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DEPARTMENT OF
RAILROAD ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION

REPORT NO. 4155 OCT 18 1979

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ILLINOIS CENTRAL RAILROAD COMPANY

McMANUS, LOUISIANA

JULY 7, 1969



FEDERAL RAILROAD ADMINISTRATION

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DEPARTMENT OF
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Summary

DATE:	July 7, 1969	
RAILROAD:	Illinois Central	
LOCATION:	McManus, Louisiana	
KIND OF ACCIDENT:	Head-end collision	
TRAINS INVOLVED:	Freight	Freight
TRAIN NUMBERS:	92	Extra 8908 South
LOCOMOTIVE NUMBERS:	Diesel-electric units 8958, 9320, 9218, 8956	Diesel-electric units 8908, 9336, 8109, 9166
CONSISTS:	22 cars, caboose	29 cars, caboose
SPEEDS:	40 m p h	40 m p h
OPERATION:	Timetable, train orders	
TRACK:	Single; tangent; level	
WEATHER:	Clear	
TIME:	10:32 a m	
CASUALTIES:	4 killed; 6 injured	
CAUSE:	Dispatcher issuing a meet order after one of the trains had passed the point where it was to receive the order, resulting in an overlapping of authority for the opposing train movements and the acci- dent	

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL RAILROAD ADMINISTRATION
BUREAU OF RAILROAD SAFETY

RAILROAD ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION
REPORT NO 4155

ILLINOIS CENTRAL RAILROAD COMPANY

JULY 7, 1969

Synopsis

On July 7, 1969, a head-end collision occurred between two freight trains on the Illinois Central Railroad at McManus, Louisiana. It resulted in death to four and injury to six members of the train crews.

The accident was caused by the dispatcher issuing a meet order after one of the trains had passed the point where it was to receive the order, resulting in an overlapping of authority for the opposing train movements and the accident.

Location and Method of Operation

The accident occurred on that part of the railroad extending from Freight Yard, Vicksburg, Mississippi to North Baton Rouge, Louisiana, a distance of 141.8 miles. In the accident area this is a single-track line over which trains operate by timetable and train orders. There is no block-signal system in use. Harriston and Roxie, Mississippi; McManus and Slaughter, Louisiana, are 94.3, 78.5, 24.3 and 16.3 miles north of North Baton Rouge, respectively.

The collision occurred on the main track, 1.1 miles north of the McManus station.

Time and Weather

The collision took place at 10:32 a.m., in clear weather.

Authorized Train Speed

The maximum authorized speed for all trains in the collision area is 40 m p h

Main Track

From the north on the main track there are, in succession, a long tangent, a 2°00' curve to the left 805 feet, and a tangent 665 feet to the collision point and a considerable distance beyond. In this area, the grade is practically level.

View Approaching Accident Point

Because of track curvature and trees alongside the railroad, opposing train movements nearing the accident point are not visible to each other at a distance greater than about 1500 feet

Carrier's Operating Rules and Special Instructions

Operating Rules

221 Unless otherwise provided, a fixed signal must be used at each train order office, which must indicate "stop" when there are train orders to be delivered. When there are no train orders the signal must indicate "proceed"

222 Operators must promptly record and report to the train dispatcher the time of arrival and departure of all trains and the direction of extra trains

714 Engine and train crews must not go to meals or otherwise delay their train for personal convenience without permission

Train Dispatchers

813 Under circumstances admitting of a doubt, they must not attempt to restrict a train, either by day or night, upon an operator's statement that it has not passed

Superintendent's Notice No. 33

Effective January 1, 1969, hours of other than continuous train order offices will be as follows:

<u>Station</u>	<u>Monday thru Friday</u>

Roxie	9 AM - 6 PM

Customer Service Agents

The carrier has instituted the "mobile agent" concept in the territory involved and created positions of Customer Service Agent. The agents are furnished a small van-type motor vehicle equipped as an office. They travel from station to station and call on the railroad's customers. Each agent is assigned several stations. The agent's responsibilities include copying of train orders when called on to do so.

