

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

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INVESTIGATION NO. 2784  
THE CHICAGO & EASTERN ILLINOIS RAILROAD COMPANY  
REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT  
AT BOURBON, ILL., ON  
MARCH 15, 1944

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SUMMARY

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Railroad: Chicago & Eastern Illinois  
Date: March 15, 1944  
Location: Bourbon, Ill.  
Kind of accident: Rear-end collision  
Trains involved: Freight : Freight  
Train numbers: 172 : 62  
Engine numbers: 915 : 1938-1927  
Consist: 12 cars, cabooses : 35 cars, cabooses  
Speed: Standing : 4 m. p. h.  
Operation: Timetable, train orders and  
manual-block system  
Track: Double; tangent; practically level  
Weather: Foggy  
Time: 11:15 p. m.  
Casualties: 2 killed; 1 injured  
Cause: Failure properly to control  
speed of following train  
in accordance with signal  
indication and flagging signals

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

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INVESTIGATION NO. 2784

IN THE MATTER OF MAKING ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION REPORTS  
UNDER THE ACCIDENT REPORTS ACT OF MAY 6, 1910.

THE CHICAGO & EASTERN ILLINOIS RAILROAD COMPANY

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April 17, 1944.

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Accident at Bourbon, Ill., on March 15, 1944, caused by failure properly to control speed of the following train in accordance with signal indication and flagging signals.

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REPORT OF THE COMMISSION <sup>1</sup>

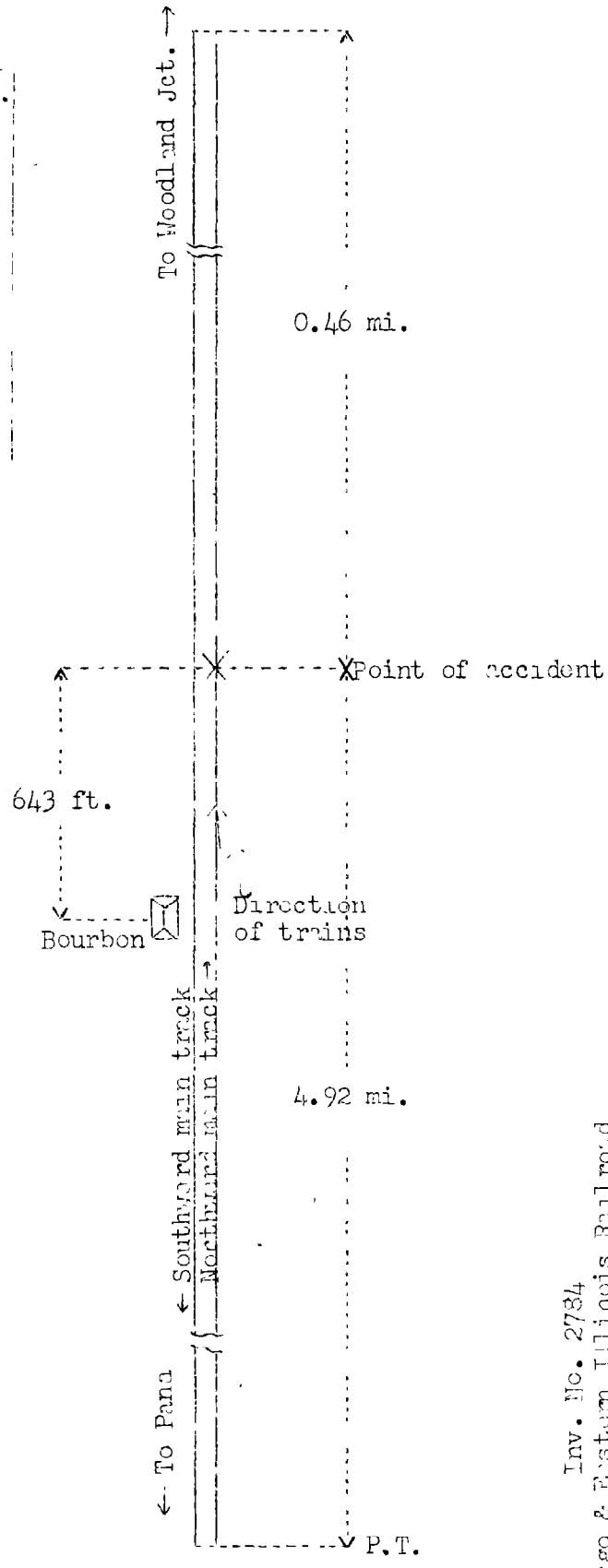
PATTERSON, Chairman:

