

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

FATAL UNION PACIFIC TRAIN CRASH *
IN SALTON SEA, CALIFORNIA *
ON SEPTEMBER 8, 2022, *

Accident No.: RRD22LR014

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Interview of: SAM BRUMLEY, Conductor
Amtrak

EGAN ANDERSON, Conductor
Amtrak

Indio, California

APPEARANCES:

RYAN FRIGO, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

ISAAC MCKEITHEN, Operating Practices Track Inspector
Federal Railroad Administration

KEN ABELL, Safety Task Force Investigator
Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen

DAVID CARR, Operating Practices Accident Chief
Federal Railroad Administration

THOMAS DUNLAP, Superintendent of Operations
Amtrak

KEVIN GARCIA, Senior Manager of Train Operations
Union Pacific

SCOTT JONES, National Safety Team Investigator
SMART Union

CRAIG KNISLEY
Amtrak

THAD LAFERRIERE, Investigator/Inspector
State of California PUC

JIM MAYNARD, Task Force Investigator
Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen

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I N T E R V I E W

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2 MR. FRIGO: Good afternoon. My name is Ryan Frigo. I'm an
3 investigator with the National Transportation Safety Board. This
4 is in reference to Accident Number RRD22LR014, UP collision with
5 standing cars on September 8th.

6 We got a group here in Indio, California. And we also have
7 some folks on the phone from Amtrak. Let's introduce ourselves
8 for the benefit of the transcriptionist. Spell your last name and
9 just identify the organization you're with. I'll begin and then
10 pass off to my right.

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

12 MR. MCKEITHEN: Isaac McKeithen, M-c-K-e-i-t-h-e-n, FRA,
13 Operating Practices.

14 MR. CARR: David Carr, C-a-r-r, FRA, Operating Practices.

15 MR. LAFERRIERE: Thad LaFerriere, L-a-F-e-r-r-i-e-r-e, State
16 of California CPUC, Operating Practices.

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

19 MR. ABELL: Ken Abell, A as in apple, B as in boy, e-l-l.
20 BLET Safety Task Force Investigator.

21 MR. GARCIA: Kevin Garcia, Union Pacific Railroad, Senior
22 Manager of Train Operations, G-a-r-c-i-a.

23 JONES: Scott Jones, J-o-n-e-s, Investigator, SMART Union
24 National Safety Team.

25 MR. FRIGO: Go ahead, Thomas.

1 MR. DUNLAP: Thomas Dunlap, Amtrak, Superintendent of
2 Operations for Southwest Division.

3 MR. KNISLEY: Craig Knisley, K-n-i-s-l-e-y, (indiscernible)
4 Amtrak.

5 MR. FRIGO: Sam.

6 MR. DUNLAP: Dunlap is D as in David, u-n-l-a-p. Sorry about
7 that.

8 MR. FRIGO: No, thank you. Sam, go ahead.

9 MR. BRUMLEY: Sam Brumley, B-r-u-m-l-e-y, of Amtrak.

10 MR. FRIGO: Egan.

11 MR. ANDERSON: Egan Anderson, E-g-a-n, last name Anderson, A-
12 n-d-e-r-s-o-n, Conductor at Amtrak.

13 MR. FRIGO: Great. Gentlemen, thank you for joining us here
14 today. We just talked to Marcos (ph.) and Theron, and they gave
15 us a pretty detailed rundown on the events leading up to basically
16 when they found out that something was going on. I'd like to just
17 turn it over to either of you to do the same thing. Just kind of
18 walk us through what you were hearing, maybe what you saw, who you
19 might have interacted with, and just give us kind of a general
20 overview.

21 MR. ANDERSON: Sam, do you want to start, or did you want me
22 to start?

23 MR. BRUMLEY: You go ahead. I'll just add whatever I can.

24 MR. ANDERSON: Okay. So, I was working as the assistant
25 conductor of this trip. My name's Egan Anderson. Sorry, Anderson

1 speaking. We heard over the radio on our pack sets (ph.), an
2 emergency call from the UP that it was a Norfolk (ph.) Southern 7
3 something. I'm sorry, I don't exactly remember the number. It
4 was the conductor that was calling, and he requested Amtrak to --
5 he first said emergency, emergency, emergency. They he asked us
6 to go restricted speed. And then he also asked us to pick him up.

7 We picked him up, we put him in the dining car and then we
8 were going at restricted speed against -- we were on Main Track 1,
9 and we were letting him look at his train as we were going along.
10 Once we heard from our head end and we could observe the
11 derailment, I got out with the conductor of that train to look for
12 the crew.

