UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Investigation of:	
TRAIN DERAILMENT AT BNSF GLOBEMASTER YARD IN DENVER, COLORADO ON AUGUST 5, 2025	Accident No.: RRD25FR022

Interview of: [redacted], Student Engineer
Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway

Denver, Colorado

Thursday,
August 7, 2025

APPEARANCES:

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[redacted], Chairman, Local 626
SMART Transportation Division
Representing Mr. [redacted]

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I N T E R V I E W

MR. LAVALLEE: All right, good afternoon, everyone. My name is Scott Lavallee and I am the NTSB incident Investigator-in-Charge for this accident. We're conducting an interview on Thursday, August the 7th with [redacted], who works for BNSF. This interview is in conjunction with NTSB's investigation of the accident in Denver, Colorado. The NTSB accident reference number is RRD25FR022. The purpose of the investigation is to increase safety, not to assign fault, blame, or liability.

Before we begin our interview and questions, we'll go around the room, introduce ourselves. Please spell your last name, title, tell us who you're with. I'll start off and pass it to my right.

Again, my name is Scott Lavallee, L-a-v-a-l-l-e-e is the spelling of my last name, and I am the NTSB Investigator-in-Charge for this accident.

MR. HOEPF: Hi, this is Mike Hoepf, I'm a human performance investigator with the NTSB. Last name is H-o-e-p-f.

MR. GRAJEDA: Roberto Grajeda, G-r-a-j-e-d-a, BLET Safety Task Force investigator.

MR. GARRELS: Jeffrey Garrels, G-a-r-r-e-l-s, General Director of Operating Practices for the BNSF Railway.

MR. ARCHIE: J.D. Archie, A-r-c-h-i-e, FRA, I am the Investigator-in-Charge for the FRA on this accident.

MR. BRIDGES: Brett Bridges, BNSF Mechanical Superintendent,

observer.

MR. ZAGATA: Zach Zagata, Z-a-g-a-t-a, NTSB Branch Chief, observer.

MR. COOK: Michael Cook, C-o-o-k, Assistant Vice President of Safety, BNSF.

MR. SAUNDERS: Cameron Saunders, S-a-u-n-d-e-r-s, SMART-TD National Safety Team.

MR. [redacted]: [redacted], [redacted], I'm the SMART-TD local chairman for Local 626 out of McCook, Nebraska.

MR. [redacted]: [redacted], [redacted], student engineer for BNSF.

MR. LAVALLEE: All right, thank you, everyone.

So, [redacted], thanks for being with us here today. We want to ask you a couple of questions here to start out. Do we have your permission to record our interview with you today?

MR. [redacted]: Yes, sir.

MR. LAVALLEE: All right, thank you. And [redacted], do you understand that these transcripts will eventually become part of the public docket and as such, we can't guarantee any confidentiality?

MR. [redacted]: Yes, sir.

MR. LAVALLEE: Appreciate that. And then finally, [redacted], we do allow you the opportunity to have a representative with you here during the interview. Do you have one and who is it?

MR. [redacted]: I do. [redacted] with SMART-TD.

MR. LAVALLEE: Mr. [redacted] with SMART-TD. Thank you very

much.

INTERVIEW OF [redacted]

BY MR. LAVALLEE:

Q. Okay. [redacted], I'd like to just kind of start out generally speaking, tell me about your railroad career so far today.

A. I've been with the railroad two and a half years, I've been a student engineer since May, made several trips to Denver as a student engineer.

Q. Two and a half years on the railroad, total?

A. Yes.

Q. And then since May, June, July, August, about three-ish months --

A. Three-ish months.

Q. -- as a student engineer?

A. Yeah.

Q. What did you do before the railroad?

A. I was a diesel mechanic, worked on Case IH agricultural equipment.

Q. Okay. So you're not a stranger to, like, an industrial-type environment.

A. No, sir.

Q. Very good, all right. So in that period of time preceding coming into the engineer trainee program, what assignment were you working?

A. Mostly I worked the road pool going between Denver and

Lincoln. I had a little bit of time on the extra board, not a whole lot.
Q. So mainly the pool between Denver and Lincoln, which would be the same area that you're firing over, is that correct to say?
A. Yes.
Q. All right. And working between Lincoln and Denver, if you could kind of give us an estimation of Lincoln versus Denver, is it one more than the other, are they about even as far as where you'll go from McCook?
A. Spend a lot more time coming to Denver as opposed to Lincoln.
Q. Okay, more time going to Denver than Lincoln. And that being said, I don't -- I assume there's probably other places within the Denver area that you may go to, right, or may have gone in your previous capacity as a conductor. Coming specifically to Globeville Yard here in Denver, if you had to guess and again, I'm not going to hold you to it if you don't have an exact number, how many times would you say you've been to Globeville Yard?
A. I wouldn't have an idea, I mean, you figure a couple, three, four times, I mean, a couple times a week for two and a half years, that's quite a few times coming to Denver.
Q. Okay. Three or four times a week for about two and a half years. All right, I appreciate that. Student engineers and mentor engineers, can you kind of describe what that process is like, in other words, are you assigned to a particular person, how does that work?

