

Appendix J

Interview Transcript, Officer Timothy Wolleck and Officer Richard Moberg

Survival Factors Group Chairman's Factual Report

Metrolink train 111
Union Pacific train LOF 65-12
Los Angeles, California
September 12, 2008
DCA-08-MR-009

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGES

* * * * *
In the matter of: *
*
METROLINK TRAIN NO. 111 *
COLLISION WITH UNION PACIFIC *
RAILROAD LEESDALE LOCAL, * Docket No.: DCA-08-MR-009
September 12, 2008, *
Los Angeles, California *
* * * * *

Interview of: TIMOTHY WOLLECK
RICHARD MOBERG

Los Angeles, California
Wednesday,
September 17, 2008

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice.

BEFORE: DANA SANZO

APPEARANCES:

DANA SANZO, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board
Washington, D.C.
(202) 314-6439

CARLOS TAPIA, Inspector
Rail Operations Safety Branch
California Public Utilities

SERGEANT NINA SUTTER
Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

JESUS OJEDA, Security Coordinator
Metrolink

JOHN QUINTANAR, Battalion Chief
Metrorail Coordinator
Los Angeles Fire Department

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I N T E R V I E W

1
2 MS. SANZO: My name is Dana Sanzo. I am an accident
3 investigator with the National Transportation Safety Board, and
4 we're conducting interviews for Accident Number: DCA-08-MR-009,
5 the collision of Metrolink train and UP freight train, in Los
6 Angeles, California.

7 And if we could first go around the table and if
8 everyone can state their name, please, and the organization
9 they're with?

10 MR. TAPIA: My name is Carlos Tapia. I'm a motor power
11 and equipment inspector in the Rail Operation Safety Branch of the
12 California Public Utilities Commission, and I was assigned to help
13 NTSB in this investigation.

14 SGT. SUTTER: Nina Sutter, L.A. County Sheriff's
15 Department, sergeant, assigned to Metrolink bureau.

16 OFFICER WOLLECK: Timothy Wolleck, police officer,
17 Devonshire Division.

18 OFFICER MOBERG: Officer Moberg, LAPD, Devonshire
19 Division.

20 MR. OJEDA: My name is Jesus Ojeda. I'm the security
21 coordinator for Metrolink, also asked to participate in the NTSB
22 investigation.

23 BATTALION CHIEF QUINTANAR: John Quintanar, battalion
24 chief, L.A. Fire, assigned to Metrorail and asked to be part of
25 the investigation team.

1 MS. SANZO: Thank you for being here today. And if we
2 could just start off one at a time for the ease of later
3 transcription.

4 OFFICER MOBERG: Why don't you go first?

5 INTERVIEW OF TIMOTHY WOLLECK

6 BY MS. SANZO:

7 Q. If you could, just describe how and when you were
8 notified of the accident and take us through the events of the
9 afternoon?

10 A. I was eating lunch with my partner and Officers Johnson
11 and Bullard, when the call came out of a possible explosion.
12 Shortly thereafter, the primary unit, I believe it was Officer
13 Valle, arrived on scene. He had verified that a train collision
14 had occurred and there is over 100 casualties at scene.

15 We responded directly to the incident. My partner and
16 I, along with Johnson and Bullard, were one of the first units on
17 scene, along with Captain Ruiz, who is -- arrived approximately
18 the same time we had.

19 We traveled down Rinaldi to a point where the dirt road
20 started, where Sierra Canyon School was, and we parked our vehicle
21 on a rather small parking lot right there, observed that there was
22 very little room to maneuver. So we contacted the CP, advised
23 them not to let any more officers travel down that road to allow
24 for fire department to respond.

25 From that point, we ran to the accident scene and

1 Officer Valle was there directing units on his radio. The fire
2 department personnel were also there, at that time, working --
3 putting out the fire and working on the first cab and engine.

4 From my perspective, there didn't seem to be any signs
5 of life in the front cab. Most of our attention was directed
6 towards the second and third car. There were multiple victims
7 that had already been either taken off the train or had left the
8 train and were lying on the side of the hill and lower portion on
9 the south side of the tracks.

10 Several residents had responded from their houses there,
11 and they had set up chairs and water and were trying to do their
12 best to comfort and treat the victims -- paper towel rolls. There
13 were also still victims -- still on the second and third cars.
14 There wasn't a lot that we could do for them, at that time.

15 We spent some time assessing the situation, planning our
16 course of action until more units arrived on scene.
17 Deputy Chief Moore got there. He ordered that mobile field force
18 units be set up at the command post and then respond to the
19 accident scene. And he ordered us first to clear out all the
20 bystanders and media personnel who were swarming onto the tracks
21 south from Rinaldi.

22 So that's the first thing we did. We moved all those
23 people out, south, all the way down to Rinaldi and taped off the
24 scene. And at this time the first platoon was coming up. I
25 believe it was Sgt. Fletcher. And the second platoon arrived

1 shortly thereafter and that was headed by a motor sergeant, and
2 the name eludes me right now.

