



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. * Docket No.: DCA-15-FR-004

JANUARY 12, 2015 *

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Interview of: PAUL D'ANDRADE

WMATA Headquarters
Jackson Graham Building
Washington, D.C.

Wednesday,
April 15, 2015

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice.

BEFORE: MICHAEL FLANIGON
Railroad Accident Investigator

The interviewee was afforded an opportunity to review this transcript for accuracy. No corrections were received.

APPEARANCES:

MICHAEL FLANIGON, Railroad Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

RICK NARVELL, Human Performance Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

LOREN GROFF, Ph.D., Transportation Safety Analyst
National Transportation Safety Board

I N D E X

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Interview of Paul D'Andrade:	
By Mr. Flanigon	4
By Mr. Narvell	33
By Dr. Groff	37
By Mr. Flanigon	42

I N T E R V I E W

1
2 MR. FLANIGON: It's April 15th, 2015. My name is Mike
3 Flanigon, F-l-a-n-i-g-o-n. I'm with the National Transportation
4 Safety Board, and we're interviewing Mr. Paul D'Andrade today, who
5 is an Assistant Superintendent at the Rail Operations Control
6 Center. The last name is D'A-n-d-r-a-d-e. Did I spell that
7 right?

8 MR. D'ANDRADE: Correct.

9 MR. FLANIGON: Great. And we're conducting the
10 interview in relation to the January 12th arcing incident on the
11 WMATA rail system at L'Enfant Plaza in Washington, D.C. I'll ask
12 my colleagues to identify themselves.

13 MR. NARVELL: Rick Narvell, N, like in Nancy, a-r-v,
14 like in Victor, e-l-l, with the NTSB.

15 DR. GROFF: Loren Groff, L-o-r-en, G-r-o-f-f, NTSB.

16 MR. FLANIGON: Okay. And just want to confirm, you
17 understand we'll record the interview and provide you a
18 transcript.

19 MR. D'ANDRADE: Understood.

20 MR. FLANIGON: Okay. Great.

INTERVIEW OF PAUL D'ANDRADE

21
22 BY MR. FLANIGON:

23 Q. Well, let's start with a general question. How long
24 have you worked at WMATA, how did you get to the position you're
25 in now, and what do you do?

1 A. Okay. I've been with WMATA for 5 years. I came to
2 WMATA by way of New York and Charlotte. Spent some time in New
3 York City Transit, as a train operator. Spent some time in
4 Charlotte as a controller. And I came to WMATA in 2010 as a
5 controller. I was a controller at WMATA for 3 years, and I've
6 been assistant superintendent for 2 years. And pretty much, the
7 role of assistant superintendent is to manage the controllers to
8 ensure that everyone is following procedures and notify upper
9 management when we have any incidents, and manage any incidents on
10 a higher level than the controllers.

11 Q. Okay. Is there an assistant superintendent on every
12 shift?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Okay. And then an overall superintendent that sort of
15 manages the whole operation --

16 A. Right. Exactly.

17 Q. -- is that how it works? I see.

18 A. Right. Yes.

19 Q. Okay. Great. And you -- let's see, 5 years. So, over
20 those, over the 5 years -- you came on board not long after a
21 whole string of pretty significant accidents.

22 A. Um-hum.

23 Q. And what kind of changes have you seen since you came on
24 board to today, with regard to safety, the emphasis on safety
25 and --

1 A. Right.

2 Q. -- you know, what's better, what's worse, what's the
3 same? What's your take?

4 A. I'm not sure exactly how it was before the incidents
5 came, because I was more a year afterwards. And you kind of saw
6 the wheels turning towards it and becoming more close to the
7 industry standard of really monitoring rules and making sure
8 everybody are following rules, and just making sure that everybody
9 is just on board.

10 One thing I do notice that everybody seems to make a
11 concerted effort towards safety, and towards just keeping it a
12 part of the normal conversation. So, I can say that's definitely,
13 I guess, is an improvement from what I've heard how it was before.
14 So --

15 Q. Okay. Do people come to you with your -- the
16 controllers on your shift, do they come to you with safety issues
17 if they feel they have them?

18 A. Yes. I mean, if they feel they have a safety issue,
19 they will come to me and whatever the issue may be I'll pass it on
20 to either our safety officer or, you know, department managers to
21 address whatever issues there may be.

22 Q. And would you be the person they would come to if they
23 had questions or needed clarification on some of the procedures
24 they had to follow?

25 A. Yes. Usually, yes, I'm the first person they would

1 contact. Yes.

2 Q. Okay. And so if I've got it right, you're sort of the
3 first-line supervisor for the controllers --

4 A. Right. Exactly.

5 Q. -- on the floor?

6 A. Yeah.

7 MR. FLANIGON: I'm going to step over here and just shut
8 this door the whole way.

9 BY MR. FLANIGON:

10 Q. And talk a little bit about how you assure yourself that
11 the procedures are understood, followed, executed properly.

12 A. Well, the first thing I like to do is -- and this is
13 something that I really stress -- is to make sure that they have
14 it in paperwork, whether it's email or a memo format, so they have
15 it, so they can always refer back to it. And then you also talk
16 with the staff and make sure that they understand any changes or
17 anything that's new coming down the pike, and even follow up with
18 some of the newer controllers and even the older controllers to
19 make sure that their skill set is still high and they're still
20 maintaining the level of understanding of what they have to do on
21 a given day-to-day basis.

22 So, a lot of it is through conversations and follow-up
23 through emails -- you know, coaching sessions. Things of that
24 nature.