A. So as a student engineer, I watch the boards and find which engineers I want to go learn specific traits of running a train from, so it can be, I mean, anybody in that pool that I'm comfortable working with, I know how they run and how I want to learn to run.
Q. So you get to choose who you're going to work with?
A. Yes, sir.
Q. All right. So would it be fair to say that you've worked with Mr. [redacted] before?
A. Yes.
Q. And what's your opinion of -- I would assume, you correct me if I'm wrong, that -- being that you get to choose who you're going work under is that you perhaps might think that Mr. Corbett has good skills as an engineer, would that be fair to say?
A. That is correct.
Q. Thank you for that. And then I'm sure it's on record somewhere, but how many trips have you made with Mr. [redacted]?
A. Oh. I mean, as a student engineer, I've made two round trips. Prior to that, I made several as a conductor with Mr. Corbett.
Q. Okay, so a long working history with Mr. [redacted]. In regard to the conductor that you were assigned with on the day of the accident, had you worked with that conductor before?
A. As a new hire conductor, I trained with Mr. [redacted]. I think it was a couple of trips I worked with him as my trainer, as a

conductor.
Q. Okay, so Mr. [redacted], in the past while you were training as a conductor, was your mentor conductor, is that correct?
A. Yes, sir.
Q. Do you have any issues with the professionalism or expertise of either one of those gentlemen?
A. No.
Q. Very good. Let's move to the day of the accident, which I have on my records as happening between August the 4th into August the 5th, right?
A. Yes, sir.
Q. Can you just kind of describe how you -- you took your call, times, just give me what you can remember about that.
A. Well, I tried to get called to go work with him and I had to call in to the crew office and get myself put on that job that, for whatever reason, there were issues. Don't know. Went on duty at 14:00 in McCook, I got in a van and went to Corona, got on the train and came to Denver.
Q. Okay, so we got in a van and -- to take us out to Corona, is that right or --
A. Yes.
Q. Is that normal to get -- and again, I don't want to say, you know, it happens every time, right, but is it unusual to have to get in a van and go to an outside location to get your train?
A. No, I mean, we do it pretty regular to go get on one and take

it the rest of the way.
Q. Okay. It happens, like -- I assume, at McCook, is there a crew change location that would be considered the designated crew change location?
A. I mean, McCook is the crew change location and you go either way.
Q. All right. So not unusual to have to go outside to get it.
A. No.
Q. Tell me about the condition of the train when you stepped on it there at Corona.
A. When I climbed on the train, I mean, it was left the way it should've been, it was ready to rock and roll and continue west.
Q. Okay. So no issues with the train, had good paperwork?
A. Yeah.
Q. All right. Any work in or out between Corona and Denver?
A. No.
Q. Any issues, delays, anything that stands out as far as you can remember?
A. I mean, a couple times in a siding but, I mean, that's not unusual.
Q. Sitting in a siding is -- tell me about coming from Corona into Denver, is it like a main track with sidings, is it multiple main --
A. It's a main track with sidings.
Q. All right. So going into sidings a few times, presumably for

train meets, trains coming the other way or --
A. That is correct.
Q. All right, I appreciate that. When you first got on the train at Corona, right, and the crew takes control of the train, do you have a job brief with Mr. [redacted] about, you know, hey, who's going to run, are you going to run part of it, am I going to run part of it, what was that like?
A. I mean, with Mr. [redacted], he told me I was going to run the train, you know, I needed the experience coming into Denver Yard and yarding a train.
Q. Okay. Any issues with that or were you keen to do it?
A. I had no -- I marked up on this train because I knew what it was going to entail bringing it into Denver and putting it away.
Q. What you're here for.
A. Yeah, yeah.
Q. Okay, I appreciate that. So no issues in between Corona and Denver, from what you're telling me, in and out of a couple sidings, train meets here and there. Talk to me about arrival in Denver, how does that process go, to the best of your recollection?
A. When we get to Denver, we went to the yard channel and talked to 38th Street yardmaster, figure out where they wanted the train yarded, we were instructed to pull the train through 104 track and talked to 31st Street, out to the other end. When we got to the other end, we talked to 31st, got permission to poke out, were

instructed to take the head cars on the train that didn't fit into 104 over to 103 and gave us -- he gave us the signal, permission for the reverse, I mean, everything was -- was like normal.

