

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

* * * * *

Interview of: WILLIAM WOOD, Manager of Signal Maintenance
Union Pacific

Indio, California

Monday,
September 12, 2022

APPEARANCES:

TROY LLOYD, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

HEIDI ESTRADA, Signal and Train Control Inspector
State of California CPUC

CHRIS HAND, Representative
Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen

GABE NEAL, Staff Director, Signal and Train Control
Federal Railroad Administration

ADOLFO RODRIGUES, Signal and Train Control
Federal Railroad Administration

CHRIS SCHULTZ, Director of Signal Maintenance
Union Pacific

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I N T E R V I E W

1
2 MR. LLOYD: We're on the on record. NTSB formal interview.
3 It's going to be a piece of cake for you. Just go around and ask
4 you a couple questions. Answer them at the best of your ability.

5 MR. WOOD: Okay.

6 MR. LLOYD: All right? All right. I'm going to do a little
7 spiel here. Good morning. My name is Troy Lloyd. I'm with the
8 National Transportation Safety Board, and today is September 12th,
9 2022, and we are conducting an interview with Mr. William Wood,
10 Woody. Okay to call you Woody, right?

11 MR. WOOD: That is correct.

12 MR. LLOYD: Who works as a Manager of Signal Maintenance for
13 the Union Pacific Railroad. This interview is being conducted at
14 the Fairfield Inn and Suites in Indio, California. And this
15 interview is in connection with an accident that occurred on
16 September 8th, 2022, where a Union Pacific railroad freight train
17 collided with standing rail cars in Bertram siding. The accident
18 occurred in Imperial County on Union Pacific's Yuma subdivision.
19 The NTSB accident reference number is RRD22LR014.

20 Real quick, the purpose of this investigation is not to
21 increase -- is to increase safety, not to assign fault, blame, or
22 liability. The NTSB cannot offer any guarantee or confidence to
23 your immunity from (indiscernible) actions. What I described to
24 you before, you'll get a transcript of the entire interview, all
25 the questions, answered, asked. You'll be able to go through,

1 review it, and any corrections that you want to do, you can send
2 it back to me on an ARADA (ph.) sheet. You know, the interview's
3 being recorded, right? You good with that?

4 MR. WOOD: Yes, sir. Yes, sir.

5 MR. LLOYD: Do you have any type of legal representation or a
6 rep?

7 MR. WOOD: No.

8 MR. LLOYD: Okay. Good by yourself?

9 MR. WOOD: Yes.

10 MR. LLOYD: All Right. So, before we go around the room,
11 same thing as last interview. I'll start out with myself. Say
12 your first name, who you're from, spell your last name, speak
13 clearly in the mic, that way so you can get a good recording.

14 Again, my name's Troy Lloyd. I'm with the National
15 Transportation Safety Board. Spelling of my last name is L-l-o-y-
16 d, and I'm the Track and Signal Group's investigator for this
17 accident.

18 MS. ESTRADA: Heidi Estrada, California Public Utilities
19 Commission, Signal and Train Control investigator, last name, E-s-
20 t-r-a-d-a.

21 MR. RODRIGUES: My name's Adolfo Rodrigues. I'm with the
22 Federal Railroad Administration, Signal and Train Control
23 inspector, District Seven out of Sacramento, California. Last
24 name's spelled R-o-d-r-i-g-u-e-s.

25 MR. NEAL: Morning, I'm Gabe Neal. I'm the Staff Director

1 for the Signal and Train Control and Crossings division at the
2 Federal Railroad Administration. Last name is N-e-a-l.

3 MR. SCHULTZ: My name is Chris Schultz. I'm the Director of
4 Signal Maintenance out of Roseville, California. Schultz, S-c-h-
5 u-l-t-z.

6 MR. HAND: Chris Hand, Representative, BRS. Last name, H-a-
7 n-d.

8 MR. WOOD: William Wood, Woody, Manager of Signal
9 Maintenance, Yuma, Arizona. Spelling of my last name is W-o-o-d.

10 MR. LLOYD: All right, Woody. I appreciate you being here on
11 such quick notice. Just going to -- we're going to go around the
12 horn and just ask you a couple questions, how we got it. I'll
13 start out, and I think the majority of questions are going to be
14 asked from Adolfo. So --

15 MR. WOOD: Okay.

16 INTERVIEW OF WILLIAM WOOD

17 BY MR. LLOYD:

18 Q. Just real quick, tell me a little bit about yourself. When
19 were you hired with UP, how you came up through the ranks from, I
20 guess, from an assistant to a signal maintainer, and now you're
21 the man.