Stations assigned to one Customer Service Agent, a former agent-operator, included Harriston and Roxie. He had supervisory jurisdiction over the operator assigned to the Roxie station.

The Accident

Train No. 92

No 92, a northbound second-class freight train, left North Baton Rouge at 9:05 a m the day of the accident. Before leaving, the crew members received, among others, copies of train order No 105, which read in part as follows:

Eng 8908 run extra Cedars to MP Junction has
right over No 92 Cedars to Slaughter

Under the provisions of the order, Extra 8908 South was authorized to run from Cedars, Mississippi, 5 4 miles south of Freight Yard, to MP Junction, 1 1 miles north of North Baton Rouge. The order gave Extra 8908 South right over No 92 to the main track between Cedars and Slaughter, and restricted No 92 from proceeding northward on the main track beyond the north siding-switch at Slaughter unless Extra 8908 South had entered the Slaughter siding and cleared the main track.

No 92 arrived at Slaughter at 10:00 a m where cars were set off and the crew members received, among others, copies of train order No 110, which was addressed to Extra 8908 South at Roxie, to No 92 at Slaughter, and read in part as follows:

Extra 8908 South meet No 92 at Gloster
complete 10:10 a m

This order established Gloster, 35.5 miles north of Slaughter, as the meeting point for Extra 8908 South and No 92. Under the provisions of order No 110, Extra 8908 South, which had right over No 92, was restricted from proceeding southward on the main track beyond the south siding-switch at Gloster until No 92 had entered the Gloster siding and cleared the main track.

No 92, consisting of 4 road-switcher type diesel-electric units, 22 cars and a caboose, left Slaughter at 10:18

a m , to meet Extra 8908 South at Gloster, as required by train order No 110 The engineer, fireman, conductor, and front brakeman were in the control compartment of the first diesel-electric unit The flagman was in the caboose

About 10:30 a m., the train passed the station at McManus while moving at a speed of about 40 m p h , as estimated by the engineer Approximately two minutes later, the engineer observed the headlight of an opposing train come into view on a curve at a distance which he estimated to be about 1800 feet He immediately called a warning, initiated an emergency application of the brakes and closed the throttle The engineer and the front brakeman then left the control compartment and jumped from the locomotive The fireman and conductor also left the control compartment and were last seen on the front and rear steps of the right side of the locomotive, respectively A few seconds after the engineer and front brakeman jumped from the locomotive, No 92 collided with the locomotive of Extra 8908 South, 1 1 miles north of the McManus station, before its speed was materially reduced

Extra 8908 South

Extra 8908 South, a southbound freight train, left Freight Yard, Vicksburg at 6:10 a m the day of the accident Before leaving, the crew members received, among others, copies of train order No 105 The train arrived at Harriston about 7:45 a m , set off 14 cars, and departed at 8:05 a m

Approximately 30 minutes after leaving Harriston, Extra 8908 South stopped on the main track opposite the station at Roxie The station train order signal was displaying a proceed indication at that time After setting off four cars on a nearby auxiliary track, the train proceeded southward one mile to the town of Roxie, where it was left standing on the main track while the crew hurriedly ate breakfast at a nearby boarding house, without first obtaining permission from the dispatcher The train order signal at the Roxie station continued to display a proceed indication when the train passed the station en route to the town of Roxie About 9:00 a.m., approximately 1 hour 10 minutes before the dispatcher issued train order No 110, Extra 8908 South consisting of 4 road-switcher type diesel-electric units, 29 cars and a caboose, left the town of Roxie and proceeded southward toward Slaughter to meet train No 92 under the provisions of train order No 105 The engineer, fireman, and front brakeman were in the control compartment of the first diesel-electric unit The conductor and flagman were in the caboose

About 9:25 a m , the train passed Crosby, Mississippi, 18 8 miles south of Roxie. Shortly afterward, the conductor radioed the Customer Service Agent assigned to Crosby and identified his train to that agent, who was en route in his van-type motor vehicle to the Crosby station