Q. Okay. So you got permission in for -- from the 38th Street yardmaster, you get the initial yarding instructions to come in for 104.

A. Yeah.

Q. Coming in Track 104, any -- anything out of the ordinary that you're aware of coming into 104?

A. No, I mean, I just took it nice and slow, being new, first time I'm yarding a train, I took it slow, made sure the switches and everything were good, I mean, I had no issues, nothing unusual.

Q. Did you -- you talked about having to get permission to come out at the 31st Street end of it. Did you have to make a stop at the bottom of 104 before coming out?

A. I believe we had to stop and line the track into 3.

Q. Okay, you had to stop at the bottom and line the track, yeah. How would you know that you would have to stop for a switch that wasn't lined for you in that situation?

A. I mean, I look at the switch points and, I mean, you -- looking at the switch points, you can tell whether they're -- it's going to take you one way or it's not.

Q. Just clarifying that, looking at the switch points, [redacted], we're talking about the actual ends, skinny ends of the rail that

can align one way or the other?
A. Yes, to change which direction a train -- the train is moving.
Q. Okay. Are there any other visual cues on switches that can give us an indication of which way it might be lined?
A. There is a switch indicator, but just out of habit, I look at the points, I don't rely on that indicator.
Q. Is there a common name for, like, that indicator that you're talking about?
A. I've always called it a switch point indicator, I don't know if there's anything --
Q. Okay.
A. -- more official than that.
Q. As far as switch point indicators, can you kind of describe what they are? Are they, like, electric lights or -- tell me about --
A. In Denver Yard, it's a red and green target to look at. Typically, if it's red, it's lined out; if it's green, it's lined for like a lead.
Q. Okay. Is there -- do targets, like you described red, one way; green, another way, are they always corresponding, one color is for one movement, another -- or can they be different?
A. They can be different depending on, I mean, where they're at.
Q. So based upon that, it seems like we're going to look at -- you're telling me that you look at your switch points.

A. Correct.
Q. But are you also aware of the target or the switch point indicator, switch indicator, as well?
A. Yeah.
Q. Which one has precedence for you, which one is, like, I'm definitely going to pay attention to this?
A. Switch points is a hundred percent, I mean, that is -- the switch point's not going to lie to you.
Q. Okay, I appreciate that. So coming in the bottom of 104, I believe you said, to the best of the your recollection, you had to stop and line a switch out on a lead, is that correct?
A. I believe so, I mean that -- it --
Q. Okay. Who would've lined -- if that occurred, who would've lined that switch out?
A. It would've been Mr. [redacted].
Q. Okay. And he was your conductor that day?
A. He was the conductor, yes.
Q. All right, so bottom of 104, you stated that you needed to talk to the -- I think, the 31st yardmaster to come out?
A. That is correct.
Q. Any issues with that communication with the 31st yardmaster?
A. No, no, 31st told -- they told us we could poke out, gave us the signal at 21st and gave me permission for the reverse so we could put the rest of our train away.
Q. So permission for the reverse. Remember that this docket

might eventually be read by the public, so I want to make sure that we kind of capture that. Am I to understand that there's a signal, like a light signal down at the other end of the yard that you would need to go past in order to pull your train completely into 104?

A. I do, yeah, I do have to go past the lighted signal --

Q. Okay.

A. -- to get enough -- or I mean, it's the head room, room for my train so the conductor had room to line the switch behind me.

Q. And then typically speaking, after you pass the signal, can you just reverse after you pass or do you need something further?

A. It depends on where the train stops. There is, I mean, rules to follow on that.

Q. And I'm not looking to get --

A. Yeah.

Q. -- like, deep in the rules, but for the day in question, did you have all the permissions that you needed to --

A. I did, I did.

Q. That's fair. All right, so at this point we're pulling forward, who tells us when to stop?

A. Thirty-eighth watches on the camera when we're in the clear on their end of the yard and count you down and stop you.

Q. So just to clarify, that would be like when the rear of your train is in the clear in Track 104 --

A. That is correct.

Q. -- at the 38th end of the yard? All right. What happens next?
A. At that point, the conductor will get an in-between so he can go in and tie some handbrakes. After he ties the handbrakes needed, he'll get cleared up, we'll do a release test. If everything holds, we'll pump it back up, set the brakes back up, give him an in-between again and he'll close the angle cock and we'll cut away.
Q. As far as that process, did that all go as planned, any issues with that?
A. It went smooth.
Q. Okay. And it sounds like at this point you -- the head end of the locomotive, which you're on and controlling --
A. Correct.
Q. -- you're -- you're not right next to the conductor anymore.
A. No.
Q. Do you remember how far back he was, just --
A. I want to say that he was about 38 cars behind me.
Q. Thirty-eight or so cars behind you. So at that distance, were you having any issues with communicating with him?
A. We had a little radio, a few people were talking over each other. At that point there was no movement made, we -- we waited until we got a car count and told he was protecting our shove before we made any movement of that train.
Q. Okay, so it sounds like there's some -- would you consider

