



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	
EXHIBIT	

Agency / Organization

Title

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 *

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Docket No.: DCA-15-FR-004

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Interview of: CONNIE CONNER

Washington, D.C.

Friday,
January 16, 2015

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice.

BEFORE: DAVE BUCHER
Railroad Accident Investigator

APPEARANCES:

DAVID BUCHER, Railroad Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB)

RICHARD DOWNS, JR., Survival Factors Investigator
Chairman, Survival Factors Technical Working Group
National Transportation Safety Board

SHARMILA SAMARASINGHE, Vice Chair
Tri-State Oversight Committee

DORSEY ADAMS, Manager of Rail Safety
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)

HERCULES BALLARD, Managing Director Rail Transportation
WMATA

MARLENE FLEMINGS-McCANN, Assistant Business Agent
for Rail Operations
Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 689

DION BAKER, Shop Steward for Train Operations
ATU Local 689

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I N T E R V I E W

(8:30 a.m.)

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3 MR. BUCHER: This is Dave Bucher, Rail Accident
4 Investigator for the NTSB. This is the interview of Connie
5 Conner, a train operator for train 510, related to the WMATA
6 L'Enfant Plaza incident of January 12, 2015, NTSB accident number
7 DCA-15-FR-004, and today's date is January 16, 2015.

8 To my right I have?

9 MS. SAMARASINGHE: Sharmila Samarasinghe, Tri-State
10 Oversight Committee, the TOC, and I'm the full-time Virginia
11 member.

12 MS. FLEMINGS-McCANN: Marlene Flemings-McCann, Assistant
13 Business Agent from Rail Operations, Local 689.

14 MR. BALLARD: Hercules Ballard, Managing Director, Rail
15 Transportation.

16 MR. ADAMS: Dorsey Adams, Manager of Rail Safety.

17 MR. DOWNS: Rick Downs, Survival Factors Group
18 Chairperson.

19 MR. BAKER: Dion Baker, Shop Steward for Train
20 Operations, Local 689.

21 MR. BUCHER: Thank you, everyone.

INTERVIEW OF CONNIE CONNER

22 BY MR. BUCHER:

23 Q. Connie, like I said earlier, if you could just go back
24 to the 12th, the day of the incident, and give us as much as you
25

1 can remember of your train arriving at L'Enfant Plaza and
2 everything that followed, we would appreciate it.

3 A. Okay, I was at Archives. I can start with Archives?

4 Q. Yeah, or if you want to go back. I mean, if you want to
5 give us the run from when the train -- you picked up the train.

6 A. I approximately left Greenbelt approximately -- I
7 believe we were running late -- at about -- my train should have
8 left at 2:43 p.m. from Greenbelt. My ID it was 510. I'll say
9 about approximately 3:00, 3:12, somewhere in that ballpark, when I
10 arrived at Mount Vernon Station, track 2, heading towards
11 downtown, Gallery, Central Command instructed me to do a track
12 inspection for possible smoke between Mount Vernon and Gallery
13 Place. I took my train, I did just that. When I got to the 8 car
14 marker, Gallery Place, berthed the train, opened my doors, I
15 reported to Central that everything was clear, that I did not see
16 any smoke.

17 I serviced the station, continued on to Archives. Once
18 I got to Archives, I serviced the station. I was instructed again
19 by ROCC, Central Command, to do a track inspection of -- for
20 possible smoke, again, from -- of L'Enfant.

21 As I was approaching L'Enfant, I'm listening to Central
22 Command talking to the train, evidently, that just left, 302, that
23 just left L'Enfant. The operator is telling Central Command that
24 there's a lot of smoke in the tunnel. Central Command, I need to
25 go back. I need to reverse. I don't know if he said he had

1 reversed or he needed to reverse, but he needed to reverse, to go
2 back to L'Enfant.

3 I remember Central telling him, negative, 302; hold your
4 position. I remember him telling her it's a lot of smoke, my
5 passengers, they're punching him up. They can't breathe. They're
6 saying they can't breathe. And she's telling him negative, 302;
7 hold your position. Cut the EV off.

8 Again, I'm still approaching L'Enfant. When I first hit
9 the platform, I didn't see anything, but I'm assuming -- I can't
10 remember because it engulfed me so quickly. I don't know if I was
11 halfway on, a fourth of the way. I'm not sure. But the next
12 thing I know I'm engulfed in smoke. And I stopped the train, I
13 called Central and told them: This is 510, Central, I can't see
14 anything. I didn't get a response. Central was dealing with the
15 302 operator, along with trying to deal with somebody that was
16 blocking and clamping switches at a interlocking. I'm not sure
17 where.

18 Q. Where, okay.

19 A. Yeah, yeah. That was all going on. There was -- I
20 looked to my right. There's a Transit officer on the platform. I
21 threw my window open, could barely breathe. You could smell and
22 taste -- it was a lot of smoke. Couldn't see, but you also could
23 tell that it was a chemical in that smoke. Something was in that
24 smoke.

25 At any rate, I asked the Transit officer, sir, what's

1 going on? He says I don't know. He had his flashlight out. I
2 asked him could you guide me to the 8 car marker? Because, again,
3 I'm not sure how I'm on the platform. I had a six-car train. He
4 said to me follow the light, follow my light. So he's walking
5 with me. I'm taxiing the train down the platform. He went as far
6 as he could go and stopped and said I can't go any further. The
7 smoke, everything is just too intense. And at that same moment,
8 some other officer runs up and says to me: We have to evacuate.
9 We have to evacuate this train. We've got to get these people out
10 of here now.

11 I put the train in auto-store. I tried to contact
12 Central again. They did not hear me because of all the commotion
13 that was going on on the radio. Once I placed the train in auto-
14 store, getting ready to talk to the customers -- and looking
15 around, the customers had already broke the emergency seals on my
16 train, the doors, and were getting off.

17 So I evacuated, just like they asked us to. When I
18 evacuated, again, it's smoke everywhere. We can't see. It's hard
19 to breathe. It hurt, as a matter of fact.

20 I ran to the station manager's booth. I happened to
21 know the station manager's named Cindy is what -- I know Cindy. I
22 said Cindy, Cindy, what's going on? She said I'm not sure, I'm
23 not sure. I tried to contact Central again from the booth and I
24 couldn't get through.

25 At this point, Transit is coming through, more Transit

1 officers, and they're evacuating us. Get out, you have to get
2 out, you have to get out now. And that's what I remember.

3 Q. Okay. And do you remember -- this is Dave Bucher. Were
4 you guided out of the station by anyone, or you just evacuated
5 yourself out of the station?

6 A. No, no, no. Transit was there. Transit was bringing us
7 up, Transit. There were other --

8 MR. DOWNS: Was it police?

9 WITNESS: I'm sorry?

10 MR. DOWNS: Transit Police?

11 WITNESS: Transit Police, yes. I'm sorry. That was the
12 Transit Police officer with the flashlight if I didn't say police.
13 But when I say Transit, that's what I mean, Transit Police.

14 BY MR. BUCHER:

15 Q. Dave Bucher again. To the best of your knowledge, they
16 guided everybody on your train out? I mean, you could see some of
17 those people?

18 A. Right, right, yeah. Right, we were going out. The ones
19 that were left on, they were going out with me. We were all
20 getting off. They were getting us out. We have to get out, get
21 out now. It's what one of the officers was telling us.

