

**RAILROAD ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION**

**Report No 3824**

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LOUISVILLE AND NASHVILLE RAILROAD COMPANY

BARDSTOWN JCT , KY

DECEMBER 15, 1958

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**INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION**

**Washington**

## SUMMARY

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DATE	December 15, 1958	
RAILROAD	Louisville and Nashville	
LOCATION	Bardstown Jct , Ky	
KIND OF ACCIDENT	Rear-end collision	
EQUIPMENT INVOLVED	Track motorcar with trailer	Passenger train
TRAIN NUMBER		4
LOCOMOTIVE NUMBER		Diesel-electric units 777 and 772
CONSIST		13 cars
ESTIMATED SPEEDS	Undetermined	60 m p h
OPERATION	Timetable, train orders, and automatic block-signal system	
TRACK	Double, tangent, 0 55 percent descending grade northward	
WEATHER	Hozy	
TIME	7 06 a m	
CASUALTIES	5 killed	
CAUSE	Track motorcar and trailer occupying main track on time of over- due first-class passenger train	

## INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

REPORT NO 3824

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

LOUISVILLE AND NASHVILLE RAILROAD COMPANY

February 4, 1959

Accident near Bardstown Jct , Ky , on December 15, 1958, caused by truck motorcar and trailer occupying a main track on the time of an overdue first-class passenger train