those minor communication issues?
A. Yeah, yeah, it's minor. I mean, you know, it's just minor.
Q. Okay. Didn't affect your move overall or anything?
A. No, because I did not move until I had heard Mr. [redacted]'s voice and was given permission to shove the cars.
Q. Okay. Before we get to the shove, right -- so you said everything went well with the depositing or leaving cars at 104. After you cut away, I would -- after you cut away, you would need to pull forward again for a short distance --
A. Correct.
Q. -- in order to clear what sort of -- all right, I don't want ask this -- so we leave the cars in 104, we need to pull ahead a short distance in order to set up your next move.
A. Correct.
Q. And the next move is to do what?
A. To line the switch into Track 103.
Q. All right. Are you close enough that you can see all what's going on back there?
A. No.
Q. No. Who's telling you what's happening back there?
A. Mr. [redacted].
Q. Okay. And how?
A. Oh, at this point we were on the radio and he pulled me up, told me to stop and did his thing.
Q. Okay. Let's talk about now that we're ready to shove, what

sort of communication did you have with Mr. [redacted] at that point?
A. At that point I received a 30-car -- conductor's on the point, protecting the shove, back up 30, I moved a single car, he told me it was moving and that was the communication I had.
Q. Okay, single car and he tells you it's moving. Is there a specific way that you're handling the train, can you kind of talk about that or is someone telling you how to do it?
A. So at that point I was, I mean, just getting moving, trying to keep everything a smooth ride. As soon as I knew that the rear of my train was moving, I picked up a little more speed, set a minimum on the cars so it would be a smooth ride back and, I mean, that -- that was it.
Q. Okay. And I understand that you're probably operating a couple controls, right, kind of almost simultaneous.
A. Yes.
Q. You may not have an exact -- you know, you're not -- may not be staring at the speedometer the entire time, but do you have a sense, in the course of your reverse movement, how fast it might have been, to the best of your estimation.
A. I believe between five and seven miles an hour.
Q. Between five and seven miles an hour. As far as the -- you talked about using a minimum set after, you know, the conductor confirms that the rear of the train is moving, has anyone guided you that hey, this is how you should do that?
A. Mr. [redacted] is the one, he told me that he wanted -- he

wanted me to see what it was like to shove cars on air.
Q. Okay. And did all of that seem reasonable to you?
A. This wasn't the first time I'd been told about shoving cars on air, so it was not out of the ordinary.
Q. Okay. Conductor's on a ride, back for 30, is that correct?
A. That is correct.
Q. That was the initial shove, you described moving back a car, he tells you -- roughly a car, he tells you the rear end's moving, then you apply a minimum set to the airbrakes, is that correct?
A. Correct.
Q. For cushioning?
A. For cushioning, yeah.
Q. What happens after that?
A. After that, I think I moved, I mean, in total about five cars and the train went into emergency and everything stopped.
Q. With the train going into emergency, there may be more than one way that that can happen, but based upon what you know, what caused the train to go into emergency, if you know.
A. I mean, it would've been an air hose, I mean, it could have been an air hose coming apart, my air escaped.
Q. Okay. So you were able to see your brake pipe pressure and what did it do?
A. Dropped to zero.
Q. Dropped to zero. After the train experienced a train line emergency, what was kind of the conversation in the cab between

you and Mr. [redacted]?
A. The first thing that happened was [redacted] said emergency over the radio and I looked at [redacted] and asked what happened, I mean, because I had -- I didn't know if I maybe left PTC in and it bumped me, I had no idea.
Q. So based upon that, there's several things that could cause a train line emergency, would that be correct to say?
A. Correct.
Q. Any further communication from the conductor after the brake light (ph.) emergency?
A. No.
Q. Nothing at all?
A. I did not hear another broadcast from the conductor.
Q. Okay. Did you -- we talked about the engineer calling out emergency, emergency, emergency. Is that like a -- like, something that's prescribed that we do?
A. Yes, we can stop all movement in the yard in case something went bad.
Q. Okay. How did you learn, after the train went into emergency, how did you learn about what had happened and what was it that you were told had happened?
A. Somebody over the radio broadcasted "man down, cars everywhere."
Q. Wow. Okay. Were you given any sort of instructions, guidance, what to do, by anybody after that?

