



NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
Investigative Hearing

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority Metrorail train 302 that encountered heavy smoke in the tunnel between the L'Enfant Plaza Station and the Potomac River Bridge on January 12, 2015

GROUP	G
EXHIBIT	
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Agency / Organization

District of Columbia Fire and Emergency Medical Services

Title

Interview Transcript of Lawrence Chapman

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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WMATA INCIDENT AT L'ENFANT PLAZA
STATION, WASHINGTON, D.C.
JANUARY 12, 2015

Docket No.: DCA-15-FR-004

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Interview of: LAWRENCE CHAPMAN

Washington, D.C.

Wednesday,
January 28, 2015

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice.

BEFORE: RICHARD DOWNS, JR.
Survival Factors Investigator

APPEARANCES:

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Chairman, Survival Factors Technical Working Group
National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB)

ROBERT JOE GORDON, Investigator-in-Charge
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Tri-State Oversight Committee

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Office of Emergency Management
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)

DERRON HAWKINS, Deputy Fire Chief
Homeland Security & Special Operations Division
D.C. Fire and EMS

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I N T E R V I E W

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2 MR. DOWNS: Today's date is January 28, 2015 and the
3 following is an interview being conducted in reference to NTSB
4 investigation number DCA-15-FR-004, which relates to an accident
5 involving heavy smoke release and train evacuations that occurred
6 in and near the L'Enfant Plaza station of the WMATA Metrorail
7 system here in Washington D.C. on the afternoon of January 12,
8 2015.

9 This interview is being conducted with a member of the
10 District of Columbia Fire and Emergency Medical Services
11 Department as conducted by the NTSB Survival Factors Technical
12 Working Group of the investigation. My name is Richard Downs, Jr.
13 and I'm a Survival Factors Investigator with the NTSB, in which I
14 also serve in the role as Survival Factors Technical Working Group
15 Chairperson.

16 I will preside over this interview, which is being
17 recorded for the record, in which a transcript may also be
18 compiled of the recording as a permanent docketed record of the
19 interview.

20 I'll now ask that the witness please identify
21 themselves, their employment affiliation and job position title
22 for the record.

23 MR. CHAPMAN: My name is Larry Chapman. I'm a captain
24 with D.C. Fire and EMS.

25 MR. DOWNS: Thank you. And you're not accompanied by

1 anyone today?

2 MR. CHAPMAN: I am not.

3 MR. DOWNS: Thank you. And as my first questions for
4 the witness, would you -- off the record.

5 (Off the record.)

6 (On the record.)

7 MR. DOWNS: Back on the record.

8 Thank you. I'll now ask that the participants of this
9 interview, who will have the opportunity to present questions to
10 the witness, to please individually identify themselves, their
11 employment affiliation, and job position title for the record.

12 MR. ROURKE: Good morning. My name is Denton Rourke.
13 I'm the Operations Manager with WMATA's Office of Emergency
14 Management.

15 MS. BURTCH: Good morning. I'm Kimberly Burtch with the
16 FTA's Office of Transit Safety and Oversight.

17 MR. HAWKINS: Good morning. I'm Derron Hawkins, Deputy
18 Fire Chief, D.C. Fire and EMS, Homeland Security Division.

19 MR. BLACKISTONE: Steve Blackistone, National
20 Transportation Safety Board, Office of Communications.

21 MS. SAMARASINGHE: Good morning, Captain Chapman. I am
22 Sharmila Samarasinghe. I'm with the Tri-State Oversight
23 Committee.

24 MR. GORDON: Joe Gordon, National Transportation Safety
25 Board, Investigator-in-Charge.

1 And in addition to what Mr. Downs said there to begin
2 with, wanted to just let you know the purpose of the NTSB
3 investigation is to enhance safety. We're not here, you know, to
4 assign any fault or blame. We just want to look for any safety
5 improvements that we may be able to make and, you know, take as a
6 learning experience from the accident.

7 NTSB cannot offer or guarantee any confidentiality or
8 immunity from any legal action, and Mr. Downs touched on the
9 transcript that will go into the public docket. So we can get
10 started with the questions.

11 INTERVIEW OF LAWRENCE CHAPMAN

12 BY MR. DOWNS:

13 Q. Thank you. And as my first question for the witness,
14 would you please briefly describe for us your role or involvement
15 in the event?

16 A. On the 12th, I was Acting Battalion Chief in the 2nd
17 Battalion and I assumed the position of Incident Commander.

18 Q. Thank you, Captain. And could you please describe for
19 us in your own words what occurred on the day of the event
20 relative to your actions and involvement at L'Enfant Plaza
21 Station?

22 A. Sure. Briefly, as I said, I was acting in the 2nd
23 Battalion, dispatched as first due chief on the incident. I
24 established a few directives en route. One was to put Level 3
25 accountability into place in accordance with our Standard

1 Operational Guidelines. An entry control point was announced by
2 the Office of Unified Communications during the dispatch.

3 While en route I was contacted by another battalion
4 chief who was operating on an incident nearby. This was the 6th
5 Battalion. And he had told me that they were investigating smoke
6 that could possibly be coming from a Metro vent shaft. I asked
7 him to keep me updated and let me know if there were any
8 developments or whether he could confirm that condition.

9 As units began to arrive, they were reporting people
10 evacuating the station and that they were being advised that there
11 was heavy smoke on the platform. Again, in alignment with our
12 Standard Operational Guidelines, I assigned two engine companies
13 and one truck company as a recon group. This was Engine 18,
14 Engine 1, and Tower 3. I additionally assigned Engine 23 as an
15 accountability company to ensure that Level 3 accountability was
16 maintained.

17 It seemed evident from the very beginning communications
18 were going to be an issue. As soon as the first company entered
19 the station, their transmissions became intermittent. I advised
20 units on the scene to activate our VRS, vehicle repeater system,
21 which can sometimes accentuate communications when we're in a
22 tough spot.

23 I arrived on the scene and made a verbal announcement
24 that I was now assuming command and, again, the communications
25 issues were becoming more prevalent as companies started to

1 engage. At this point, to me, it was really unclear what the
2 situation was below grade. I was having trouble communicating
3 with my units. I was receiving various reports of heavy smoke,
4 people being evacuated, coming out of the station.

5 One of my biggest concerns at this point was sending
6 people into an unknown environment. I really had no idea what was
7 going on down there. At this point another battalion chief, the
8 second due battalion chief on the incident arrived. This was
9 Battalion 4. And I had asked him if he could assume command of
10 the recon group and advise me of what was going on. So he began
11 to get himself situated and head down.

12 As the incident progressed and I'm starting to realize
13 the volume of individuals who might require assistance, whether it
14 was evacuation, whether it was medical treatment, whether it was
15 transport, I started to realize that we could quickly become
16 overwhelmed. At this point I requested second alarm. It was
17 fairly early in the incident. The second alarm was going to bring
18 a lot more resources to bear plus, I think, it would also wind up
19 having the command staff start to arrive to support the operation.

20 Now obviously it's been a little while and my memory
21 might be getting a little contaminated from all the different
22 timelines and all the different reports that are flying around,
23 but as I recall, I was communicating with a representative from
24 Metro and I know this -- the gentleman had two stars on his
25 shoulder, so I'm presuming this was a chief-level officer from

1 Metro Transit.

2 They were starting to tell me -- were trying to convey
3 the information that they had about what was going on. He said,
4 well, we have an unknown fire somewhere; it's creating this smoke
5 condition. At this point I'm starting to realize that they have a
6 train stopped in the tunnel. Now we're talking about this train
7 car and he said, well, there's people on it and we would like to
8 try and move it back to the station. I said, okay.

9 So the power is still up and they're conveying to me
10 that power was still up and their intent was to try and move the
11 train back. I said, well, you know, what's the difficulty? Why
12 can't you do it? And he said, well, we're having brake problems
13 on the train. So at this point I'm under the impression that
14 there is really no understanding of what's -- what the status is
15 of that train, whether it could be moved or not.