3 Once more, fire department personnel arrived on scene
4 with a sufficient amount of backboards. We started moving people
5 out of the area to a triage that was set up north of the train in
6 a grassy area of the park. There were CHP units there and sheriff
7 units there. My recollection is most of their effort was helping
8 what few survivors were in the front cab, helping the fire
9 department extract those people through the rear door.

10 And, as more units came in, we just continued to carry
11 people out to the triage area, back and forth, until both the
12 second and third trains were evacuated of all people.

13 At that time, we lined up into two squads directly next
14 to the back of the second cab and waited there and we were taking
15 turns switching out, helping them remove the victims from the
16 first cab.

17 It would be much easier if I had the pictures. I can
18 show you where we were. I have all the pictures from the
19 clippings, the last couple days and it's difficult -- but we
20 remained there and they started setting up the temporary morgue,
21 I'd call it, on the outside of the train. They were moving bodies
22 from the top of the cab.

23 And so, several of us were picked to relieve the CHP
24 officers. I guess they wanted to rotate us out as far as removing
25 the bodies out of the cab. And so we went over to the south side

1 of the cab where the fire department personnel were still working
2 on that portion of the wreck. And then, you know, they were
3 switching out -- Ventura County came in and I noticed they were
4 switching out a lot of fire department personnel on a regular
5 basis pretty much. And we remained there for a long time until
6 they found the jacket of Officer DeSha.

7 And at that time we pretty much knew that we had one of
8 our own on the train. And we remained there at the head of the
9 train until finally we were ordered to -- all day-watch personnel
10 was ordered by Chief Moore to return back to the command post and
11 then we debriefed from there and were told to go into watch.

12 Q. Thank you.

13 INTERVIEW OF RICHARD MOBERG

14 BY MS. SANZO:

15 Q. Officer?

16 A. On Friday, around 1630 hours -- I forget -- what day was
17 it? Was it the 13th? Yeah -- 13th, the 13th?

18 OFFICER WOLLECK: Friday.

19 BY MS. SANZO:

20 Q. The 12th?

21 A. 13th -- 12th?

22 Q. The 12th.

23 A. On --

24 OFFICER WOLLECK: Friday.

25 OFFICER MOBERG: Sorry. On September 12th, around 1630

1 hours, I was assigned to GRO (ph.) Section handling child abuse,
2 and a radio call came out -- a train crash at Rinaldi and Canoga.
3 Since I'm familiar with the area -- those (indiscernible) train
4 tracks actually cross that.

5 And later, a few minutes later, another radio call came
6 out -- possible explosion. So I started heading over there to
7 assist. The first unit to arrive there was A car and broadcasted
8 there was a train crash and wanted additional units.

9 Then a sergeant arrived on -- Sgt. Ninos, and gave a
10 better description of the accident scene -- because the only thing
11 I know -- at the time was just a train crash and they needed
12 additional officers.

13 He gave a more clear picture, stated there was a train
14 crash/train derailment, major casualties, requested more
15 additional units and gave a better location of where the train
16 crash was.

17 I was one of the first units there, but knowing the
18 area, knowing that the train tracks don't cross there, I responded
19 northbound on Owensmouth, which is closer to the train site. The
20 actual area is after Chatsworth Academy. And I followed a fire
21 truck in and they had the ladders there because they had to go
22 through some yards and there's a kind of ravine -- climb over the
23 ladder, quickly assess the situation.

24 From my vantage point, which was the south side of the
25 train -- I knew there was a couple units there, but I didn't know

1 where they were because on the south side of the train -- because
2 it's a large area.

3 I observed a Union Pacific train was heading eastbound,
4 collided with a Metrolink train that was heading westbound. A
5 couple of the Union Pacific train was off the tracks. The main
6 Metrolink engine was inside the first passenger car and is on
7 fire. There was approximately two LAFD fire trucks putting out
8 the fire.

9 At that time, since we could not assist them there
10 because they were putting out the fire and due to a possible
11 explosion, I worked my way south. I went in the second and third
12 car to see if there was any casualties or someone who knew first
13 aid.

14 I arrived there inside the second car and -- let me back
15 up. As I approached the train, I saw there were over 50 people
16 outside the train, badly injured and some were not as bad. A
17 couple people were yelling. There was a couple officers out there
18 assisting them.

19 And when I entered the second train, I observed over a
20 dozen civilians injured. Some of them looked like they were
21 possibly dead because they had no vitals or life signs. Other
22 ones were in shock, just kind of moaning, asked for help.

23 At that time I met the Probation Officer Sanders who
24 works at (indiscernible) and we went to each person and kind of
25 let them know we're here and we're going to help them and if

1 they're able to move. And if they're able to move, we escorted
2 them out, outside, because we're concerned that the train would
3 blow up.