25 Q. How about observations? Do you have a kind of

1 structured observation program where you'll --

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. -- either do replays or listen to tapes or watch --

4 A. Right.

5 Q. -- somebody work, and --

6 A. We'll listen in live, and we also have ability to pull
7 tapes and listen in. We'll listen in on -- we'll audit, I guess,
8 on certain times of the day to make sure that you're getting all
9 your repeat backs and your communication and you're setting up
10 your work areas to make sure that the -- everyone is protected
11 according to our, you know, SOPs. So, we do have an auditing
12 program and we do at least, per assistant superintendent maybe
13 about 12 or -- between 12 and 20 a month.

14 And it's six -- fully staffed, assistant
15 superintendents, there will be six of us. So you're talking about
16 at least that amount.

17 Q. Yeah. And so, that number 12 or between 12 and 20, what
18 constitutes a number? Is that one observation --

19 A. Yeah, one observation, right.

20 Q. -- one interaction?

21 A. Right. It would be one observation. So, we'll do -- if
22 it's communication, we may do it for like an hour or a half hour
23 time frame, and we'll listen in. Or if it's like an RWP it will
24 be one specific worksite which we'll look at and make sure that --
25 you know, what are prohibited exits and everything is installed

1 and, you know, we verify that they put their safety equipment down
2 also. So we'll listen in to make sure that stuff is enforced.

3 Q. Okay. Are you aware of a close call or a near miss
4 reporting system at WMATA?

5 A. Yeah. I'm aware of it.

6 Q. Okay. Do you get any data from that program that guides
7 anything you do?

8 A. I don't see it on a regular basis.

9 Q. No?

10 A. No.

11 Q. You see it on an occasional basis?

12 A. Right. I may see it on an occasional basis, but I can't
13 say I could put my finger on it to find it right away, you know.

14 Q. Okay. And how about the safety hotline? Are you
15 familiar with that?

16 A. Yeah. I'm familiar with the safety hotline.

17 Q. Okay. And in regards -- sort of the same question. Do
18 you get any data that comes to you that --

19 A. No, from --

20 Q. -- you receive any guidance, or --

21 A. Like, let's say -- no, there's no report. Like, let's
22 say, for instance, if someone anonymously calls or not anonymously
23 calls the safety hotline, there's -- at least not on my level that
24 it's distributed.

25 Q. Yeah. Okay. So you've been at three different

1 organizations and so you've kind of got a perspective, perhaps,
2 broader than people who just have worked here for their whole
3 career.

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. Do you think it's a safe place to work for?

6 A. Yeah, it's a safe place to work. And I think I -- I
7 guess from the different, three different systems, you're dealing
8 with -- New York was a relatively old system; Charlotte was a
9 brand-new system; here, is like a teenager.

10 Q. Yeah.

11 A. So -- and I think what happens when you deal with a
12 place like New York -- they've been through so many things so it's
13 become more ingrained. And like I say, similarly, Charlotte
14 they're still learning a lot of different things. And I -- the
15 good thing with a new system, everything works.

16 Q. Yeah.

17 A. Everything is perfect. So you really have -- you really
18 don't really have to really go into the nuts and bolts of really
19 kind of a lot of the repair. That's where WMATA is at now.
20 They're kind of in that teenage -- that initial brand spanking new
21 system is out, you know, and they're in the middle of their rehab.
22 And I think it's an adjustment for everybody. And I guess -- to
23 akin, you have a brand-new car, everything works well. And then
24 one day it doesn't start and you're like, well, what to do?

25 Q. Yeah.

1 A. So, that's -- and I think that's where it is. But I
2 wouldn't say it's unsafe. I think it's -- I think they had a
3 challenge with that learning curve that, let's say, a big -- a
4 longer city, like New York, has been through multiple learning
5 curves, changed multiple systems, signaling systems and things of
6 that nature.

7 Q. Yeah.

8 A. So I think it becomes more ingrained as you get a little
9 longer.

10 Q. Yeah. Are you familiar with the Tri-state Oversight
11 Committee?

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. Do you ever see them visiting the control center?

14 A. I work nights. I believe -- I think last year they made
15 a visit. But I really work nights. I don't see too many people.

16 Q. Um-hum.

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. Okay. Talking about equipment and the age, aging
19 equipment, how do you see the WMATA radio system working?

20 A. Honestly, that was my biggest challenges coming to the
21 system. In New York, I mean, one, as a train operator we all had
22 our own radios, so we were responsible for our own radios. And it
23 was to a point where if you didn't hear control center, the
24 problem was you, not the radio. That's how well the radios
25 worked. And similarly in Charlotte, we -- no problem with the

1 radios. So, coming here, that was a huge challenge of, one, just
2 seeing that they're still on analog system, you know. And two,
3 the difficulty of switching over from the analog to digital, which
4 I think this year was we fully went digital.

5 And you still have issues where, you know, because each
6 train operator is not issued their own radio, then some are using
7 the train radios because they didn't have enough radios in the
8 locker, you know, the pick-up locker. And it's -- I don't know.
9 I don't know how could they fix it. But it is a challenge. It is
10 a -- and it is frustrating. It's frustrating for -- to be out in
11 the field and you're not hearing, and it's also frustrating for
12 the controllers not to be able to clearly, you know, pass on
13 information. So -- so I would say that's definitely a challenge.

14 Q. Okay. You're not the first person to say that. Just in
15 case you want to know.

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. There's a system here they use at WMATA called SMS,
18 safety management system. Are you familiar with that at all?

19 A. No. I'm not that --

20 Q. No? Okay.

21 A. -- greatly familiar with it.

22 Q. It's a database, I gather.

23 A. Okay.

24 Q. So, it may be that you're just not on the level where
25 you would use it. Well, actually, on that, one of the -- as I

1 understand that system, one of the things that it tracks in a
2 database are incidents on the system.

3 A. Okay.

4 Q. Safety-related incidents --

5 A. Right.

6 Q. -- either like infractions or actual injuries, damaged
7 equipment --

8 A. Right.

9 Q. -- you know, collisions and derailments and that sort of
10 thing. So, when those kind of things happen obviously on the rail
11 system the control center is in the mix.