16 At this point I'm getting, again, sporadic
17 communications. I'm starting to receive reports of -- through OUC
18 and through some of my units below grade that there's, you know,
19 significant numbers of injured people. Rescue 1 had also stated
20 that they were in the process of removing somebody who was in
21 severe distress. I think they were unresponsive. Rescue 1 had
22 entered via the elevator.

23 They were assigned to the rescue group but they weren't
24 actually part of the recon group. I think they all wound up
25 working together at some point. But, again, it was kind of

1 unclear what was going on below grade.

2 I can't say exactly what time this was, but I know
3 Deputy Chief Moore had joined the command post and was, you know,
4 giving direction and advice as well as Acting Assistant Chief
5 Mills. And it did stick in my memory at one point, I had the
6 representative from Metro, I believe he was from the Fire
7 Marshall's Office, Deputy -- the chief officer from Metro Transit
8 and Chief Mills. And this is when we were starting to receive
9 communications that my units might have entered the track bed
10 already. And our policy states that until power is confirmed
11 down, we never enter the track bed.

12 I know Chief Mills heard this. He says, okay, you tell
13 everybody to stop right where they are. So I made a generalized
14 announcement on our tactical channel that units should hold their
15 position, not enter the track bed until we confirmed status of
16 power. At this point I turned to the Metro officials and I said
17 you're going to have to shut everything down; kill it all. You
18 know, we're not -- we can't risk having people on the track bed
19 with power up.

20 In fairly short order, I got confirmation from both the
21 Metro official on the scene and from our OCC liaison that power
22 was down, advise the units that they could now proceed and that
23 the track bed was safe. There weren't a lot of command decisions
24 that needed to be made at this point because the units were still
25 trying to assess what was going on, figure out who needed to be

1 removed. I'm getting occasional reports from Battalion 4.

2 Another operational decision I made with the advice of
3 one of our deputies who said, you should probably move EMS to a
4 separate branch, give them their own tactical channel and get that
5 off my plate. That was actually a very beneficial move. It was
6 getting a little overwhelming trying to deal with all these
7 different activities at the same time. That was probably one of
8 the best suggestions that I received during the entire incident.

9 Eventually wind up assigning another engine, another
10 truck, and I think that was -- yeah, another engine and another
11 truck to the recon group, which was starting to push the span of
12 control for that battalion chief, but I think he needed the
13 resources. And after conferring with him later, he suggested that
14 he might have even been able to use more resources. But, again,
15 due to the confusion and the lack of communication, it was very
16 difficult for me to just randomly commit companies when I didn't
17 know what I was sending them into.

18 We also had a report from Metro, I would say fairly well
19 into the incident when we still had no idea what was burning, they
20 thought it was an ancillary room somewhere near the station. They
21 had requested some of our units to go with them to investigate to
22 try and figure out where the smoke was coming from. So at that
23 point I assigned Engine 9 and Truck 13 to work with Metro in an
24 attempt to figure out where it was.

25 Also, I remember Deputy Chief Baker had also gone down

1 to provide some information to us to try and clear up what was
2 going on. He was communicating directly with, I think, Deputy
3 Chief Moore and Chief Mills via cell phone. So I wasn't in
4 communication with him, but I was getting reports through those
5 two gentlemen, what he was seeing and what he was able to relay.

6 They did send us eventually a chain marker. I think it
7 was 50.00 or thereabouts, to give us an idea where the train was.
8 I think later it turned out the fire was actually well towards the
9 actual portal on the Yellow Line towards the Potomac River exit.

10 After getting most of these resources in place,
11 establishing the EMS branch, things started to flow a lot better
12 and really from that point on there weren't a whole lot more
13 tactical decisions to be made. It was mostly a matter of just
14 trying to understand what the companies were doing, where people
15 were going, and how we were going to transport and treat these
16 folks.

17 Q. Okay. Does that pretty much summarize your points for
18 now?

19 A. I think that certainly gives you an overview of what I
20 was thinking.

21 Q. Okay. Very good.

22 MR. DOWNS: We'll move on to our next round of
23 questioning. Mr. Rourke.

24 BY MR. ROURKE:

25 Q. Chief, I got just some general questions about Metro

1 Training.

2 A. Sure.

3 Q. And then I'll just ask you some questions about, you
4 know, the incident.

5 A. Um-hum.

6 Q. Can you describe for me generally the DCFD Metro
7 training program?

8 A. Let's see. I've -- I have close to 24 years of service.
9 And we have, I would describe it as, had peaks and valleys when it
10 comes to training with Metro. There's certainly times when the
11 amount of training that we performed with or about Metro is -- it
12 goes up, and at times it goes down.

13 I know there has been some very valuable training that
14 we've conducted with Metro. I've been out to Pennsy Drive myself.
15 In fact, I participated in their emergency services rodeo one
16 year. But obviously with the complexity of the system, it's
17 something that is really vast.

18 Q. Right.

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. Well, go back 24 years, do you remember what you did in
21 recruit school? If anything?

22 A. I think we learned about putting the WSAD on and using
23 the volt probe. I think that's really the extent of Metro. Most
24 of my information about Metro, I picked up while studying for
25 promotional exams, reading through the emergency services guide

1 and our SOGs.

2 Q. So that leads to my next one. What do you -- I know you
3 all do a lot of training at the station battalion level. How much
4 of that revolves around Metro?

5 A. Most of our training at the company level is at the
6 discretion of the company officer. I know my times doing company
7 drills, we -- I like to do walk-throughs. Like we would -- prior
8 to that directorate from 2013, we would go look at vent shafts and
9 do familiarization at stations. We would talk about some of our
10 standard operating guidelines, just a lot of overview sort of
11 things, because some of it is just so specific it really needs to
12 be referenced while you're at an incident.

13 I could say, and it might have been auspicious, but that
14 morning I actually printed out a whole new set of Metro Response
15 Guidelines and put them in the buggy that day. I mean, maybe that
16 was some kind of a premonition, but I'm glad I did it.

17 Q. Have you ever participated in a Metro exercise that you
18 know of?

19 A. I remember we used to do some overnight drills in
20 tunnels and things like that. I never actually wound up doing
21 one. The extent would be, like I said, going out to Pennsy Drive
22 that time. I can't remember another specific incident where -- or
23 activity that we actually performed with Metro.

24 Q. All right. Thanks. And then as an acting battalion
25 chief, what kind of incident management training do you get?

1 A. Prior to becoming turned over to act, you need to be
2 current with all the incident management standards, like the NIMS
3 100, 200, 300, 700, 701, et cetera. You spend time training with
4 a battalion chief. Under his supervision, you'll, you know, run
5 incidents, et cetera. I'm trying to remember if there's anything
6 else specifically that you need to do. Nothing comes to mind
7 right now, but I might have left something off the list. Most of
8 it is actually just operating under the direct supervision of the
9 battalion chief.

10 Q. OJT, so to speak. Right?

11 A. Indeed.

12 Q. Yes. All right. Anything specific to Metro in that
13 process?

14 A. Not that I recall.

15 Q. Last year we had a -- there was a training program
16 called the Joint Supervisor Training. I think you might have
17 covered this already, but did you attend that?

18 A. No.

19 Q. Do you guys have a specific command and control chart
20 for Metro incidents?

21 A. A command chart?

22 Q. Command and control chart that that the chief uses to
23 track resources? You might call it something else.

24 A. Yeah. Yeah, we do. We do.

25 Q. Worksheet?

1 A. We have a specific tactical worksheet designated for
2 Metro.

3 MR. DOWNS: Was that used in this event, Captain?

4 MR. CHAPMAN: I did refer to it.

5 MR. DOWNS: Okay.

6 BY MR. ROURKE:

7 Q. So what's your understanding of the incident management
8 structure of -- at a Metro incident? I know you understand your
9 -- you know, the D.C. Fire Department portion of it.

10 A. Sure.

11 Q. But what's your understanding of other folks of Metro,
12 how they play into it?

13 A. Well, ideally we would establish a unified command where
14 we would have representatives from every organization that was
15 involved in one place and providing information back and forth to
16 one another. In this incident it became a little difficult to
17 organize that in an effective manner.