22 Q. Did you make any -- Dave Bucher again. Did you make any
23 additional attempts? I mean, did you have a portable radio that
24 you could try to call --

25 A. I had my handheld radio, yes, yes, and I had -- when I

1 got to the station manager's booth, uh-huh, trying to call.

2 Q. You're still trying to call --

3 A. Call.

4 Q. -- but no response?

5 A. Um-hmm, no response. I couldn't get in because it's a
6 lot of commotion going back and forth over the radio, so they --

7 Q. And your portable, you could hear the conversations
8 going on between -- obviously in the background. When you say
9 there was confusion --

10 A. When I was -- yeah, well, that was off of my train
11 radio, also, my train radio when I first -- when I kept trying to
12 call them to let them know. You know, I can't see anything. That
13 was the train radio that I was on, not my handheld.

14 Q. Right, okay.

15 A. My handheld was when I was off near the station
16 manager's booth.

17 Q. Your train, when you left Greenbelt, there were no
18 mechanical problems with your train? The train was fine?

19 A. My train, no, no mechanical problems.

20 Q. And what time did you go on duty? You said you left
21 Greenbelt. You said 3:00 or what time?

22 A. On my schedule, my manifest, it says that I'm to leave
23 the platform at 2:43.

24 Q. Oh, 2:43?

25 A. 2:43. I believe, I'm not sure, we were running a little

1 bit behind. I'm not sure.

2 Q. Okay, but when did you go -- I guess what I'm -- I
3 wasn't clear. What time did you go to work that day?

4 A. On Monday?

5 Q. Yeah.

6 A. On Monday my schedule is for 6:06, if I'm not mistaken.

7 Q. So 6:00 in the morning?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. 6:06, okay. And then you take trains during the day,
10 and then you take a break in the middle of the day, is that
11 correct?

12 A. Uh-huh. I do what we call a "swing." You would call it
13 a split shift.

14 Q. All right.

15 MR. BUCHER: I'll pass off to Mr. Downs, and we'll just
16 go around the table. Questions? Yeah, go ahead.

17 BY MR. DOWNS:

18 Q. Ms. Conner?

19 A. Yes, sir?

20 Q. Thank you for joining us.

21 A. Um-hmm.

22 Q. Let's divert a little bit and get your mind off the
23 event itself.

24 A. I'm sorry?

25 Q. Let's get your mind off the event itself, divert a

1 little bit. How long have you been with WMATA?

2 A. Almost 10 years.

3 Q. Ten years, roughly?

4 A. Um-hmm.

5 Q. Can you highlight for us, summarize for us, please, your
6 experience at WMATA, work experience?

7 A. I was a bus operator for just a year.

8 Q. A year.

9 A. And I've been down on trains almost just about --

10 Q. And you went from --

11 A. -- 9 years.

12 Q. A bus operator for one year and then train operator for
13 9?

14 A. Just about, yeah.

15 Q. Great. Tell us about your training program, safety
16 training, for train operators. Is there an initial training and
17 then an annual retraining? How does that work?

18 A. Yeah, we have right-of-way training. I believe it's
19 every 2 years. I'm not sure. Is it every 2 years? I believe
20 it's every 2 years we're supposed to get right-of-way training for
21 the road.

22 The initial training, I was the first class. I believe
23 my class was the first class to do, what, 6 month? About 6
24 months, just about.

25 Q. And that's combined operator training, as well as safety

1 training, your initial training?

2 A. Um-hmm. They're doing everything, yeah, at that point.

3 Q. I see. And once you pass the various tests of that --

4 A. Um-hmm. Certification.

5 Q. -- certification, get certified, you then go into train
6 operations?

7 A. Yes, with on-the-job training. Someone's always with
8 you at that point.

9 Q. For a certain period of time?

10 A. For a certain period of time, exactly.

11 Q. And then at some point you're elevated up to your
12 own --

13 A. We're released on our own, exactly.

14 Q. Your own, okay. Great. And when was your most recent
15 recertification, your 2-year recertification? Do you remember?

16 A. I'm coming up on it now.

17 Q. So it was maybe almost 2 years ago the most prior?

18 A. Yeah, yeah. I'm sorry, yes.

19 Q. Okay, great. Have you been involved in any prior
20 significant events?

21 A. Not at all.

22 Q. So no other prior emergency events that were really
23 noteworthy here in your 9 years of experience?

24 A. I had a train to -- on the orange line to hit something,
25 and I thought it was explosion, but it wasn't. I believe a

1 ceiling tile fell or something like that. But, yeah, but it came
2 in contact. I just -- I didn't know what it was. That was my
3 first loud explosion or --

4 Q. A relatively minor event?

5 A. Yeah, well, it was, yeah, yeah, yeah. But other than
6 that, no.

7 Q. Okay, great. Okay, going back to the day of the event,
8 it was a relatively benign day, routine day? No other activities
9 during the course of the day on any of your runs that were
10 noteworthy?

11 A. When I came -- left Greenbelt, I was just coming back on
12 from my swing, so I'm due on at 2:23 or something like that, so I
13 brought the train out of the yard from about, we'll just say,
14 2:23, 2:30, something like that. I was bringing out the yard.

15 Q. And on the day of the event, you described pulling up
16 into L'Enfant Plaza?

17 A. Um-hmm.

18 Q. Hearing a lot of radio chatter going on about this train
19 in front of you?

20 A. There was a lot of commotion going on, on the train, but
21 I'm also trying to tell them, as I said, I can't see.

22 Q. As you're pulling into the station?

23 A. Not as I'm pulling into the station, no. Once I got on
24 the platform. How far on the platform I'm not sure.

25 Q. Halfway, maybe, or something?

1 A. I don't -- again, I will say I'm not sure.

2 Q. Not sure, okay, great. We measured where the train --
3 we found the train that night. It was about 104 feet from the 8
4 car position, so it appears not quite to the 7 car position, okay?

5 A. Um-hmm.

6 Q. Normally, you would pull a train all the way up to the 8
7 car position, right?

8 A. Exactly.

9 Q. Okay. You weren't given any guidance by OCC coming into
10 L'Enfant Plaza in terms of stop short of the station or anything
11 like that?

12 A. Not at all.

13 Q. Not at all?

14 A. Not at all.

15 Q. So as far as you knew, your signals and OCC guidance, as
16 you pull into that station as you're supposed to and pull up to
17 the 8 car spot and stop and service the platform, right?

18 A. That's what I normally would do.

19 Q. That's your normal protocol?

20 A. Right, right. And there's a signal before going into
21 L'Enfant Plaza. That signal was a lunar for me. I could see that
22 signal.

23 Q. Okay, and lunar means --

24 A. Initially hitting the platform -- I'm sorry, lunar means
25 green.

1 Q. Green, okay.

2 A. Green to you, yeah, a clear signal.

3 Q. So you pulled in, all this smoke is enveloping the area,
4 you pulled up as far as you could given your level of safety, you
5 didn't want to proceed, you asked for the guidance --

6 A. No, I pulled up as far as I was guided by the Transit
7 officer.

8 Q. No, no, no, I'm getting, I'm getting to the Transit
9 officer. You initially pulled into the station and stopped at
10 some point?

11 A. Right.

12 Q. As best you could see on your own?

13 A. Right, right.

14 Q. A Transit officer approached you with a flashlight?

15 A. No, that's not it, sir.

16 Q. No.

17 A. A Transit officer was on the platform.

18 Q. On the platform.

19 A. He was on the platform. He had a flashlight. I just
20 threw my window open to ask him what's going on; I can't see.
21 After I reported to OCC: This is 510, I can't see anything. I
22 just happened to look. He was there.