12 A. Right.

13 Q. So, how do those kind of things get captured in the
14 control center and what happens to that information?

15 A. Okay. Right. Usually when we have an incident in the
16 control center, we'll liaise with the safety officer, I guess, who
17 is doing the investigation. They'll typically request, you know,
18 radio recordings, which we'll pull the tapes for them.

19 If it's -- involves one of our guys, we'll do our own
20 preliminary investigation where we'll listen to the tapes and, you
21 know, do -- we'll do our playbacks through our AIMS systems, if
22 necessary, and see what's -- what our -- what do we think our root
23 cause was, and we'll share that with our superintendents and the
24 -- and whatever the information that the safety officer needs,
25 we'll give it to them.

1 Q. Okay. That would include, you know, a smoke incident
2 that maybe didn't rise to the seriousness of the one we're looking
3 at here, but --

4 A. Right. Yeah.

5 Q. -- would that follow that same path?

6 A. It depends. Let's say if you just had a normal arcing
7 insulator, which we have quite frequently. We have a arcing
8 insulator and track department goes out and de-energize third rail
9 power. A lot of times they'll just knock out the insulator and
10 come back and do the repairs.

11 Besides the initial documentation that we had this
12 happen and the -- I don't think it gets escalated any further up
13 than that.

14 Q. So it's documented in the control center in a log?

15 A. Right. We'll do an incident letter where we have those
16 kind of incidents. And, you know, that incident letter -- with
17 all our other major incidents, it's compiled at the end of the
18 night and distributed to senior management.

19 But requesting tapes and playbacks, I don't think they
20 get into that much detail with those, with those minor events.

21 Q. Yeah.

22 A. I think you've had -- if it escalates to the point like,
23 let's say, with the L'Enfant Plaza incident then it becomes a bit
24 of an investigation.

25 Q. Yeah.

1 A. But --

2 Q. So, would that be tracked in any kind of database?

3 Would you be able to go back and --

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. -- say we had, you know, so many last year?

6 A. Yeah, you'd probably be able to track it through -- we
7 have a work order system called MAXIMO.

8 Q. Uh-huh.

9 A. So, you'll be able to go into MAXIMO and pull up, let's
10 say, arcing -- you know, plug in a code and filter it out, and say
11 we had about, you know, 10 this month or, you know, or this is a
12 particular problem area. So, yeah.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. But it wouldn't be done on my level. Maybe it would be
15 done on, you know, the track department level so they could
16 assess, you know, what's going on and what areas they need to
17 work.

18 Q. Okay. Do you have any familiarity with WMATA's System
19 Safety Program Plan? And the acronym is SSPP.

20 A. Yes. Yeah, uh-huh.

21 Q. You do? Okay. And --

22 A. Yeah. It's -- you know, I read it about a couple weeks
23 ago. It's just a book. It goes over pretty much the mission
24 statement of what the safety program is. It has a lot of
25 different information on who to contact and, you know, what roles

1 everybody has.

2 Q. And what would your role be under that plan?

3 A. My role would be to report anything -- any abnormalities
4 to any -- any safety-related abnormalities to the safety officer
5 to correct any incidents, and, you know, any emergencies at my
6 level.

7 Q. Okay. Now, you went from -- if I'm following your
8 career, you were a controller at New York City Transit?

9 A. No. I was a train operator.

10 Q. A train operator.

11 A. Um-hum.

12 Q. And then a controller --

13 A. In Charlotte.

14 Q. -- at Charlotte.

15 A. Um-hum.

16 Q. And then came here --

17 A. Controller, yeah.

18 Q. -- as a controller and then promoted up.

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. And so how did you learn to be a supervisor? What --

21 A. Before I got into transit, I was in supervision. I
22 managed a call center. So I had experience with supervision
23 before I got into transit.

24 Q. And did WMATA provide any training to you as a
25 supervisor?

1 A. Yeah, uh-huh. Yeah, we have various classes. Like
2 even, I'm in a class now dealing with principles of supervision.
3 So -- and then you have other classes that I've been to: conflict
4 resolution, bullying, you know, different things on EAP. So, they
5 have a lot of things to offer.

6 Q. On the AP? What's --

7 A. EAP, like, you know, different --

8 Q. EAP. Okay.

9 A. Yeah, you know, a lot of programs --

10 Q. Employee Assistance Program?

11 A. Right. Um-hum.

12 Q. Got it. Okay. Good. Okay. In terms of your training,
13 when you came here to be a controller, you'd already been a
14 controller, but a different kind of system.

15 A. Right.

16 Q. And what was the training program like for you here?

17 A. Well, I came in in March. We had an abbreviated
18 training, just teaching you about the trains. It was
19 approximately about -- maybe 4 to 5 weeks. Then we went to a
20 short classroom training, kind of just taught us about the
21 different aspects of, you know, the AIMS system and the different
22 systems. And then I went to OJT. The training that I went
23 through as a controller in 2010 is much shorter than, I guess,
24 what you would see now, where the controllers really sit down and
25 have, you know, 16, 18 weeks in class. And then, you know, 2, 3

1 weeks per shift on OJT. So, my training was a little abbreviated
2 compared to what supposed to being offered now. And it's much
3 better now than it was then.

4 Q. And was that just because that's how it was then, or
5 were you part of a special group that already had the experience?

6 A. No, I think that's what it was then. And I think a lot
7 of times with a lot of systems, because these are typically jobs
8 that people have worked their way up through the system, so it's
9 hard to conceive how to train someone from, quote/unquote,
10 "outside," you know.