22 A. Yup. I hired out in '96 with Southern Pacific and Union
23 Pacific merged in '97. I started off as an assistant signalman
24 and went to signal maintainer for a brief period, and then went to
25 the West Colton (indiscernible) yard as an interlocking repairman

1 for a few, and then on to the signal gang as a signalman. Worked
2 my way up to a lead man, and then I left there, went to become a
3 signal maintainer for about a year.

4 Left there, became a signal construction gang foreman for
5 about three and a half, four years, and then I moved into the
6 signal Arsa (ph.) position for about a year and a half. Crossed
7 over to signal maintenance Arsa for about a year and a half, and
8 then I took the Manager of Signal Maintenance job here in Yuma,
9 Arizona, for the last nine years and two months.

10 Q. All right. So, what year did you go from -- I guess from
11 assistant in signal to where you went over to the management side?

12 A. 2013 is when I became a manager.

13 Q. 2013? All right. So, 1996. You've seen -- I guess you've
14 seen some changes in the way business is conducted, different
15 types of circuitry, technology. Talk to me about that.

16 A. Yes. I've seen pole line relay logic into electric code, the
17 crossings from GCP300s to the GCP3000s, GCP4000s, HXPs. I mean,
18 I've seen a lot of different signal system, and still have some of
19 the old pole lines relay logic.

20 Q. The old stick and pick path stuff.

21 A. Yup.

22 Q. So, right now you're working -- what's the newest technology
23 you're working with now?

24 A. That'd be the IXS, electric code five, basically with the
25 micro lock as well, and the GCP4000.

1 Q. All right. Is that what's at the Bertram siding right now?

2 A. Bertram siding is a micro lock.

3 Q. Pretty familiar with it? Know the ins and outs of it?

4 A. The basics. Not too much on the downloading and all that,
5 reading those, but the ins and outs of it.

6 Q. Pretty reliable system, looking at what you have today to
7 what you had back then?

8 A. Yes. It's reliable. I believe it's reliable. I mean, the
9 old relay logic didn't lie.

10 Q. It did not. That's the truth.

11 A. You know, it's -- you can see it, plain as day.

12 Q. Yup.

13 A. It's hard to see stuff inside of a unit without downloading
14 it.

15 Q. I got you.

16 A. So, but --

17 Q. So, different training scenarios when you went from the relay
18 logic to the newer stuff? How did you -- how's the folks go
19 through that training? Do they go through a school or something
20 like that? Or --

21 A. No. It's basically on-the-job training when they come up
22 with new stuff. And we have mobile training guys that come out
23 and give training on the new stuff when it comes out and then get
24 them out here. And -- otherwise, it's pull out the book, and read
25 up, and --

1 Q. A lot of vendor application where you're working with the
2 vendors? You got them on --

3 A. Not necessarily.

4 Q. -- in the house with you for a while?

5 A. No. No.

6 Q. Okay. Okay. So, talk to me about your division that you
7 maintain. So, how big of a territory do you have?

8 A. Roughly about 700 miles of main track. I have the Yuma sub
9 from Mapo (ph.) 372 -- oh, excuse me, 637 to Mapo 372. And then I
10 have the Gila sub, which goes from 732 to about 875. And then I
11 have the Calexico sub 69 to 708, the El Centro 143. Oh, man, what
12 is the smaller Mapo, 140 (indiscernible) 146. It's approximately
13 25 miles long on that.

14 Q. Right.

15 A. And then the Phoenix sub from -- the in-service portion of
16 it, from 852 to 879 -- or 979, excuse me, 979. And then, the
17 industrial leads of the Tempi (ph.) industrial lead, the Channeler
18 (ph.) industrial lead, and the Moskit (ph.) line. And -- so it's
19 quite a bit of different territory.