23 Q. There.

24 A. Where he came from, I have no idea. I asked him can you
25 please guide me to the 8 car marker. He went as far as he could

1 go.

2 Q. Right. And that's as far as you could go, also? Okay,
3 great. So you've locked down the train, basically, and evacuated
4 the station at that point?

5 A. Um-hmm.

6 Q. Stopping first at a station manager's kiosk?

7 A. Exactly.

8 Q. Which station kiosk is that? Do you remember? There's
9 three kiosks in the station.

10 A. There is. It's on the track 2 side is all I know.

11 Q. Track 2?

12 A. Yeah. I'm not familiar with the stations topside.

13 Q. Okay. And you tried to contact OCC, still without
14 success?

15 A. Right.

16 Q. And you had your two-way handheld radio with you at that
17 time?

18 A. Um-hmm.

19 Q. After you left the kiosk, were you by yourself or with
20 the transit officer?

21 A. Transit officers, other -- not employees. I'm sorry,
22 customers, station manager Cindy was somewhere in the vicinity,
23 but she's trying to check her back rooms. We were just all being
24 escorted out.

25 Q. Okay. So you left the L'Enfant Plaza Station exit and

1 went up to daylight?

2 A. Went up topside, yes.

3 Q. Topside, okay.

4 A. Yes, um-hmm.

5 Q. What did you do when you got topside?

6 A. And I also encountered a supervisor, Supervisor Adams.
7 Supervisor Adams, he's from the orange line, so he evidently came
8 up. In my going out of the station, I encountered him. He told
9 me he was going to go back and try to get to the train. I went
10 upstairs. He soon followed, came back up.

11 Q. So at that point, staying in the station was not an
12 option?

13 A. We could not stay down in the station. We were upstairs
14 in the station. Another -- at some point in time, I don't know
15 how much time had passed, 20 minutes or whatever, there was
16 another Transit officer that walked up to us and said who was the
17 train operator? I am. He said come with me.

18 Q. Okay. Tell us about that?

19 A. Well, he took myself, and I asked Supervisor Adams to
20 come with me, also. And he took us -- we walked several blocks,
21 across the street or whatever, but it was to another way to get
22 down into L'Enfant.

23 Q. Okay. So you walked these several blocks to another
24 entrance?

25 A. To the L'Enfant Station.

1 Q. L'Enfant, okay. Tell us what happened there?

2 A. We go down in the station. They wanted to try to pull
3 the train back out in reverse, going back the way that I went.
4 There was a flashing lunar, which means that they going to reverse
5 that train if they could, but before we could do anything, they
6 had turned third wheel power down so --

7 Q. So at that point you couldn't have moved the train
8 anyways?

9 A. No, no.

10 Q. Okay. All right. Any idea as to the time that this
11 occurred?

12 A. No, I don't. I don't have any idea when that occurred.

13 Q. When you were topside, you say you tried to -- correct
14 me if I'm wrong -- you tried to contact OCC again?

15 A. No, I didn't say topside. I said when I was down in the
16 station and I tried.

17 Q. Down in the station.

18 A. Yes, I at the kiosk.

19 Q. At the kiosk?

20 A. Um-hmm.

21 Q. And that was the last time you tried?

22 A. Yes, it was.

23 Q. The radios work topside, correct?

24 A. Um-hmm.

25 Q. Did you try to use the radio?

1 A. No, I didn't. I was standing with the supervisor at
2 that point. No, I did not.

3 Q. Was the supervisor in contact with OCC, do you know?

4 A. I really don't -- I didn't pay attention to that. I
5 can't remember that.

6 Q. And that's the Supervisor Adams, right?

7 A. Supervisor Adams.

8 Q. Okay. So going ahead to where you had gone back down to
9 L'Enfant Plaza to try to move the train and you discovered the
10 track was -- the power was shut off --

11 A. They told us that it was -- there was no power.

12 Q. How was the smoke condition down there at that time?

13 A. The smoke condition wasn't as bad at that time. It was
14 bad but not as bad as it was initially.

15 Q. So if you had power, theoretically, do you feel the
16 smoke condition would have been okay enough to get back in your
17 train, reverse end, and pull out of the station? What do you
18 think?

19 A. Yes, yes, yes, we could have.

20 Q. You feel comfortable you could have done that?

21 A. We could have done that, but we would have had to normal
22 up, which we did, but -- start normaling up. Supervisor Adams did
23 the emergency doors because people had broke the seals on the
24 emergency doors, so you got to normal everything back up before
25 you can get in all the doors.

1 Q. Close all the doors and --

2 A. Close them up and to get all doors closed.

3 Q. And the seal --

4 A. That's what he and I both were working on.

5 Q. You were both working on it at that time?

6 A. Doing that, yeah.

7 Q. You went down the train, door by door, closing them all
8 up?

9 A. Right, right.

10 Q. I see. Okay, good. And that might take, what, 5 or 7
11 minutes maybe, something like that?

12 A. Right.

13 Q. Best guess?

14 A. Something, yeah.

15 Q. And by the -- was the power shut off before that or
16 after that? Do you know when the power shut off?

17 A. I think the power was actually shut off after that.

18 Q. After that?

19 A. I think. I'm not sure. I'm not sure.

20 Q. So had it --

21 A. Because I was able to get in all doors closed. When I
22 keyed up, I was able to get in all doors, and that's what we're
23 looking for in order to move that train without breaking seals.

24 Q. So you and Supervisor Adams worked your way down the
25 train, closing all the doors, getting the train normalized up?

1 A. Um-hmm.

2 Q. Okay, and you're back at the opposite end of the train?

3 A. No, we were in the middle of the train.

4 Q. Middle of the train.

5 A. When I keyed up I was in the middle. It was in the
6 belly of the train.

7 Q. Oh, you can key up in the middle of a train?

8 A. Yes, sir.

9 Q. I see, okay. And was that the point when you were
10 notified or you found out that the power was off?

11 A. I guess so. Somewhere in there.

12 Q. Approximately at that time?

13 A. Yeah, uh-hmm, yeah, yeah, approximate.

14 Q. So anything further to deal with the train would have
15 been a futile effort?

16 A. Um-hmm.

17 Q. I see. So what happened then?

18 A. We just -- we waited. We just waited.

19 Q. In the station?

20 A. I was in the station, downstairs in the station.

21 Q. And you still had your handheld radio?

22 A. Um-hmm.

23 Q. Did you hear any messages from OCC trying to connect
24 with you?

25 A. Not at all.

1 Q. Not at all?

2 A. Uh-uh. He had -- Supervisor Adams had his radio on, I
3 had mine on; we didn't hear anything, not right away.

4 Q. I see. And --

5 A. I think, eventually, they -- someone came over the air
6 and asked was the 510 operator there, and we said yes. I answered
7 yes, 510 operator is here.

8 Q. Do you know who that might have been or --

9 A. No.

10 Q. No?

11 A. No.

12 Q. Didn't make a determination?

13 A. No.

14 Q. So you remained in the station?

15 A. Um-hmm. In the --

16 Q. Was the smoke condition heavy, light or getting better?

17 A. It wasn't as heavy. It wasn't as heavy.

18 Q. It was tolerable, maybe?

19 A. Yeah, a little tolerable, but it wasn't as heavy. You
20 could still smell a chemical or something, but it wasn't as heavy.

