's going to get
20 the job done. So, talk to me to that point, you're moving forward
21 with what's in front of you?

22 A. Just a normal day from what I remember until I look up and
23 see Helbert.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. Just normal, me spiking every anchor spike and then looking

1 up and --

2 Q. So, you see the gentleman in front of you, behind Ben's
3 equipment. So, you see the accident right -- I guess when it took
4 place?

5 A. As it took place.

6 Q. As it took place, so just trying to get a visual here. You
7 said he was facing the siding, which would've been, I guess,
8 north?

9 A. I don't remember the cardinal direction.

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: East.

11 BY MR. LLOYD:

12 Q. East, I'm sorry, guys. So, he was facing the siding?

13 A. Facing the siding.

14 Q. Okay, do you remember anything of that time? Just slow down
15 and just think about what he was doing, was he walking, was he
16 standing there, was he kneeled down looking at something? If you
17 could just -- I hate to do it, but just try to get there, man.

18 A. It happened so fast.

19 Q. I know.

20 A. I want to say he was looking down at something.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. But I can't --

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. I just can't think of what he was looking down at.

25 Q. Standing upright, standing straight up?

1 A. Stand up -- straight up.

2 Q. So, he was standing straight up, was he in between the gauge?

3 A. In between the gauge.

4 Q. So, he was in the gauge, you remember him having any
5 equipment on him or anything?

6 A. Not that I can recall, no.

7 Q. Okay, you're there. So, you've got this guy, he's facing the
8 siding, he's standing up and you're thinking he's looking down at
9 something. At that moment, that's when you told Ben --

10 A. Stop.

11 Q. -- stop the equipment. Okay, do you remember any one
12 time -- and I know it's hard just thinking you saw it, but any one
13 time, seconds prior to -- I know you're spiking, you're looking
14 up, you're moving, you're spiking -- where he might've come into
15 play? Did you see him walking from the access road in, did he
16 walk in from the siding in?

17 A. Not that I can remember.

18 MR. LLOYD: Okay.

19 I'm good, Roy?

20 BY MR. MORRISON:

21 Q. Sorry, Jordan, you have to go through this. I just have a
22 couple of questions. I wanted to ask you about your daily routine
23 as a spiker operator. Tell me a little bit about your walkaround
24 and what -- as a spiker operator, are there certain things you
25 look at or look for?

1 A. Okay, so typically, I start my day just unlocking everything,
2 the fire extinguisher, the batter blocks, the two doors, the
3 toolbox on the back, and when I'm doing that, typically, I'm
4 looking at the chains -- the travel chains. When I unlock the
5 door, if I know we're making a pretty big tram that day, I'll go
6 ahead and spray the chains with chain lube. Once I start it up,
7 wait for the computer to come on, turn on the computer, turn on
8 the pump, check the headlights, check all the bolts, make sure
9 everything's tight inside the guns, where the shoots go down.
10 Checking the headlights, the travel alarm, I think that's it. I
11 can't think of anything else.

12 Q. Perfect. When your -- so, you've been on this machine since
13 May, is that right?

14 A. I've been -- this specific machine? I've only been on R12
15 for a couple months now.

16 Q. Oh, okay, and then in your experience, if you've found
17 something in your walkaround and you notify the mechanics, they're
18 really good about taking care of it?

19 A. Oh, yeah, for sure. Right on the spot.

20 Q. Perfect, and can you tell me about the horn on your machine?

21 A. The horn?

22 Q. Yeah.

23 A. Okay.

24 Q. Describe it for me?

25 A. I've never paid that much attention to it, honestly. It

1 works -- I can hit the button and it works.

2 Q. Okay, that's good. So, you've been on R12 for a few months,
3 can you tell me about the culture around your adzer? Do
4 they -- we kind of got the feeling, like, the adzer's a dangerous
5 place and can you tell me how that's expressed to you in the
6 culture of your work crew?

7 A. Yeah, stay away from it.

8 Q. So, it's covered in your job briefings?

9 A. Oh, yeah.

10 Q. And, like, you guys talk about it as workers together?

11 A. We've heard several stories about people getting hurt around
12 the adzer, so we take that very seriously. We definitely stay
13 away from it -- as long as it's moving, we try and stay away from
14 it.