20 Q. Yup. All the same -- all the same technology, all the same
21 logic stuff?

22 A. No. No.

23 Q. So, you're working with -- different lines have different
24 circuitry?

25 A. Correct, relay logic all the way up to the newest and latest

1 and greatest.

2 Q. Okay. Yup. So, it's all the -- all the big territories.

3 So, how do you -- is it manageable? Do you trust -- I guess, you
4 got to trust your --

5 A. Some days.

6 Q. -- got to trust your signal maintainers out there.

7 A. I do. I place a lot of trust in my -- in my team.

8 Q. Yup.

9 A. I spend a week or two. Depending on what the month comes
10 out, I travel up to Phoenix and stay the week up there and work
11 with those guys, and I try to separate it into three different
12 groups to spend time with them. So --

13 Q. Right. So, I guess is the signal maintainer -- are you the
14 direct report to them? It's --

15 A. I have one signal foreman --

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. -- on the -- on the California seniority roster, but not one
18 on the Arizona roster.

19 Q. Okay, got you. So, below you, how many people probably
20 report to you?

21 A. I have -- I have 14 people that report to me.

22 Q. Okay. Okay. Awesome. I'm good. Thank you very much.

23 Around the horn.

24 BY MR. RODRIGUES:

25 Q. All right. Adolfo Rodriques again, FRA. Go ahead and ask

1 you some questions, Woody. As part of your duties, do you perform
2 efficiency tests on signal personnel?

3 A. Yes, I do.

4 Q. What type of efficiency tests, or what do they consist of?

5 A. Depending on what they're doing for that day. If they're
6 working on crossings, I work with them on their crossings and make
7 sure they're doing their testing per Yellow Book instructions. If
8 they're working on switches, I go through with the switches per
9 Yellow Book instructions.

10 Q. How often are you doing these tests?

11 A. Every day. I would say Tuesdays through Fridays. Monday's
12 usually admin day in the office, but I get out Tuesday, Wednesday,
13 Thursday, and Friday. And I try to do one maintainer per day,
14 spend the day with them.

15 Q. Okay. So, have you performed these tests on the signal
16 maintainer responsible for this territory where the incident
17 occurred?

18 A. Yes, I have.

19 Q. And do you recall the last efficiency test that was performed
20 on him?

21 A. No, I do not.

22 Q. Okay. Were you ever informed --

23 A. Let me -- let me -- let me retract that because I actually
24 was out there with him the other day during this investigation --
25 you know, working on the switch with him and stuff like that. And

1 I do those while we're doing stuff like that as well. I just have
2 not been able to sit down with him and discuss what we've talked
3 about -- or what I saw. So --

4 Q. Okay. All right, were you ever informed that the cars were
5 being stored on the siding track at Bertram?

6 A. No.

7 Q. Do your signal maintainers inform you of cars being stored in
8 siding tracks for extend period times? You know, as they go
9 through their -- and do their monthly quarterly tests?

10 A. No. Unless they're putting it in a R status because there
11 were cars parked on top of a switch that they can't do, then they
12 put it in a R status until the cars be moved. And that's about
13 the only time.

14 Q. Okay, and can you explain this, the R status?

15 A. R status is when we are continuing to -- you know, we doing
16 our FRA testing. If there is a -- something that is not right
17 that needs to be repaired, or if it's -- can't be repaired right
18 then and there, or -- we can either put it in a R status or an O
19 status for out of service as well. Because then we'd have to take
20 the switch out of service, but if we can't get into it to clamp it
21 or anything like that, we just put it in a R status for now until
22 they do clear the cars. And normally, that's three or four days,
23 two or three days later. Then, they go back and test that switch.

24 Q. Okay, and can you explain a little bit more of the process
25 for the out of service? Are you reaching out to dispatch or --

1 A. Reach out to the MTO or MYO, whoever's got that -- and ask
2 them when they're going to be moving the cars.

3 Q. Okay. Are you aware of any procedure of protected cars
4 stored on controlled track?

5 A. I am now.

6 Q. Were you not aware of these before the accident?

7 A. I believe I was aware of there was something out there, but I
8 didn't know exactly where it was at until this week.