13 And this was just my scenario, was I helped him; we started
14 looking around. Once -- I started initiating phone calls because
15 as soon as I saw something, I initiated a phone call to my
16 immediate manager, which is Carl (ph.) (indiscernible). He
17 initiated a contact, I believe with you, Thomas, but I'm not sure.
18 And then we proceeded, and when I continued getting phone calls, I
19 went back on my train set so that way my conductor could do what
20 he needed to do outside. And I stayed on board our train. And
21 then Sam took over at that point, so Sam go for it.

22 MR. BRUMLEY: Same thing. Following UP 7575 (ph.) I believe,
23 and then I think the move by the UP dispatcher was to get us
24 around him. So, we went over to Track 1, made our way up, picked
25 up the conductor, and called emergency, took him towards the head

1 of his train. That section of track is kind of winding, so we
2 just couldn't quite see what was going on yet. We got a little
3 bit further up, and that's when it became clear, though, that
4 something had taking place. And so, they jumped off, my assistant
5 conductor dropped us off, went to ground.

6 They were out there for a little bit. And then I forgot what
7 prompted -- I think Egan came over the radio. But there was a lot
8 going on down there. So, we had swapped spots, after some period.
9 I went out there to act as like the point of contact and then I
10 think Egan was on the train pretty much from then on dealing with
11 passengers and phone calls.

12 MR. ANDERSON: Correct.

13 MR. BRUMLEY: Border Patrol and the Sheriff, I believe, were
14 the first to arrive. Then we had some track guys, UP track guys
15 popped up as well. And then once everybody got word, they started
16 making their way over. So about -- it takes about two to three
17 hours to get out there. But the guys had already been located, I
18 think the sheriffs and the engineers had -- we easily found the
19 engineer, but it was the conductor we couldn't quite find. They
20 found him.

21 I think once management and patch (ph.) crew came we are
22 relieved. Well, you know what? I take that back. We ended up
23 having to shove back, so we left the scene at that point and then
24 were relieved further down the line by Indio.

25 MR. FRIGO: Do either of you remember, prior to those

1 emergency, emergency, emergency calls, do you remember anybody out
2 there calling out signals that you could hear?

3 MR. BRUMLEY: We can't hear anything. I think the first
4 thing that we had heard -- one-sided conversation from the
5 engineers. But the first thing that I remember hearing about that
6 was that emergency call by their assistant conductor who sounded
7 pretty shaken. Sorry, by their conductor who sounded pretty
8 shaken.

9 MR. ANDERSON: Correct.

10 MR. BRUMLEY: That was noteworthy.

11 MR. ANDERSON: Yeah. Correct. And just in reference of what
12 he did, I'm really glad that he did what he did. And he did an
13 excellent job. So just again, noteworthiness, I just wanted to
14 say he did an excellent job in declaring emergency and having us
15 slowdown, making sure (indiscernible).

16 MR. BRUMLEY: We feel like we would have been on the ground
17 too. There was a large piece that was completely fouling our
18 track, Track 1. And it -- really there was a piece fouling it,
19 and then there was a piece pretty much straight occupying it, but
20 not shunting the track. So, we were on approach clear 50. We
21 could have hit that thing pretty much at full speed. You know,
22 who knows what could happen. So, I'm pretty thankful to that guy
23 because without that emergency call who knows what would be --
24 what would have ended up happening.

25 MR. ANDERSON: Agreed.

1 MR. FRIGO: Gentlemen, I'm going to look around the room and
2 see if anybody has any follow up questions for you.

3 MR. CARR: David Carr, FRA. Sam, do you recall any
4 conversations or what was the conversation the conductor had when
5 he stepped on the dining car with you? Is there anything that
6 stands out from the conversation with him?

7 MR. BRUMLEY: Egan would have to answer that. I was
8 upstairs.

9 MR. ANDERSON: I was the one that helped get the conductor on
10 and I had interaction with him. First thing that I did was I got
11 him on our train and then immediately I gave him a bottle of
12 water. The interaction was just a shock, not understanding why
13 his crew was -- his -- the other crew was not answering the radio.
14 There was panic as well as fear. I could tell -- I can't presume
15 what was actually going on with him, but that was kind of how I
16 felt with the conversation.

17 So, I immediately gave him a water. Just -- I said, we don't
18 know what's going to happen next. I need you to drink a water. I
19 don't know what's going to happen. So, I hand him a bottle of
20 water, make sure that he drank it. And then we went ahead and
21 started going at restricted speed, falling alongside their
22 equipment.

23 MR. CARR: Was there any conversation about cars in the
24 siding or the thought of cars in the siding?

25 MR. ANDERSON: No, that did not come to our conversation.

1 Our conversation was mainly just we don't know what's going on and
2 they're not answering, and we need to find out what's happening.

3 MR. CARR: All right. I appreciate that. No further
4 questions.

5 MR. GARCIA: It's Kevin Garcia, UP. When you guys were going
6 up at restricted speed, were you looking out the diner car towards
7 that area to see if there was any obstructions or anything ahead
8 of you?