11 Q. Yeah.

12 A. So, and I think a lot of companies, they're ill-prepared
13 to do so. Because it's easier to say, okay, this person was a
14 train operator at WMATA. They moved up, let's say, a terminal
15 supervisor. Then they became a regular supervisor. So, they have
16 a big, good understanding how the system in totality works. So,
17 when they move into the control center, which is typically, you
18 know, later on in a person's career, typically 10, maybe 15 years
19 in probably any of the systems that I've been in -- New York same
20 kind of way -- you don't have to train them as much background.
21 All I got to really do is just take your knowledge base and brush
22 it up a little bit, this is what we do in this office.

23 Q. Yeah.

24 A. You know, and then build upon that. So, I think what
25 they -- what WMATA struggled with is when they brought in people

1 at that level as controller, they realized that they had certain
2 inadequacies, so they had to go back -- if they were going to
3 continue to hire from the outside or, you know, go to different
4 disciplines. And there was times that they brought in a lot of
5 air traffic controllers. And so, they realized they had to
6 provide that extra support, you know, so they're able to have a
7 good understanding so when they go on the floor -- because what
8 happens is if you push them out too early and -- it creates undue
9 stress, and a lot of training that your controllers who are doing
10 on-the-job training, they really have to build you up from
11 scratch. And, one, it's a distraction from the course of the job
12 that they have to do already. And then, two, it's unfair to the
13 trainee that has to work there.

14 Q. Yeah. So, you had on your shift experience with people
15 who are hired from the outside that have gone through the newer
16 training program.

17 A. Right.

18 Q. And how does that seem to work out? How do they
19 perform?

20 A. It's a little better. You still have areas of stress
21 because it's -- a lot of times you may have someone that's just
22 totally new to the railroad, and the control center is a very high
23 level job in the railroad. So there is a learning curve and we
24 have to be very patient so that, you know -- I mean, one would
25 say, okay, I'm an air traffic controller and, you know, you're

1 controlling trains. But it's two totally different disciplines.
2 So, you just really have to --

3 (Phone ringing.)

4 MR. BITAR: Let me just put this on silent. Sorry.

5 You know, just two totally different disciplines. So,
6 you just have to make sure that they're comfortable and they'll
7 learn.

8 BY MR. FLANIGON:

9 Q. Yeah.

10 A. They can learn it, so --

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. I think it's always going to be a challenge, someone to
13 just totally parachute into a whole new organization --

14 Q. Yeah.

15 A. -- and learn, you know, and -- but, you know, transit
16 systems are faced with a lot of people retiring, you know. A lot
17 of baby boomers are retiring. And it's not just here. It's in
18 every industry. You have to be creative with staffing, so you try
19 to make due the best you can and try to capture the knowledge that
20 everybody has accumulated 30 years in, you know, in the company
21 before they leave.

22 Q. Yeah. Okay. Prior to January 12th, either as a
23 controller or as an assistant superintendent, what kind of
24 training had you received in emergency incidents in tunnels
25 involving smoke and fire?

1 A. The initial training that we went through, as just going
2 through as controller, you know, how to set up the fans and how to
3 -- just incident management. That was just covered just through
4 your on-the-job training, and also, you know, through your initial
5 classroom set-up.

6 Q. So, it's -- it was taught in a classroom and then
7 reinforced --

8 A. Right.

9 Q. -- on the job?

10 A. And then reinforced on the job.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. Um-hum.

13 Q. And in -- you know, some questions have come up about
14 how the fans were sequenced and which direction they were going on
15 the day of that incident. What -- thinking back to your training
16 before this incident, what were you told to do with the fans?

17 A. Before the incident, you would pull the smoke away from
18 the customers and where the area was. I know since the incident
19 start -- since it happened, they put more of an emphasis and more
20 of a reinforcement on bringing fresh air to the customers,
21 wherever they are, you know. So, that's one change between post
22 and pre.

23 Q. Um-hum.

24 A. You know, before it was just like just get the smoke
25 out, you know.

1 Q. Yeah. Either in training or since going into the
2 supervision side of things, have you ever participated in a
3 scenario-based exercise on smoke in a tunnel or fire in a tunnel?
4 Like a tabletop or --

5 A. A tabletop on that topic? I really can't remember.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. Okay. How about any joint training exercises with WMATA
9 field personnel, police?

10 A. I know they have them, but I haven't been part of them
11 personally.

12 Q. Okay. And so the current protocols, you know, smoke in
13 a tunnel, what's supposed to happen?

14 A. Okay.

15 Q. The train stops. Hey, I got smoke in the tunnel; I'm
16 stopping.

17 A. Right. The train will stop. And, of course, they're
18 not going to proceed through the tunnel, through the area.
19 They're going to look to reverse ends. We're going to stop train
20 traffic to allow that train to reverse ends and maybe make a, you
21 know, a wrong rail move or an absolute block move back towards the
22 area to offload.

23 We can do two things. I mean, if they could identify
24 that it's heavy smoke and it's not passable, we'll just, at that
25 point, just shut it down. You know, wait for -- you know, notify

1 fire department and everyone else. And, but if it's light smoke
2 and we want to see what's going on, we may send a train without
3 customers with the train operator to do an investigation. You
4 know, at the same point we'll tend to -- depending on where the
5 fire or smoke is, we try to make sure that we have fresh air
6 towards wherever we have customers platformed and not platformed.

7 Q. Um-hum.

8 A. So, that's our initial thing. If we have to single
9 track around that area, we'll single track around that area.

10 Q. Yeah. And what -- when do the fire department get
11 notified?

12 A. They'll get immediately -- as soon as we get that
13 initial notification that we have smoke. So what I will do in my
14 role -- we'll get that initial call from the -- over the radio,
15 and I'll call the local jurisdiction, whether it's D.C., Fairfax,
16 Arlington or, you know, P.G. County, and I call them directly and
17 say this is what we have a report of and, you know, we're sending
18 someone to investigate or, you know, this is what we have
19 confirmed. And at that point they'll dispatch someone and they'll
20 either call back to a conference line where we'll stay on -- I'll
21 stay on the line with the battalion chief, and we'll just assess
22 the situation live as it goes on.