18 Again, I had -- I believe it was a representative from
19 the Fire Marshall's Office. And I'm not sure what his position
20 was. And I definitely had a chief officer from Metro Transit. I
21 also had MPD and I wound up having FBI. And they would
22 essentially come up to the buggy, talk to me, we would confer a
23 little bit, and then they would step away. So it wasn't a formal
24 unified command, but I think we did manage to convey information
25 back and forth.

1 You know, obviously you can imagine that the environment
2 is a little tricky to work under. And at times I just have to
3 sort of shut down and say, okay, I have to concentrate on what's
4 going on right here, right now. And I think that can be taken the
5 wrong way, shall we say?

6 Q. Uh-hum. Did you ever have a rail supervisor, anyone
7 that identified themselves as a rail supervisor or a rail
8 supervisor come to the command post?

9 A. No. Now that doesn't mean that one didn't. I know
10 there were several representatives from Metro who came and went
11 but did not actually identify themselves. In fact, I don't think
12 any of us identified ourselves by a name. I think the folks I was
13 dealing with realized that I was the incident commander and I had
14 a sense of who they were, but we didn't actually, you know, say,
15 okay, I'm this, you're that, et cetera, et cetera.

16 Q. Right. I think you kind of covered this, but the
17 questioned is was a solid unified command established with D.C.
18 Fire Department, Metro Transit Police, and Metrorail supervisor?

19 A. Uh-huh. The style?

20 Q. Well, a solid. That's the way the question was put.
21 Like a strong -- a strong unified command. I guess that's what
22 he's trying to say here.

23 A. I don't think I could describe it as a strong unified
24 command. See, if -- in my vision, that would be, say, a command
25 vehicle where everybody could be in the same room, where you're

1 kind of quiet, away from the incident a little bit. That's sort
2 of how I would envision it and that just wasn't possible here.

3 Q. You all -- has there ever been an instance where you all
4 managed from the back of the buggy or do you do everything from
5 the inside of the buggy?

6 A. I have never operated outside. Every incident I have
7 been in charge of, I've been inside the buggy. Although this was
8 certainly the largest incident I've ever been in charge of.

9 Q. It's a nice day to be acting chief.

10 A. Indeed. Indeed, it was.

11 Q. Do you -- you said you use the command and control
12 worksheet, chart --

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. -- whatever you -- what do you all call it?

15 A. Tactical worksheet.

16 Q. Tactical worksheet. Did you bring that with you by any
17 chance?

18 A. I may have it. I do indeed.

19 Q. This one, we can look at?

20 MR. DOWNS: Well, Captain, we'll get a copy of that at
21 some point.

22 MR. ROURKE: Okay.

23 MR. DOWNS: We can do that after the interview.

24 MR. CHAPMAN: Sure.

25 MR. ROURKE: Good. All right.

1 MR. CHAPMAN: It's not particularly pretty, but --

2 MR. DOWNS: That's fine. We understand if it's -- it's
3 cryptic notes, that's fine. We'll just have it as one of the
4 documents for the investigation.

5 MR. CHAPMAN: Sure.

6 BY MR. ROURKE:

7 Q. What were some challenges or obstacles involved with
8 incident management?

9 A. The largest by far was communications.

10 Q. And what do you mean by that?

11 A. I mean, I was unable to get clear reports from my people
12 operating inside of the system.

13 Q. Radio communications?

14 A. Correct.

15 Q. Okay. Anything -- any others you want to -- come to
16 mind?

17 A. No, not really.

18 Q. Okay. Can you just describe for us briefly your D.C.
19 SOP for communicating a Metro incident?

20 A. For communicating a Metro incident. Well, our primary
21 means is through our portable radios. That's our primary. And we
22 actually do have a system of tests that we're supposed to perform
23 on a regular basis to ensure that our radios do work in the
24 system. You know, we've recently gone to some updated equipment,
25 and I think part of that familiarity training is re- -- excuse me,

1 not re-, but performing tests in the stations to see if the
2 communication system actually worked. I know as an acting
3 battalion chief I had sent companies to inspect numerous stations
4 in the last month or two.

5 Secondly, there's the wayside telephones that we could
6 use. We used to have a hard-wired system that we could run into
7 the tunnels or into the station. I think we discontinued those
8 quite a long time ago. And what seems to be sometimes the most
9 effective for us, and not just on this incident but other
10 incidents as well, is cell phones.

11 Q. Did you, at the -- when you were at the command post,
12 did you ever talk to the Rail Operational Control Center?

13 A. No. I had another battalion chief who responded to OCC
14 to relay information.

15 Q. And was the command conference line utilized?

16 A. I believe it was. I know the battalion chief I spoke to
17 who was acting as our Metro liaison for that incident attempted to
18 access it. Now, I don't know how successful he was obviously.

19 Q. Um-hum.

20 A. He's here today.

21 Q. Right.

22 A. So you can ask him about it.

23 Q. So you know if Chief Mills or Chief Moore was on it?

24 A. I do not know.

25 Q. Generally how well do your radios work in our -- in

1 Metro stations and tunnels?

2 A. I would say -- I wouldn't say completely sporadically,
3 but, I mean, when the equipment seems to be operating, it's fine.
4 But every once in a while you'll enter a station and the radios
5 will stop working.

6 Q. Is that the first due battalion at that station?

7 A. It is not.

8 Q. Is not. Okay.

9 A. Battalion 6 would have been first due --

10 Q. Six. All right.

11 A. -- and he was out on that -- a local --

12 Q. Right.

13 A. -- investigating the smoke from the shaft.

14 Q. So there's been reports that -- there was some
15 information that the radio system was having problems a week
16 prior.

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. Were you aware of that at the time?

19 A. No.

20 Q. Do you know if this -- well, I'll ask him. Never mind.
21 I won't ask you to speak for somebody else.

22 Did anybody from the Metro offer to pair up a police
23 officer or other Metro employee with your units to enhance
24 communications?

25 A. To enhance communications? No. We never discussed

1 that.

2 Q. When were you notified about the -- or to the best of
3 your knowledge, about the train being stuck in the tunnel with
4 passengers aboard?

5 A. You know, the timeline for me is a little fuzzy.

6 Q. Sure.

7 A. Obviously things were happening fast and it was sort of
8 hectic. I think it -- I'm going to guess it was maybe about 5 --
9 5 to 10 minutes after I had assumed command of the incident. And
10 I have to emphasize that that's speculation.

11 Q. And who -- do you remember who told you that?

12 A. I was receiving reports from OUC, our communications
13 center, as well as from folks on the scene. I seem to recall
14 Rescue 1 making a transmission about bringing somebody off of a
15 train. And it was starting to become clear that there was a
16 train, that there were people on it, and that it wasn't at the
17 station.

18 Q. Um-hum. Okay. Did any of the police officials that
19 were there or police supervisors that were there, did they convey
20 that information to you -- to the best of your recollection?

21 A. I believe that it did come from either the fire
22 marshal's representative or from that chief officer.

23 Q. Okay. Thanks.

24 A. I know we certainly talked about it because obviously we
25 went on to converse about possibly moving the train. So it would

1 have been, clearly would have been prior to that.

2 Q. Right. Okay. Good deal. Did anybody give you a
3 location of the train at that time?

4 A. No.

5 Q. Okay. The chain, you talked a little bit about a chain
6 marker. You didn't get that until later on?

7 A. Correct. And I got that from our deputy chief. And now
8 looking at my tactical worksheet, it was 55-00.

9 Q. What tools do you have to locate a chain marker?

10 A. Tools?

11 Q. Yeah. How do you know what that means?

12 A. Well, we have Metro response maps in all of our
13 buggies --

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. -- and all of our apparatus.

16 Q. Good. And you -- was that used on this incident?

17 A. I did not refer to it. But I believe Chief Moore was
18 looking at it behind me.

19 Q. So when the train -- when you get the word about the
20 train in the tunnel and there's a conversation about trying to
21 move it, what's your thinking then of Plan B or whatever?

22 A. Well, obviously being able to bring the train back to
23 the station would have been the optimal solution because, you
24 know, people can certainly just step right off of and onto the
25 platform. Secondary would be evacuating via the catwalk or

1 through the track bed.