21 Q. I see, I see. How long did you remain in the station,
22 roughly?

23 A. I was down in the station with the train until 9:00,
24 9:30. I was down there that whole --

25 Q. That late?

1 A. Yeah, yeah. Long time.

2 Q. So you stuck around with Supervisor Adams?

3 A. Well, yeah, but they left. They eventually left and I
4 was still in there. They were going to get someone to come in.
5 Somewhere during that time, they had put the trains in cold --
6 what they call cold storage. So the car equipment had to go down
7 and open up our auxiliary -- is it the auxiliary? Break boxes.

8 MR. BAKER: Yeah, breaker panel.

9 WITNESS: Yeah, breaker panel and bring everything off.
10 Take all the breakers off the train.

11 BY MR. DOWNS:

12 Q. I see, okay.

13 A. So once they did that, they had to have someone stay
14 with the train until, I guess, they get ready to move it. So I
15 sat until they got me a relief.

16 Q. I see. And that would be your normal procedure: Stay
17 with your train until you've got a relief?

18 A. Um-hmm.

19 Q. I see. Okay, very good testimony. Thank you.

20 MR. ADAMS: Can I get us some water?

21 MR. DOWNS: Let's go off the record.

22 MR. BUCHER: Yeah. Let's take a break. That's not a
23 problem.

24 (Off the record)

25 (On the record)

1 MR. BUCHER: Okay, this is Dave Bucher again, and we're
2 back with the interview of Ms. Conner. We'll continue with a few
3 questions.

4 Mr. Downs?

5 BY MR. DOWNS:

6 Q. Okay, I just have one remaining question and then we'll
7 continue on with the rest of the folks here.

8 Ms. Conner, to your best knowledge, where you had
9 stopped the train on the platform, and we later mentioned about
10 104 feet, to your best knowledge, the train didn't get moved by
11 you or anybody else?

12 A. No.

13 Q. No. That's where it -- in other words, when you were
14 prepping the train with the intent of moving it reverse direction,
15 it didn't get moved at that time, right?

16 A. No, uh-uh.

17 Q. Okay, great.

18 MR. DOWNS: I'm going to move on to the next question.

19 MR. ADAMS: Dorsey Adams.

20 BY MR. ADAMS:

21 Q. Ms. Conner, I just have a few questions and I'll move
22 on. When you were in the kiosk and you couldn't contact them by
23 handheld, did you attempt to contact them by landline?

24 A. I was going to but they were escorting us out, yeah.

25 Q. As you came in to L'Enfant, did you hear a transmission

1 asking you to proceed without stopping?

2 A. You know, I think I did hear that. I thought I heard
3 someone say go to Water Front. I couldn't, I couldn't --

4 Q. It was garbled? Just --

5 A. I thought that I heard that. I wasn't sure.

6 Q. Sure, okay.

7 A. And, no, I couldn't. I wouldn't have anyway.

8 Q. Because of --

9 A. I could not see. I could not see anything.

10 Q. And that was going to be my next question.

11 A. Yeah. I could not see anything. I couldn't see the
12 signals. We have, as you know, the --

13 Q. So if you're in a procedure like that, in a situation
14 like that and you can't see in front of you or you can't see in
15 any way you want to go, is that standard procedure to stop the
16 train?

17 A. Um-hmm. It would be, yes. It would be to stop, yes.

18 Q. But even if there wasn't standard procedure --

19 A. If it wasn't standard procedure, for my safety --

20 Q. -- you would have still stopped?

21 A. -- I would have stopped.

22 Q. Okay, thank you. Was it the first officer that you came
23 upon as you came in to L'Enfant to actually lead the train, or was
24 it the second officer that came up later, or did anyone actually
25 lead the train?

1 A. Sir, my statement to you was that when I stopped, looked
2 to my right on the platform, I saw a Transit officer with a
3 flashlight.

4 Q. Right.

5 A. I asked him could he -- what was going on. He said he
6 wasn't sure. I asked him could he guide me to the 8 car marker.
7 He went as far as he could go because the further we went, the
8 more thicker and intense the smoke was. He stopped. Someone
9 else, another officer, ran up and said we have to get these people
10 out of here, we have to evacuate this train now.

11 Q. All right, all right. I think you have answered all the
12 questions that I had. Thank you.

13 A. Thank you.

14 MR. BALLARD: Hercules Ballard, Washington Metro.

15 BY MR. BALLARD:

16 Q. Ms. Conner, as you were doing your track inspection from
17 Archives to L'Enfant Plaza, when you first entered the -- when you
18 first approached the interlocking into -- leading into the
19 platform there at L'Enfant Plaza, did you notice smoke?

20 A. Not at all, sir.

21 Q. Okay. And as you moved across interlocking, going on to
22 the platform, I just want to make sure I get this clear: It's not
23 until after you arrive on the platform that you actually started
24 seeing smoke come onto the platform?

25 A. I was so far into the platform. How far I'm not sure.

1 Q. But you had already entered the platform?

2 A. Exactly, sir.

3 Q. Okay. I'm just trying to make sure we've got all
4 the -- and then you moved the train up onto the platform with the
5 assistance of a Transit officer, and even at that point you were
6 not actually sure the position of the train on the platform, so
7 there was no -- well, even at that point, were you sure of the
8 position, how far onto the platform you were? I mean --

9 A. Was I sure?

10 Q. Right.

11 A. No, sir, I was not sure.

12 Q. Okay. So if OCC had given you a command to open the
13 doors onto the platform side to evacuate the customers, would you
14 have felt comfortable opening the doors even --

15 A. Sir, with all the smoke that was in there, I wouldn't
16 have had a choice. I would not have had a choice.

17 Q. Whether or not to open the doors?

18 A. I wouldn't have -- I would have had to open the doors.
19 I would not have -- with all the smoke that was in there, there
20 was no way that I could just sit there and not open those doors.
21 I'm on the platform. I don't know how far, but I know I'm on the
22 platform.

23 Q. Okay. And, okay, at some point you got back on -- left
24 the station and came back into the station. You said you and
25 Supervisor Adams boarded the train. After you normalized the

1 doors, then you keyed up in the middle of the train, I guess third
2 car or wherever, and then that's when you got the 'all doors
3 closed'?

4 A. I just wanted -- we wanted to key up to see if I had an
5 'all doors closed' on the console, yes.

6 Q. Yes?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. But that was after you normalized the doors?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Okay. That's my question.

11 A. That was the only way we were going to get a 'all doors
12 closed'.

13 Q. I just -- I wanted to make sure. I wanted to get -- you
14 know there's a record, right?

15 A. Uh-huh.

16 Q. So I wanted to make sure that everyone knows that you
17 did not just board the train, keep the train up and the train was
18 normalized. The train was not normalized until after you had
19 normalized the doors.

20 A. Right, right.

21 Q. And then you could get --

22 A. Right. We had to, we had to key -- we had to normalize
23 the emergency doors.

24 Q. Right. Okay. That's all I had.

25 BY MS. FLEMINGS-McCANN:

1 Q. Good morning.

2 A. Good morning.

3 Q. Marlene Flemings-McCann, assistant business agent.

4 Ms. Conner, I'm glad that you're fine. I understand you're still
5 out, and I hope you feel better.

6 A. Thank you.

7 Q. With that being said, I want to ask you how many cars
8 were in your consist?

9 A. Six cars were in my consist.

10 Q. On a normal day, ROCC has control over the railroad on a
11 normal day?

12 A. Um-hmm.

13 Q. This was not a normal day. When you couldn't get any
14 confirmation from ROCC or the radio communication wasn't where
15 you -- they could hear you and you could hear them, the on-scene
16 commander at that time was Transit?