9 Q. Can you describe what that procedure is now that you --

10 A. It's -- in our -- in our -- Yellow Book rule says that if
11 cars are being stored, it's Rule 1.1.13. If they're going to be
12 stored for more than 10 days, that we are to be notified and we
13 should go out and protect that siding by placing a Form C track
14 (indiscernible), taking the siding out of service, and getting
15 with signal design to see what the best way is to secure the
16 signal system where they cannot get a signal into that siding.

17 Q. Do you know when the last time this procedure was used?

18 A. No.

19 Q. Do you happen to know who was the individual that stopped
20 this procedure?

21 A. I don't understand stopped. Stopped the procedure, I don't
22 understand that.

23 MR. NEAL: If the procedure was there, was it not being used?
24 Was it by instruction not being used? Or just (indiscernible)
25 using it?

1 MR. WOOD: Oh. No, it's -- if we didn't know the cars were
2 being stored there, then how would we know to do the procedure?
3 So, nope, they don't tell us if they're going to store cars there.
4 They may pull cars out and put them into a siding and then, you
5 know, hours later go pull them out or a day later go pull them
6 out. But what's -- you know, I don't -- they don't tell us when
7 they're storing cars for long periods of time.

8 BY MR. RODRIGUES:

9 Q. Okay. Have you had any trouble calls associated with the
10 Bertram siding in this past year that you can recall?

11 A. Okay. We've had a power off indication where we had a blown
12 fuse. We had the batteries -- the house was broken into there.
13 The batteries were stolen. And off the top of my head, that's the
14 last two that I can remember.

15 Q. And did you respond to these specific trouble calls?

16 A. Personally, no.

17 Q. I think I'm okay. (Indiscernible).

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I don't have any. I'm good.

19 MR. LLOYD: So, I have -- Gabe. Go ahead, please.

20 BY MR. NEAL:

21 Q. I just want to chat a little bit about the Bertram siding
22 itself. It's my understanding that it was used a little more
23 whenever you had single track, and that was a siding. And now you
24 guys are running exceptionally long trains that won't fit there,
25 right? So, it's 83, 172 feet long and you guys are running since

1 PSR large trains, right?

2 A. That's correct.

3 Q. Were you -- were you involved in any conversation about the
4 deterioration of that siding? Meaning the rusty rail condition?

5 A. Didn't know anything about it until we arrived the other day.

6 Q. Okay. Do other locations come to your mind that may have
7 that same condition?

8 A. No, and I believe the only reason that's so rusty right there
9 is because of the salt and sea right there. We've got other
10 sidings out there that don't have that condition.

11 Q. Okay. Can you think of any other procedure other than the
12 one that's in the Yellow Book that's not being used to protect
13 against rusty rail conditions?

14 A. That are in place right now?

15 Q. Yes, (indiscernible).

16 A. I don't know of any. I don't know of any other procedures to
17 -- you know, to inform us of how long they're going to be in there
18 or if they already put them in there.

19 Q. That's all, (indiscernible).

20 MR. LLOYD: So, I do have a follow-up question. This is
21 Lloyd, L-l-o-y-d from the NTSB. Follow-up question with the
22 procedure on the amount of time cars are stored on a siding, and
23 then this procedure would take effect. Just curiosity, is if --
24 how do you guys know -- and I'm just throwing this out there. So,
25 they go, and they pull one car out, and they take it out of there.

1 Does that timeframe start over? Is it the same amount of cars
2 that have to stay in there for the 10-day duration, or does the
3 count start over when I come in and grab one car and pull that car
4 out? Does that 10-day duration start over? That's the question I
5 have, to understand the procedure.

6 MR. WOOD: I don't know.

7 MR. LLOYD: You know, it's -- it might -- I -- maybe I'm
8 asking it wrong, you know, and I -- reading the procedure, I can
9 go, yeah, if cars are stored for 10 days or more, this protection
10 would have to be in place. So, on the ninth day, they go in and
11 they pull out a lead car and they take it somewhere, does that
12 start over?