4 And the ones that couldn't move, we just reassured them
5 we'll be right back for them and we'll get more help. At the same
6 time, there's a paramedic who was triaging all the people. There
7 were so many people on the train -- he was doing one at a time.
8 And a couple of them, during (indiscernible) of the day, they just
9 kept on going down the row.

10 One of the ladies was bleeding out and a civilian was
11 helping first aid. We went over there and we just told him just
12 hold a towel or whatever he had for the blood. One guy had a gash
13 on his -- leg was kind of missing and other people were just like
14 -- said they had broken legs or double broken legs.

15 Once we cleared out the people who are able to come out
16 or rescue them, I noticed that the smoke -- they had put out the
17 fire. I went over there at the time and assisted with whatever
18 passengers they could pull out. And the fire people would say,
19 well, there's no one else we can pull out and then continued
20 digging for more survivors.

21 At that time, one of the fire department guys said we
22 need to get everyone out the train. And then, as more units came,
23 we were able to get backboards or gurneys and we started putting
24 everybody off the train.

25 Once we got everybody off the train that -- we went back

1 and then helped out the main compartment. But as we were taking
2 everyone out of the train, they were all being tagged by the LAFD,
3 which they did a great job, and we just put them on the different
4 pre-assigned mats. There was green, yellow and red. And we did
5 that for a good hour or so.

6 And then once everyone was out the train, we went back
7 -- Officer Sanders and myself went back to help out the main
8 train. Once all the visual -- the survivors were out, they said
9 they had to dig.

10 From that point on, the LAPD, Comansa (ph.) got there
11 and they wanted to secure the scene and we were reassigned to --
12 for the north side of the crash site and set up a crime scene and
13 kick the media out. And from that point on we were there til --
14 for -- relieved of duty from Metro, which was like 4:00, the next
15 morning.

16 Q. Thank you very much.

17 MS. SANZO: Start with the -- start with going around
18 the table group to ask some follow-up sections.

19 MR. TAPIA: I don't have any questions right now.

20 SGT. SUTTER: Did you ever come across a conductor, the
21 conductor?

22 OFFICER MOBERG: No, ma'am. Some of my gang officers I
23 was with, they went on that south side and they saw either the
24 conductor or engineer and he was halfway decapitated or it looked
25 like he was decapitated.

1 SGT. SUTTER: Where was that at?

2 OFFICER MOBERG: I wasn't there. He just said someone
3 was --

4 SGT. SUTTER: (indiscernible)?

5 OFFICER MOBERG: -- some -- one of the train personnel
6 was underneath the train.

7 SGT. SUTTER: Okay. Did you see the sheriff's deputy?

8 OFFICER MOBERG: I saw one sheriff deputy. When we
9 first got there, he went a different direction -- a tall male,
10 white.

11 OFFICER WOLLECK: The one who was on the train? You're
12 asking --

13 SGT. SUTTER: Either? Both?

14 OFFICER MOBERG: Oh. No, I thought you meant --

15 OFFICER WOLLECK: The one that was injured?

16 SGT. SUTTER: Um-hum.

17 OFFICER MOBERG: No, I did not see -- there was a deputy
18 sheriff there when I was pulling up. He was helping out too.

19 OFFICER WOLLECK: There was one on the train wreck who
20 was actually on the train and got -- was injured.

21 OFFICER MOBERG: No, I didn't see that.

22 SGT. SUTTER: Okay. But did you see anything?

23 OFFICER WOLLECK: I did not come in contact with a
24 sheriff, and I recall their mentioning that possibly, you know,
25 either the conductor or an engineer had survived and they were

1 shouting or they wanted to make sure that they had a DRU unit go
2 and stand next to him, accompany him to the hospital. I don't
3 know if that happened or not.

4 SGT. SUTTER: Where are deputy personnel when you got
5 there?

6 OFFICER WOLLECK: I'm sorry?

7 SGT. SUTTER: Did you see deputy personnel when you got
8 there?

9 OFFICER WOLLECK: Sheriff's deputies?

10 SGT. SUTTER: Yes.

11 OFFICER WOLLECK: I don't -- I remember seeing -- there
12 were sheriffs there. At what point they got there, I do not know.
13 I remember seeing the tan and beige uniforms. And at that time we
14 really couldn't distinguish the CHP officers and the sheriffs.

15 But the sheriffs and the CHP officers, I remember
16 vividly, were -- they were pulling bodies out of the back of the
17 front cab. As they -- they were trying to get to people that
18 might have been or could have been alive and they were having to
19 pull bodies out of the back just to try to get deeper into the
20 train. And they were trying to pull bodies as fast as they could.
21 And I know there were some sheriff officers who were triaging,
22 pulling people like us mainly to the triage.

23 But the CHP, and especially the tall guy with the boots,
24 and he's in a lot of the pictures, him and some other CHP motors
25 and there might have been several sheriffs also that were

1 primarily to the back of that first cab extracting victims.