23 (Phone ringing.)

24 MR. FLANIGON: You're just a popular guy. Actually, we
25 used to have BlackBerrys and I miss my BlackBerry. I liked that

1 keyboard thing.

2 MR. NARVELL: These things are okay.

3 MR. FLANIGON: Yeah.

4 BY MR. FLANIGON:

5 Q. Okay. And who would notify the fire department? How
6 would that --

7 A. We would notify them over the phone.

8 Q. So, who is we?

9 A. Well, the assistant superintendents.

10 Q. So, the word would go to you --

11 A. Right.

12 Q. -- and you would --

13 A. Right. And I would call them.

14 Q. -- you would make the call? Okay. Good.

15 Is there a direct line or --

16 A. Yeah. We have a direct line for each jurisdiction. So
17 we're not just dialing 911. We're just calling a direct line.

18 Q. Okay. So in your career here have you had to personally
19 manage or deal with similar sorts of situations, emergencies in
20 tunnels --

21 A. Um-hum. Yeah.

22 Q. -- and went through that?

23 A. I think a little --

24 Q. Give us an example of what --

25 A. -- a little bit afterwards, after the incident, I had

1 one very arcing insulator between Foggy Bottom and that area. It
2 was a very similar incident. The train went through, reported it
3 -- and horrible radio communication in that area. But we got
4 through, was able to -- you know, we brought a train without
5 customers and the train operator said, yeah, this is what we have.
6 Reversed him out of there, single tracked. Got the fire
7 department there; fire department went down there. And it ended
8 up to be a track issue.

9 A lot of the times with the arcing insulators it's
10 nothing really the fire department can kind of do. But, you know,
11 we just want -- they went out there to make sure. And it ended up
12 to be a track issue. It was -- they had to jumper a cable, one of
13 the third rail cables out. It burned out. So, you know, we
14 instituted a red tag outage and they went to work with that.

15 Q. Right.

16 A. But it was just managing the trains and, you know, just
17 trying to keep a level of service, you know, for the area.

18 Q. Okay. So when there's an emergency like that, who is
19 the on-scene or incident commander?

20 A. Right. Well, the incident commander, you know, it
21 varies from, let's say, initially it may be the train operator.
22 And, let's say, if you have a road supervisor, it becomes a road
23 supervisor, and then it escalates as -- it depends on the people
24 with more authority. For the control center, you know, just
25 managing the trains, it would be myself and, you know, the

1 superintendent or someone else. You know, if they're there, they
2 may come and take over, you know, just due to the nature of the
3 incident, you know, they may take over. But your on-scene
4 commander is going to be, you know, your supervisors, you know,
5 your fire department, whoever -- you know, in order as they get
6 there.

7 Q. Yeah. Okay. In the January incident, in looking at the
8 fan maintenance procedures, one of the checklist items for the
9 people that go out and maintain the fans is to contact the control
10 center and have the control center exercise the fans remotely.

11 A. Right. Um-hum.

12 Q. And in some cases that wasn't done. And we understood
13 that there's sometimes difficulty in getting a controller with the
14 time at the moment to do that because they've got, you know, other
15 jobs and other responsibilities. Do you -- now, you work the
16 night shift --

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. -- so maybe there's not much of that that goes on on the
19 night shift. I don't know.

20 A. Well, sometimes they do go out and test it. They will
21 call. They will call. You get -- but you typically will get it
22 more towards the p.m. shifts. But in the night shift you have
23 guys that go out and test the fans or do maintenance on the fans.

24 Q. And how typical is it that it's a challenge to --

25 A. I would say the only time where I would say it's a

1 really -- two instances where there's a legitimate "I'm too busy."
2 It's kind of hard to do during rush hour because you're just
3 managing the spacing and the trains and the customer service
4 levels, and when we have an incident because you're directed
5 towards the incident.

6 Q. Um-hum.

7 A. You know, but if it's a lull between those two times,
8 you know, it's not that hard to, you know, just get a call. And
9 it's not like they'll sit on the phone with you. They'll say turn
10 this fan on, keep it on for 2 minutes, then take it off. I guess
11 the challenge that I'm speaking as a controller is sometimes
12 people may forget and leave the fans running.

13 Q. Yeah.

14 A. And then they call you back, hey, listen, it's been 5
15 minutes; you can take it off. But --

16 Q. Yeah.

17 A. -- other than that, it's not like they're sitting on the
18 phone with you for 2 minutes and you're just holding the dead air,
19 you know. So, yeah, it would just be turn the fan on exhaust, and
20 you go back to what you're doing. And then if you remember, you
21 turn it back off. So --

22 Q. Yeah. Okay.

23 A. I mean, it's not as impossible to manage as one would
24 say.

25 Q. Okay. As you came onto the system here, did you get

1 much in the way of I'll call it right-of-way familiarization or
2 territory familiarization, getting out on the system?

3 A. Yeah, we did get on the system. We spent some time in
4 training going out on the system, going on the roadway, you know,
5 identifying certain things. You know, we had RWP, you know,
6 training to be qualified. But, I -- and then we also did -- as
7 certified controllers, we walked out there with the track walkers
8 when they do their visual inspections. So, we spent some time out
9 there with them.

10 So, it gave a good idea -- especially since some
11 controllers haven't been out there in a long time, what are some
12 of the challenge, you know, how to look for a missing bolt and how
13 they -- what they'll do, they'll walk with some chalk and they'll
14 mark it so they have those areas. And, you know, if a certain
15 amount of things missing, they'll call -- escalate it up and then,
16 you know, have a track supervisor come out and see if it's -- you
17 know, they may have to replace a couple bolts or, you know, so --

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. So, we'll -- so, there's some -- just you get a good
20 understanding.