13 MR. WOOD: I don't know.

14 MR. NEAL: You're asking him that question?

15 MR. LLOYD: Yes.

16 MR. WOOD: I don't know.

17 MR. LLOYD: I'm asking the group, I guess. It's -- yeah,
18 it's --

19 MR. NEAL: I don't -- I don't read anywhere in the rule where
20 it would start over.

21 MR. LLOYD: Yeah.

22 MR. RODRIGUES: There's nothing that says if they come take a
23 car out, it's (indiscernible) 10 days.

24 BY MR. LLOYD:

25 Q. Okay, and have you ever used -- what -- you've been around

1 here not -- a long time, '96. Been a signal manager and all that
2 stuff. Have you seen that procedure used before?

3 A. I've never -- I've -- well, I have now.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. On the Gila sub, there's cars stored in a siding.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. And there is a Form C bulletin on that siding that that
8 siding is out of service.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. And there is a tag on the CAD screen that says when they put
11 those cars in there and what train they're off of.

12 Q. Got you. Got you. And --

13 A. There's not on Bertram siding.

14 Q. So, talk to me about that. So, is that -- is that the same
15 procedure that's -- that we're talking about now, this Form C?

16 So, talk to me about that.

17 A. So --

18 Q. How are they protecting this --

19 A. -- so, that was -- that was done by the track inspector on
20 that --

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. -- on that sub. And so, he's put out a Form C on that.

23 Q. Got you.

24 A. Taking that siding out of service. So, he's the only one
25 that the track department I assume, can allow the train crews to

1 go in and get those cars.

2 Q. Okay. How does he do that?

3 I had told Ed to plan on that being a high ball. I did say that
4 to him.

5 Q. What does that mean?

6 A. I guess they call him to say they'll need to get
7 (indiscernible) to get the cars out.

8 Q. So, they probably --

9 A. I don't know what their procedures are.

10 Q. Right. So, they probably spike this -- just stay normal,
11 clamp it, and if crew needs to get in there, they have to call a
12 track inspector and he has to unclamp, unspike, allow the crew to
13 get in there, probably hand throw it. And they get
14 (indiscernible) speed --

15 A. I would assume. I would assume that. I don't know what
16 their procedures are.

17 Q. Got you. Got you.

18 A. And to be honest with you, I don't know if they have clamps
19 or anything on this which is right now.

20 Q. Got you. So, what -- so, the procedure we're talking about
21 now, what would a signal maintainer do? I know they put the D
22 rails out in case that -- in case the cars, you know, drift out,
23 whatever. But what's on the signal maintainer side of the house
24 that he would have to do to comply with this procedure?

25 A. He needs to notify me.

- 1 Q. Got you.
- 2 A. And we need to call design --
- 3 Q. Okay.
- 4 A. -- and figure out which is the best way to do this.
- 5 Q. Got you.
- 6 A. Is it -- is it to clamp the switch, take a wire off the motor
- 7 so they cannot throw it?
- 8 Q. Understood.
- 9 A. You know, from now on, I'm (indiscernible) we're probably
- 10 going to have to take a wire off the siding track circuit to make
- 11 sure it stays down.
- 12 Q. Yeah. Yeah.
- 13 A. So, there's going to be different procedures, I'm sure,
- 14 coming out.
- 15 Q. Yeah. At least from my perspective, just hearing everybody
- 16 talk, some clarity. Because I don't even understand that -- you
- 17 know, who does the car count. How does a signal maintainer know
- 18 what day that car goes in there? I don't know. That's what I'm -
- 19 - that's what I'm asking. If -- I see your procedure and I can
- 20 read it, but how's it being relayed or, or how's it start, how's
- 21 it end, what happens if something goes in there and gets pulled
- 22 out, does that day start over?
- 23 A. Right.
- 24 Q. You know, that's the questions I would --
- 25 A. It's the questions we'd like --

1 Q. I mean, it sounds like a good procedure. Sounds like it
2 would work, you know, to me, but I think there's a lot of
3 unanswered questions with it. But -- so, I know you were talking
4 about the salt and sea and, you know, we went out there. Like I
5 told everybody, it's pretty unique for me to be out there. Even I
6 even had to take myself to the beach to go down there just to see
7 what this thing was all about.