On March 15, 1944, there was a rear-end collision between two freight trains on the Chicago & Eastern Illinois Railroad at Bourbon, Ill., which resulted in the death of two car-department employees and the injury of one car-department employee.

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<sup>1</sup>Under authority of section 17 (2) of the Interstate Commerce Act the above-entitled proceeding was referred by the Commission to Chairman Patterson for consideration and disposition.

- o Woodland Jct., Ill. 62.2 mi.
- o Villa Grove Jct. 3.7 mi.
- o T. Y. Tower 5.9 mi.
- X Bourbon (P. of A.) 5.3 mi.
- o Arthur 20.8 mi.
- o Findlay Jct. 19.6 mi.
- o Pana, Ill.



Inv. No. 2784  
 Chicago & Eastern Illinois Railroad  
 Bourbon, Ill.  
 March 15, 1944

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the railroad designated as the St. Louis District and extending between Pana and Woodland Jct., Ill., 122.5 miles. In the vicinity of the point of accident this was a double-track line over which trains were operated by timetable, train orders and a manual-block system. The accident occurred on the northward main track 643 feet north of the station at Bourbon. The main tracks were tangent throughout a distance of 4.92 miles south of this point and 0.46 mile northward. The grade was practically level.

The block involved extended between Arthur, 5.3 miles south of Bourbon, and T. Y. Tower, 5.9 miles north of Bourbon. The manual-block signal at Arthur was of the three-position, upper-quadrant, semaphore type. The involved night aspect, indication and name of this signal were as follows:

<u>Aspect</u>	<u>Indication</u>	<u>Name</u>
Yellow	Proceed with caution.	Caution-signal.

DEFINITIONS

\* \* \*

Caution--Moving at such speed that stop can be made within range of vision.

\* \* \*

Operating rules read in part as follows:

11. A fusee burning on or near the track is a signal to stop, extinguish the fusee, and proceed with caution; except that on double or three tracks a fusee burning between tracks is a signal to stop and proceed with caution, without extinguishing fusee. \* \* \*

15. The explosion of one torpedo is a signal to stop, and if no flagman is in sight, proceed with caution for a distance of one mile, expecting to find an obstruction on the main track. The explosion of two torpedoes not more than 100 feet apart is a signal to reduce speed and proceed with caution for a distance of one mile.

\* \* \*

72. Trains of the first class are superior to those of second and third classes and trains of the second class are superior to those of the third class.

\* \* \*

86. An inferior train must, unless otherwise provided, clear the time of a superior train, in the same direction, not less than five minutes;  
\* \* \*

99. When a train stops under circumstances in which it may be overtaken by another train, the flagman must go back immediately with flagman's signals a sufficient distance to insure full protection, place one torpedo on the rail, and when necessary, in addition, display a lighted fusee.

When recalled and safety will permit, he may return after placing a second torpedo on the rail sixty feet from the first, unless conditions require one torpedo only and a lighted fusee.

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FORMS OF TRAIN ORDERS.

\* \* \*

Form B.--Directing a Train to Pass or Run Ahead of Another Train.

\* \* \*

(4) Extra 95 south run ahead of No. 3 B until overtaken.

The first named train will run ahead of the second named train from the designated point until overtaken, and then arrange for the rear train to pass promptly.

\* \* \*

305. Block signals govern the use of the blocks, but, unless otherwise provided, do not supersede the superiority of trains; nor dispense with the use or the observance of other signals whenever and wherever they may be required.

318. \* \* \*

A train may be permitted to follow a train other than a passenger train into a block under caution signal indication.

The maximum authorized speed for the following train was 40 miles per hour.