21 Q. Yeah. We heard -- I forget -- this might have been a
22 controller. It might have been someone else. Talk about
23 something called a lessons learned report?

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. Do you get those?

1 A. Yeah, actually I -- most of the time I write them.

2 Q. Oh.

3 A. So, what we'll do is, whenever we have an incident or
4 even something that we just want to reinforce, we'll create a
5 lessons learned document, pretty much explaining what the incident
6 was and, you know, reinforcing what should be done or what we've
7 learned from it, you know. So we try to send those out monthly.
8 Sometimes if something happens you'll, you know, you'll send it
9 out more frequently.

10 Q. Yeah. Yeah. I know something was done after the
11 January incident with a diagram --

12 A. Right. Yeah, right.

13 Q. -- emphasizing the supply exhaust.

14 A. Um-hum. Yeah. Yeah, I authored that one.

15 Q. Oh, okay.

16 A. And it --

17 Q. It looked pretty good, what I saw. Yeah.

18 A. Oh, thank you.

19 Q. Um-hum. Yeah.

20 A. Yeah, so -- yeah, I did do that one.

21 Q. And then how does that get -- was that one that was sort
22 of face-to-face communicated with the controllers or was it --

23 A. Right. We did have a training -- we have a -- we did
24 have a training, where they signed for and got that memo. And
25 then we reinforced it in the lessons learned. Lessons learned,

1 I'll distribute it via email and also, you know, on our board. It
2 will populate on one of the screens in the PowerPoint. So they'll
3 be able to see it there also.

4 Q. Okay. I think the last question I had -- let me just
5 check. Maybe not. Okay, back to training. There's an initial
6 certification --

7 A. Right.

8 Q. -- to be a controller. And when do controllers go back
9 for more? Is there a -- like a annual or semiannual --

10 A. You should have an annual recertification, and that
11 would be done by the training department. And to be honest, I
12 don't think any was done in 2014. I don't know if they're tasked
13 from all our initial recruitment trainings, but that initial
14 recertification training wasn't done in 2014. I can tell you
15 that. For the -- you know, on the controller.

16 Q. Yeah. And, so the training department does -- like it's
17 a classroom --

18 A. Right. It's a classroom.

19 Q. Is there a simulator involved at all?

20 A. I'm trying to remember. Yeah, they may go through --
21 they -- we do have a simulator, and they may go through the
22 simulator in the classroom. And then they have you take a test.
23 Pretty much a rule book quiz.

24 Q. Yeah. And in the initial training and/or the
25 recertification, is it the training department that goes over the

1 emergency procedures?

2 A. Yeah. It would be the training department goes over all
3 the emergency procedures, the rule book -- yeah, that would be the
4 training department.

5 Q. Okay. And are you familiar with the QA or quality
6 inspections or reviews? Is that something that happens in the
7 control room, somebody comes in and looks at processes?

8 A. I don't see it being done frequently. I -- in my
9 personal opinion, I think the control center should have its own
10 QA person that kind of just really goes through, make sure, you
11 know, all the reports are being done to standard and, you know,
12 listening. I think a lot of the auditing could be done from that
13 QA role. That's just how, I guess, I would structure it.

14 Q. Yeah.

15 A. You know, so you always have that bit of QA. And also
16 doing a lot of the tabletop exercises based on what they find, you
17 know, so you can find that root cause analysis. That would be
18 something that, I think, could be improved upon at the
19 departmental --

20 Q. Yeah. Okay, good. Good thought.

21 Now I do have the last question -- or, for -- the close
22 to the last question for me, anyway. We heard something about a
23 disciplinary matrix. Are you familiar with that?

24 A. Okay. Yeah, actually I got a little briefing on it
25 yesterday. A disciplinary matrix -- I guess, it's come to the

1 point where, you know, labor and HR, they noticed that different
2 divisions and different areas, they're having different forms of
3 discipline, where they may have any -- and I guess because you
4 have a lot of different bargaining units. You have your 689, your
5 922, Local 2, which is the controllers. So, you have a lot of
6 different -- like you may do something and they give you 22 days,
7 and another department may give you 5.

8 Q. Yeah.

9 A. So, they wanted to make -- create it uniform, so -- and
10 they classified it in three different levels. There's a general
11 rules violation, which there's a five-step program, process.
12 There is -- and I can't remember the exact terms. I just looked
13 at it yesterday. But you -- say, there's a critical and a really
14 bad, like, safety incident. You know, one -- the really bad, you
15 know, causing life and breaking laws and the other one is just,
16 you know, just a serious safety incident. So, they kind of
17 characterize it in three different stages, and so they could have
18 a standard bit of discipline that they put out and so everybody's
19 on the same page.

20 And also, a bit of -- I guess what came out of it, so,
21 interdepartmentally, if someone transfers from one department to
22 the other, all that bit of discipline, their safety record,
23 everything follows. So it's just a standardization of, I guess,
24 the discipline.

25 Q. Okay. Good.

1 MR. FLANIGON: That's all I had for now. My colleague,
2 here --

3 MR. NARVELL: This is Rick Narvell, from the NTSB. Just
4 a couple, Mr. D'Andrade.

5 BY MR. NARVELL:

6 Q. You've been here 5 years and you've had quite a bit of
7 experience in NYCT and also down in Charlotte. What if any -- or,
8 if any, what safety concerns or issues do you see here?

9 A. Right. I think the major -- one of the major issues is
10 the radio system.

11 Q. Which we've discussed.

12 A. Like we discussed.

13 Q. Yeah.

14 A. And besides that, and just making sure we keep on top
15 of, you know, everybody knowing information and just staying
16 trained and current to those.