A. Well, no, we were -- we sat on the motors until somebody came to relieve us.
Q. Who eventually did come?
A. I don't know who they were, there were a couple of guys, don't know who they were.
Q. Did it seem like it was a crew or --
A. Yeah, it was a crew of some sort, I don't know who they were.
MR. LAVALLEE: Okay. You know, [redacted], I think -- I think I'm going to leave it at that for the initial round, I'm going to pass it to my right.
MR. HOEPF: Thanks, Scott. This is Mike with the NTSB. [redacted], are you doing all right, do you need a break or anything?
MR. GRAY: Oh, I'm all right.
MR. HOEPF: Okay, all right, good. Thank you. And again, thank you for being here and, you know, obviously, sorry that this happened to you and your team and hope you're doing okay. It's tough to come in here, you know, and talk about this, but --
MR. GRAY: Yeah.
MR. HOEPF: -- you know, we're just the safety folks, so we just -- just trying to learn from, you know, what happened here.
BY MR. HOEPF:
Q. So there's -- I guess, I think I'll just start with some general kind of questions in terms of the way, you know, you're operating, I know you're going to be an engineer, I know you

worked as a conductor. In terms of, you know, you were saying you -- when you look at a switch, you know, you look at the indicator, you also look at the rail, you know, to make sure it's lined. Do you -- you know, let's say you're pulling into a yard, you know, like -- you know, like (indiscernible) and, you know, are you only looking at the switches that are associated with the move that you're currently on or do you kind of, like, take a big picture look at it, at everything?

A. Being new at this point, I was just looking at the switches that were involved in my movement, I wasn't looking at anything else.

Q. Yeah, gotcha, gotcha. And can you just talk a little bit about, I guess, the dynamics, you know, on that day, you know, so you had three of you in the cab and so, you know, when you see a switch, do you call it out?

A. Yeah, we'll call out whether we have a good switch or the bad switch. If we have a bad switch, we obviously got to stop and line.

Q. Gotcha, gotcha. And then -- so what was -- what was kind of just the work tempo for that day in terms of -- was it usually you who was calling it out or --

A. It was the whole crew, I mean, the whole crew was doing it, we were all three looking at everything going on.

Q. Okay, okay. I gotcha, I gotcha. And, you know, I know you can't really speculate what was going on in the minds of, you

know, other people, but would you say that that was probably all three of you were kind of just focused on the immediate movement or --

A. Yeah, I mean, we were all pretty well dialed in to what was going on.

Q. Yeah, yeah. I gotcha, I gotcha. Okay, let me ask you this, so talk a little bit about job briefings. Can you talk to me just kind of a little bit about, you know, what -- what is a job briefing, you know, is there a difference between a job briefing and a job safety briefing, you know, when do you have those, do you need to pre-brief, you know, have another brief throughout the day?

A. I mean, we're going to brief any time something changes, any time there's a change to what's going on, we're going to re-brief and talk about what we need to watch out for and what we're doing.

Q. Okay. And so, you know, let's say you're pulling into a yard, you know, is that a time where you're going to have a job briefing, then?

A. Once we have instructions on where we're going, yeah, we're going to brief on, you know, where we're going, what we need to be watching out for.

Q. Yeah, okay. Do you remember, you know, when you got to Globeville, did you guys -- did you guys have a job briefing at that point, do you remember?

A. I don't remember.
Q. Okay. I gotcha, I gotcha. You know, I'm not -- I'm trying to be transparent here, I'm not trying to --
A. Yeah.
Q. I'm not trying to play "gotcha" or anything like that, it's generally questions that we've kind of been talking about, you know, the teams, like, when is -- you know, when you are just, like, issuing instructions versus, you know, when is it, you know, a job safety briefing and I mean, I don't know if there's any, you know -- yeah, I don't want you to speculate or talk about anything you're not comfortable with but, you know, just any insight you can give us in general, I mean, it's -- you know, when you get to a yard, you're going to be making some moves, I mean, what's --
A. Yeah, it --
Q. -- some things you might talk about or is it really more just kind of about the instructions of, like --
A. I mean, it's more of a conversation about, you know, where we're going, what we're doing, where we need to put cars and what we need to be looking for, you know, what lead we need to go down, stuff like that is what we're discussing.
Q. Gotcha, gotcha. Let me just ask, you know, how was the day going in general, were you guys on schedule, were you behind schedule, were you ahead of schedule?
A. Honestly, I don't know, I -- that's dispatcher and that's above me, you know --