2 Q. Did you make that -- did the command make that decision
3 to do that or did that kind of just happen?

4 A. That decision sort of evolved. Once power was shut
5 down, it was obvious that the train wasn't going anywhere and I
6 believe the 4th Battalion chief, Chief Welsh, was probably
7 directing units to do just that. But again, the intermittent
8 communications made it difficult to understand exactly what was
9 going on down there.

10 Q. That had to be very frustrating.

11 A. Indeed.

12 Q. I want to talk a little bit about ventilation.

13 A. Sure.

14 Q. What's the -- what is the district's SOP regarding
15 ventilation under the Metro stations and tunnels?

16 A. I believe, and I -- I'm afraid I can't be specific, but
17 I believe that we generally take the suggestion of Metro when it
18 comes to operating the fans. If we determine that we want the
19 fans operated in a different way, we're going to go through OCC to
20 have that done. And we did actually request a change at one point
21 during the incident. I might even have the number of the shaft
22 that we would have changed up.

23 MR. DOWNS: That's okay, Captain. We don't need the
24 details of the timing and the numbers. Just a general description
25 as to the best your recollection at this point.

1 MR. CHAPMAN: Okay.

2 BY MR. ROURKE:

3 Q. Did anybody from -- when you got there, did anybody
4 provide you any information on the ventilation status?

5 A. No. No, we didn't talk about it until I received a
6 request from Chief Baker to change one of them. And I believe we
7 were going from exhaust to supply on one of them.

8 Q. Are they -- let's talk a little bit about the mass
9 casualty part of it, what you all do to -- you know, treated and
10 transported a great number of folks.

11 A. Sure.

12 Q. What's the SOP? Do you have an SOP for that in D.C.?

13 A. We do. Yes. Once we get to nine or more patients, we
14 declare a mass casualty incident. It's not that -- it's not
15 optional. It happens automatically. This sets into motion a few
16 actions. One, the hospitals begin to get notified that we have
17 this situation developing and that they're going to be dealing
18 with an influx of patients. We also have two mass casualty units,
19 one for the north side of town, one for the south side of town.
20 They will both respond. It consists of ambulance buses with
21 companies in support. And in this incident I wound up assigning a
22 battalion chief to that branch. And as I said earlier, just to
23 get it off my plate completely.

24 Q. Do you have a notation what time that was declared?

25 A. I do not.

1 MR. DOWNS: That should be on the fire department
2 timeline, Chief, shouldn't it?

3 MR. HAWKINS: Yes.

4 MR. DOWNS: So we'll get that later. Thank you.

5 BY MR. ROURKE:

6 Q. Let's see. So you talked a little bit about how you set
7 up the recon units.

8 A. Um-hum.

9 Q. Just wanted to -- just describe for us generally what
10 that process would work normally if it works like it's supposed
11 to.

12 A. Well, the intent is to control access to the station.
13 So we limit the number of companies we just immediately put in
14 place. And I say that to sort of discriminate between a Metro
15 incident and, say, a structural fire.

16 Q. Um-hum.

17 A. On a structural fire, our SOGs are fairly clear and
18 units will act without direction. On a Metro incident we expect
19 units not to act without direction. The initial recon group is
20 always the first two engines and truck. The two engines are
21 basically the hunt and seekers to go see what's going on. The
22 truck has the safety function.

23 Q. So how did that work?

24 A. Well --

25 Q. In this instance, I mean.

1 A. You know, I had the units acknowledge their assignments.
2 I know I was getting the occasional report from Engine 18 as they
3 were going in. But, again, once they got far enough down I
4 started to lose contact with them.

5 Q. All right. So that takes me to communications. So we
6 just covered that one. How about, did you have any conversations
7 with any Metro officers on the platform? I know you were at the
8 street, so --

9 A. No.

10 Q. Okay. I talked about the third rail SOP, how companies
11 need permission to access the roadway.

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. Or the track bed.

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Power has to be down.

16 A. Correct.

17 Q. So just run for me to the best of your recollection the
18 sequence of when you arrived, whatever you were told about power,
19 up until the point they told you it was down.

20 A. Well -- and again, you know, my memory of the exact
21 timeline is a little fuzzy.

22 Q. Sure.

23 A. I know we had had some discussions about what was
24 actually going on, what was burning, and when Metro officials and
25 I were discussing the fact that there was a train in the tunnel

1 and that they were trying to move it, you know, that made it
2 abundantly clear to me that power was still up.

3 Q. Um-hum.

4 A. And I think we were still discussing it when Chief Mills
5 directed me to take some action and, first off, ensure that our
6 units weren't committing themselves to a dangerous area and then
7 to advise Metro to just shut the power down. And I know they were
8 asking when I made the request is, you know, what do you need shut
9 down? I said everything. And eventually they came back and
10 advised me that it was from waterside to the portal it was shut
11 down, and that seemed to me to be adequate.

12 Q. And that information was coming from?

13 A. It came from Metro initially and then from -- confirmed
14 by our battalion chief at OCC.

15 Q. Okay. And I think you stated earlier that you didn't
16 look at them -- you weren't using the emergency response map data?

17 A. I was not.

18 Q. No. You described for us a little bit about your point
19 of entry accountability.

20 A. Um-hum.

21 Q. Where did they set that up? Where did you direct them
22 to set that up?

23 A. That was -- I'm trying to remember. The primary entry
24 point was the -- I guess it's D Street between 6th and 7th. Is
25 that -- I'm trying to remember exactly --

1 Q. Where is that in location to -- in relation to where you
2 are?

3 A. I was right in front of it.

4 Q. All right. That's good. Next question.

5 A. I think below the HUD building; is that right?

6 Q. Yes. Um-hum.

7 A. Yeah. That was our primary entry point.

8 Q. And how well did that work for you?

9 A. I think it worked very well. Because with position of
10 my command post, I was actually able to talk to companies as they
11 were coming out, and I actually wound up getting a lot of
12 information that way as well. A company officer would walk up to
13 my buddy as he was coming out of the station and say, well, this
14 is happening, this is going on down there. And sometimes that
15 would be quite illuminating.

16 Q. Um-hum. So all the companies entered at -- through that
17 entrance?

18 A. With the exception of Rescue 1 and, let's see, the
19 companies that wound up going with Metro to try and find the fire.
20 That was Engine 9 and Truck 13. They went through an alternate
21 entry point. I think everybody else did go through the primary.

22 Q. All right. How do you account -- or how is
23 accountability done of Metro police officers or Metro employees?

24 A. We don't have a policy regarding that.

25 Q. Okay. Was there any conversation with the transit

1 official at the command post about the accountability of Metro
2 employees?

3 A. We did not discuss it.

4 Q. The units that went with the Metro folks to look for the
5 source of the fire?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Where did they go? Do you know?

8 A. I actually don't. I heard from them when they were --
9 when they had connected with the Metro employees, but I did not
10 hear from them further.

11 Q. And how about any check of adjacent rails? I don't want
12 to call it a search, but I guess you could call it a search of the
13 other rails?

14 A. I know initially Engine 18, at least, had gone down the
15 Green Line tunnel as opposed to the Yellow Line where the train
16 actually was. I think that would probably be the extent of our
17 investigating other tunnels or other shafts.

18 Q. Um-hum. And did we ever locate -- did you all ever
19 locate the source of the fire or the smoke?

20 A. Not until long after. I mean, the train had been
21 evacuated. It seemed to me, and obviously I wasn't down there,
22 but it sounded as though the smoke had started to clear a little
23 bit after power had been dropped. And I think eventually we wound
24 up finding out it was much closer to the portal.

25 Q. Okay. That's all I have.

1 MR. DOWNS: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Rourke.

2 Ms. Kimberly Burtch, do you have questions for our
3 witness?

4 MS. BURTCHE: No.

5 MR. DOWNS: Okay, thank you.

6 Chief Hawkins, do you have questions now or do you want
7 to defer until later?

8 MR. HAWKINS: I'll defer to later.

9 MR. DOWNS: Okay. Very good. Mr. Blackistone?

10 BY MR. BLACKISTONE:

11 Q. Yeah. I've got a couple questions, mostly just to
12 clarify a couple things. In your current assignment are you
13 currently operating as the battalion chief at every shift, or --

14 A. Very often.

15 Q. Okay. And where are -- as captain, where are you
16 stationed?

17 A. I'm stationed with Engine 18 on Capitol Hill.

18 Q. Yeah. Okay.

19 A. 8th Street, S.E..

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. Although it's a new assignment for me. I've only --
22 I've only been there for a month or so. And most of the time I've
23 actually been acting as chief.