17 Q. Okay. Is that, I think -- I don't want to assume. I
18 think I heard, but I'll ask just to be sure. Is that getting
19 better with the introduction of the --

20 A. Yeah, that's getting --

21 Q. -- the digital system?

22 A. Right. It's getting a little better, yeah.

23 Q. Okay. But there's still dead spots?

24 A. Right. There's still dead spots. And, you know, it's a
25 work in progress. But it's better, it's better than it was when I

1 came. So --

2 Q. In those situations, when you encounter those dead spots
3 on an operational setting, is there a back-up, a plan B?

4 A. Right.

5 Q. Is there --

6 A. They'll go to the ETS box and they'll have to just call
7 us directly to the control center.

8 Q. And ETS stands for?

9 A. Yeah, emergency trip system. They have the phones with
10 the -- where the trip boxes -- you know, every 600 feet they have
11 emergency trip stations and they have a phone with that also.

12 Q. Okay. Okay. Is a train operator ever permitted to use
13 his or her personal cell phone?

14 A. No. Uh-uh. Don't go there.

15 Q. ETS?

16 A. Um-hum.

17 Q. Got you. All right. Do you interact at all with the
18 safety department? And, if so, could you give us some, you know,
19 particulars, some details?

20 A. Our interaction would be like we'll notify them when we
21 have events. I mean, not events but, you know, incidents. So,
22 we'll notify them, let them know what's going on, give them
23 updates. And then we'll communicate them directly, if they need
24 for us to pull any tapes or audio recordings and --

25 Q. Right.

1 A. -- things like that.

2 Q. Which we -- I know Mike had asked about that. Do you
3 meet with a representative of the safety department or -- on a
4 regular basis at all?

5 A. No. Uh-uh.

6 Q. Just on an ad hoc --

7 A. Right. Um-hum.

8 Q. -- as needed? Okay. All right. Mike had also asked
9 you about your familiarity with the Tri-state Oversight Committee,
10 or the TOC.

11 A. Um-hum.

12 Q. Do you ever see any representatives from the FTA,
13 Federal Transit Administration, in ROCC?

14 A. I've heard -- I hear when they come, but they don't come
15 at my shift.

16 Q. They don't come at your shift? You've heard that they
17 were there?

18 A. Yeah. I heard they were there. But --

19 Q. All right. Okay.

20 A. Not many people come around at 2 in the morning.

21 Q. Oh, I understand. I'm with you.

22 A. Right.

23 Q. Last question for now. And this has to do with the
24 confidential close call reporting system, again, that you
25 discussed with Mike. You mentioned that you don't get -- I can't

1 remember exactly what you said, but are not allowed to have
2 information. What information do you -- or, are you, you know,
3 kind of privy to or aware of? I mean, is it the nature of the
4 incident that --

5 A. Yeah. I think it's more the nature of the incident.
6 And a lot of it is because a lot of times close calls will involve
7 my department, you'll hear what goes on.

8 Q. That's what I'm --

9 A. Right. So -- but, just on, let's say, a report that's
10 distributed or what the findings are, we don't really get the --
11 too much, you know, too much information on that.

12 Q. What would you have seen out there? Would you have seen
13 a -- well, what type of incidents would you -- are you aware of,
14 that would be a part of a confidential system? Just as an
15 example, one or two, if you can?

16 A. I guess we have some times when a work unit gets routed
17 into a work area, protected work area. You know, that would be
18 included. You know, personnel given permission to walk while a
19 unit is going through or a train is going through. You know,
20 those kinds of incidents.

21 Q. So, roadway worker?

22 A. Yeah, roadway worker violations, I guess.

23 Q. Okay. Do you ever get any -- did your folks ever come
24 across any trespassers out there --

25 A. Oh, yeah.

1 Q. -- on the roadway?

2 A. Oh, yeah.

3 Q. How often does that happen?

4 A. A lot on Saturdays.

5 Q. A lot on Saturdays?

6 A. A lot on Saturdays. We'll say, in a given week, maybe
7 at least two to three.

8 Q. Two to three. Okay.

9 A. Yeah. If not more. You know, you'll have people jump
10 down on the platform, jump back up. And, you know, just, you
11 know, just out there.

12 Q. Okay. Great.

13 MR. NARVELL: Well, thank you. That's all I have for
14 now.

15 MR. D'ANDRADE: Okay.

16 DR. GROFF: Okay. Loren Groff, NTSB.

17 BY DR. GROFF:

18 Q. Actually, just a couple questions. You covered a lot of
19 this stuff already, but just a little more detail maybe about how
20 things actually go. You were talking about how if there's any
21 kind of occurrence the controller is part of it, just because
22 they're talking to everybody. They're -- so, let's say someone,
23 whether it be a train operator or someone doing maintenance or
24 whoever it is, reports a safety problem that they recognize. And
25 let's say it's not -- maybe it's not an incident that's happening

1 right now. They see some condition or whatever it is and they
2 report it back.

3 A. Right. Um-hum.

4 Q. What happens? Like from the controller all the way --

5 A. Well, the controller would get that report and gather
6 information and call myself. And I would call one of the safety
7 officers, the on-call safety officer and report it to him. And
8 they'll follow -- they'll go out there and follow up, wherever it
9 is.

10 Or, say, if it's something simple, there's a slippery
11 condition somewhere, you know. And they will call and notify us
12 and we will notify the on-call safety officer. And then they'll
13 either head out there to check it out or they'll send somebody.

14 Q. So does that get logged in any way or is there --

15 A. It depends. Sometimes it may not be logged by us. It
16 may be logged -- let's say if it was a slippery condition or
17 something, our plant department may log it into our MAXIMO system.
18 If it's something related to the rails, we'll log it into the
19 MAXIMO system ourselves. But it would be logged into MAXIMO.

20 Q. So, it would go in that MAXIMO --

21 A. Right. Um-hum.

22 Q. -- system, okay, anyway.

23 How about if a controller has a concern with -- maybe
24 they see I'm getting a lot of -- I'm seeing a lot of this certain
25 condition or this process isn't working or something like that.

1 It's, again, not an incident but maybe an overall safety
2 concern --

3 A. A process.

4 Q. -- or process. How would that get --

5 A. I guess it depends on where it is. If it's an internal
6 process, like in -- departmental process, you know, we'll look at
7 it at our level, on the superintendent level, and see if there's
8 anything that we could do to change it. If it's something, let's
9 say, out on the roadway or -- we'll do the same thing. We'll
10 notify the safety officer and they'll take a look at it.

11 Q. Do you participate -- we've heard about the local and
12 departmental and executive safety committee structure. Do you
13 participate in that?

14 A. I try to, but it's kind of hard to come out during the
15 daytime.

16 Q. So most -- so those activities are all happening during
17 the day?

18 A. Right, yeah. Yeah, there's a lot of stuff that happens
19 during the day.

20 Q. And so in your position, where would you fall in that
21 structure? Would you be in the local safety --

22 A. I guess the departmental --

23 Q. Departmental?

24 A. Yeah. Departmental.

25 Q. Okay. How would you characterize the relationship

1 between controllers and the train operators and maintenance folks
2 -- the people out on the track?

3 A. Right. I would say it would -- it's good. I guess the
4 challenge is a lot of times with the radios, you know. So, your
5 communication sometimes works on it. I try to make sure that the
6 controllers on my shift or any shift that I work, you know, they
7 maintain a professional tone on the radio. A lot of times, you
8 get a lot of train operators -- and this is also one of the things
9 where, when you don't have your own radio -- when you have a radio
10 they know it's you.

11 Q. Right.

12 A. So, sometimes you get, you know, the peanut gallery.
13 They chime in on the radio a little bit a little too much. But,
14 you know, it's funny because, you know, you do that in New York
15 they will come get you.

16 Q. Yeah.

17 A. Because they know it's you.

18 Q. Right.

19 A. But if you pick up a radio and lock it, no one knows who
20 it is. But other than that, it's nothing out of the ordinary --

21 Q. Yeah.

22 A. -- like, you know, a real contentious kind of
23 relationship.

24 Q. So do they view them as some kind of authority or --

25 A. Yeah, the controllers --

1 Q. -- watching them?

2 A. Right. Exactly. You know, a train operator, you know,
3 you'll get a lot of management of, let's say, train spacing,
4 especially since you're not in ATO; you know, hold 2 minutes here,
5 adjust your schedule there. So you have more of that kind of
6 incident, you know, that kind of normal conversations with the
7 train operators.

8 Q. Okay. So would there be any reason to be reluctant for
9 somebody to report something to a controller?

10 A. Speaking -- I mean, I wasn't a train operator here. But
11 I think just what one may have a reluctance is the peanut gallery.

12 Q. Right. Yeah.

13 A. You know, you may say something over the radio and then
14 you may have someone start chiming in and things of that nature.
15 And, you know, they're working on the field on eliminating that.
16 But --

17 Q. How about if the controller would see something that
18 concerned them? Is there any sort of pressure or any reason for
19 them to be reluctant to report it? Like to not be seen as --

20 A. No. Uh-uh.

21 Q. -- sort of telling on somebody or something like that?

22 A. No.

23 Q. No problem with that?

24 A. No. No. I don't see a problem with that.

25 Q. And maybe one last little piece. You mentioned that if

1 there's an actual problem, getting -- that that could -- would get
2 logged into that MAXIMO system. Are there any sort of routine
3 things that get logged and recorded? Let's say, for example, the
4 cycling of the fans, exercising the fans, any of those kinds of
5 requests, is that logged --

6 A. No, that's not logged.

7 Q. -- or recorded in any way? Automatically or manually?

8 A. I would assume if you really wanted to find out you
9 could just, you know, pull an Oracle report on, you know, on our
10 AIMS system, to see where we commanded it open and commanded it
11 closed.

12 Q. So, it would be at the actual equipment level?

13 A. Right. Exactly. So -- but there is no log to say this
14 person called and they did this dally check.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. At least not on our end. Maybe at their end they have
17 their own maintenance records.

18 Q. Okay.

19 DR. GROFF: That's all I have. Thank you.

20 MR. D'ANDRADE: Okay.

21 BY MR. FLANIGON:

22 Q. I really don't have anything, other than to just clarify
23 for my own mind on -- you know, I'm not a user of the WMATA radio
24 system, so I don't know entirely how it works. But it sounded
25 like with the peanut gallery observation that it's an open system.

1 A. Right. It's an open --

2 Q. So everybody hears what you say --

3 A. Right. Exactly.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. Everybody hears what I say. And, you know, everyone
6 hears the whole communication.

7 Q. Yeah. I know some digital systems are set up where
8 only, you know --

9 A. Right.

10 Q. -- the people talking hear.

11 A. Right. Almost like the Nextel, where you go back and
12 forth.

13 Q. Yeah. Yeah.

14 A. Right. No, no, it's an open system.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. So, you get that from, you know, time to time.

17 Q. Come and get you. That's all I wanted to clarify.

18 A. Okay.

19 Q. Anything you want to add before we wrap up?

20 A. No. No, I think that's about it. I can't think of
21 anything else.

22 Q. Okay.

23 MR. NARVELL: All right.

24 MR. FLANIGON: Well, I will thank you, and --

25 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

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
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Interview of Paul D'Andrade

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Jane W. Gilliam
Transcriber