Q. Yeah.
A. -- I don't know what time -- what the timeline was on it.
Q. Okay. So were you personally feeling time pressure or anything?
A. No.
Q. All right. Were you personally feeling okay that day?
A. Yeah. Yeah, I was, I mean --
Q. Fatigued or anything like that?
A. No, I'd taken -- had a couple days off, I was ready to get back to work and go.
Q. Yeah, I gotcha. I know that you don't have a crystal ball, but -- to get into the inside of other people but, you know, in terms of in your crew, you know, Mr. [redacted], did it seem like he was doing okay? Did it seem like he was sick, maybe had a cold or anything like that?
A. He was just [redacted], I mean, he was the same as always.
MR. HOEPF: Okay, good, okay. That's all the questions I got for right now.
MR. [redacted]: Okay.
MR. HOEPF: I'll pass it off.
BY MR. GRAJEDA:
Q. Roberto Grajeda, BLET Safety Task Force investigator. And just to help clarify what Mike was hitting on and for the general public, job safety briefing, (indiscernible) explain it, is not technically just a job safety briefing, it can actually be, as you

mentioned, you have a conversation, something as simple as "all right, guys, we're going to 4 track," okay, everyone's on the same -- same page and knows exactly what the task at hand is required to do and not a specific "all right, guys, let's stop, we are here now (indiscernible) Globeville" and detailing every step by step is the standard, normal conversation as a task at hand that you need to do, is that safe to say?

A. That's correct.

MR. GRAJEDA: That's the only thing I needed.

BY MR. ARCHIE:

Q. J.D. Archie, FRA. [redacted], as you're sitting at the engineer's control stand, what's your -- what's your field of view visibility like from that control stand as you're sitting in the cab?

A. I mean, out in front of you, you can't see anything behind you. Is that what you're --

Q. Well, like, where is the PTC screen located?

A. PTC screen was off to the side, I mean, there's -- I had a clear view out the windshield.

Q. Any issues with, like, lines through the screen being too wide or anything like that?

A. No.

MR. ARCHIE: That's all I have.

BY MR. COOK:

Q. Okay, Michael Cook, BNSF. [redacted], being in the engineer training program, who's your road foreman right now?

A. It is [redacted].
Q. Where's he out of?
A. He's out of Hastings.
Q. In the program, in the locomotive engineer training program, are there any requirements to take a number of trips on, like, a Denver terminating train, let's say a Lincoln terminator train?
A. There is, there's -- it's 11 each way, 10 local starts and two starts in the yard.
Q. So 10 each way --
A. Eleven each way.
Q. Oh, 11 each way. Do you have to be on a -- let's say a Denver train, like a Lincoln/Denver or could you -- could those 11 be a Chicago/Denver Z train that goes to Rennix?
A. Yes, they can be Z trains, they can be Linden's or -- Linden's unit trains.
Q. Okay. Is there a certain number of -- out of that 11 that has to be a terminator in the yard itself?
A. Not that I'm aware of.
Q. And how many trips as a student engineer have you made over to Denver, do you think?
A. I've had seven round trips to Denver.
Q. Have you come in the yard before?
A. I've been into Rennix Yard. The closest I've been to the yard here is on the coal tracks.
Q. Okay, okay. When Scott asked you about the shove and the

communication from the -- the conductor, you said, if I recall correctly, he said on the point protecting, back 30 or something like that.

A. Correct.

Q. When he said on the point protecting, what did you take that to mean?

A. That he was riding a car.

Q. Okay. And is that why you -- is that why you were instructed to set air, to cushion the ride for him?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Would you handle it differently if somebody was not on the car?

A. No, I mean, you're going to want the air there to shove so you can stop when it's time to stop.

MR. COOK: Okay. Okay, that's all I have at this time.

MR. SAUNDERS: Cameron Saunders, SMART-TD, I don't have any questions.

BY MR. LAVALLEE:

Q. All right. [redacted], so you mentioned that even as a conductor, you would come into Denver/Globeville Yard, you know, fairly frequently.

A. Correct.

Q. It wasn't the only place you went, but it seemed like you had a fair amount of experience. Specifically to a Linden or Denver train, the terminating train, in your experience therein, how does

it normally yard, is there like particular tracks or does it just kind of depend?
A. Varies by the train.
Q. Okay. With that being said, that it can vary, do you recall ever having yarded a train into 104 to 103 previously?
A. I do not believe I did.
Q. Okay. And going a little bit further with that, even in regards -- beyond regards of yarding a train in those tracks, do you recall ever having been in Tracks 104 or 103 previously, at all, for any reason?
A. If I had been in them, it would've been down at the east end of the yard.
Q. So would that be the opposite end or --
A. Yes, that would be --
Q. The end that you came in the yard?
A. Correct.
Q. All right. So this, then, timetable west, but really, like, kind of compass direction south, the end where -- the 31st side of it.
A. It would be the 38th side.
Q. Okay. So the 38th side, if you had been in 104 or 103, it would've been on the 38th side, not the 31st side.
A. Correct.
Q. All right, thank you for clarifying that. If there are certain special instructions or considerations that the railroad