15 MR. MORRISON: I think that's all.

16 BY MR. KRAHOLIK:

17 Q. Just a few and I appreciate your time. I cannot imagine what
18 you've seen and what you went through, so I really appreciate your
19 time. I'm just going to ask you again just for clarification,
20 he's standing there, you didn't notice anything in his hands?

21 A. Not that I can remember.

22 Q. I know that it's a split second, so, yeah.

23 A. It happened really fast. Not that I can remember.

24 Q. Okay, I appreciate that. Ben backing up to you, it's loud,
25 were you wearing hearing protection?

1 A. I was wearing hearing --

2 Q. Talk to me about your familiarity with the change of
3 direction alarm?

4 A. Okay, so the headlights are facing forward, if you hit the
5 reverse button to go backwards, the alarm, it's tied to the --

6 MR. LLOYD: Foot pedal.

7 MR. SHORT: Foot pedal, yeah.

8 MR. KRAHOLIK: Okay, so are you familiar with the toggle
9 switch?

10 MR. SHORT: Yes, it's the headlights. If you travel forward,
11 the alarm's in the back, if you travel reverse, it's in the front.

12 MR. KRAHOLIK: I want you to be totally truthful if you
13 didn't hear it, if you heard it, if you think you heard it, if you
14 couldn't hear it. Ben backing up, that's a unique sound, that
15 backup alarm. And I know you're spiking, and I know the machine,
16 we all work around them, did you hear anything when his machine
17 was backing up?

18 MR. SHORT: My machine is very loud, I did not hear anything.

19 MR. KRAHOLIK: I appreciate the honesty. Thank you.

20 That's all I got.

21 BY MR. MICK:

22 Q. It's Jon Mick. Tough day for everybody and even everybody in
23 this room, especially you. When you talked to our employee, was
24 he doing anything, was he working or anything?

25 A. When I said good morning to him that morning?

1 Q. Yes.

2 A. He was -- I believe he was painting. I didn't look for --

3 Q. Okay, was he painting going toward the front of the gang or
4 coming back toward the gang -- toward the rear?

5 A. He was walking towards the end of the job, so away from the
6 gang when I was walking back.

7 Q. So, the way the gang was working, is that correct?

8 A. That's correct.

9 Q. Okay, I'm going ask you a tough question here, okay, and I'm
10 sorry, when our employee was hit, do you have any idea how far it
11 moved before it stopped? That's for measurements purposes, just
12 so you know.

13 A. If I had to guess, I'd say maybe 20, 25 foot.

14 MR. MICK: Okay, that helps everybody and their measurements.
15 I'm sorry to ask that question, I feel for you and thank you for
16 your honesty, okay, and I hope you're okay. That's all I have.

17 BY MR. YOUNG:

18 Q. Young, for the record. Jordan, obviously, my deepest
19 sympathy to you and appreciate your cooperation going through all
20 this. I just had one question and Jon slightly hit on it was as
21 you guys were -- the rail that you guys were taking out was still
22 on the track as you were lining plates going forward, is that
23 correct?

24 A. That's correct.

25 Q. And on the way back, that's when you'd seen Mr. Helbert after

1 you finished pass?

2 A. That's right.

3 Q. And he was working in the same direction that the gang was
4 working?

5 A. That's right.

6 Q. Was he painting the rail we were taking out in the track and
7 measuring it?

8 A. I honestly don't remember if he was working. But I just
9 remember passing him and saying good morning to him. I don't
10 remember if he was working for sure or not.

11 Q. But he was working toward the front of the gang?

12 A. He was working, yeah.

13 Q. And the rail was still on the track -- the running rail that
14 everything runs on and there were still machines behind it to work
15 through there?

16 A. Right, yeah, the rail hasn't been cut yet and the spikes
17 haven't been pulled yet.

18 Q. And when you'd seen your visualization of the incident, you
19 mentioned that -- was it right at the point of impact or slightly
20 before?

