

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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TRAIN DERAILMENT NEAR NEW CASTLE,
PENNSYLVANIA ON MAY 10, 2023

Accident No.: RRD23FR011

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Interview of: BEN DEPRANO, Carman
Norfolk Southern Railway

via Microsoft Teams

APPEARANCES:

MATT THOMPSON, Mechanical Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

ERVIN WHITE, Motive Power and Equipment Inspector
Federal Railroad Administration

GEOFF CRAKER, Director, Mechanical Operations
Norfolk Southern Railway

ROBERT LEONARD, General Supervisor
Norfolk Southern Railway

DENNIS SABINA, President
Transport Workers Union Local 2035

NICK JOHNSTON, Union Representative

CHAD SPREB

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I N T E R V I E W

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2 MR. THOMPSON: Okay, my name is Matt Thompson and I'm the
3 NTSB investigator/mechanical for this accident. This interview is
4 being held virtually, MS Teams, to conduct an interview with
5 Ben Deprano, who works for Norfolk Southern Railway. The
6 interview is in conjunction with NTSB's investigation of an NS
7 train derailment on May 10th, 2023. The NTSB accident reference
8 number is RRD23FR011. The purpose of this investigation is to
9 increase safety, not assign fault, blame, or liability.

10 Before we begin our interview and questions, let's go around
11 the table and introduce our self. Not a table, but I'll just call
12 you out by name as you're on my screen, and when we get to the one
13 person with multiple people, you can just go in whatever order you
14 want there. But please spell your last name and if you're
15 representing someone, who you're representing and your job title.
16 And I'd like to remember -- remind everyone to speak clearly so we
17 can get an accurate recording.

18 I'll start off and then I'll call out the next person.
19 Again, my name is Matt Thompson, the spelling of my last name is
20 T-h-o-m-p-s-o-n, and I am the NTSB mechanical investigator for
21 this accident. Ervin White.

22 MR. WHITE: Ervin White, W-h-i-t-e, FRA motor power and
23 equipment and IIC.

24 MR. THOMPSON: Okay, Geoff.

25 MR. CRAKER: Geoff Craker, Norfolk Southern, mechanical.

1 Last name spelling, C-r-a-k-e-r.

2 MR. THOMPSON: Leonard.

3 MR. LEONARD: Yes, Robert Leonard, general supervisor,
4 L-e-o-n-a-r-d, for Norfolk Southern.

5 MR. THOMPSON: Okay. And if you can call out someone else
6 over on your side there.

7 MR. LEONARD: Yes, sir.

8 MR. DEPRANO: Ben Deprano, Norfolk Southern, carman,
9 D-e-p-r-a-n-o.

10 MR. THOMPSON: Okay, next one.

11 MR. SABINA: Denny Sabina, S-a-b-i-n-a, president of Local
12 2035 TWU and also mechanical carman.

13 MR. THOMPSON: Okay. Do we have anybody else there?

14 MR. LEONARD: Yeah, I've got two more, sir.

15 MR. THOMPSON: Okay.

16 MR. JOHNSTON: Nick Johnston, J-o-h-n-s-t-o-n, carman, union
17 rep.

18 MR. THOMPSON: Okay.

19 MR. SPREB: Chad Spreb (ph.), S-p-r-e-b.

20 MR. THOMPSON: Okay, is that --

21 (Crosstalk)

22 MR. THOMPSON: Is that everyone?

23 MR. LEONARD: Yes, sir, that'll be all at this end.

24 MR. THOMPSON: Okay. So basically, I'm going to -- I'm going
25 to go -- I'll call on you guys in order to see if you have any

1 questions.

2 INTERVIEW OF BEN DEPRANO

3 BY MR. THOMPSON:

4 Q. But first off, can you tell us a little bit about your
5 railroad career, you know, such as how long you've been working
6 there, what positions? Anything like --

7 A. Well, I've been on the railroad 15 years, I've been a carman,
8 and I've been here at Conway since 2016.

9 Q. Okay. And typically, what are your duties as a carman in
10 Conway?

11 A. Inspecting trains, doing air tests, marker tests, and the
12 roll-bys.

13 Q. Okay. And --

14 A. Also repair.

15 MR. THOMPSON: Okay. Ervin, you can -- you can go and I'll
16 ask more in a minute here, but what do you have there, Ervin?

17 BY MR. WHITE:

18 Q. You were working as the UCI (ph.) the day in question?

19 A. That is correct.

20 Q. Were you working at all that day with a single shift?

21 A. That was a single shift.

22 Q. And you did a roll-by on the 14M as it departed out of West
23 Conway?

24 A. That is correct.

25 Q. Do you remember if there were any defects that you noted?

1 A. None.

2 Q. So this is a rather long train, it has double over, I think
3 it was 306 to 304 or something like. Were you there for the whole
4 pull-out of both sections or did you only see one section?