2 As far as being -- when I got there, did I see any? I
3 don't recall. I remember Valle was there and there were some fire
4 department personnel. I believe it was 96 -- was it 96 got there
5 first? Ninety-six was there because I recognized some of the guys
6 because I deal with them -- we deal with them every day. That's
7 what I recall when we first got there.

8 OFFICER MOBERG: When I was responding, there was a
9 sheriff's deputy responding. He was L Unit, 1-9 Unit, tall white
10 guy, bald head. And when we got there, originally, we were on the
11 train-tracked area and he said we need to go around. And so he
12 went a different direction and I went a different direction. He
13 went to Canoga and Rinaldi. And I'm guessing -- I don't know why
14 he went that way -- maybe because that's where the call originally
15 came out.

16 But, because I knew the area, I went to Owensmouth
17 because I knew it was off -- it'd be closer. And he was pretty
18 much in that same area when I first arrived. So we kind of
19 separated.

20 SGT. SUTTER: Okay.

21 OFFICER MOBERG: So at that point, I didn't see him
22 there. When I arrived at the location, it was too chaotic, you
23 know. I just saw the civilians hurt. I saw the -- a couple
24 firemen and one paramedic-type person and I don't remember if CHP
25 was there or the sheriffs.

1 Again, like I say, I didn't see half -- our units, I
2 guess, apparently, we were on the north side, because I was the
3 south side, til (indiscernible).

4 MR. OJEDA: I'd like to go back a little bit and address
5 the issue about the crew members. So you noticed the engineer
6 sticking out of the locomotive?

7 OFFICER MOBERG: I did not. A gang officer said that he
8 saw some train personnel underneath the train.

9 MR. OJEDA: Okay.

10 OFFICER MOBERG: But I personally did not see it.

11 MR. OJEDA: Okay. I was a little confused about that.
12 Did you see any railroad personnel outside the equipment? Okay.
13 Can you tell me a little bit about who you saw, what -- at that
14 moment?

15 OFFICER WOLLECK: Originally, when I was -- I and
16 several other officers were pushing all the bystanders out of the
17 area, there was a gentleman who stated that he was a vice
18 president at UP and that he had to check on his crew. And I told
19 him, sir, this is a disaster scene; you got to let us do our work,
20 and I sent him to the command post that was on Canoga and Rinaldi.

21 MR. OJEDA: Okay.

22 OFFICER WOLLECK: I don't remember seeing that
23 individual again. Later on, there were several Metrolink
24 employees who I was standing right next to just north and adjacent
25 to the decedents that were under the yellow tarp and -- at least

1 two Metrolink employees, and I assumed that they were there at the
2 fire department or someone's request and did not question them
3 being there.

4 And then as the evening progressed, there were people,
5 various different people with jackets and -- the yellow reflector
6 jackets and one was FRA and there was a couple other people that I
7 didn't get their -- where they were from, but --

8 MR. OJEDA: Okay. Thank you. As a follow up, what time
9 would you say you saw the UP vice president show up or person that
10 identified himself as a UP representative?

11 OFFICER WOLLECK: Maybe approximately 20 to -- well,
12 yeah, they have the whole thing on tape, I know, when --

13 MR. OJEDA: No problem. Just guesstimate.

14 OFFICER WOLLECK: It was as I reached the point where
15 the railroad tracks cross with Rinaldi. I don't know. That might
16 have been 20 minutes, a half an hour after the crash, maybe 10, 15
17 minutes after I had gotten there. He was in civilian attire and
18 -- that was it. I told him the fire department were working to
19 help as many people as they could and I told him to go to the
20 command post.

21 MR. OJEDA: Did you guys at any point have any
22 difficulty getting into the two cars that were upright? You guys
23 were working those two cars mainly. Any problems with windows,
24 doors?

25 OFFICER WOLLECK: From what I recall, the doors all were

1 open at that time. And motor units from VTD were there and they
2 were clearing the last two trains, making sure there was no one
3 left behind.

4 MR. OJEDA: Okay.

5 OFFICER MOBERG: I approached the second car. We were
6 trying to evacuate injured people. The second car, what I recall,
7 was partially closed. We tried to pry it open and we couldn't.
8 So we had to take them out on the south side, which those doors
9 were open almost the full extent. The rear car I don't remember.

10 MR. OJEDA: But it was the second car that you tried to
11 pry the second door open and --

12 OFFICER MOBERG: The door was partially open and you
13 could just barely squeeze through, but you could not evacuate
14 people through there.

15 MR. OJEDA: Only -- so only one door was open; the other
16 one was --

17 OFFICER MOBERG: The south side -- the doors were open
18 but one of the -- the north side, the doors were partially open.