17 A. Yes, I would say that it was Transit.

18 Q. Okay. Because when you first got there, there was no
19 supervisors or anyone that you can see clearly? It was Transit
20 who approached you?

21 A. It was Transit that was on the platform, exactly.

22 Q. So Transit?

23 A. Yeah, um-hmm.

24 Q. Transit is the on-scene commander?

25 A. Um-hmm.

1 Q. So you were guided by Transit from there on?

2 A. Um-hmm.

3 Q. I know you said that the customers had -- at that point,
4 your doors were still closed?

5 A. Um-hmm.

6 Q. And when the officer guided you as far as he could go,
7 you did not open your doors?

8 A. Uh-uh, not at all.

9 Q. The customers?

10 A. Yeah, they already broke the --

11 Q. They had already broke the seals on the emergency --

12 A. Well, once we stopped and that other officer was coming
13 up to say you got to get these people out of here, unbeknownst to
14 me until I turned around, they had already broke --

15 Q. They already -- okay.

16 A. Yeah, they were evacuating, um-hmm.

17 Q. Okay, so they were coming out the number 9 door?

18 A. Exactly.

19 Q. Okay. You said they told you not to leave and you was
20 doing what you were instructed to do, and you were still trying to
21 reach Central once you got upstairs and with all the back-and-
22 forth. I guess it was a lot of commotion, because they were
23 saying that they wasn't hearing you, and I can see now you
24 couldn't hear them. Did you see any green line supervisor at all?

25 A. Not at all.

1 Q. And is that unusual when you have a situation to not see
2 any supervisor?

3 A. Well, I don't know -- see, I was asking that. I didn't
4 even know who was on duty.

5 And I forgot to say once we came back downstairs into
6 the station, myself and Supervisor Adams, at some point Supervisor
7 Abney was there, also.

8 MR. DOWNS: Supervisor?

9 WITNESS: Abney, Abney. He was there.

10 BY MS. FLEMINGS-McCANN:

11 Q. Was a green line supervisors?

12 A. He's a, he's a orange line supervisor. They came up.

13 Q. Supervisor Abney?

14 A. Uh-huh. They both are orange line supervisors. New
15 Carrollton supervisors, yeah.

16 Q. Okay. So on the green line, you had two orange line
17 supervisors there?

18 A. I did at L'Enfant.

19 Q. At L'Enfant?

20 A. Yeah, that's -- at some point, um-hmm.

21 Q. I guess my last question: Supervisor Adams was the
22 first supervisor you encountered?

23 A. That I saw, that I encountered.

24 Q. And that's when you was going up? When Transit
25 instructed --

1 A. Well, we were coming -- yeah. I think we -- I may have
2 been somewhere even around the kiosk. I'm not sure. But, you
3 know, and then going up and out.

4 Q. Okay. Did you hear Supervisor Adams on his radio
5 talking to Central?

6 A. I believe he tried to get in touch with Central. I
7 believe he did, um-hmm.

8 Q. So you don't even know if he communicated?

9 A. He couldn't, he couldn't communicate. I believe he did
10 and he couldn't get through, either. He couldn't get through.

11 Q. Okay. That's all I needed. Thank you so much.

12 A. Um-hmm, he couldn't get through. Coming up the
13 escalator, yeah.

14 MR. BUCHER: Further questions?

15 MS. FLEMINGS-McCANN: That's all I have. Thank you.

16 MS. SAMARASINGHE: Sharmila Samarasinghe, Tri-State
17 Oversight Committee.

18 BY MS. SAMARASINGHE:

19 Q. Ms. Conner, just a couple of questions. On approach to
20 the L'Enfant platform, you were not instructed by ROCC of anything
21 other than for you to -- they didn't tell you to proceed, nor did
22 they tell you not to proceed, right? You were heading through the
23 lunar to the platform assuming condition were fine, because you
24 didn't know there was anything going on at that time?

25 A. They just -- no, they just told me to check for smoke.

1 Yeah, check for smoke.

2 Q. All right. And as you approached the platform and you
3 saw the smoke and you realized that you cannot go any further, you
4 stopped. But even at that point, did OCC tell you to stop?

5 A. No.

6 Q. No.

7 A. OCC didn't tell me to stop, uh-uh.

8 Q. Okay, all right. And after you had those conversations
9 with the first police officer, as well as the second police
10 officer, at which point they decided and instructed you to leave
11 the train and evacuate, you informed ROCC on your train radio that
12 you were leaving the train, is that correct?

13 A. No, I did not. I just told them I couldn't see.

14 Q. Yeah.

15 A. But I'd let them know that, you know -- well, I told
16 them I couldn't see. I did say that when I first stopped. When I
17 first got on the platform after going so far and could not see, I
18 let them know that this is 510; I can't see.

19 Q. Okay. And then you had that first police officer trying
20 to guide you further up?

21 A. Exactly.

22 Q. With his light?

23 A. With his flashlight, um-hmm.

24 Q. And then at that point, he decided even that was not
25 going to be enough to safely guide you, and then it was at that

1 point either --

2 A. No, he couldn't see.

3 Q. He couldn't see.

4 A. He couldn't see, he couldn't see.

5 Q. Yes.

6 A. He found it was too intense and he stopped, said he
7 couldn't go any further.

8 Q. Yeah.

9 A. Because the further we went, the thicker and deeper it
10 got, I guess, into the smoke.

11 Q. Okay. And it is at that point that --

12 A. Another officer.

13 Q. -- police officers -- yeah, decided -- had the
14 conversation with each other --

15 A. No, they didn't have a conversation with each other.
16 No, that's not what I said. Another officer ran up and said we
17 have to evacuate.

18 Q. Okay. At the point where they told you you need to
19 leave the train, along with the passengers who were leaving the
20 train, did you have a chance to tell OCC or get feedback from OCC
21 that they understood that you were leaving?

22 A. No, no.

23 Q. No, okay. And then as you were leaving, you stopped at
24 the station manager's kiosk and you tried to raise OCC while you
25 were there on your radio, right?

1 A. Um-hmm.

2 Q. And you said after time had passed, one of the police
3 officers, the third police officer, came and got you and
4 Supervisor Adams and you all made your way back down to the
5 platform where the train was berthed, 510 was berthed, and you all
6 started your procedures to start readying, normalizing the train
7 to move. And did you say that at that time either you or
8 Supervisor Adams was trying to raise OCC?

9 A. Uh-uh.

10 Q. No?

11 A. I wasn't trying to reach OCC, no, uh-uh, uh-uh.

12 Q. Did you hear on the radio them trying to contact you or
13 Supervisor Adams?

14 A. I just really can't remember on that, on that, no. I
15 really can't recall them saying anything as far as that's
16 concerned. I don't remember that.

17 Q. All right. And then the final question is: I know you
18 said as you were normalizing the training and getting all the
19 doors closed, you were in one of the middle cars and you keyed up
20 the train where you got an 'all doors closed' indication?

21 A. Um-hmm.

22 Q. You would only get an 'all doors closed' indication if
23 you had power, right, or would you not?

24 A. I would think so, yeah, yeah. I would think so. If
25 there was no power, we wouldn't -- I wouldn't have been able to

1 key it up, right, um-hmm, um-hmm.

2 Q. All right. Okay, great. Thank you.

3 MR. BUCHER: Dave Bucher again.

4 BY MR. BUCHER:

5 Q. I have one follow-up question, and it should be
6 relatively easy. As you evacuated the train and, obviously, if
7 you're using the flashlight to be guided down the platform, I just
8 want to be clear, the station lights were totally ineffective?
9 There was no lighting that you could see at all?

10 A. Barely, barely. At that point, barely any lighting in
11 the station, period. None, as a matter of fact, in terms of
12 heading in the direction in which I was going in.

13 Q. Okay. Not effective at all?

14 A. Um-hmm.

15 Q. Okay, thank you.

16 BY MR. DOWNS:

17 Q. Okay, Ms. Conner, just to make sure I understand the
18 train operation, once a passenger opens the door, that locks the
19 train up? Basically you cannot move the train?

20 A. Not going to be able to move the train.

21 Q. Until you normalize the door again?

22 A. Um-hmm, um-hmm.

23 Q. I see, great. Knowing what you know now, we always try
24 to brainstorm a little bit for future events, lessons learned.
25 We're not saying you did anything wrong or anything, but knowing

1 what we know now, is there anything that you could do different,
2 would have done differently, you know, in the future?

3 A. Myself or just overall?

4 Q. Yourself and then overall. How's that? Any thoughts
5 you might have on that?

6 A. Overall, when the train operators report to ROCC that
7 there is smoke and/or fire, in my opinion, whatever is going on,
8 they need to stop and address that and nothing but that until we
9 have an all clear.

10 Q. I see. Okay, good. Good point. How about so far as
11 yourself? Any thoughts on your --

12 A. As far as myself is concerned, when that happens, it's
13 myself as well as any of the operators. When we hear we happening
14 to be traveling in that direction, that area, whether it was on
15 the same track or the opposite track, we should be able to just
16 stop and wait. Just automatically stop on our own and wait.

17 Q. Of your own initiative rather than --

18 A. Exactly.

19 Q. -- waiting for OCC?

20 A. Whether -- that's right.

21 Q. I see.

22 A. We should be able to stop and wait.

23 Q. With that, would you mean stop in the middle of track
24 somewhere or stop at a station?

25 A. Exactly. Wherever you are, we need to just stop. I

1 believe all transportation needs to -- if it's on that particular
2 line -- needs to halt until we get a hold on what's going on.

3 Q. Get things sorted out?

4 A. Exactly.

5 Q. I see, great. Anything else you can think of that might
6 be helpful?

7 A. They need to not not listen to us to have to have
8 verification. They need to be able to take our word when we say
9 we see smoke or something is going on.

10 Q. Has there been a problem in the past with OCC where
11 you'd tell them something?

12 A. Yeah, yeah, it has, it has.

13 Q. Tell us about that?

14 A. Well, I can't remember any one particular incident off
15 the top of my head now, but they -- it's always like they have to
16 get verification from a supervisor or someone else maybe.

17 Q. Really?

18 A. Yeah. We need -- they need to listen to us.

19 Q. So you might be riding down the track somewhere, doing
20 your job and you see something unusual, you'd report it, and the
21 standard procedure as far as you understand is that OCC would
22 dispatch a supervisor --

23 A. Keep moving, keep moving; we'll get someone on it, we'll
24 get someone on it or whatever, yes.

25 Q. I see.

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. Okay, good point. Anything else you can think about?

3 A. That's important. That's the most important as far as
4 I'm concerned.

5 Q. Most important thing?

6 A. Yeah, that's the most important, yeah, um-hmm.

7 Q. Okay. Train operations, the ventilation system, the on-
8 board ventilation system. We heard testimony yesterday that OCC
9 has to provide guidance to shut that off, is that correct? In
10 other words, you can't shut down the on-board train ventilation
11 system without instructions from OCC, is that correct?

12 A. Um-hmm, um-hmm, exactly. In terms of the EV. He's
13 talking about the EV? Yeah, yeah, they got to tell us, yeah.

14 Q. I see. How do you feel about that? In other words,
15 let's put you --

16 A. Yeah, I would -- it would be the -- I would feel the
17 same way. We need to be able to just do it if -- because we're
18 out there. We're in the thick of things.

19 Q. In other words, putting yourself in the situation of
20 our, of our 302 train operator.

21 A. The 302 train operator.

22 Q. Put yourself in that situation.

23 A. Oh, my God, um-hmm.

24 Q. How would you have handled it in terms of your train
25 starts to fill up? Would you have shut the --

1 A. Yes, I would have.

2 Q. You would have?

3 A. Yes, I would have.

4 Q. I see. Very good. Good point.

5 A. Yes, I would have.

6 Q. Any other thoughts you'd want to offer as long as you're
7 brainstorming a little bit?

8 A. You just -- again, you just need to stop. You need to
9 stop everybody. Once I -- because I'm listening to him on -- when
10 I'm on approach to L'Enfant saying that there's a lot of smoke in
11 the tunnel, I know that's the yellow line in front of me because
12 of the ID, so I'm thinking it's his tunnel, which it was, as he's
13 going up in there. They should have stopped me and let me sit,
14 even if I'm in the middle, which I was at that point, somewhere on
15 approach to -- in between Archives and L'Enfant. They should have
16 stopped me.

17 Q. I see.

18 A. And listened to him. He would have been able to bring
19 that train back to that platform.

20 Q. Because the platform would have been empty still?

21 A. It was empty still, exactly.

22 Q. Got you.

23 A. It was still empty.

24 Q. Got you. Good point.

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Anything else you can think of?

2 A. No.

3 Q. That's it?

4 A. No, sir.

5 MR. DOWNS: Let's move on next. Question?

6 BY MR. ADAMS:

7 Q. Just a couple last things to clarify. Ms. Conner, when
8 was the last time that you attempted during this whole process to
9 call OCC?

10 A. Oh, man.

11 Q. Don't know?

12 A. Probably around -- just at the kiosk.

13 Q. At the kiosk?

14 A. Yes, yes, because once, you know, Supervisor Adams
15 appeared, he's the on-scene commander. I got to follow his
16 instructions. He's got to follow Transit's instructions, so yeah.

17 Q. Okay. On approach to Mount Vernon, and I don't know if
18 I remember this correctly, when OCC asked you to check or verify a
19 smoke sighting?

20 A. While I was at Mount Vernon Station, they asked me to
21 check for smoke between Mount Vernon and Gallery.

22 Q. Okay. And you did that?

23 A. Yes, sir.

24 Q. And then you called them back to --

25 A. Once I was at the 8 car marker at Gallery, I let them

1 know it was a clear track inspection.

2 Q. Okay. And how often during the course of the day do you
3 guys get calls about possible smoke incident?

4 A. Oh, not that often.

5 Q. Not that often?

6 A. Not that often.

7 Q. It's not something that occurs every day?

8 A. No, it's not going to -- no, no, hopefully, no, it
9 doesn't occur every day.

10 Q. Yeah, I know that.

11 A. Oh, no.

12 Q. But I just wanted to know approximately is it a thing
13 that happens all the time or is it seldom?

14 A. Uh-uh. No, it doesn't happen all the time, sir, no, but
15 it happens enough for them to take our word for it.

16 Q. Okay. Well, let me get this clear: So at Mount Vernon
17 they didn't use a supervisor; they used you to verify?

18 A. They used me, um-hmm.

19 Q. And so they took your word for it in that particular
20 case?

21 A. At that particular time, yeah, they did, because I was
22 right behind 302.

23 Q. Okay, all right. That's all I have.

24 MR. BALLARD: Hercules Ballard, Washington Metro.

25 BY MR. BALLARD:

1 Q. Ms. Conner, once you and Supervisor Adams board the
2 train --

3 A. We boarded, um-hmm.

4 Q. You boarded the train. Who told you that third wheel
5 power was energized? Could you tell by the train going to
6 emergency lighting or did OCC say that?

7 A. Now he was, he was in charge of that, so I'm not sure on
8 that.

9 Q. Supervisor Adams was --

10 A. I'm sorry, "he" meaning Supervisor Adams.

11 Q. Supervisor Adams told you that?

12 A. Um-hmm.

13 Q. That power had been --

14 A. No, no, no. I'm saying he was in charge. I'm not sure
15 if he was told by Transit or if he heard it off his radio or if he
16 actually spoke to them. I'm not sure.

17 Q. So you and he were not standing close to each other
18 when --

19 A. Not very close. I'm in the -- I went to the cab to try
20 to just key up, and I just let him know I got a 'all doors
21 closed'.

22 Q. All right, okay. And then once you got that 'all doors
23 closed', what, he came to your cab and said, Ms. Conner --

24 A. No, he didn't come, he didn't come to my cab. I came
25 out of the cab.

1 Q. So you came out of the cab?

2 A. Um-hmm.

3 Q. And then you went to where Supervisor Adams would be?

4 A. Yeah, and he was probably walking through. We were
5 moving fast. He probably was walking through to go to the
6 opposite end, to the Archives end.

7 Q. And then once you met up together, then he told you that
8 third power had been reloaded?

9 A. Um-hmm.

10 Q. On the approach to -- when you were doing the track
11 inspection from Archives to L'Enfant Plaza and you heard the
12 conversation between OCC and the operator of 302, all right, and
13 I'm assuming you heard 302 say that there was smoke in the tunnel
14 leaving L'Enfant Plaza --

15 A. He didn't say leaving L'Enfant. He just said there was
16 smoke in the tunnel. He's leaving L'Enfant.

17 Q. So you don't, you don't know where he -- you didn't know
18 exactly where he was located?

19 A. He wasn't on the platform that I know of. He wasn't on
20 the platform.

21 Q. But at that point, you had not arrived at L'Enfant Plaza
22 so --

23 A. I had not totally arrived at L'Enfant Plaza, but I could
24 not see his marker lights, the train marker lights.

25 Q. So when he was communicating to OCC that there was heavy

1 smoke, you had not arrived on the platform?

2 A. I had not --

3 Q. But you were close enough to the platform to see the
4 platform?

5 A. I could kind of see the platform, not totally, um-hmm.

6 Q. Okay, so even --

7 A. And therefore -- and I didn't see any smoke at my end of
8 the platform.

9 Q. So as OCC's communicating with the operator of 302, you
10 were nearing the cross-over at L'Enfant Plaza, and then you just
11 continued on into the platform, and then at some point OCC got
12 back to you and saying continue on? Or say something --

13 A. I didn't say that, sir, no.

14 Q. Do not stop?

15 A. No.

16 Q. Well, I'm --

17 A. No, no, no.

18 Q. I didn't say that you said that. I'm asking.

19 A. No, sir, no.

20 Q. So at what point did you hear OCC say continue or do not
21 service?

22 A. I can't even say they said do not service. I'm not
23 sure. I was already in the thick of things, I believe, when I
24 heard that.

25 Q. Right.

1 A. I was in the thick of things. And at that point, I was
2 not going to move because I could not see.

3 Q. Right, okay. That's all the questions I have.

4 MS. FLEMINGS-McCANN: Marlene Flemings-McCann, union
5 rep.

6 BY MS. FLEMINGS-McCANN:

7 Q. It's been a while since I've been on a train, so I'm
8 kind of -- got to get a refresher on some procedures. But I
9 remember back in the day -- and I don't know if it's still -- I
10 guess it's still part of it now -- if there was an emergency on
11 the railroad or an operator called in an emergency, they would
12 normally tell everybody to clear the air and they would just talk
13 to the operator that's reporting this emergency and other -- they
14 would tell all the other operators to stand by or stand clear,
15 whatever. I never heard anyone say that that took place.

16 A. Um-hmm.

17 Q. Not from OCC, not from the other operator we talked to,
18 and not from you.

19 A. Right.

20 Q. So because I wasn't there -- and I do realize there were
21 more than one emergency going on, but I just never heard that
22 being said, so can you tell me --

23 A. It wasn't -- it didn't -- you didn't hear anybody say
24 that because it wasn't said, if that's your question. It was not
25 said: Clear the airwaves.

1 Q. That's my question.

2 A. Because you're absolutely right. There are times when
3 they will say clear the airways, we have an emergency situation
4 going on, but that was not said this time.

5 Q. And normally, when that does happen, that gives OCC time
6 to respond to that emergency operator to get better clearance of
7 what's going on to guide other trains as to how to proceed. And
8 do you think because of the different situations that was
9 happening, or do you think it was the new radio system or the
10 communication in the area? Because it sounds like it was so much
11 chatter that either they couldn't hear who they were talking to or
12 the operators couldn't respond to -- were they hearing me?
13 Because the airway was never really shut down to the emergency
14 train.

15 A. Yeah, it was never really shut down to the emergency
16 train, that number 302.

17 Q. So am I little bit back on track? Is that still in
18 effect? We still -- they still do that?

19 A. Normally you're right, you're right, especially in
20 something of this magnitude. When he said smoke, that's really
21 what should have gone down. Nobody should have been able to talk
22 but 302.

23 Q. Okay, thank you.

24 MS. FLEMINGS-McCANN: I have no more. I'm sorry.

25 BY MS. SAMARASINGHE:

1 A. Ms. Conner, Sharmila Samarasinghe, Tri-State Oversight
2 Committee. Just two questions: After you all were taken topside
3 by Metro Transit P.D., you said after time had passed you all were
4 again taken from a different entrance by Metro Transit P.D.
5 escorting you down to the station platform where 510 was located.
6 Do you recall just approximately how much time had passed once you
7 got to topside to the time that you got back down to the 510?

8 A. No, I don't. Yeah, no, I don't.

9 Q. Okay, all right. Second and last question is that as
10 you were approaching L'Enfant, there was no instruction that came
11 to you from OCC to stop the train?

12 A. Not at all.

13 Q. Thank you.

14 A. You're welcome.

15 MR. BUCHER: Dave Bucher again.

16 BY MR. BUCHER:

17 Q. Just one little question, and it involves your radio
18 again. And I hate to keep going back to that, but when you went
19 back down to reactive the 510 train, do you remember if your
20 portable was working? Could you communicate with Adams or --

21 A. I could communicate with my -- yeah, my portable was
22 working.

23 Q. And you could hear -- you talked to Mr. Adams with it
24 and everything or --

25 A. I didn't have to talk to Adams. We were kind of in the

1 same area, but no, my radio was working. You want to know if my
2 handheld was working? It worked.

