

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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METRO-NORTH RAILROAD FATAL TRAIN

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CRASH, VALHALLA, NEW YORK

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Docket No.: HWY-15-MH-005

FEBRUARY 3, 2015

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Telephonic Interview of: BRIAN BORYK

Metro-North Railroad
North White Plains, New York

Friday,
February 6, 2015

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice.

BEFORE: DAVID BUCHER
Railroad Accident Investigator

APPEARANCES:

DAVID BUCHER, Railroad Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

BRUCE PARKIN, Safety Inspector, Region 1
Federal Railroad Administration

PATRICK VEDDER, Inspector, Region 1
Federal Railroad Administration

KEVIN MAHONEY, Road Foreman
Metro-North Railroad

KIRK THOMAS
Association of Commuter Rail Employees

MICHAEL BELLUCCO
Association of Commuter Rail Employees

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>I N D E X</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Telephonic Interview of Brian Boryk:		
By Mr. Bucher		4
By Mr. Mahoney		7
By Mr. Parkin		8
By Mr. Bucher		8
By Mr. Cooper		9
By Mr. Parkin		10

I N T E R V I E W

(1:40 p.m.)

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3 MR. BUCHER: This is Dave Bucher, Rail Operations --
4 Rail Accident Investigator for the National Transportation Safety
5 Board. This is a telephone interview of Brian Boryk, engineer on
6 Metro-North Railroad. And the interview is in reference to the
7 accident that occurred on February 3, 2015 at Valhalla, New York;
8 NTSB accident number HWY-15-MH-005.

9 To my left I have?

10 MR. THOMAS: Kirk Thomas, K-i-r-k, T-h-o-m-a-s, ACRE.

11 MR. MAHONEY: Kevin Mahoney, K-e-v-i-n, M-a-h-o-n-e-y,
12 road foreman.

13 MR. BELLUCCO: Mike Bellucco, B-e-l-l-u-c-c-o, ACRE.

14 MR. COOPER: Tommy Cooper, T-o-m-m-y, C-o-o-p-e-r.
15 engineer and local representative, Harlem Division.

16 MR. VEDDER: Patrick Vedder, P-a-t-r-i-c-k, V-e-d-d-e-r.
17 FRA inspector, Region 1.

18 MR. PARKIN: Bruce Parkin, P-a-r-k-i-n. Federal
19 Railroad Administration, safety inspector, Region 1.

INTERVIEW OF BRIAN BORYK

20
21 BY MR. BUCHER:

22 Q. Okay, Brian, Dave Bucher again. And I'm just going to
23 start off asking you a couple questions about your -- quickly
24 about what's your job experience as a locomotive engineer, when
25 were you promoted, and I guess when were you hired by the railroad

1 first?

2 A. 1988.

3 Q. Okay, and what position were you when you first hired?

4 A. Conductor.

5 Q. Conductor, okay. And when were you promoted to
6 locomotive engineer?

7 A. 1989.

8 Q. Okay. And from a couple of the other interviews I
9 understand there was a pick in November. Is that when you were on
10 the 657 job we're talking about --

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. -- or were you on there longer?

13 A. No, that's when I took over the job.

14 Q. Okay. All right. I guess the question that's on
15 everybody's mind here is, of course, is when you went through the
16 area, specifically Commerce Street, you were operating, we
17 speculate, about 10, 11 minutes ahead of the 659 train. Did you
18 notice anything unusual when you went through?

19 A. No, took no exceptions. Crossing was down, gates were
20 down, no exceptions to the crossing.

21 Q. Okay. I'm taking notes here. Did you operate on number
22 2 track northbound?

23 A. Yes, sir.

24 Q. Okay. All right, was there -- my question is did you
25 notice anything unusual at Commerce Street in the way of vehicular

1 traffic? And what I'm looking for, was it heavy or light or there
2 wasn't anybody, anything like that?

3 A. Almost every night the traffic on the Taconic, which
4 runs parallel to us, is very heavy. That's rush hour and it's
5 always backed up there. It's like a parking lot out there.

6 Q. Okay. And specifically Commerce Street at the crossing,
7 were there vehicles backed up when you went through there?

8 A. There usually are cars parked there. To the best of my
9 recognition, there probably was cars parked there -- not parked
10 there, but sitting there waiting for the gates to open.

11 Q. Okay. So you would characterize that as heavy traffic,
12 multiple vehicles?

13 A. I would characterize it as a usual occurrence. It's
14 rush hour and there's usually cars there.

15 Q. Okay, okay. Okay, have you ever had any experience with
16 any -- specifically any grade crossing close calls or even another
17 grade crossing accident in your experience on the Harlem Line?

18 A. Not in that area, no. Up at Brewster crossing I've had
19 cars drive in front of me when I stop at the station, but not in
20 the lower Harlem, no.

21 MR. BUCHER: Okay. Okay, I'm going just pass it off to
22 Kirk on my left here. And we'll just make a circle around the
23 room here and ask you a few questions, and that should be about
24 the limit there, buddy.