19 OFFICER WOLLECK: Which one?

20 OFFICER MOBERG: The second car. It got pushed open.

21 OFFICER WOLLECK: The front or the back?

22 OFFICER MOBERG: The second car that was upright. We
23 had to force it open, but --

24 MR. OJEDA: Okay.

25 OFFICER WOLLECK: I know. But there's two sets of doors

1 on the north side, right, front and aft? That's where the two
2 dead guys were right inside --

3 OFFICER MOBERG: Right. Right there in --

4 OFFICER WOLLECK: -- the car, by the stairway?

5 OFFICER MOBERG: -- the little stairwell, you know. It
6 was -- I think it was the aft door.

7 MR. OJEDA: Okay.

8 OFFICER MOBERG: Because the other one was fully open
9 because that's where the two, the two (indiscernible) passengers.

10 OFFICER WOLLECK: Well, they had to go through the back
11 because they couldn't get through the passageway because it was
12 blocked by the bodies.

13 OFFICER MOBERG: And the other one was a female. But
14 one of the doors, I remember, was partially open.

15 MR. OJEDA: Okay. Thank you.

16 BATTALION CHIEF QUINTANAR: Did you see NTSB personnel
17 there?

18 OFFICER WOLLECK: I don't recall it if I did or not. I
19 think they said they were on their way. I don't remember if I saw
20 someone with an NTSB jacket. What I remember -- mostly Metrolink
21 personnel were there.

22 OFFICER MOBERG: I believe I saw the NTSB. They were
23 there later when the feds got there, the FBI. I wasn't sure if it
24 was them or another initial (indiscernible).

25 OFFICER WOLLECK: Was it FA -- FDR or F -- FRA people?

1 OFFICER MOBERG: I know FBI, for sure.

2 OFFICER WOLLECK: They had the white coats with the red
3 lettering.

4 OFFICER MOBERG: And Union police officers were there.

5 OFFICER WOLLECK: Oh, that's right. And Metrolink --
6 Metrolink police or Metrolink security?

7 OFFICER MOBERG: There was Union --

8 OFFICER WOLLECK: There was some --

9 OFFICER MOBERG: -- Union police.

10 OFFICER WOLLECK: UP Police?

11 OFFICER MOBERG: Union Pacific police was there.

12 BATTALION CHIEF QUINTANAR: Oh.

13 OFFICER WOLLECK: Wasn't there a Metrolink security or
14 Metrolink -- do they have security officers? Oh, it must have
15 been UP then.

16 OFFICER MOBERG: There was a lot of initials running
17 around. I don't --

18 BATTALION CHIEF QUINTANAR: Right.

19 OFFICER MOBERG: So I just remember FBI because, you
20 know, that's pretty familiar, at least those three --

21 OFFICER WOLLECK: They had the basket weave on. Was
22 that UP?

23 OFFICER MOBERG: Yeah, the only reason I remember the
24 Union police because, you know, he looked like a cop and I asked
25 -- yeah, I saw the patch. So --

1 BATTALION CHIEF QUINTANAR: Hey, I haven't asked this
2 question to anybody, but I'm going to ask you guys. Did you guys
3 get tired?

4 OFFICER WOLLECK: Yes.

5 BATTALION CHIEF QUINTANAR: What, physical -- mental?
6 Physically? What?

7 OFFICER WOLLECK: Well, physically tiring. We evacuated
8 people for like an hour about, and the dead weight was very heavy
9 on the backboards.

10 BATTALION CHIEF QUINTANAR: Uh-huh.

11 OFFICER WOLLECK: And it was funny, every last victim
12 who we carried across the tracks into the triage area, all of them
13 said, please, don't drop me. I don't know why I remember that,
14 but as we were going up and down the hills, and these people are
15 in terrible shape and they're, please, don't drop me.

16 But, yeah, my partner was complaining about his forearms
17 from holding the backboards and there was --

18 BATTALION CHIEF QUINTANAR: And you two were not
19 partnered up, right?

20 OFFICER WOLLECK: No.

21 OFFICER MOBERG: No. For me, I was exhausted because, I
22 mean, there -- the second and third car, were so hot it felt like
23 a sauna. I mean, I probably lost 30 pounds just in sweat. And I -
24 - some other officers said maybe we should knock out the windows,
25 but -- the emergency windows. I guess one officer tried. I don't

1 know if it worked or not. It wouldn't really open.

2 And then there -- it was a lot of victims sitting
3 against the car and that -- so, the way, I guess, they're
4 designed, which I don't know exactly, if you pop them up, they
5 just drop --

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No.

7 OFFICER MOBERG: -- and we didn't want to hit any
8 victims.

9 OFFICER WOLLECK: It's hard to tell in our uniform, but
10 I remember the sheriffs and the CHP, because they're tan uniforms,
11 they were just drenched from -- all the way down.

12 OFFICER MOBERG: Yeah, we were -- I mean, we're totally
13 drenched and I was physically exhausted because -- just physically
14 because it was so hot in there.

15 And once we evacuated all the ones that could be moved,
16 because some of them were in pretty bad shape and we didn't remove
17 those and let the fire department move those, which we assisted.
18 But there were so many victims, at least four or five officers had
19 to carrier the victims to the triage area, the lawn area where the
20 different colored mats were. And that --

21 OFFICER WOLLECK: Even for small victims, it took six
22 officers --

23 OFFICER MOBERG: Because there was no --

24 OFFICER WOLLECK: -- or more.

25 OFFICER MOBERG: It seemed like there was more -- in the

1 beginning it was more police officers than fire officers, I mean,
2 fire department personnel. And so, in the very beginning, it
3 seemed like we did most of the work. And I know a lot of the fire
4 personnel was trying to deal with the fire situation and trying to
5 dig people out, because they had the tools. And -- but it was
6 very hot in there.

7 And then mentally, I think it was kind of like a shocker
8 in the sense that you have people in there asking for help and
9 there's only so much we could do, we could render. In fact, we
10 rendered some first aid, but there was not enough, like,
11 backboards because some of them we couldn't move. We had to wait
12 until a fire truck get there, grab one and drop them off, and take
13 the backboard back to -- there weren't enough backboards and then
14 someone started using like a big, I guess, tarps or -- I'm not --

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Carry --

16 OFFICER WOLLECK: It was the plastic things that --

17 BATTALION CHIEF QUINTANAR: Disaster litter, right, um-
18 hum.

19 OFFICER MOBERG: They started using those things.

20 BATTALION CHIEF QUINTANAR: It sounds like most of the
21 LAPD officers were on car two and three and CHP and sheriffs were
22 in car one. Is that a good explanation? Would you --

23 OFFICER WOLLECK: Yes, sir.

24 BATTALION CHIEF QUINTANAR: -- agree to that?

25 OFFICER WOLLECK: Yes, sir.

1 OFFICER MOBERG: Well, there's some -- I mean, we helped
2 out car one, but they -- what they did was, they tried to get
3 people who initially -- to get out first.

4 BATTALION CHIEF QUINTANAR: Right.

5 OFFICER MOBERG: And -- because I went over to help out
6 but then when there was no more people they could get to
7 immediately, then we concentrated more two and three. Because
8 then at that time you got more fire people coming in. Because
9 there was a lot of fire people inside.

10 BATTALION CHIEF QUINTANAR: You mentioned A car. What
11 does that mean?

12 OFFICER MOBERG: A regular patrol unit with two
13 officers.

14 BATTALION CHIEF QUINTANAR: An A car is just two
15 officers?

16 OFFICER MOBERG: Yes, sir.

17 BATTALION CHIEF QUINTANAR: They're not special gang or
18 anything? They're just a normal --

19 OFFICER MOBERG: Patrol.

20 BATTALION CHIEF QUINTANAR: -- patrol car?

21 OFFICER MOBERG: Yes, sir.

22 SGT. SUTTER: What time did your shift start that day?

23 OFFICER MOBERG: Mine started at 1400.

24 SGT. SUTTER: And yours?

25 OFFICER WOLLECK: Six -- 06.

1 SGT. SUTTER: In the morning?

2 OFFICER WOLLECK: Yeah.

3 BATTALION CHIEF QUINTANAR: And I wasn't through
4 questioning.

5 SGT. SUTTER: Sorry. You looked like you -- you looked
6 at her.

7 BATTALION CHIEF QUINTANAR: I'm just (indiscernible).

8 SGT. SUTTER: Stop it.

9 BATTALION CHIEF QUINTANAR: Go ahead. Back to you.

10 SGT. SUTTER: No, go ahead.

11 BATTALION CHIEF QUINTANAR: No, I'm good.

12 SGT. SUTTER: (indiscernible) done.

13 BATTALION CHIEF QUINTANAR: The time, the time you
14 started, what time?

15 OFFICER MOBERG: Oh, 1400 hours, 2:00.

16 SGT. SUTTER: He started at 2 p.m. and he started at --

17 OFFICER WOLLECK: Six.

18 OFFICER QUINTANAR: Six?

19 SGT. SUTTER: Six in the morning, which is my -- your
20 exhaustion. All my guys were on 16 hour days -- start at 0500 to
21 0600.

22 OFFICER WOLLECK: They were drenched. They were
23 drenched.

24 BATTALION CHIEF QUINTANAR: The individuals we
25 interviewed at --

1 SGT. SUTTER: Yes. Well --

2 BATTALION CHIEF QUINTANAR: -- Fire Station 7?

3 SGT. SUTTER: -- a lot of them. Yeah.

4 BATTALION CHIEF QUINTANAR: Wow.

5 OFFICER WOLLECK: They were drenched. They were just
6 (indiscernible).

7 OFFICER MOBERG: Because it was very hot in there. It
8 was like a sauna.

9 BATTALION CHIEF QUINTANAR: Yeah, we heard that, you
10 know. I think the deputies were saying that too.

11 OFFICER MOBERG: In fact, I guess -- I will say that one
12 of the fire guys that worked on the first train area,
13 engine/train, that's where, I guess, one of them came out because
14 -- like fell over of heat exhaustion. So --

15 MR. TAPIA: Was this mostly in the second car that it
16 was very hot in the second car? Did you say you saw about 12 --

17 OFFICER WOLLECK: Yeah, second and third cars --

18 MR. TAPIA: -- that had some injuries?

19 OFFICER WOLLECK: -- very, extremely hot.

20 MR. TAPIA: Most of them, huh?

21 OFFICER WOLLECK: Yes, and -- yes, sir. And --

22 MR. TAPIA: Did you get a chance to climb on top and on
23 the bottom levels?

24 OFFICER MOBERG: Well, yeah, we cleared the first level
25 and then we went to the second level and rendered first aid

1 or/evacuated citizens up there. And some of the people, they were
2 so in shock they didn't even want to leave. And we explained that
3 it might be possible that this thing might blow up, they were
4 saying when we first got there. So some took the pain on the way
5 out and some chose not to.

6 MR. TAPIA: Okay.

7 MS. SANZO: Other questions?

8 BATTALION CHIEF QUINTANAR: I just want to say I wasn't
9 that hot, by the way, okay. Of course, I wasn't with these guys.

10 OFFICER WOLLECK: I don't --

11 BATTALION CHIEF QUINTANAR: That's a joke. I'm just
12 playing.

13 OFFICER WOLLECK: I don't remember it being that hot.
14 The thing I remember --

15 BATTALION CHIEF QUINTANAR: No, I heard it was. I heard
16 it was. I'm not -- I'm just joking.

17 OFFICER WOLLECK: The thing I -- the -- I remember the
18 sounds and the smells more than anything. It was very loud
19 because the helicopters were landing and just -- and taking off at
20 an incredible pace. And you could smell the fresh smell -- you
21 know what an accident smells like. It smells like a fresh
22 accident with the diesel and the blood.

23 MS. SANZO: Metal on metal.

24 OFFICER WOLLECK: And the burning plastic kind of smell,
25 you know, from a fresh TC and the diesel.

1 BATTALION CHIEF QUINTANAR: Yeah, that was -- it was
2 diesel that was burning.

3 OFFICER MOBERG: I think it was a little frustrating
4 because like some -- like the door was partially open and we
5 couldn't pry it open, you know, and that -- like there were not
6 enough backboards to get people out and, besides, I think it was
7 frustrating for us is someone wanted to stack all the people,
8 rather than the first ones to be evacuated.

9 BATTALION CHIEF QUINTANAR: Well, we interviewed a
10 operations and incident commander. He really spoke well of LAPD
11 and the Sheriff's Department working together hand-in-hand and CHP
12 officers and so forth.

13 So on behalf of my department, I'd like to just thank
14 you guys for all the help and all the good work you guys did.

15 OFFICER WOLLECK: Yeah, there was, you know --

16 OFFICER MOBERG: Everybody did a good job.

17 OFFICER WOLLECK: There was no mention of who did this
18 or did that. We got there and it was obvious what had to be done
19 and it didn't matter where you were from or who you were with. I
20 stood there for at least two hours watching 96 just pull bodies
21 out of the top of the, you know, first car with the ladder and I
22 don't think I could have gone in that car. And there was guys who
23 were working tirelessly and took three bodies and then move them
24 and -- they just -- they looked exhausted. And I know they didn't
25 want to leave, but they finally had to relieve them with, you

1 know, guys from Ventura County. I can't say enough about those
2 guys. Incredible.

3 OFFICER MOBERG: I know one thing. Before we were sent
4 to do the perimeter, our Sergeants, Vermatt (ph.) and Ninos,
5 wanted us to go farther up the tracks and we walked all over the
6 tunnel looking for anybody that might have been ejected farther
7 from the train site, but we didn't see anybody.

8 BATTALION CHIEF QUINTANAR: All right.

9 MR. OJEDA: I'm sorry -- and I know that he thanked you
10 and I can't thank you enough, guys. I work for Metrolink and part
11 of our job is to keep the system safe, keep our passengers safe.

12 Unfortunately, what happened this time, and what I want
13 to say is I want to thank you guys for putting your lives in harms
14 way -- it could have been a lot worse -- and then saving our
15 passengers.

16 OFFICER MOBERG: Sure thing, sir.

17 MR. OJEDA: So I appreciate all the work you guys did.

18 OFFICER MOBERG: I know one thing, just food for
19 thought. I know I'm just a police officer, but one thing, some of
20 the people we had to take off on the boards, as you go up from the
21 bottom level, first, second level, I guess there's a little side
22 panel, like a walkway type thing. It was very difficult to
23 maneuver people out that. A couple times we thought about
24 breaking it with our batons. And one of our guys was going to use
25 a sledge hammer, you know, and -- it would have been nice if that

1 glass was there -- hopefully, this will never happen again -- if
2 that would have been breakable or some type of emergency release.