24 Q. Okay. Where were you before that?

25 A. I had been detailed to Engine Company 30 in Northeast.

1 Q. Yeah. Okay. I just asked to get an idea if you were,
2 to state companies are close to Metro stations.

3 A. Sure.

4 Q. So, 18 --

5 A. Everywhere I've been assigned has had a Metro station
6 with its first due my entire career.

7 Q. Okay. You mentioned Level 3 accountability. Could you
8 describe that for us a little bit? What does that mean versus
9 Level 1, Level 2?

10 A. Sure. What Level 3 accountability -- is basically a
11 trigger for us to control entry and exit. We want to ensure that
12 we are aware of who's going in and who's going out. That's the
13 reasoning behind assigning a company to actually record who is
14 entering the station, who isn't entering the station or a hot zone
15 on a different kind of incident.

16 Q. Hazmat or something?

17 A. Yeah. Hazmat is actually where I see it somewhat.
18 Sure. Exactly.

19 Q. Okay. And then you mentioned VRS. Could you describe
20 the VRS system a little bit, how it operates or --

21 A. Well, I can do my best. Not from a technical
22 standpoint, but --

23 Q. Yeah, I realize you're not a technician.

24 A. Right. Right. When we initially went to our 800
25 megahertz radio system some years ago, it was determined that it

1 was pretty hard to get a signal in and out of larger buildings,
2 some parts of town. We went through some big growing pains with
3 it.

4 Q. Yeah.

5 A. One of the measures we took to enhance communications
6 was to create this VRS system. And the VRS consists of a repeater
7 built into the vehicles with a directional antennae on either
8 side. It's, again, it's evolved a little bit. It used to be
9 somewhat cumbersome to actually engage it but now it's fairly
10 easy. Units operating would switch from the tactical channel to a
11 direct channel, which is one channel adjacent to our tactical
12 channel. And they would send a signal directly to the VRS
13 repeater, which would be then transmitted over the regular tac
14 channel.

15 Q: And it typically works pretty well, am I right, I n terms
16 of --

17 A: It helps. It helps. I mean, it's not an end-all, be-
18 all, but it helps.

19 Q. And I just want to clarify one thing. You -- where did
20 you set up your command post? I assume it was in the buggy and
21 not the --

22 A. Correct. Yeah, correct. The -- I believe our command
23 vehicle was actually out of service.

24 Q. Okay. So where did you set it up?

25 A. It was directly adjacent to the primary entry point.

1 Q. Okay. You mentioned underneath HUD. I --

2 A. I think that was it.

3 Q. I think more likely it is underneath what used to be the
4 DOT building because I don't think there's an entrance to the
5 subway underneath HUD.

6 A. Okay.

7 Q. I think it was -- just to clarify that.

8 MR. DOWNS: We can sort out the --

9 MR. BLACKISTONE: Sure. It was --

10 MR. DOWNS: -- a tactical map later on.

11 MR. BLACKISTONE: Yeah. But as opposed to the Maryland
12 Avenue entrance.

13 MR. DOWNS: Right.

14 BY MR. BLACKISTONE:

15 Q. Where in the process did you decide -- did you decide to
16 call for a second alarm, not in terms of time but just in terms of
17 things you were seeing?

18 A. Once I assigned units to assist Battalion 4, you know,
19 additionally to the recon, the initial recon assignment, I started
20 to think that, you know, we're going to have an awful lot of
21 patients here, I think. The companies -- the companies I had
22 available were going to be overwhelmed within fairly short order.
23 I'd say when I started to realize the number of casualties we
24 might be dealing with and the scope of the incident and that it
25 was escalating and I thought even if I don't need them, I would

1 like to have them there or at least on the way.

2 Q. Sure. When did you realize that you had -- you were
3 dealing with an IDLH?

4 A. We would presume any time you have a smoky atmosphere,
5 it's IDLH.

6 Q. Okay. Is that -- I know that most smoke events in
7 Metro, there are lots of them and most of them are not IDLH type
8 situations.

9 A. Well, I mean, again, it's an assumption we kind of make
10 that if there's smoke it's probably hazardous and I'm not talking
11 about specifically chemicals or anything else.

12 Q. Yeah.

13 A. I mean, just the products of combustion themselves are
14 hazardous.

15 Q. Right. And last question. I believe Joe had asked you
16 about pairing up police officers with fire fighters --

17 A. Right.

18 Q. -- to go into the station. Knowing that you had an
19 IDLH, would you have sent police officers into that environment?

20 A. Well, I don't have any authority over Metro.

21 Q. Right.

22 A. When it comes to police officers. And police officers
23 do frankly tend to operate on their own.

24 Q. Um-hum. So had you --

25 A. I would have thought about it but, you know, I don't

1 think I would send anybody into an IDLH atmosphere without
2 protective gear. And, I mean, I'm sure Metro Transit operates in
3 those -- that environment as a regular course of business. But,
4 again, it's not -- it's not my organization.

5 Q. Right.

6 A. I don't have that authority over them.

7 Q. I understand that. You would not have asked them to
8 send somebody in there --

9 A. No. I wouldn't do it.

10 Q. -- if you knew it was an IDLH?

11 A. I would not, sir.

12 Q. Okay. I think that's all I've got for now. Thank you.

13 MR. DOWNS: Very good. Sharmila, if you can identify
14 yourself.

15 BY MS. SAMARASINGHE: Sure. Sharmila Samarasinghe, Tri-
16 State Oversight Committee. Captain Chapman, I have a handful of
17 questions. You described the sequence of events in terms of you
18 finding out there were people, your personnel, most likely on the
19 roadway or on the verge of getting on the roadway and you
20 mentioned that there is an SOG or a protocol that describes or
21 requires certain number of steps to be taken before they get on
22 the roadway.

23 MR. DOWNS: He did.

24 BY MS. SAMARASINGHE:

25 Q. Can you describe the protocol?

1 A. Well, there are really three components.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. Number one, we need verbal verification from OCC --

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. -- that power's down.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. Second, we're going to trip the ETS.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. And thirdly, we would test the third rail --

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. -- and place a WSAD on it.

12 Q. Okay. Excellent. Thank you. You also talked about the
13 communication flow between you and OCC and OC -- I'm sorry, ROCC
14 and ROCC back to you or to your command post.

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Were you the primary conduit of that information flow
17 from the command post to ROCC and the ROCC back to you or was
18 there a communications officer paired up with you from D.C. Fire?

19 A. Ideally --

20 Q. Uh-hum.

21 A. -- our official response at Pennsy Drive is going to be
22 our direct link.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. As I understand from him and this is not during the
25 incident but through later discussions.

1 Q. Yeah.

2 A. Our radios don't work inside the building, at OCC.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. He had to stand in the parking lot.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. And his aid would go back and forth between them.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. My understanding is there used to be a work station
9 there for us but the radio there has not been upgraded or
10 functioning at all.

11 Q. Okay. All right. But in terms of receiving
12 communications either from your personnel at ROCC or anybody from
13 ROCC, you would be the person receiving it or would you have
14 somebody else from D.C. Fire kind of receiving it and conveying it
15 to you beside you?

16 A. Well, the way we generally operate is the battalion
17 chief has an aid.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. And the aid would operate, would handle a different
20 channel.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. For example, in this incident, our main channel --

23 Q. Yeah. Yeah.

24 A. -- channel 2, was handled by my aid and I was on the
25 tactical channel --

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. -- which was channel 3. Sometimes information would be
3 conveyed to him and he would just say, I just got this from OPC --

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. -- or I just got this from OCC.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. Chief Leonard, who was at OCC, was calling me directly
8 on our tac channel.