9 MR. ANDERSON: I was downstairs with the conductor. I went
10 ahead and let him look out our window. We had the door shut. We
11 have an access window where it says crew can open it up. But I
12 was letting him observe his own train. Just I felt that was the
13 safest thing, especially it being his train. So, I let him
14 observe.

15 MR. GARCIA: Okay. Did you -- sorry about that -- but so did
16 he make any reaction when you got closer to it? Could he see
17 anything from a distance, or did he react when you guys pretty
18 much were up on top of it?

19 MR. ANDERSON: Well, we pretty much, everybody just reacted
20 because we were -- at that point we are -- there's two
21 locomotives, the baggage car, a sleeper, and then a diner. So,
22 we're a good distance back. So, you can't see everything. But we
23 could see the two containers that were pinned up in like mid-air.
24 And we knew there was a major derailment at that point, but we
25 didn't know exactly to what extent.

1 And I just went and followed him as soon as -- I opened up
2 the door and we got off as soon as the train came to a safe stop
3 and we started trying to investigate and find the crewmembers,
4 hoping that they were still alive.

5 MR. GARCIA: Okay. How far back from the signal were you at
6 that point, where you could actually see the cares up in the air?
7 When you first --

8 MR. ANDERSON: The signal, I'm not sure. I mean, we -- I
9 could see the signal. It was kind of right next to us, but in --
10 like in that dining car area. But the distance that we stopped
11 was probably about three car lengths away from the obstruction
12 because we're coming around a curve. We have the signal but we're
13 still going at restricted speed. So, when they saw the
14 obstruction in the tracks and we saw the derailment, our engineers
15 stopped the train, good train handling. And then once it was
16 stopped, like I said, we got out.

17 MR. GARCIA: So, you pretty much had to be on top of it in
18 order to see the wreckage, is what you're saying?

19 MR. ANDERSON: Yeah. With the curve, correct. Yes, I would
20 say that, sir.

21 MR. GARCIA: Thank you.

22 MR. ANDERSON: Otherwise, I wouldn't --

23 MR. BRUMLEY: (Indiscernible).

24 MR. GARCIA: Thank you so much.

25 MR. ANDERSON: By the way, I'm sorry, I'm not in the cab, but

1 we couldn't observe it. We were, again, five cars back or four --
2 one, two, three, four -- four and a half cars back from the actual
3 head end. So, we had two locomotives, baggage car, sleeper car,
4 and then the diner that we were in.

5 MR. GARCIA: I understand. I appreciate it. I know that run
6 pretty well. It was my run that I had for years, also. So, I
7 feel for you.

8 MR. BRUMLEY: Yeah.

9 MR. GARCIA: Thank you.

10 MR. FRIGO: This is Ryan Frigo again. Do either of you --
11 can either of you describe the lighting conditions that were out
12 there when you were walking around?

13 MR. ANDERSON: I could describe the -- it wasn't very bright
14 at all, I mean, it was our headlights illuminating the scene and
15 just night light, nothing else. We don't have any streetlights or
16 anything that we could see. It was our train that was lighting
17 everything up and that's when we could see it.

18 MR. FRIGO: So, when you say night light, what does that
19 mean?

20 MR. ANDERSON: Whatever the -- what I mean by that is
21 whatever the moon was illuminated to, that was the ability for us
22 to see. So, there was no streetlights. There was no -- it was
23 our flashlights and the train's headlights, and dish lights from
24 our locomotive that provided the light for us.

25 MR. FRIGO: Was it was it overcast?

1 MR. ANDERSON: (Indiscernible) yeah, but not that I can
2 remember, sir.

3 MR. BRUMLEY: It was clear. I could see the moon pretty
4 clearly. The moon wasn't too far off the horizon, and it was kind
5 of more like an orange color. So, it wasn't providing too much
6 light. Our flashlights are pretty good. I've got a real beefy
7 flashlight as well. That and the headlight on our train was
8 pretty much all that was available.

9 After a while there was enough on scene that there was plenty
10 of flashlights around that we can kind of get a better idea of
11 things. But that was after some time.

12 MR. FRIGO: Gentlemen, we don't have any further questions
13 here in the room. I just want to say thank you again for talking
14 to us today. We really appreciate it. And again, I'll be passing
15 on the transcript to the Thomas one once we've completed it. But
16 I'm going to go ahead and go off the record here in the room and
17 thank you again.

18 (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 UNION PACIFIC TRAIN CRASH
IN SALTON SEA, CALIFORNIA
ON SEPTEMBER 8, 2022
Interview of Egan Anderson & Sam Brumley

ACCIDENT NO.: RRD22LR014

PLACE: Indio, California

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.



Melissa Bousquette
Transcriber