wants you to be aware of for a particular location, are those -- are those notes or is that information, where can that be found?
A. Listed on a timetable.
Q. Listed on a timetable. What timetable would cover the Denver/Globeville Yard?
A. It would be the Brush subdivision.
Q. Well, that's -- it's the Brush subdivision, I think that might be, like, the sub -- was it, like, timetable names, as far as you're aware of?
A. The timetable name is the Brush subdivision.
Q. The timetable is Brush --
A. Or Brush.
Q. Okay. Were there any specific instructions for the Globeville area that pertained to this move that you are aware of?
A. I believe close center tracks.
Q. Okay.
A. Off the top of my head, I could not tell you what tracks those are --
Q. Okay.
A. -- being new, new work.
Q. So you believe there might be something about close center tracks, but not a hundred percent sure what tracks it might be, would that be correct to say?
A. It's something if I was going to be yarding a train I would look at.

Q. Yarding a train in what?
A. In regards to being on the ground.
Q. Okay, copy that. So it's something to pay attention if you'd be on the ground and in a position to be on the ground and manipulate switches and ride equipment, would that --
A. Correct.
Q. -- be fair to -- all right, thank you for that. Shove instructions, you talked about the shove instructions earlier, conductor's on, riding back, good for 30. Being in your experience and what you know about requirements, right, what sort of communication requirements you have, is it necessary or is it required for who's giving those shove instructions to tell you which way you're lined or the position of switches en route?
A. Can you clarify a little bit better on that?
Q. So if I'm going to give you shove instructions as an engineer, if I'm the conductor --
A. Okay.
Q. -- and I tell you BNSF 1-2-3-4, conductor's ahead of the move, we're lined for Track 8, do I have to tell you which way I'm lined? Is that required as far as you know?
A. I'm trying to -- I know there was a general notice at one point, that we were to --
Q. And I don't --
A. But I don't -- I mean, I don't know, I don't recall it, I mean --

MR. LAVALLEE: Okay. And that's fair. If there is one that you -- you know, if you're not aware of one, then that's perfectly acceptable, thank you for that. Okay, that's all I've got, I'm going to send it around one more time.

BY MR. HOEPF:

Q. All right, thank you. Mike, NTSB again here. I just wanted to talk a little bit more about the switches, you know, and kind of what that process looks like. Do you know if you've ever made this particular move before, specifically, with Tracks 4 and 3?

A. I don't believe I have on the 31st end of the yard.

Q. Okay. And then I'm just -- so if you're -- I know you're kind of -- so if you're coming in a hypothetical track that, you know, you're not familiar with the switches that are there, I mean, is it -- does your approach change depending if you're familiar with the switches or not? I'm sorry, if that make sense.

A. I mean, either way, as an engineer, I'm going to take it easy pulling into a yard so I don't have the opportunity to miss something.

Q. Yeah. I'm just wondering, you know, I would keep prefacing and saying I'm not a railroader, you know, but, you know, I'm looking at this track chart and it's just -- I mean, there's a lot of tracks, there's a lot of switches, there's a lot -- you know, there's kind of a lot going on and I just wondered if you could just kind of give me a little bit of insight, you know, like, what you're thinking when you're, you know, pulling into a yard in

terms of -- I know you said you only kind of focus on the switches that impact your current --

A. Correct.

Q. -- decision but, you know, how do you determine which switches apply to you? Can you give me some insight into what your, kind of, scanning kind of looks like?

A. I mean, you're -- the switch stands are numbered, they have the track number on that, a majority of them have the number on there, so it's kind of looking for that and maybe counting from the main down to -- forget which track, I mean, when you're in a low track like that, it's -- you can count down to find the track that you're going to be headed for.

Q. Okay, so you said you're -- you are looking at, like, the numbers, like on the switches, kind of -- to kind of orient yourself --

A. Yeah, yeah.

Q. -- to, you know, where you're at? Okay. So do you -- again, just generally here. Do you tend to look at the switch indicators, the numbers first, just to kind of orient yourself and then look at the rail to make sure --

A. Correct.

Q. Is that kind of how your process --

A. Correct. That's the way my mind works with it.

Q. Gotcha, gotcha. You know, J.D. kind of asked you a little bit about the visibility. In the Globeville Yard, would you say

the visibility is good, do you ever have any issues with it being too dark or anything like that?