9 Q. Oh, okay. Okay. All right. Thank you. Last question.
10 You mentioned that on a regular basis, your radios or your
11 communications infrastructures tested especially inside the
12 tunnels. Do you happen --

13 A. Yeah. Actually that's our only --

14 Q. -- to know how often --

15 A. How often?

16 Q. -- it is done?

17 A. Again, it's not unlike the Metro training that I
18 discussed earlier.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. At some points in time we sort of peak on our awareness
21 of Metro.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. Other times, we don't.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. We actually do have a set procedure for testing radios

1 in Metro.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. And that's the only set procedure we have for radio
4 testing.

5 Q. Okay. And would that involve you getting a Metro escort
6 to go into the tunnels to test it or are you all allowed to just
7 go in and test it inside tunnels on the catwalks?

8 A. We had a directive in 2013 --

9 Q. Um-hum.

10 A. -- that said we could no longer enter tunnels or vent
11 shafts or any ancillary areas without Metro accompaniment or
12 permission. We used to do it.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. I recall specifically going passed the end of a platform
15 and going down a tunnel once as part of a company drill. Now
16 we're prohibited from doing that unless we prearrange with Metro.

17 Q. Okay. So in order for the radios to be tested inside
18 the tunnels post 2013, you would actually need to get either a
19 scheduled escort at whatever frequencies you are tested or request
20 it on the day of?

21 A. That's correct.

22 Q. Okay. Great. Thank you.

23 A. You're welcome.

24 MR. DOWNS: Mr. Gordon. You have the next questions.

25 BY MR. GORDON:

1 Q. Joe Gordon, NTSB. I have one question. With the radio
2 issues, is that a broken transmission? When you -- when you have
3 communication over the radio, are you receiving anything back or
4 is it just blank.

5 A. Well --

6 Q. And the reason that's important to me is I'm wondering
7 if you -- if you have any knowledge or if you're trying to
8 determine whether they're catching anything that you're
9 transmitting or if you get no response back at all?

10 A. Well, you know, as radio systems have evolved, we've
11 gone from analog to digital.

12 Q. Right.

13 A. I think you're probably well aware that with digital
14 communications, if you don't get a clear signal, you get nothing.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. And that's -- occasionally you'll get that weird sort of
17 electronic distorted sound but it's unintelligible.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. My presumption is that the units below -- I should put
20 it a different way. When our unit -- when our radios are not in
21 contact with either a repeater or our main stations, they honk.
22 They make a noise to alert you to the fact that they're not
23 connected.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. My assumption is that the radios below grade were doing

1 that. And that if it stopped then maybe they jumped on the
2 opportunity to make a transmission.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. Because I think Battalion 4 told me that Chief Welsh had
5 told them that there were numerous times that he made
6 transmissions and he just presumed that I did not hear it.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. But occasionally he would get through.

9 Q. Okay. So very intermittent.

10 A. Very much so.

11 Q. Okay. I have no further questions.

12 BY MR. DOWNS:

13 Q. Thank you. Downs, NTSB. Captain, we've got the initial
14 reports from witnesses on board the train that universally they
15 were describing that they waiting an incredibly long time, to
16 quote some of the individuals, and that in establishing our
17 timeline right now, we're looking at about 45 minutes to almost an
18 hour between the time when the event started and when the fire
19 department actually approached the rear of the train and started
20 evacuating persons.

21 Now you provided testimony here to the effect that you
22 had some frustrations initially arriving on scene, communications,
23 things of that sort.

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. You had difficulty making a determination actually what

1 was happening.

2 A. Correct.

3 Q. That would be an accurate way to put it. Could you
4 describe for us, kind of summarize some of your frustrations in
5 terms of explaining why it took almost an hour for your fire crew
6 to first get to the train itself?

7 A. Well, an hour between our arrival and contact seems
8 extremely excessive.

9 Q. No, an hour between when the event occurred and it
10 probably took 10 minutes --

11 A. So the initial (indiscernible)?

12 Q. -- or so before a fire department was on scene.

13 A. Right.

14 Q. And then it took probably another 45 minutes or so from
15 that time point until the first fire crew approached the rear of
16 the train and started attempting to open the emergency doors. The
17 idea is maybe for the -- for the record, you can describe for us
18 some of the encounters that occurred between the time of your
19 arrival and when the first crew arrived at the car that might
20 account for that time interval.

21 In other words, to explain and to have the folks
22 understand as to why it took that amount of time, some of your
23 frustrations that you encountered.

24 A. Um-hum. Well, you know, I've explained the issues with
25 communications and conditions. I think it's probably worth going

1 over again. As an incident commander, I'm taught that there's a
2 level of risk that I can't exceed. I'm not going to put people
3 into a situation where the risk is going to exceed the benefit.
4 Now, in an completely unknown situation, I was concerned about
5 putting people into that environment.

6 I committed the recon companies and then Rescue 1. And
7 they were reporting, you know, I was getting intermittent reports
8 of a heavy smoke condition. So we know something's burning. We
9 don't know what and we don't know where. Once it became clear
10 that there was a train car with people on it, you know, we did
11 assign additional resources and started trying to get those folks
12 off.

13 It seemed to me that Rescue 1 were probably at the train
14 a lot faster than some of these timelines suggest because we were
15 receiving report from OUC that was referred to -- well, relayed to
16 me by my aid that there was a person unresponsive on the train.
17 So at this point, you know, we know there's obviously people in
18 severe distress. And then the evolution is that Rescue 1 got to
19 them and started to remove them.

20 And I know they transferred care to Engine 10, Paramedic
21 Engine 10. And they attended to that person. So it's kind of
22 hard for me to go back. I wish I had had like a stopwatch to tell
23 you the truth. But it's hard for me to go back and be able to
24 reconstruct a timeline from my memory because we all know that
25 under duress and in an extreme situation, time doesn't necessarily

1 feel the way it is. It seemed to me that everything happened
2 really quickly.

3 Q. I see.

4 A. I'm sure -- I'm sure to somebody stuck on that train, it
5 didn't seem that way at all. But for me there was all kinds of
6 things going on and it seemed like next thing I knew, they were
7 bringing people off.

8 Q. Okay. Thank you, Captain. It sounds also at first, you
9 weren't quite sure where the train was located.

10 A. Correct.

11 Q. It could have been one of two different directions.

12 A. Yeah. Right. It could have --

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. -- could have been orange-blue or it could have been
15 yellow-green.

16 Q. Right. Okay. Very good. Let me digress a little bit.
17 You mentioned you've been with the fire department 24 years. Is
18 it?

19 A. March will be 24 years.

20 Q. Twenty-four years. Okay. Can you summarize for us your
21 experience at the fire department, --

22 A. Sure.

23 Q. -- how you started out and your progression over the
24 years.

25 A. Um-hum. After the training academy, I was appointed to

1 the ladder company in southeast D.C., Truck 16. From that point,
2 I transferred to an engine company in Anacostia. That was Engine
3 15. So that accounted for about the first 5 years. My next
4 assignment was Rescue Squad 3. After 4 years with Rescue Squad 3,
5 I received a merit promotion to technician. I spent another 4
6 years at Rescue Squad 3 as a technician.

7 I was promoted to Sergeant in early '02. And I was
8 assigned to our newly formed, special operations division. I was
9 there about, approximately a year. I was then transferred to our
10 training academy for a year and a half. When I was promoted to
11 lieutenant, I was assigned to Engine Company 26 on Rhode Island
12 Avenue, Northeast. I had spent one year detailed to ROUC as a
13 fire liaison officer.

14 And that was when we first started to create the
15 position. So I was one of -- one of the first ones. Came back to
16 Engine 26. I was promoted to captain in, let's see, that would be
17 2010. January 2010, I was assigned to Adams Morgan. I was there
18 for 3 years. I was then transferred to Truck 15, which is
19 assigned with Engine 26, so back to Rhode Island Avenue. I was
20 there for a little over a year.

21 I was then transferred to our Professional Standards
22 Office here in this building. I was here for 4 months and then
23 detailed to Engine 30. And then recently I was reassigned from
24 Professional Standards to Engine 18.

25 Q. Very good, Captain. Thank you. Incident command

1 training, have you had any formal training at the National Fire
2 Academy or anything like that?