21 A. Right when I looked up was when he was getting hit by it and
22 going down.

23 MR. YOUNG: Okay, that's all the questions I have.

24 DR. HOEPF: All right, thank you.

25 BY DR. HOEPF:

1 Q. Jordan, are you still doing all right? Do you need a short
2 break?

3 A. I'm okay.

4 Q. Okay, I don't think we're going to have a lot more questions
5 for you. So, you know, if you don't know these or have any
6 comment on here, you know, just say so. But did you know Helbert
7 very well?

8 A. I didn't. The only thing I did know about him, we were from
9 the same hometown.

10 Q. Oh, okay. I got you.

11 A. I was friends with him on Facebook.

12 Q. Yeah, okay.

13 A. I didn't talk to him much outside of work or anything.

14 Q. Got you. I was just wondering; you wouldn't happen to know
15 if he had any hearing or vision issues or anything like that?

16 A. No idea.

17 Q. Okay, and when you saw him, did you happen to notice what he
18 was wearing, you know, did he have a vest on, anything? I don't
19 know if you happen to remember.

20 A. I honestly don't remember.

21 Q. Yeah, that's okay, and then I just wanted to -- I think we
22 hit on this, but, you know, you have your operating procedures, is
23 there any -- when you -- I guess -- so, do you ever -- I'm
24 sorry -- do ever do a reverse movement typically in your --

25 A. Typically, no. If I bend a spike or something, I usually

1 pull forward and then just get out and fix it with a hammer or a
2 claw bar.

3 Q. Oh, okay.

4 A. So, I'm typically not making backwards moves.

5 Q. Okay, but if you do, what do you have to do to do a reverse
6 movement? Are there, like, safety protocols you have to follow?

7 A. I'm supposed to -- I guess technically, you're supposed to
8 get out and do a walkaround, make sure nothing's behind you, make
9 sure nobody's behind you. But I guess just look behind you and
10 make sure there's no one behind you, look in the mirror, make sure
11 you don't see anything. You're supposed to sound the horn three
12 times for backwards.

13 Q. Okay, three times. The walkaround, is that just a good
14 practice, or do you -- I mean, do you happen to know if that's,
15 like, a written rule somewhere? It's okay if you don't know off
16 the top of your head.

17 A. Off the top of my head, I don't know. I'd say it's probably
18 just good practice.

19 Q. Yeah, I got you. Okay, I just wanted to ask, I know you said
20 that you didn't hear anything and I certainly understand that with
21 operating a noisy machine, but it sounds like -- do you ever hear
22 Ben honking the horn, you know, when he's doing on of his backup
23 moves or is it -- do you never hear it because it's just too loud?

24 A. It's just too loud when we're working. If you've ever been
25 around a spiker, you know loud it is.

1 DR. HOEPF: Oh, yeah, we were out there today and it's pretty
2 noisy even just sitting there idling and then I'm sure if you're a
3 hundred feet back behind another noisy machine with hearing
4 protection on. Yeah, so, okay, I'm going to pass it on from here
5 and might just have a couple close up questions.

6 Troy, anything else?

7 MR. LLOYD: No, I'm good.

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I have nothing else.

9 Thank you, Jordan.

10 DR. HOEPF: Okay, Jordan, awesome, thank you so much for
11 coming in today. Just some concluding remarks, is there anything
12 that we should've talked about today that we didn't and do you
13 have any suggestions for safety improvements? I mean, is there
14 anything that you can think of that's pertinent or just any ideas
15 that you can think of that, you know, might prevent something like
16 this from happening again?

17 MR. SHORT: Not that I can think of off the top of my head,
18 honestly.

19 DR. HOEPF: Yeah, okay. Well great, and we are off the
20 record.

21 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)
22
23
24
25

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD


IN THE MATTER OF: NATIONAL SALVAGE & SERVICE
EMPLOYEE FATALITY IN DAUPHIN,
PENNSYLVANIA ON DECEMBER 8, 2021
Interview of Jordan Short

ACCIDENT NO.: RRD22LR003

PLACE: Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania

DATE: December 9, 2021

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.



Carolyn Hanna
Transcriber