8 But rusty rails, I mean, you can -- you can see them plain as
9 day. We've all been on a railroad, we've all seen rusty rails, we
10 know what it does. We know it can cause loss of shut. Some
11 railroads have rusty rail reports, procedures, all that stuff.
12 But has it always been a situation out there where that stuff just
13 rusts so quick from that -- from those elements?

14 A. I don't know the answer to that --

15 Q. Right.

16 A. -- because I -- you know? Adolfo asked that question about
17 the -- no, I'm sorry. Neal asked the question, right? About
18 single -- if a single track, and it was the siding.

19 Q. Right.

20 A. They use that siding. And that was double track, they didn't
21 use the siding very much.

22 Q. Right. Right, right.

23 A. So, without train traffic on it, it's rusting up. That's --
24 it was actually quite a shock to me to see the rust --

25 Q. Yeah.

- 1 A. -- the day after the rain.
- 2 Q. And it -- and it was -- and it was --
- 3 A. I was -- I was very shocked to see how much was on there.
- 4 Q. And it was odd because the short amount of time that Main Two
5 was out of service, you can see the rust started, you know, with
6 no traffic on that, just that short (indiscernible), you could see
7 the rust already starting to accumulate on that. So -- and we
8 know the best thing to prevent that is just keep the wheels
9 rolling over that --
- 10 A. Right.
- 11 Q. -- over that rail and it -- you know, to keep that fresh
12 continuity. But yeah, unique situation out there, but --
- 13 A. Yeah.
- 14 Q. -- any other sidings like that that you deal with, that's
15 salt air or anything like that?
- 16 A. There's no other sidings through there that are close to the
17 salt and sea.
- 18 Q. Got you. What about other locations that -- such as Phoenix
19 or --
- 20 A. I haven't -- I haven't seen any --
- 21 Q. Got you.
- 22 A. -- any other on my territory.
- 23 Q. Right. It's unique, very.
- 24 A. Yup.
- 25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible).

1 MR. LLOYD: Yeah, absolutely.

2 BY UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

3 Q. I just have a question on that 1.1.13 rule. Doesn't it state
4 that they have to be a corner signal? That the corridor
5 (indiscernible) this? I don't -- I don't have the language in
6 front of me of that rule.

7 A. I don't recall. I'd have to look it up.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. (Indiscernible).

10 Q. That's another follow-up question for me -- for you, Woody,
11 on that. So, was there any communication being made? I know you
12 mentioned track forces when they go out. Take it out of service,
13 put a Form C track bulletin, whatever, you know, (indiscernible)
14 form there. Are they informing signal at all -- signal
15 maintainer, yourself?

16 A. Not that I'm aware of.

17 Q. Or -- I know you mentioned, you know, if you go out and you
18 were to take off a control wire or, you know, through signal and
19 possibly take it out of service or whatever you guys are doing
20 that (indiscernible) that way. You guys communicate to track and
21 let them know what you're doing?

22 A. Not necessarily. They took it out of service because of
23 cars. We'll go out and make it signal system where they can't get
24 in there. So, they would call us saying hey, we can't get the
25 switch to throw, or we can't get -- you know the switch has got a

1 clamp on it with a signal lock. They would call us at that point
2 in time and then we could tell them, hey, at that point in time,
3 we have this disabled so they cannot get a signal into there. I
4 assume there should be more communication all the way around.

5 MR. NEAL: Follow-up question on that. You mentioned another
6 location where the track department is taking the track out of
7 service. Has that been post-accident?

8 MR. WOOD: I don't know when that tag got put on there, but
9 the date on there says -- I believe said 7/10/22, is when those
10 cars were set in there. But I do not know when that tag was
11 actually put on there. I know the tag had been there before
12 saying cars, just like the Bertram siding, but I don't know when
13 the tag got changed to fill out the date that it was put in there.

14 BY MR. LLOYD:

15 Q. What do you said 7/10 of '22?

16 A. I believe that's what it was.

17 Q. Okay. (Indiscernible) Gabe and Adolfo help me out with this
18 -- with -- correct me if I'm wrong, but was -- aware of any FRA
19 waivers where they would have to go in to do some circuitry testing
20 that went from two years -- every two years required to -- it was
21 moved to a four-year waiver. It -- help me out with this, guys.