3 A. I have never been to the National Fire Academy.

4 Q. Any other --

5 A. I do have an associate's degree in Fire Science
6 Engineering Administration.

7 Q. You're anticipating my question.

8 A. How so?

9 Q. College? Professional academic training?

10 A. Yes. I have an associate's degree from the University
11 of the District of Columbia in Fire Science Administration. I am
12 currently enrolled in the University of Maryland. I'm studying
13 government and politics and I'm at the 80 credit mark.

14 Q. And that's towards a bachelor's degree?

15 A. Yes, sir.

16 Q. Okay. But so far as incident command training, is that
17 part of your associate degree or would that be other training or?

18 A. Yeah, somewhat. Plus all of the national incident
19 management system classes that are required.

20 Q. And you've gone -- you attended these classes?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Very good. Okay, Captain.

23 A. I have all of them but 300 and 400.

24 Q. You have the 1 and 200 level?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. And 700s. I believe --

3 Q. And 700s. And you're working --

4 A. 700, 701, and 701A, I think.

5 Q. And you're working on the 3 and 400 series?

6 A. Sure. Um-hum.

7 Q. Very good.

8 A. At the first opportunity.

9 Q. Okay. Okay, Captain. Thank you. That concludes my
10 questions for the moment. Mr. Rourke, any more questions?

11 MR. ROURKE: No, I think I'm good.

12 MR. DOWNS: Nothing? Ms. Burtch?

13 MS. BURTCHE: No.

14 MR. DOWNS: Chief?

15 BY MR. HAWKINS:

16 Q. Yes, I have three questions for you, Captain.

17 A. Um-hum.

18 Q. First question, regarding accountability, can you
19 explain to -- there's various levels of accountability here.

20 A. (Indiscernible).

21 Q. Can you explain to what levels are -- you mentioned
22 Level 3 accountability. Can you explain the levels of
23 accountability that we use in the fire service? D.C. Fire
24 Department?

25 A. Yeah, well, our Level 1 is our most basic level of

1 accountability. That essentially means that you've assumed duty.
2 You take a personal identification tag, place it on a card inside
3 of the apparatus you're riding on and that essentially creates
4 Level 1, meaning that we can tell who's riding on what piece of
5 equipment.

6 Level 2, we don't really use very often. We usually
7 jump right to Level 3, which means that we keep track of every
8 single individual who enters or exits the hot zone.

9 Q. Okay. So the three levels of accountability. Okay. In
10 terms of communications, and we talked -- when you talked about
11 the problems you had with communications, are there redundancy
12 plans in place? If communications is not clear, what is the next
13 -- are there steps and levels of communication that we do, whether
14 it's a Metro accident or a structural fire, in terms of enhancing
15 our communication capability?

16 A. Well, after VRS, you know, there's certainly a few other
17 actions we could take. One, we could switch to an analog channel
18 and talk directly in line of sight. You could set up a relay.
19 You could use runners. And as we tend to do most of the time, we
20 start using cell phones.

21 Q. Okay. And --

22 MR. DOWNS: Chief, if I could ask you to please speak up
23 so we can get you on the recording.

24 MR. HAWKINS: Okay. I'm sorry.

25 MR. DOWNS: Thank you.

1 BY MR. HAWKINS:

2 Q. And one more question here regarding the command post.
3 When you arrived on the scene, did you identify where the command
4 post was?

5 A. We did take a little time to locate and set up. My aid
6 sort of drove around a little bit trying to find a good spot. But
7 I don't recall specifically making an announcement of where the
8 command post was.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. I remember saying that I was one the scene and assuming
11 command and I do not recall saying exactly where the buggy was.

12 Q. Okay. And the next question, there was a Metro officer
13 -- you mentioned two star --

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. -- that came to the command vehicle. Can you explain,
16 was that being to establish a unified command, what was -- what
17 was the process of that conversation here?

18 A. That was my impression. I mean, as -- although it was
19 not formal, I thought that we had essentially created a unified
20 command by having those officials nearby and being able to reach
21 out to them should the need arise. Plus, we also had MPD and,
22 then again, eventually FBI. And they seemed to all understand
23 where the command post was and who they needed to talk to.

24 Q. So in your opinion, you established unified command by
25 pretty much --

1 A. Correct.

2 Q. -- location and officials coming (indiscernible)?

3 That's all I have.

4 MR. DOWNS: Thank you, Chief. Mr. Blackistone?

5 BY MR. BLACKISTONE:

6 Q. Yep. Steve Blackistone, NTSB. I just wanted to follow
7 up on the question that Mr. Downs asked regarding the length of
8 time that passengers at least perceived that they were on the
9 train before they arrived.

10 And this may be a question better asked of the guys from
11 Rescue Squad 1 who were first to the train, but did you have any
12 perception that there was a period of time between when they
13 reached the front of the train and when they reached the back of
14 the train? There are six cars here and I assume they had to work
15 their way through each car.

16 A. I made the same assumption and I really did not have a
17 good idea of --

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. -- how long it took them to clear or to go all the way
20 through.

21 Q. And do you have any idea where on the train the person
22 who was in distress, I think was the term you used, was located?

23 A. Yeah. I don't have personal knowledge. And I'm --
24 sometimes this far detached from an incident, I've, you know, of
25 course, heard the news -- media reports myself, which lead me to

1 believe that other passengers had brought this person to the end
2 closest to the station. But that's my only sense.

3 Q. Okay. Well, perhaps that is a question we can ask --

4 MR. DOWNS: Sure.

5 MR. BLACKISTONE: -- the people on the track later.

6 That's it. Thank you.

7 BY MS. SAMARASINGHE:

8 Q. Sharmila Samarasinghe, Tri-State Oversight Committee.

9 Captain Chapman, just one question. Do you happen to know, and I
10 understand that the timelines are a little blurry. Do you happen
11 to recall at what point the firefighters who did go down in --
12 onto the platform and towards the tunnel, what point they donned
13 their SCBAs?

14 A. I have no idea.

15 Q. Okay. But do you happen to know whether they did wear
16 them at some point in time?

17 A. I did hear anecdotally --

18 Q. Uh-hum.

19 A. -- from one officer, I don't recall exactly who it was,
20 that they were dealing with an older woman and he felt a little
21 ridiculous wearing his mask when she didn't have one.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. So I'm not sure who used them, --

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. -- when they used them, or placed them in service.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. Our guidelines say you should --

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. -- any time you enter an IDLH --

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. -- but to be quite honest, that's a decision that's
7 generally personalized.

8 Q. I see. Okay. Thank you.

9 A. You're welcome.

10 MR. DOWNS: Is that your questions?

11 MS. SAMARASINGHE: Yes.

12 MR. DOWNS: Mr. Gordon?

13 BY MR. GORDON:

14 Q. Joe Gordon, NTSB. I know we've talked about timeline
15 several times, but to your knowledge, how long was it after you
16 arrived on the scene and took command of the incident until
17 someone from Metro came and briefed you on what they knew about
18 the situation?

19 A. I think it was probably as short as a couple minutes.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. I really -- it doesn't seem like it was very long at
22 all.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. But again, in that environment it's extremely difficult
25 for me to say with any accuracy how long things took. But I seem

1 to recall those two gentlemen approaching the buggy fairly short
2 order.

3 Q. Okay. And did they give you a pretty good overview of -
4 - I mean, I know at the time you weren't aware that the train was
5 stopped in the tunnel.

6 A. Right.

7 Q. What did they know at that time?

8 A. It seemed to me that I was starting to figure all that
9 out about the same time that they arrived.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. That's just kind of my recollection. And, again, it's
12 the best I can do.

13 Q. Okay. Okay. So within minutes of arriving on the
14 scene, you started to get a clear picture of what you had?

15 A. Yeah. Yeah, it seemed that way so that, you know, my
16 units would have already been in the station. I don't think I
17 talked to anybody from Metro until after the recon group was
18 deployed, after Rescue Squad 1 had already gone in. And, again,
19 you know, that bit of time seemed to me like that.