3 Because it took a while to maneuver some of these people out, you
4 know, especially in their conditions they were. That's very
5 frustrating that --

6 MR. OJEDA: This is going from the second level --

7 INVESTIGATOR SANZO: That's Plexiglas, right?

8 OFFICER MOBERG: Right. I guess, over near the bottom
9 where it's kind of empty and it kind of comes up to the first
10 level.

11 MR. OJEDA: Okay.

12 OFFICER MOBERG: There's like a, I guess, wall. Then
13 you have a Plexiglas-type --

14 MS. SANZO: But you still have that one railing.

15 OFFICER MOBERG: So --

16 MS. SANZO: Would that still be hindering it? If the
17 Plexiglas was removed and it was open?

18 OFFICER MOBERG: Well, tried to break it and it didn't
19 break.

20 OFFICER WOLLECK: I'm sure it was those freakin'
21 tables --

22 OFFICER MOBERG: (indiscernible).

23 OFFICER WOLLECK: -- that caused most of the damage.

24 OFFICER MOBERG: But, yeah, we hit it with the baton a
25 couple times and it wouldn't break.

1 OFFICER WOLLECK: They had -- everyone had trauma --

2 OFFICER MOBERG: So --

3 OFFICER WOLLECK: -- chest trauma, broken ribs,
4 collapsed lungs, and all at the same height, you know, they --
5 their backs. And so my thinking is, you know, those tables they
6 have, people just got thrown into them, you know, chest high or on
7 their backs and it just tore through them, you know, just -- oh,
8 internal injuries were terrible.

9 OFFICER MOBERG: That's why we -- one (indiscernible)
10 took a sledge hammer. Because we tried to hit it with a baton and
11 it wouldn't break. Because we couldn't --

12 MR. OJEDA: We actually have a sledge hammer inside that
13 compartment that you're describing. That's where we have our
14 emergency tools and that's probably why it was open because either
15 passengers or whoever showed up first opened that compartment to
16 have access to it.

17 MS. SANZO: Axe, sledge hammer?

18 MR. OJEDA: Correct.

19 OFFICER WOLLECK: Yeah, but you guys would have known
20 that. We wouldn't have known that.

21 MR. OJEDA: Correct.

22 OFFICER MOBERG: You know, particularly, our batons were
23 worthless on that Plexiglas. I guess it's pretty strong.

24 OFFICER WOLLECK: You guys were drenched in sweat.

25 OFFICER MOBERG: So, you know, like I say, it took a

1 while to maneuver those people out.

2 OFFICER WOLLECK: They were (indiscernible).

3 OFFICER MOBERG: It would have been nice if there was
4 type of release.

5 MR. OJEDA: You know, I'm curious, do you guys keep your
6 uniforms on when you're working like that or could you take it off
7 and -- because I know you guys have vests on and --

8 OFFICER WOLLECK: Yeah. I -- some guys were taking
9 their stuff off. I just unzipped the front of my uniform.

10 We got water like you wouldn't believe. We had
11 mountains of water. People were bringing us water. You couldn't
12 drink that much water. We had water being thrown to us when we
13 were in line and they're rotating people out, taking the bodies
14 out, and they had a -- just a pile of water there. So we were
15 able to get some water.

16 OFFICER MOBERG: I know most of us kept our uniform on.
17 There was a couple, I saw, sheriffs and -- just unzip their front
18 part. I know, for me, I guess, to me that -- and I'm not
19 intending to start taking my clothes off or -- because I'm just
20 focusing on the job at hand.

21 OFFICER WOLLECK: Some of the firefighters had to. Some
22 of the guys who came out of the engine, they had to pull up -- had
23 to unzip their jacket. They must have been really hot in there.

24 MR. OJEDA: What's your policy, both of you, I know --
25 there's no policy to keep it on, take it off?

1 SGT. SUTTER: It's got to stay on.

2 MR. OJEDA: It's got to stay on?

3 SGT. SUTTER: As long as they're working, it has to stay
4 on, they have to be in uniform. The only thing we're taught is if
5 there's an emergency situation like an officer down where somebody
6 was shot, bleeding or something, where we take it off and use it
7 as compression, something like that. Other than that, it stays
8 on.

9 MR. OJEDA: It stays on?

10 SGT. SUTTER: Otherwise, the public wouldn't know who we
11 were, differentiate us between other people.

12 BATTALION CHIEF QUINTANAR: And you have to keep your
13 weapon, right, just in case, huh?

14 MR. OJEDA: Thank you. That's all I have.

15 OFFICER WOLLECK: Thank you.

16 SPEAKERS: Thank you.

17 (Whereupon, the interview in the above-entitled matter
18 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: METROLINK TRAIN NO. 111
COLLISION WITH UNION PACIFIC
RAILROAD LEESDALE LOCAL,
September 12, 2008,
Los Angeles, California
Interview of Timothy Wolleck
and Richard Moberg

DOCKET NUMBER: DCA-08-MR-009

PLACE: Los Angeles, California

DATE: September 17, 2008

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been compared to
the recording accomplished at the hearing.

Kay Maurer,
Transcriber