22 A. The locking desk. The electronic locking.

23 Q. Is that what -- is that what that is?

24 A. I know the waiver has expired and so we're back to the two-
25 year for now.

- 1 Q. Okay.
- 2 A. And that just happened two weeks ago, three weeks ago.
- 3 Q. Yeah. So, when --
- 4 A. Somewhere around there.
- 5 Q. -- so, when would that -- if it would've stayed on a two-year
6 deal, when would the -- when would that test been required?
- 7 A. At Bertram?
- 8 Q. Yes. If it would -- if we would've stayed on the two-year
9 versus the four.
- 10 A. It would've been done in '20, October of '20.
- 11 Q. Okay. So, does this test find something like if you're
12 getting loss of shunt or if rusty rails may be affecting
13 circuitry? What does this test do? I'm going to ask you
14 (indiscernible).
- 15 A. It's the locking test that they do.
- 16 Q. Yup, got you.
- 17 A. You know, making sure they can -- that the -- if the track
18 circuit's down, they cannot get a signal in there. The track
19 circuit picks up, we can get a clear signal in there. Doesn't
20 necessarily tell you if it's rusty rail or not.
- 21 Q. Understood.
- 22 A. We're just going by what the electronics and the track
23 circuits are telling the signal system. So, if the cars are in
24 the siding, we cannot do that test into the siding because we
25 can't get a clear signal in. So, we wouldn't even do that test.

1 Q. All right.

2 MR. NEAL: What would you do if you found cars inside?

3 MR. WOOD: We would have to take that -- well, let's put it
4 this way because we try to test within 30 days prior to the test
5 date. And if he gets out there and there's cars in that sighting,
6 now we're going to find out, okay, around when -- then, that's
7 when I get involved and say, okay transportation, when are we
8 going to move these, we need to be able to test that siding. And
9 that's when I start that (indiscernible).

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: That answer your question?

11 MR. LLOYD: Yeah, it does. Yeah. It -- I'm just -- I'm just
12 curious when it comes to that kind of stuff. But any other
13 questions? Adolfo?

14 MR. RODRIGUES: I'm good.

15 MR. LLOYD: Gabe? (Indiscernible) you good?

16 MS. ESTRADA: I'm good.

17 BY MR. LLOYD:

18 Q. So, just formality stuff, Woody. I know -- it sounds like
19 you do a lot of travel, but it seems like you're -- pretty good
20 rest. Fatigue, anything like that nature or --

21 A. There's days.

22 Q. I'm sure there is. I'm sure there is, bro.

23 A. There's days. I'm doing all right today.

24 Q. Yeah. The hotel life, is that what it is?

25 A. Well --

- 1 Q. I was the (indiscernible) car days.
- 2 A. It's -- like I said, it's about once -- either every other
3 week or every third week, I'll go out of town.
- 4 Q. Yup.
- 5 A. But I'm home for two or home for one. So --
- 6 Q. Good. From your -- from your managers, pretty good support
7 when you need something or request for help, they're there for
8 you?
- 9 A. Yes.
- 10 Q. Answer of a phone call, something like that?
- 11 A. Yes.
- 12 Q. Good deal. What about your needs, your tools and equipment
13 for you to do your job? You're pretty much supplied with
14 everything you need?
- 15 A. They supply us with the money.
- 16 Q. That's right.
- 17 A. It's not enough.
- 18 Q. It's never enough, right? It's never enough.
- 19 A. It's never enough.
- 20 Q. Yeah. Safety needs? You see anywhere there needs
21 improvement? Everything's hunky dory? It's --
- 22 A. Safety-wise, I believe we're good. It just -- there's holes
23 in the communication process. Just with everything else.
- 24 Q. Got you.
- 25 A. I mean, it's -- the communication process between crafts

1 needs to improve.