20 Q. Right.

21 A. I'm sure, for a lot of other people, it was not that
22 fast.

23 Q. Okay. Okay. I have no further questions.

24 BY MR. DOWNS:

25 Q. Thank you. Down, NTSB again. Captain, in your instant

1 command process, do you utilize an aid or anyone who actually
2 keeps notes for you and keeps the logistics of the event so you
3 can have instantaneous notes that you can refer to and that aid
4 would serve maybe as a runner as well to be able to do
5 administrative stuff for you during that process?

6 A. Yes. Yes. I think I briefly described the function of
7 my aid in -- in normal operations we sit side by side and he would
8 operate channel 2 and I would be on the tactical channel. That
9 was I could communicate with the units actually engaged where he
10 makes transmissions to communications, asks for additional
11 resources, that sort of thing.

12 And I know that my aid was -- he was taking some notes.
13 He was relaying information from the EMS branch and basically
14 functioning as a liaison for me to some of the command staff and
15 other folks.

16 Q. So in this case, the aid proved beneficial for your
17 process, your incident command process?

18 A. Um-hum. Completely indisposible.

19 Q. Very good. And it sounds like there was a little bit of
20 frustration elevating the event from just initial instant command
21 process to a unified command?

22 A. I didn't feel it at the time. I mean, obviously now
23 there's some reports that we didn't communicate that well. And,
24 you know, that's distracting. It seemed to me we were
25 cooperating. I don't know all of the different moving parts here.

1 You know, I only have my perspective. It seemed to me that if I
2 wanted to know something from Metro, I had these two guys who had
3 come over and talked to me. If they had trouble communicating
4 with me, I really wasn't aware of it.

5 Q. Thank you, Captain. As a final question from me, I like
6 to give our witnesses opportunity to express retrospective
7 thoughts, in other words, knowing what you know now --

8 A. Um-hum.

9 Q. -- would you do -- have done anything different as a
10 future consideration should an event like this occur?

11 A. Yes, actually.

12 Q. If you can go through some of those points for us.

13 A. Well, having never commanded an incident like this,
14 obviously it was -- it was a lot of pressure. It was somewhat
15 overwhelming although I think -- I think I managed to do all
16 right. After conferring with Chief Welsh, he was starved for
17 resources below grade. What I would do in the future is try and
18 push an additional command officer and resources down faster. My
19 primary concern was the unknown conditions.

20 That just nagged at me the whole time because I was, you
21 know, very, very conscious of putting people into harm's way. But
22 if I'd had a clear vision of what was going on down there I
23 definitely would have put more resources into the -- into removing
24 people and it probably would have made things go a little faster
25 because I suspected, actually from conferring with Chief Welsh, he

1 was pretty overwhelmed.

2 Q. Anything else, Captain?

3 A. I might have attempted some alternatives in
4 communication. For example, assigning a company to relay
5 communications, line of sight as I discussed with Chief Hawkins
6 there. If we had switched to an analog mode, we might have been
7 able to get some transmissions out more reliably.

8 Q. Maybe also engage some runners if you just couldn't get
9 through?

10 A. And I did get occasional reports from people coming out.
11 As a company officer or a member would come out, they'd stop by
12 the buggy and say, Chief just asked us to tell you this. And I
13 actually wound up receiving some very valuable information that
14 way.

15 Q. Very good. Anything else, Captain?

16 A. Nothing comes to mind.

17 Q. How about training? We had other testimony to the
18 effect from Metro that it had been several years since the fire
19 department had done live training exercises with D.C. Fire?

20 A. Well, I -- I can't answer that authoritatively. But in
21 my recollection, we haven't done anything significant with Metro
22 for a while.

23 Q. Several years perhaps?

24 A. I think that's certainly possible.

25 Q. And might that have helped in terms of setting up your

1 communications with the local WMATA folks?

2 A. Perhaps. But again the scope of operations were in
3 Metro, so immensed we could have been concentrating on a whole
4 different arena. You know, our department and over the 4 years
5 hasn't been that focused on training. But I think that's more of
6 a generalized management issue.

7 Q. I see. Thank you. Okay, that concludes my questions.
8 Mr. Rourke, anything?

9 MR. ROURKE: Yeah, one last question, Captain.

10 MR. DOWNS: Identify yourself.

11 BY MR. ROURKE:

12 Q. Denton Rourke, Metro. Did any of the company officers
13 give you any reports of conversations they might have heard from
14 Metro employees?

15 A. You know, I have a sense that they did. But I cannot
16 specifically remember what those conversations entailed. I think
17 there was a point where a company officer had told me that some
18 transit officers had advised them of something. But, again, now,
19 because I've heard of all these other reports, my recollection is
20 probably somewhat contaminated because I'm hearing from all
21 different media outlets, et cetera. But I do have a sense that
22 that did happen at least once.

23 Q. Face to face you believe or radio?

24 A. I think it was face to face.

25 Q. Thanks. Okay. I have one more. Thanks. When you talk

1 about channel 2.

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. What channel is that?

4 A. That's out main channel between communications and units
5 in the field. So we have -- when we're in a tactical or incident
6 channel or group of channels, communications is not -- OUC is whom
7 I'm referring to. But they're not necessarily listening to that
8 channel. So if we want to communicate with OUC, we go to channel
9 2. And then channel 1 would be our primary dispatch.

10 Q. So you have a tactical channel you do everything on the
11 scene and then if you want something from them, you go back to
12 your main channel?

13 A. Precisely, which is one of the reasons that I have an
14 aid, who generally works on channel 2 while I'm on the tactical
15 channel.

16 Q. Thanks. Thank you, that's all.

17 MR. DOWNS: Ms. Burtch?

18 MS. BURTCH: I want to follow up on your on scene
19 commander status. How is that --

20 MR. DOWNS: Ms. Burtch, please identify yourself.

21 BY MS. BURTCH:

22 Q. Sorry. Kimberly Burtch. Your on scene commander
23 status, you took command of the situation. You were --

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. -- how were you assigned to that? That position?

1 A. Through order of dispatch.

2 Q. So the dispatch comes to you and says, directs you to --

3 A. Correct. OUC, when they generate an incident, our
4 computer-aided dispatch system, commonly known as CAD, would
5 generate a response. Now, there's a response matrix that's going
6 to determine who occupies what position in the command structure.
7 We actually assign three battalion chiefs initially on a Metro
8 station box.

9 The first battalion chief is going to be the incident
10 commander. The second one is going to be assigned at the incident
11 commander's discretion. And the third battalion chief acts as a
12 liaison and goes to (indiscernible).

13 Q. Okay. Is this information conveyed to Metro?

14 A. Is it conveyed to Metro?

15 Q. Do they know who the point person is for the event?

16 A. I don't think so.

17 Q. That's all.

18 A. But there didn't seem to be any ambiguity about it once
19 we -- once we got rolling.

20 Q. Okay.

21 MR. DOWNS: You conclude your questions?

22 MS. BURTCHE: Yes, thank you.

23 MR. DOWNS: Chief Hawkins?

24 MR. HAWKINS: I have no -- I have no further questions.

25 MR. DOWNS: Mr. Blackistone?

1 MR. BLACKISTONE: No questions.

2 MS. SAMARASINGHE: I have no further questions. Thank
3 you.

4 MR. GORDON: I have no further questions.

5 MR. DOWNS: Thank you very much, Captain. That
6 concludes our interview.

7 MR. CHAPMAN: Excellent.

8 (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: WMATA INCIDENT AT L'ENFANT PLAZA
STATION, WASHINGTON, D.C.
JANUARY 12, 2015
Interview of Lawrence Chapman

DOCKET NUMBER: DCA-15-FR-004

PLACE: Washington, D.C.

DATE: January 28, 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.

Heidi E. Gardner
Transcriber

Derron T. Hawkins Deputy Fire Chief

February 25, 2015

Regarding the NTSB interview which occurred on the 28th of January, 2015. I have reviewed the transcript furnished to me by DFC D. Hawkins and found it to be accurate. I have attached to this page a copy of my credentials recorded in the Target Safety data base. The page reflects my fire service training that would be germane to the question posed by Mr. Downs of the NTSB on page 47 of the transcript.



Lawrence Y. Chapman III / Captain / Engine 18 #2