A. I mean, the locomotive's got headlights so I could see what I needed to see.

Q. Yeah, I gotcha. So have you ever had any issues or do you have any issues or you -- I mean, ever seeing the position of a switch, I mean, is that -- have you ever had a visibility problem that you can think in terms of --

A. Not that I can think of at the moment.

MR. HOEPF: Yeah, okay, okay. Thanks, [redacted], that's all I -- I think I only got.

MR. GRAJEDA: Roberto Grajeda, BLET Safety Task Force, no further questions. Thank you, (indiscernible).

BY MR. ARCHIE:

Q. J.D. Archie, FRA. A couple little questions. Do you remember -- recall what training or job aids you received in Denver Yard as a conductor?

A. I believe I received a track map and I've got one that looks similar to the one on the wall behind you there.

Q. But no specific training as to certain hazards or what to look out for or --

A. I mean --

Q. -- no, like -- you never, like, came to the yard, Denver yard, and worked as a trainee?

A. Not, like, a yard job. I did come on trains that terminated

here, as a student conductor.
Q. Okay, but never as a switchman --
A. No.
Q. -- position? Are you RCO qualified, too, or --
A. No, sir.
MR. ARCHIE: Okay, thank you. That's all I've got.
BY MR. COOK:
Q. Okay, Michael Cook, BNSF. [redacted], when you guys were dragging in 4, did you notice that there were cars on 2 track?
A. I wasn't -- I'll be honest with you, I wasn't looking at 2 track, I was focused on making sure where I was going was.
Q. Okay. Last question I have, did you know there was a crossover from 3 to 2?
A. No, I did not.
MR. COOK: That's all I've got. Thank you, Scott. [redacted], thank you.
MR. SAUNDERS: Cameron Saunders, SMART-TD, nothing at this time.
BY MR. LAVALLEE:
Q. One last one that I have, [redacted], and then we'll wrap up here. So you mentioned visibility within Denver/Globeville Yard, you stated that you've got your headlights bright, so that's not an issue, you can crank those up to bright if you need them, if glare's too much, you can turn them completely off, would that be fair to say?

A. Put them on dim.
Q. But what I'm saying is like --
A. But if there was a glare, yeah, you could turn them off.
Q. You can adjust them as necessary?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay, thank you. Specifically during your time as a conductor coming into Globeville Yard, do you remember coming into Globeville, like, during dark conditions at night, as a conductor?
A. I mean, I'm sure I did, I would hate to speculate on something like that.
Q. Sure. All right --
A. But I'm sure I did at some point.
Q. A little, slightly broader question, you've -- have you worked as a conductor in dark conditions before?
A. Yes.
Q. All right. What tools are available to you, when working in dark conditions, that will help you determine, you know, safe places to step, position of switches or are you given any tools that will help you in dark conditions?
A. The lantern.
Q. Lantern, all right. In your experience, if -- has the lantern been sufficient to do what you needed to do?
A. Yes.
MR. LAVALLEE: All right. Thank you, that's all I have.
BY MR. HOEPF:

Q. Can we kind of piggyback off of that, Scott, just to -- sorry, sorry to interrupt, I just -- when you're on the -- to your recollection, when you're on the ground, if you were going to look at a switch indicator, would you shine your lantern on that to get the reflection of the light off of it?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay.

A. There's reflective tape.

Q. Okay, so the light's helpful for looking at the switch indicator?

A. Yes.

Q. What about, would you ever not use your light on it?

A. Not -- I mean, no. I want to be able to see what I'm looking at it.

MR. HOEPF: Okay, thank you. I'm sorry for the interruption, Scott.

BY MR. LAVALLEE:

Q. Okay, so Lavallee, NTSB, L-a-v-a-l-l-e-e. [redacted], we've asked you a lot of questions today, is there anything you'd like to share with us, not having been asked or answered?

A. Not at this time.

Q. Okay. [redacted], I've got your contact information you provided me with, thank you for that. If I had any further questions that the investigative group wanted to run past you, would it be okay to contact you?

A. Yes.
Q. I appreciate that. Is there anyone that you can think of, [redacted], that the investigative group should speak to in regards to the accident to find any further information?
A. I've got no idea who was on the ground back there.
MR. LAVALLEE: I appreciate that. [redacted], on behalf of the NTSB investigative group assembled here in the room today, I'd like to thank you for your time and cooperation and spending some time with us.
MR. [redacted]: You bet.
MR. LAVALLEE: Thanks very much. And with that, we'll go off record.
(Whereupon, the interview concluded.)

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF:	TRAIN DERAILMENT AT BNSF GLOBEMASTER YARD IN DENVER, COLORADO ON AUGUST 5, 2025 Interview of [redacted]
ACCIDENT NO.:	RRD25FR022
PLACE:	Denver, Colorado
DATE:	August 7, 2025

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.

[redacted]

[redacted]
Transcriber