5 A. Both sections.

6 Q. Where did you position yourself in your manhole (ph.) to do
7 the roll-by?

8 A. West end of the yard.

9 Q. And on the north to south side?

10 A. South.

11 Q. Was that your normal position, usually, when you try to do
12 those, sir?

13 A. Depending on which end of the yard it is.

14 Q. Normally, this is kind of a general question, what kind of
15 defects do you usually catch on a roll-by when they're pulling
16 out?

17 A. Anything hanging, making noise or sticking --
18 (Audio feedback.)

19 BY MR. WHITE:

20 Q. I'm not sure if I'm cutting out, but could you please repeat
21 that last section? I didn't catch all of it.

22 A. Anything hanging, sticking pistons, any noises that are
23 blowing.

24 Q. Do you have an estimate, on the average, of how many trains
25 you roll by on a shift?

1 A. Depending on the night, anywhere from one to five.

2 Q. Another general question. How often do you think you find
3 defects on trains rolling out? Is it like daily, weekly, multiple
4 times on a shift?

5 A. Most of the time, one per 3 weeks.

6 Q. I think I'm cutting out, you said one per 3 weeks, you think?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. What would be the most common defects do you think that you
9 catch on these roll-bys, sir?

10 A. Sticking pistons.

11 Q. So let's say you have a sticking piston or some other defect
12 that you notice, what steps do you take?

13 A. I ask the train to please come to a safe stop and then assess
14 the situation and make the repair.

15 Q. And recent, I'm going to say recent being up to 6 months,
16 have you had any roller bearings, Ben, that you heard that you had
17 to stop a train for?

18 A. No.

19 Q. I'm sorry for taking a pause, I'm taking notes. If you had a
20 sticking piston on a car, what's the typical remedy?

21 A. Usually I check for air leaks, make sure the brake is
22 released, and bleed it out, do a set and release and let the train
23 continue.

24 Q. When you stop a train and do a repair, who do you advise or
25 report to after you've done that?

1 A. The lead man and the supervisor. They question every train
2 that gets stopped.

3 MR. THOMPSON: Do you have anything else there, Ervin?

4 MR. WHITE: Yeah, I got one more.

5 MR. THOMPSON: All right.

6 BY MR. WHITE:

7 Q. In your opinion, do you think it would be more beneficial
8 that somebody roll by both sides of the train or do you think that
9 rolling by one side of the train is sufficient for the duties you
10 perform?

11 A. Both sides.

12 Q. And you said you've been at Conway since 2016. How long have
13 you been doing the UCI's position?

14 A. I've been on the UCI all my career here, twice.

15 Q. I'm sorry, I cut out again. What was the current post for
16 the UCI, how long have you held this down this time?

17 A. Since November.

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Oh, he got bumped and came back.

19 MR. WHITE: Thank you so much, sir.

20 MR. THOMPSON: Okay. It looks like, Ervin, you pretty much
21 answered all of my stuff, but -- so I don't have anything else.
22 Does anybody else have any questions?

23 MR. LEONARD: Nobody here.

24 MR. THOMPSON: Nobody there. Geoff?

25 MR. CRAKER: No, sir.

1 MR. THOMPSON: Okay. Is there anything you'd like to add,
2 Ben?

3 MR. DEPRANO: No.

4 MR. THOMPSON: No. Well, this is a relatively quick one. As
5 I said, it generally will take 20, 25 days and I'll send out the
6 transcript to you and your NS e-mail, you prefer that one?

7 MR. DEPRANO: Yes.

8 MR. THOMPSON: Okay, all right. I appreciate everybody's
9 time today and have a safe day. And if you've got any questions,
10 you can reach out to me.

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you.

12 MR. THOMPSON: Thank you.

13 (Whereupon, the interview concluded.)
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

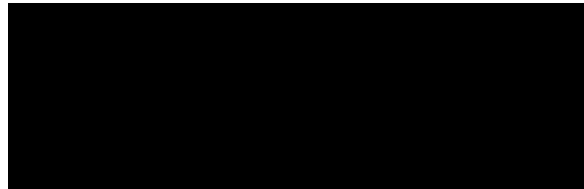
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: TRAIN DERAILMENT NEAR NEW CASTLE,
 PENNSYLVANIA ON MAY 10, 2023
 Interview of Ben Deprano

ACCIDENT NO.: RRD23FR011

PLACE: via Microsoft Teams

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.



Transcriber