3 Q. Yeah, I just was verifying that it was working?

4 A. Yeah, um-hmm.

5 Q. Okay, that's all. That's all I have.

6 MR. DOWNS: Downs, NTSB.

7 BY MR. DOWNS:

8 Q. Continuing on your radios, tell me about your radios.
9 We understand from the testimony yesterday you were issued new
10 radios, digital radios, in January. How are they working out for
11 you?

12 A. They're just okay.

13 Q. They're okay?

14 A. When it's clear, it's clear. But sometimes they sound
15 like -- what do they call them? Like a robot. You get this
16 [making sound effect] type of sound.

17 Q. Difficult to understand?

18 A. Well, it's just a screeching type of sound.

19 Q. A squeaking?

20 A. Not -- well, I'm saying that, but a robot type of
21 sounds. It just depends. Yeah, I'm not sure if it's where you
22 are, you know. You can hear sometimes very clear, and sometimes
23 not.

24 Q. And has the company explained what this noise is?

25 A. Well, we just started with these radios -- was it after

1 the 1st? I'm not sure. Was it the 1st?

2 Q. Yeah, January 1, we were told --

3 A. Yeah, um-hmm, um-hmm.

4 Q. -- they were issued. And they came on board over
5 several months or whatever?

6 A. Um-hmm.

7 Q. Are they reliable in terms of dead spots in the system
8 or -- that you know of?

9 A. Let's see, actually, when we had -- when they're out of
10 range, they're out of -- it's out of range. You're not going to
11 be able to hear.

12 Q. Right. Are there --

13 A. Yeah, yeah. If it starts beeping out of range, you're
14 just not going to be able to hear.

15 Q. And you've had -- correct me if I'm wrong, you've had
16 experience on every line, every yellow and whatever?

17 A. Um-hmm.

18 Q. Been to every --

19 A. Not yellow. No, my more experience is the red line,
20 green line and orange.

21 Q. But you've been on all the lines?

22 A. Um-hmm.

23 Q. One way or the other through your career?

24 A. Um-hmm.

25 Q. Okay. And with the new radio since January, were there

1 other places that you've experienced these radios have gone dead
2 with dead spots?

3 A. Well, I'm mainly on the green line, so yes, there are
4 some dead spots on the green line.

5 Q. On the green line.

6 A. Out of range spots on the green line.

7 Q. Okay. And you've reported that to OCC or whomever?

8 A. Um-hmm. They know, yeah.

9 Q. They know about it?

10 A. They know.

11 Q. Okay. Has it been indicated to you that there would be
12 any kind of repeater stations or whatever installed to take care
13 of those dead spots?

14 A. Not that I know of, no.

15 Q. Not that -- they didn't respond that we're going to put
16 a repeater there to take care of that? We're just still tweaking
17 the system, if you will?

18 A. Um-hmm.

19 Q. Try to get these taken care of. But they've not
20 indicated anything to you, correct?

21 A. Not to me directly, no.

22 Q. Not to you?

23 A. No, no.

24 Q. I see.

25 A. I have never been told that about a repeater, uh-uh.

1 Q. Great. Thank you. Radio procedure, correct me if I'm
2 wrong, when there's an emergency, is it appropriate and correct
3 for a train operator to announce I have an emergency or whatever
4 on the train? How does that work? Could you describe that for
5 me?

6 A. What do you mean?

7 Q. If a train experiences emergency, what is the proper
8 radio procedure to notify OCC?

9 A. Well, the way we normally. Just let them know that
10 it's -- this is 510, 302. This is -- I have an emergency going
11 on -- a certain situation going on. And you describe the
12 situation, whatever's going on.

13 Q. I see. The reason I ask is that some railroads use an
14 exact procedure whereby a train operator will simply announce
15 'Emergency, emergency, emergency' --

16 A. Oh, no.

17 Q. -- okay, and that alerts OCC stop everything and then
18 OCC would make an announcement saying all other trains clear the
19 air; we have an emergency. Is that the case with WMATA?

20 A. No, no. We just tell them what's going on, you know,
21 the situation.

22 Q. Just a narrative?

23 A. Um-hmm, a narrative of what's happening at that time.

24 Q. Of what's happening?

25 A. Um-hmm, um-hmm.

1 Q. And is it up to OCC, then, to make an announcement to
2 clear the radio channel?

3 A. Oh, yeah. They would have to make that announcement,
4 yeah.

5 Q. Do they normally do that?

6 A. It just depends.

7 Q. It just depends?

8 A. Yeah, on the situation. They have for trains that have
9 gone down, you know, that have BIEs on them or whatever.

10 Q. So that's your experience that they have done that in
11 the past?

12 A. Oh, they have done it. Yeah, they've done it in the
13 past.

14 Q. I see. Yeah, I'm not familiar with it firsthand, so I'm
15 relying upon you to fill me in.

16 A. No, they've done it in the past. Yeah, they have, but
17 they just didn't do it this time.

18 Q. And this time you did not hear any kind of announcement
19 to that effect?

20 A. Not at all, uh-uh.

21 Q. To where all the other trains should have cleared?

22 A. Uh-uh.

23 Q. Was there an announcement to the effect that all trains
24 on the yellow line or whatever 'hold your positions'?

25 A. I didn't hear that.

1 Q. You didn't hear that?

2 A. Not initially when everything was going on. Initially,
3 I did not hear that. If it came later, after that, maybe so, but
4 I did not hear that initially when everything first started.

5 Q. I see, okay. All right, very good.

6 MR. DOWNS: Let's move on.

7 MR. ADAMS: No questions.

8 MR. BALLARD: Hercules Ballard, Washington Metro.

9 BY MR. BALLARD:

10 Q. Ms. Conner, as you were approaching L'Enfant Plaza, if
11 you had seen where the platform was filled with smoke, would you
12 have stopped your train prior to?

13 A. Yes, sir, without a doubt.

14 Q. Thank you, ma'am.

15 MS. FLEMINGS-McCANN: No questions.

16 BY MS. SAMARASINGHE:

17 Q. Ms. Conner, Sharmila Samarasinghe, Tri-State Oversight
18 Committee. Just one question: When you were topside and the
19 decision was made that you all were going to be escorted by Metro
20 Transit P.D. down to the platform, did you happen to hear -- and I
21 know Supervisor Adams was in charge, essentially, from
22 Transportation. Did you happen to hear any conversations over his
23 radio with OCC saying that you all are going -- now heading
24 down --

25 A. Uh-uh.

1 Q. -- to normalize the train?

2 A. Neither one of us heard that. When the Transit officer
3 came and got us, we didn't know why he was --

4 Q. Yes, okay.

5 A. We didn't know at the time why he was escorting us
6 around.

7 Q. Okay. He just asked you to follow him down?

8 A. Just he wanted to know was the operator, come go with
9 me.

10 Q. Okay. All righty. Thank you.

11 MR. BUCHER: Dave Bucher. I have no other questions.

12 MR. DOWNS: I'm good, thank you.

13 MR. BUCHER: So anything else?

14 (No response)

15 MR. BUCHER: Okay, well, thank you very much. We
16 appreciate.

17 WITNESS: Um-hmm.

18 MR. BUCHER: This concludes the interview of Ms. Conner.

19 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)
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25

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 Connie Conner

DOCKET NUMBER: DCA-15-FR-004

PLACE: Washington, D.C.

DATE: January 16, 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.

Angie Duray
Transcriber