25 MR. BORYK: No problem.

1 MR. THOMAS: Hey, Brian, I'm just saying hi. I don't
2 have any questions. No questions.

3 MR. BORYK: Okay, thank you.

4 BY MR. MAHONEY:

5 Q. Brian, Kevin Mahoney. I just have one question about
6 the crossings in the lower Harlem headed north from Valhalla. Is
7 there anything that you could add as far as safety is concerned
8 with those crossings? Anything that you think --

9 A. Anything I can add?

10 Q. Anything that you could maybe suggest -- do you have any
11 issues with those crossings particularly?

12 A. I've had no issues in the past with those crossings, no.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. Most of the time I've gone through there, and there's --
15 during the middle of the day there's nobody there. Like I said,
16 during rush hour it's a usual occurrence to see people waiting at
17 the crossing, all the time. The Taconic is packed as far as
18 (indiscernible).

19 Q. And would you say the visibility for the crossings that
20 you have are adequate to -- in case there is a car there, you have
21 enough time to react?

22 A. That territory is 60 miles an hour.

23 Q. Yep.

24 A. You can react, but obviously at 60 miles an hour, after
25 you pass Lakeview crossing, you go one crossing at a time watching

1 each crossing as close as you can until you pass that crossing and
2 then you start viewing the next crossing, and Lakeview and
3 Commerce are a little closer than usual crossing-wise, so --

4 I don't think there's anything I could suggest due to
5 where the crossings are that would make them any safer. Maybe get
6 rid of one of the crossings. There's three, four crossings that's
7 in a mile there.

8 MR. MAHONEY: Okay, thank you very much. Appreciate the
9 time you spent.

10 MR. BORYK: Okay.

11 MR. COOPER: Brian, Tommy Cooper. I don't have any
12 questions at this time. I think we will come back around, though,
13 so I may have one after.

14 MR. BORYK: Okay, thanks Tom.

15 BY MR. PARKIN:

16 Q. Bruce Parkin, FRA. Hi, Brian. My question is, have you
17 ever encountered with the grade -- with the crossing devices going
18 through that area at all in your career?

19 A. Not in 28 years, sir, no.

20 MR. PARKIN: Okay, very good. Thank you. I have no
21 other questions.

22 MR. BORYK: Okay.

23 BY MR. BUCHER:

24 Q. Okay. Brian, Dave Bucher again.

25 A. Okay.

1 Q. You were, like I said, operating ahead of the 659. Did
2 you hear the emergency radio transmission that --

3 A. I did.

4 Q. You did? Okay, did you hear any of the other radio
5 transmissions of what was going on behind you?

6 A. I immediately started slowing down. I didn't know if
7 the emergency was in front of me or behind me, so I immediately
8 started slowing down. Then I heard the RTC trying to get --
9 trying to reach Train 659, and I realized that the person who
10 called the emergency was behind me.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. And I really didn't hear too much after that.

13 Q. Okay, thank you. All right, I have one question about
14 -- did you have a full crew with you, meaning conductor and
15 assistant conductors, for your train?

16 A. Yes, sir. I had two assistant conductors and a
17 conductor that night.

18 MR. BUCHER: Okay. Okay, that's all I have at the
19 moment.

20 MR. THOMAS: I'm good.

21 MR. BUCHER: Anything else?

22 BY MR. COOPER:

23 Q. Brian, Tommy Cooper. How many cars did you have that
24 evening?

25 A. I had eight cars.

1 Q. Had eight cars. Since you're the regular assigned
2 engineer to 657, is the head car, the north car, usually filled?
3 It's a rush hour train. Could you describe the normal capacity of
4 the passengers on 657?

5 A. In our head car every seat is taken plus there are
6 people standing in the vestibule area until we get to about
7 Chappaqua. At Chappaqua most of the head car is empty.

8 MR. COOPER: I have no further questions. Thank you,
9 Brian.

10 BY MR. PARKIN:

11 Q. Brian, Bruce Parkin, FRA. One question. Is that head
12 car on your train designated as a quiet car or is it another car
13 on the train?

14 A. No, it's the head car. The head car is designated as a
15 quiet car.

16 MR. PARKIN: Okay, thank you. No other questions.

17 MR. BUCHER: Okay, I -- this is Dave Bucher I don't have
18 anything else. I'm looking around the table; everybody looks like
19 they're done. Brian, thank you for letting us call you and ask
20 you a few questions. It's really important that we understand how
21 the trains were running that day, and we appreciate you taking the
22 time.

23 MR. BORYK: No problem. I wish I was there, but I had a
24 family problem I had to come and solve. I'm sorry.

25 MR. BUCHER: That's not a problem. We just appreciate

1 being able to talk to you.

2 MR. COOPER: Thank you, Brian, and I know that you'll
3 make yourself available if any future questions arise; I know that
4 you would make yourself available, so thank you very much.

5 MR. BORYK: No problem, Tommy.

6 MR. COOPER: Thank you.

7 MR. THOMAS: All right, Brian, take care, man.

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Good luck to your brother.

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Take care.

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Good luck.

11 MR. BUCHER: This concludes the interview of Brian
12 Boryk.

13 (Whereupon, the interview 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: METRO-NORTH RAILROAD FATAL TRAIN
CRASH, VALHALLA, NEW YORK
FEBRUARY 3, 2015
Telephonic Interview of Brian Boryk

DOCKET NUMBER: HWY-15-MH-005

PLACE: Valhalla, New York

DATE: February 6, 2015

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.

Keith J. Maurer
Transcriber