The train passed Gloster and Centreville, Mississippi, 26 7 and 35 3 miles south of Roxie, respectively, and stopped for a maintenance-of-way force at Norwood, Louisiana, 44 6 miles south of Roxie, at 10:05 a m. Members of the crew had observed and called to each other proceed indications displayed by the train order signals at Harriston, Roxie, Crosby, Gloster, and Centreville, and had not observed any railroad employees in or around any of these train order offices. The train departed Norwood at 10:15 a m, 5 minutes after the dispatcher issued train order No. 110 and without the crew members having knowledge of this order.

Shortly after 10:30 a m, while moving about 40 m p h, the train entered the two-degree curve to the left north of McManus. As it moved through the curve, the visibility of the track ahead was materially restricted due to trees and brush along the right-of-way. When the locomotive reached the south end of the curve, the front brakeman observed the headlight of No. 92 approaching at a distance of about 1500 feet. He called a warning to the engineer and fireman, and the engineer initiated an emergency application of the brakes. The front brakeman then left the control compartment and last recalls going to the steps at the front of the locomotive. The conductor and flagman heard the emergency brake application shortly after the caboose entered the curve. They said the collision occurred before the speed of their train was materially reduced.

Casualties

The conductor and fireman of No. 92, and the engineer and fireman of Extra 8908 South, were killed.

The engineer, front brakeman and flagman of No. 92, and the front brakeman, conductor and flagman of Extra 8908 South were injured.

Damages

No. 92

This train stopped with the front end twelve feet south of the collision point.

The four diesel-electric units and first eight cars were derailed. The first and second diesel-electric units overturned and stopped on the west and east side of the track structure, respectively. The third and fourth units stopped upright and partially in line with the track structure. The first six cars stopped in various positions on or near the track structure. The seventh and eighth cars stopped upright on and in line with the track structure.

The first three diesel-electric units were destroyed by the impact and fire which occurred after the collision. The fourth diesel-electric unit was heavily damaged. Of the derailed cars, three were destroyed, three heavily damaged, and two slightly damaged.

Extra 8908 South

All four diesel-electric units and the first eleven cars of Extra 8908 South were derailed. The first diesel-electric unit stopped on the west side of the track structure, 20 feet south of the collision point. The second and third units overturned and stopped on the east side of the track structure. The fourth unit stopped upright and diagonally across the track structure. The first eleven cars stopped in various positions on or near the track structure.

The four diesel-electric units were destroyed by the impact and subsequent fire. Of the derailed cars, five were destroyed, three heavily damaged, two considerably damaged, and one slightly damaged.

The total cost of damages to both trains and the track structure was \$1,014,505, as estimated by the carrier.

Roxie Operator -- Harriston and Roxie Customer Service Agent

The Customer Service Agent assigned to Harriston and Roxie went on duty at the Harriston station at 7:45 a m the day of the accident. About 8:00 a m, while leaving the station to go to Roxie, he saw a train (Extra 8908 South) standing on the main track north of the Harriston station. While enroute to Roxie the Customer Service Agent called on three customers. He arrived at the Roxie station at 9:17 a m.

About 8:10 a m the day of the accident, the operator at Roxie began her duties by checking cars on tracks east of the station. She arrived at the station at 8:45 a m, 15 minutes before the assigned train-order office hours designated in the Superintendent's Notice No. 33, and attempted to contact the train dispatcher, but was told by the chief train dispatcher to call back later as the dispatcher was busy. The operator then left the station and resumed checking cars south of the station. While doing this work, she saw the rear end of a train (Extra 8908 South) standing on the main track in the town of Roxie. Before completion of her check, she saw the train depart southward. Upon returning to the Roxie station, about 9:35 a m, she held a brief discussion with the Customer Service Agent assigned to Roxie and was instructed to check two tracks she had overlooked. She left the station shortly thereafter without mentioning to the agent that she had seen a south-bound train leaving the town of Roxie.

The train dispatcher called the Customer Service Agent at Roxie about 10:00 a m and asked him if Extra 8908 South was at Roxie. The Customer Service Agent replied that the train was not there, but he had seen it at Harriston about 8:00 a m. He further told the dispatcher he thought Extra 8908 South had not time to reach Roxie yet, but was not sure. On hearing this, the dispatcher informed the agent that he wished to issue a train order to Extra 8908 South at Roxie, and instructed him to put the train order signal

for southbound trains in Stop position. The agent put the train order signal in Stop position, as instructed. He then advised the dispatcher that the Roxie operator was checking the yard and asked if he wanted the operator to copy the order. In reply, the dispatcher instructed the Customer Service Agent to copy the order. Soon afterward, the dispatcher simultaneously issued train order No 110 to the Customer Service Agent at Roxie and the operator at Slaughter. He made the order complete (effective) at 10:10 a m, approximately 1 hour 10 minutes after Extra 8908 South had left the town of Roxie.

Gloster and Crosby Customer Service Agent

The Customer Service Agent assigned to Gloster and Crosby went on duty at the Gloster station at 8:00 a m the day of the accident. A few minutes later, he left Gloster to go to Crosby and service customers enroute. About 9:25 a m, while enroute northward to Crosby in his van-type motor vehicle, the agent observed a passing southbound train (Extra 8908 South). A few minutes later, the conductor of Extra 8908 South radioed the Customer Service Agent to inquire as to the whereabouts of No 92. Both men identified themselves to each other. The Customer Service Agent arrived at the Crosby station about 9:45 a m. He did not, however, advise the dispatcher that he had seen Extra 8908 South and had talked to its conductor by radio.

Train Dispatcher

The dispatcher went on duty at the Central Dispatching Office, Chicago, Illinois, at 7:00 a m the day of the accident and accepted transfer of the train order book. Included among the outstanding orders was train order No 105. Later, the dispatcher cleared No 92 at North Baton Rouge with several orders, including order No 105.

Shortly after 10:00 a m, the operator at Slaughter reported to the dispatcher that No 92 had arrived there and was waiting for Extra 8908 South as required by train order No 105. The operator requested permission to clear the train so that it could continue its northbound trip. Not knowing whether he could accede to this request in view of the provisions of train order No 105, the dispatcher instructed the Slaughter operator to wait. He then called the Customer Service Agent at Roxie. After this Agent informed him that Extra 8908 South was not at Roxie and it probably had not time to reach that point, the dispatcher erroneously assumed Extra 8908 South had not passed Roxie. He then issued order No 110, to advance No 92 as requested by the Slaughter operator. The Roxie Customer Service Agent, however, was unable to deliver order No 110 to Extra 8908 South as that train had left Roxie about 1 hour 10 minutes before the order was issued.

Hours of Service

Extra 8908 South

All the crew members had been on duty 5 hours and 2 minutes at the time of the accident, after having been off duty 8 hours

No. 92

All the crew members had been on duty 2 hours and 32 minutes at the time of the accident, after having been off duty more than 10 hours

Analysis of Accident

Both trains held order No. 105, which established Slaughter as the meeting point for the trains No. 92 also held order No. 110, which had been addressed for delivery to that train at Slaughter and to Extra 8908 South at Roxie This order established Gloster as the meeting point for the trains, instead of Slaughter Having passed Roxie before order No. 110 was issued by the dispatcher, Extra 8908 South did not receive that order Consequently, it passed Gloster and proceeded southward as authorized by order No 105 No 92 left Slaughter and proceeded northward toward Gloster, as authorized by order No 110. As a result of the overlapping authority for the opposing movements between Gloster and Slaughter, the trains collided near McManus

The dispatcher had no definite information as to the location of Extra 8908 South when he issued order No 110. And, contrary to the carrier's rules, he issued the order under circumstances admitting of doubt as to whether Extra 8908 South had already passed Roxie Had the dispatcher refrained from issuing the order, as required under the circumstances, the opposing trains would not have had overlapping authority to proceed between Gloster and Slaughter Thus, the accident would have been averted

Findings

1 At the time of the accident, No 92 was proceeding northward on the main track as authorized by train order No 110, and Extra 8908 South was proceeding southward as authorized by order No 105.