2 Q. Right. So --

3 A. As far as transportation says, we're going to store cars in
4 this siding, we need to let Track and Signal know so that we can
5 get out there and do our thing. You know, and that just didn't
6 happen. And if it would've, I believe this would've never been
7 happened. So --

8 Q. Yeah. So, I like to take something positive out of the
9 interview. It's -- the question, it sort of answers how we -- how
10 we think of stuff in NTSB. But if we can take back the hands of
11 time, turn them back the day before. September 7th, what would
12 Woody do -- or what would -- what would Woody do to prevent this?
13 What do you think that would -- that we can do, or UP can do, to
14 prevent this from ever happening again? I'm not talking as UP,
15 I'm talking -- CSX probably has the same scenario taking place as
16 Norfolk Southern. What could be done to prevent this from
17 happening?

18 A. Communication to us so that we can go out and physically take
19 that track out of service so they cannot get in there without us
20 being there to get in there. There was a gap somewhere and the
21 switch was able to be thrown by the dispatcher. That should never
22 have happened. We could go back to the 7th, the 6th --

23 Q. Or whenever.

24 A. Or whenever, we could've taken that out and they would've
25 never had this problem. They would've have had the incident.

1 Q. Does Woody have that authority to go in and take that matter
2 in his own hands? (Indiscernible) say, listen, this is my
3 subdivision and when you put a car in there, this is what I'm
4 going to do.

5 A. That's correct. I can do that.

6 Q. Does Woody have that? Okay.

7 A. I have no problem doing that.

8 Q. Got you. And you would get no feedback, no negative
9 feedback?

10 A. I may -- I may get feedback from transportation or somebody
11 else, but I know my boss would stand behind me.

12 Q. I got you. Mr. Gabe?

13 MR. NEAL: Woody, you've been here since '96, right? You saw
14 all those technology changes. Are you aware of any technology
15 that could be added to locations like this that have rusty rail,
16 that may enhance -- or prevent the loss of shunt?

17 MR. WOOD: You know, on the coast, and I don't know if they
18 still do it now, but on the coast subdivision right along the
19 Pacific Ocean, I think at one point in time they put a stainless-
20 steel bead on the top of the rail. But I don't know if that ever
21 stayed or if they did it, or if they identify the rusty rail, they
22 can bring in a grinding train to grind it. That would be the only
23 thing I could think of.

24 MR. NEAL: But as far as technology goes. Like, from a
25 signal perspective.

1 MR. WOOD: Not that I know of. I can't think of anything
2 that would detect the rusty rail.

3 MR. LLOYD: Okay, yeah. I'm good. Around the horn?

4 MS. ESTRADA: I'm okay, thank you.

5 MR. LLOYD: Adolfo?

6 MR. RODRIGUES: I'm good.

7 MR. LLOYD: Gabe, you good?

8 MR. NEAL: Yes.

9 MR. LLOYD: Chris?

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'm good.

11 MR. LLOYD: Anybody in the back, questions? Well, Woody, I
12 appreciate it, my friend. I do, and any questions for the group?

13 MR. WOOD: Nope.

14 MR. LLOYD: Yeah. Keep it up, brother.

15 MR. WOOD: Thank you.

16 MR. LLOYD: Yup. Keep it up, my man. What you say, three
17 more years?

18 MR. WOOD: 3 years and 10 months. I'm just counting.

19 MR. LLOYD: (Indiscernible). You got that big retirement
20 calendar on the wall, right?

21 MR. WOOD: It's on my desktop.

22 MR. LLOYD: Each day. X, X, X.

23 MR. WOOD: Each day. So --

24 MR. LLOYD: Well guys, we're off the record. Thank you very
25 much.

1 (Off the record.)

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: All right, thanks.

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Woody, thank you.

4 MR. WOOD: Thanks. (Indiscernible). Sorry everybody had to
5 be here for this.

6 MS. ESTRADA: Thank you, Woody.

7 MR. NEAL: I'd just like to say, thanks, Woody. All your
8 work out there the last couple days (indiscernible). It looked
9 like you guys had a really good (indiscernible). I been a part of
10 many of these investigations or accidents, and honestly, I don't
11 think I've ever seen a testing of the location go so smooth.

12 MR. WOOD: You haven't seen today. Those guys aren't here.
13 I got to give credit to the, you know, signal --

14 (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 William Wood

ACCIDENT NO.: RRD22LR014

PLACE: Indio, California

DATE: September 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.



Amanda Wise
Transcriber