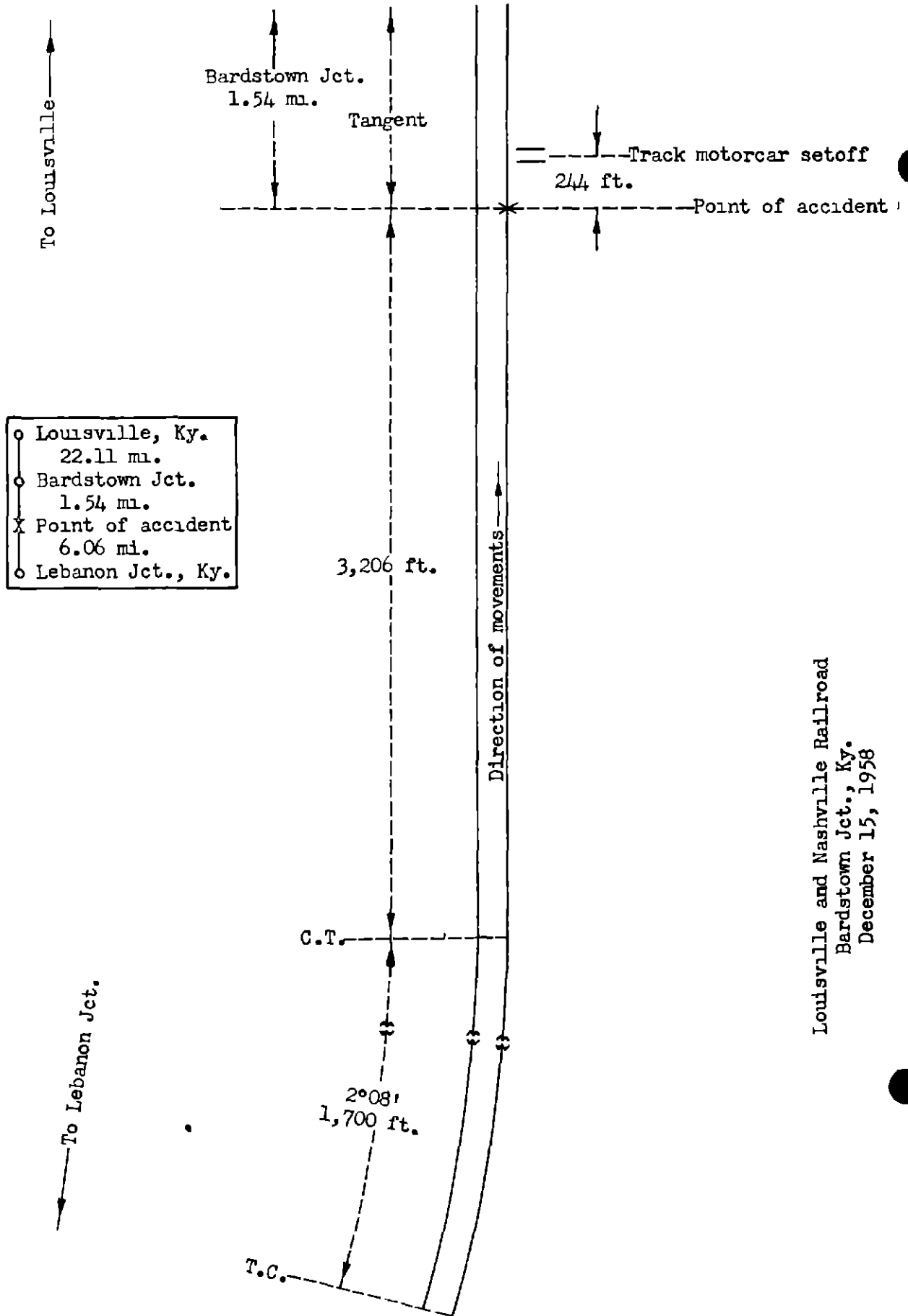
REPORT OF THE COMMISSION<sup>1</sup>

*FREAS, Commissioner*

On December 15, 1958, there was a collision between a passenger train on the Louisville and Nashville Railroad and a truck motorcar with trailer near Bardstown Jct , Ky , which resulted in the death of five maintenance-of-way employees

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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 Commissioner Freas for consideration and disposition



Louisville and Nashville Railroad  
 Bardstown Jct., Ky.  
 December 15, 1958

### Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Louisville Division extending between Lebanon, Ky., and Louisville, Ky., 29.7 miles. In the vicinity of the point of accident this is a double-track line, over which trains are operated by timetable, train orders and an automatic block-signal system. The accident occurred on the northward main track at a point 6.06 miles north of Lebanon, Ky., and 1.54 miles south of Bardonia, Ky. From the south there are, in succession, a 2°00' curve to the left 1,700 feet in length, and a tangent 3,206 feet to the point of accident and a similar distance northward. The grade in the vicinity of the point of accident is 0.55 percent descending northward.

A track motorcar setoff is located 244 feet north of the point of accident.

This carrier's rules for the operation of track motorcars read in part as follows:

126. Keeping Clear of Trains -- Track cars should be clear of main track ten minutes before trains are due, using time table and lineups to determine location of trains. \* \* \*

Foremen and operators must use the utmost care in running their cars over the road. When possible they must have a written lineup showing movement of train and must read the lineup to other occupants of the car. \* \* \*

If the flagman hears or sees a train approaching, he must place a torpedo on the rail and proceed rapidly toward the approaching train, giving a stop signal.

Safety rules of this carrier relating to the operation of track motorcars read in part as follows:

25. Before starting, employee in charge of car must assign seat location to every person riding on car and have thorough understanding as to what part each person is to take in removing the car from track. Men on iron of car shall assist driver in keeping lookout and warn of any apparent danger affecting safe operation of car. Men riding rear of car shall keep constant lookout in that direction for trains or cars.

\* \* \*

27. \* \* \* The person in charge of the operation of the car must, when practicable, procure information as to movements of trains. Dispatcher or operator will make memorandum of information given foreman or others in charge of car and have such person repeat the information given. Before trip is started, employee in charge of car shall read lineup on which movement is being made to other men on car. \* \* \* In addition to complying with these rules all other possible precautions must be taken to prevent collision. \* \* \*

The maximum authorized speeds in the vicinity of the point of accident are 70 miles per hour for passenger trains and 20 miles per hour for track motorcars pulling other cars.