Description of Accident

No. 172, a north-bound third-class freight train, consisted of engine 915, 12 cars and a caboose. At Findlay Jct., 26.1 miles south of Bourbon, the crew received copies of train order No. 48 reading as follows:

Third class and extra trains  
north run ahead of No. 62  
and No. 64 Findlay Jct  
until overtaken

This train departed from Findlay Jct. at 7:18 p. m., 4 hours 33 minutes late, departed from Arthur, the last open office, at 10:38 p. m., and stopped on the northward main track at Bourbon about 11:05 p. m. with the rear end standing 643 feet north of the station. About 10 minutes later the rear end was struck by No. 62.

No. 62, a north-bound second-class freight train, consisted of engines 1938 and 1927, 85 cars and a caboose, in the order named. At Pana, 45.7 miles south of Bourbon, the crew received copies of train order No. 48. This train passed the manual-block signal at Arthur, which displayed proceed-with-caution, at 11:02 p. m., 5 hours 56 minutes late, and while moving at an estimated speed of 4 miles per hour it struck the rear end of No. 172.

The caboose and the rear car of No. 172 were demolished. The front end of engine 1938 was slightly damaged.

It was foggy at the time of the accident, which occurred about 11:15 p. m.

Discussion

Under the rules of this carrier, the explosion of two torpedoes not more than 100 feet apart requires a train to proceed throughout a distance of one mile in such manner that it can be stopped within the distance of the range of vision. A burning fusee on or near the track requires that a train be stopped short of the fusee and the fusee be extinguished, then the speed must be so controlled that the train can be stopped within the distance of the range of vision. Under the rules governing operation in manual block-signal territory, a proceed-with-caution indication requires that the speed must be so controlled that the train can be stopped within the distance of the range of vision.

No. 172, the preceding train, and No. 62, the following train, were, respectively, a third-class and a second-class train. The clearance rules required No. 172 to clear No. 62's schedule not less than 5 minutes, but the crews of both trains held copies of a train order authorizing No. 172 to run ahead of No. 62 until it was overtaken by the following train. About 10 minutes after No. 172 stopped at Bourbon, it was struck by No. 62. Soon after No. 172 stopped, the engine was detached and

the members of the crew, except the flagman, were engaged in setting off and picking up cars. The flagman placed two torpedoes on the east rail of the northward main track about 1,500 feet south of the point where the caboose stopped. He was about 600 feet south of the caboose when he saw the reflection of the headlight of the approaching train about 1 mile distant. He immediately displayed a lighted fusee, and was giving stop signals when the engine of No. 62 passed him.

As No. 62 was approaching Bourbon the speed was 25 or 30 miles per hour. The train air-brake system was in the charge of the engineer of the first engine. The brakes functioned properly at all points where used en route. The front brakeman, who was on the first engine, and the enginemen of each engine, were maintaining a lookout ahead. Because of fog, visibility was restricted to some extent. When the first engine was about 1,500 feet south of the point where the accident occurred two torpedoes were exploded, and the engineer of each engine moved the throttle of his engine to closed position. Soon afterward the employees on the first engine saw simultaneously the lighted red marker-lamps of the preceding train and stop signals being given with a lighted fusee. The engineer immediately moved the brake valve to emergency position. The speed of No. 62 was about 4 miles per hour when the collision occurred.

Under the manual-block indication which No. 62 received at Arthur, this train was required to be so operated that it could be stopped at any point within the distance of the range of vision between Arthur and T. Y. Tower, 5.3 miles and 5.9 miles, respectively, south and north of Bourbon. The explosion of two torpedoes 1,500 feet south of the point of accident required the speed of No. 62 to be controlled in such manner throughout the next mile that it could be stopped within the distance of the range of vision. The burning fusee about 600 feet to the rear of the preceding train required No. 62 to be stopped short of the fusee and, after the fusee was extinguished, this train was required to proceed in such manner that it could be stopped within the distance of the range of vision. In addition, the flagman of the preceding train was giving stop signals. If the following train had been operated in accordance with these requirements, the accident would have been prevented.

#### Cause

It is found that this accident was caused by failure properly to control the speed of the following train in accordance with signal indication and flagging signals.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this seventeenth day of April, 1944.

By the Commission, Chairman Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,  
Secretary.