2 Extra 8908 South did not receive order No 110, which restricted it from passing Gloster before No 92 entered the siding there, due to having passed Roxie before the dispatcher transmitted the order to that point for delivery

3 As a result of Extra 8908 South passing Roxie before the issuance of order No 110, that train and No 92 had overlapping authority to occupy the main track between Gloster and Slaughter at the same time

4 The overlapping authority resulted from the train dispatcher issuing order No 110 without having definite information as to whether Extra 8908 South had already passed Roxie

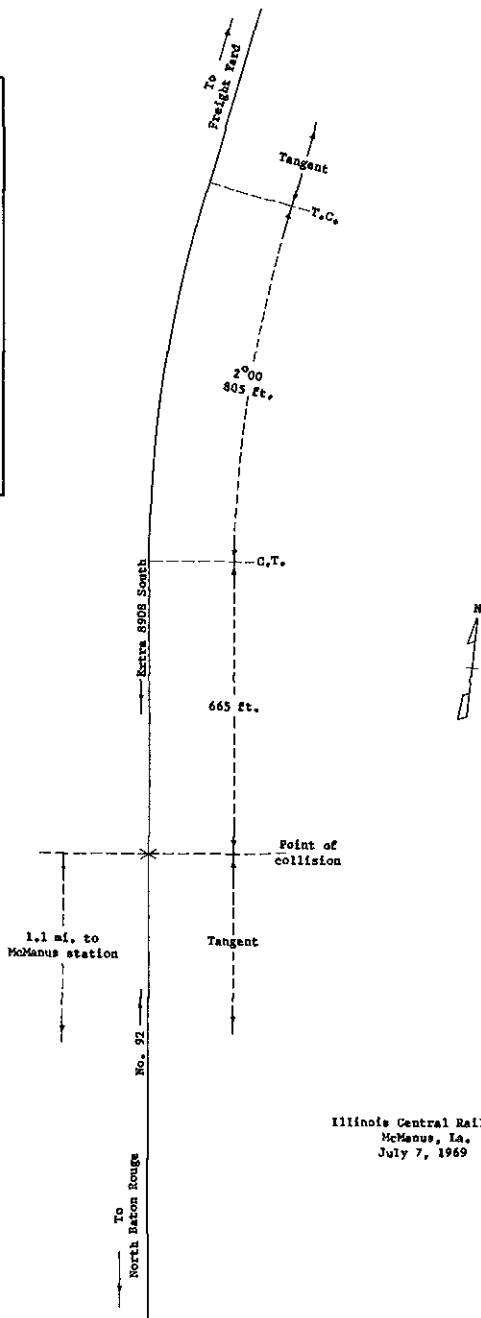
Cause

The accident was caused by the dispatcher issuing a meet order after one of the trains had passed the point where it was to receive the order, resulting in an overlapping of authority for the opposing train movements and the accident

Dated at Washington, D C , this 5th
day of August 1970
By the Federal Railroad Administration

Mac E Rogers, Director
Bureau of Railroad Safety

○	Vicksburg, Miss.	
	(Freight Yard)	
	5.4 mi.	
○	Cedars	
	42.1 mi.	
○	Harriston	
	15.8 mi.	
○	Roxie	
	18.8 mi.	
○	Crosby	
	7.9 mi.	
○	Gloster	
	8.6 mi.	
○	Centreville, Miss.	
	9.3 mi.	
○	Norwood, La.	
	8.5 mi.	
X	Point of collision	
	1.1 mi.	
○	McManus	
	8.0 mi.	
○	Slaughter	
	15.2 mi.	
○	M. P. Junction	
	1.1 mi.	
○	North Baton Rouge, La.	



Illinois Central Railroad
 McManus, La.
 July 7, 1969