### Description of Accident

About 5:30 a. m. on the day of the accident a maintenance-of-way force consisting of a foreman and four men was reported for duty at Lebanon, Ky. The foreman received a copy of the lineup of train movements for the operator at that point about 5:35 a. m. Shortly afterward the maintenance-of-way force departed northward on a track motorcar with a trailer, on the northward main track. About 30 minutes later, while the track motorcar and trailer were moving at an undetermined speed, the trailer ran truckway to 4 at a point 1.54 miles south of Bardonia, Ky.

No. 4, a northbound first-class passenger train, consisted of diesel-electric units 777 and 772, coupled in a unit-unit control, 1 extra first-class motor car, 1 baggage car, 6 first-class cars, 3 extra cars, 1 first-class car, and 1 coach, in the order listed. This train departed from Lebanon Jct., the last open office, at 7:00 a. m. 2 miles later and was moving at an estimated speed of 20 miles per hour at the time the track motorcar and trailer

The track motorcar and trailer were in motion. None of the equipment of No. 4, as defined, No. 4, stopped at the front end of the lead track until 254 feet north of the point of accident.

The section foreman and the four section men were killed.

The weather was hazy at the time of the accident, which occurred about 7:06 a. m.

During the 30-day period preceding the date of the accident the average daily passenger car per mile northward in the vicinity of the point of accident was 9.83 trains.

The track motorcar is a 4-wheeled type, powered by a 5 to 8 horsepower engine, and was equipped with 4-wheel brakes. It was originally built with a metal cab having a safety-glass windshield, an safety-glass window on the side near the front of the cab and across the rear adjacent to the top. Sun curtains were provided to cover the open areas on the sides and rear. It weighed approximately 300 pounds and had a seating capacity for 5 persons. The trailer was of the 4-wheel type and was provided with a wooden floor and bench. At the time the accident occurred the trailer was loaded with tools and materials. The track motorcar was provided with the required flagging equipment.

#### Discussion

About 6:35 a. m. on the day of the accident the operator at Lebanon Jct. received a lineup of train movements from the train dispatcher. This lineup read in part as follows:

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No. 4 end 777 by Sonora 6:30 a. m.

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Sonora is located 25.44 miles south of Lebanon Jct. The section foreman received a copy of this lineup from the operator about 6:36 a. m. in the presence of a track supervisor and another employee. The track supervisor said the lineup was read aloud but the section men were not present at that time. Shortly afterward, the section force departed on a track motorcar and trailer on the northward main track.

As No. 4 was approaching the point where the accident occurred the engineers were in their respective positions in the control compartment of the locomotive and the members of the train crew were in various locations in the cars of the train. The brakes of this train had been tested and had functioned properly when used en route. The headlight was lighted brightly and the oscillating white light was operating. The fireman said that the engineer and he first observed the track motorcar when it was approximately 1,000 feet distant. The engineer immediately initiated an emergency application of the brakes and the fireman sounded a warning blast on the horn. The fireman

that as the train was approaching the track motorcar he observed that the canvas curtains on the track motorcar were closed. He said that no torpedoes were exploded by the train, and that he did not observe any lighted fuses on the track structure in the vicinity of the point of accident. The engineer estimated that the speed of the train was about 50 miles per hour when the collision occurred.

The rules of the carrier require that foreman and operators must use the utmost care when operating track motorcars. Track motorcars should be clear of the main track 10 minutes before trains are due. In the instant case all occupants of the track motorcar were killed in the accident and it could not be determined why the section foreman did not clear the main track for No. 4, and failing to do so, why flag protection was not provided.

During the past 10 years the Commission has investigated 74 collisions, including the present case, in which track motorcars were involved. These accidents resulted in the death of 97 persons and the injury of 190 persons.

#### **Cause**

This accident was caused by track motorcar and trailer occupying a main track on the time of an overdue first-class passenger train.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this fourth  
day of February, 1959

By the Commission, Commissioner Freas

Harold D. McCoy,

Secretary

(SEAL)

**Interstate Commerce Commission**

**Washington 25, D C**

**OFFICIAL BUSINESS**

**RETURN AFTER FIVE DAYS**

**POSTAGE AND FEES PAID  
INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION**