



NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
Investigative Hearing

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

GROUP	G
EXHIBIT	
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Agency / Organization

District of Columbia Fire and Emergency Medical
Services

Title

Interview Transcript of Donald Adkins

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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

Docket No.: DCA-15-FR-004

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Interview of: DONALD ADKINS

Washington, D.C.

Thursday,
January 29, 2015

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice.

BEFORE: RICHARD DOWNS, JR.
Accident Investigator

APPEARANCES:

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

ROBERT JOE GORDON, Investigator-in-Charge
National Transportation Safety Board

KIMBERLY BURTCHE, Senior Program Analyst
Office of Transit Safety and Oversight
Federal Transit Administration (FTA)

JOSEPH TEBO, Program Manager
State Safety Oversight
Tri-State Oversight Committee
Maryland Department of Transportation

DENTON ROURKE, Operations Manager
Office of Emergency Management
WMATA

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

JAMES GORDON, Secretary
International Fire Fighters Association Local 36
(Representative on behalf of Mr. Adkins)

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I N T E R V I E W

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2 MR. DOWNS: Today's date is January 29, 2015. And the
3 following is an interview being conducted in reference to NTSB
4 investigation number DCA-15-FR-002 [sic], which relates to an
5 accident involving a heavy smoke release and train evacuations
6 that occurred in and near the L'Enfant Plaza station of the WMATA
7 Metrorail system here in Washington, D.C. on the afternoon of
8 January 12, 2015.

9 This interview is being conducted with a member of the
10 District of Columbia Fire and Emergency Medical Services
11 Department, and it's conducted by the NTSB Survival Factors
12 Technical Working Group of the investigation. My name is Richard
13 Downs, Jr., and I'm a Survival Factors Investigator with the NTSB
14 in which I also serve in the role as a Survival Factors Technical
15 Working Group Chairperson. I will preside over this interview,
16 which is being recorded for the record, in which a transcript may
17 also be compiled of the recording as a permanent docketed record
18 of the interview.

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

22 MR. ADKINS: Firefighter Donald Adkins, firefighter and
23 Rescue Squad 1.

24 MR. DOWNS: And that's D.C. Fire and EMS?

25 MR. ADKINS: D.C. Fire and EMS.

1 MR. DOWNS: Okay. Thank you. And are you accompanied
2 by someone. Please identify yourself.

3 MR. JAMES GORDON: My name is James Gordon. I'm the
4 Secretary for Local 36 and I'll be his union rep for this meeting.

5 MR. DOWNS: Thank you. I'll now ask that the
6 participants of this interview who will also have an opportunity
7 to present questions to the witness to please individually
8 identify themselves, their employment affiliation, and job
9 position/title for the record.

10 MR. ROURKE: Good afternoon. My name is Denton Rourke.
11 I'm with WMATA. I am the Operations Manager in the Office of
12 Emergency Management.

13 MS. BURTCH: I'm Kimberly Burtch with the Federal
14 Transit Administration's Office of Transit Safety and Oversight,
15 and I'm the safety assurance and risk management lead.

16 MR. HAWKINS: Good afternoon. Derron T. Hawkins, Deputy
17 Fire Chief, D.C. Fire and EMS, Homeland Security Division.

18 MR. TEBO: I'm Joe Tebo with the Maryland Department of
19 Transportation. I'm a member of the Tri-State Oversight
20 Committee.

21 MR. JOE GORDON: Joe Gordon, National Transportation
22 Safety Board and the investigator in charge on the L'Enfant Plaza
23 incident. Before we go on with the interview, I'd like to just
24 give you an overview of the purpose of the NTSB investigation.
25 We're here to enhance safety, looking for safety improvements, not

1 to assign any fault or blame. Mr. Downs spoke of the transcript
2 that would eventually be in the public docket. NTSB cannot offer
3 or guarantee any confidentiality or immunity from any legal action
4 or certificate action.

5 With that, we'll get started with the interview. Mr.
6 Downs?

7 MR. DOWNS: Thank you.

8 INTERVIEW OF DONALD ADKINS

9 BY MR. DOWNS:

10 Q. Well, thank you. And as my first question for the
11 witness, can you brief -- please briefly describe your role for us
12 or involvement in the event? I think you mentioned you were with
13 Rescue Squad 1?

14 A. Yes, sir.

15 Q. And you're just a firefighter --

16 A. Correct.

17 Q. -- with that rescue squad team. Very good. Thank you.
18 And could you please describe for us in your own words what
19 occurred on the day of the event relative to your actions and
20 involvement at the L'Enfant Plaza Station response starting at the
21 time you first got the call.

22 A. Received the call and we responded. Went to our
23 assigned position at the elevator. Stayed with the equipment.
24 Kind of realized that something wasn't quite right. It was rush
25 hour and in that location there was nobody around. Thus the

1 lieutenant made the call we need to go down here and see what's
2 going on.

3 Got to the track, to the platform, smoke, a lot of
4 smoke, no train routers were there. A lot of Metro police and
5 there was yelling and screaming and a lot of confusion. We made
6 our way to the end of the platform. That's where all the MPD
7 police were congregated at.

8 Q. Transit Police?

9 A. Transit Police, I'm sorry. A lot of talk back and forth
10 on the radios with guys, like, "Look we've got to go. There's a
11 train full. They can't breathe." A request was made we need the
12 power shut off immediately. After a very short time he got a
13 confirmation on the radio the power's down.

14 At that time we proceeded down the catwalk, hit the ETS
15 on the wall and got to the train. When we first got there, there
16 was several passengers, two or three that had already exited the
17 train by their self.

18 Q. You saw them outside the railcar?

19 A. They were coming down the catwalk.

20 Q. They were coming down the catwalk towards you as you
21 were approaching the train?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Were you in the lead of your team or --

24 A. Yeah. No, I was -- I'm not sure.

25 Q. But you definitely noticed these at least two passengers

1 coming down --

2 A. There were several passengers because I walked them out.
3 The lieutenant said, take them.

4 Q. So your team continued and your lieutenant said, take
5 them to the platform.

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Okay. So they had apparently self-evacuated the train?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Okay. You took them back to the platform?

10 A. To the platform.

11 Q. And what did you do then?

12 A. I went back to --

13 Q. Back to the train.

14 A. -- back to the train.

15 Q. Please continue.

16 A. By that time the side door was open on the train and we
17 had started the evacuation. I would get a line of people off the
18 train and walk out with them.

19 Q. Okay. Let's pause for a moment to make sure I follow
20 this. There were several firefighters in your team inside the
21 railcar working?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Were there any other firefighters outside the railcar
24 from your team?

25 A. The lieutenant was on the catwalk.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. And he was in and out --

3 Q. Going back and forth.

4 A. -- assisting people -- in and out --

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. -- from the train to the catwalk assisting the
7 passengers.

8 Q. And your assignment from him, correct me if I'm wrong,
9 is that he would gather up several passengers --

10 A. And we would -- and then we'd walk them.

11 Q. -- give them to you and you would walk them, escort them
12 along the catwalk to --

13 A. Right.

14 Q. -- the platform.

15 A. Yes, sir.

16 Q. And that was the general process that you followed?

17 A. Right, until we got -- until more personnel showed up
18 down there. At that time we set up lighting and a line of -- a
19 line of sight that way --

20 Q. Nobody got lost.

21 A. Right, because it's this wide and you've got things
22 sticking out off the wall.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. It was dark.

25 Q. How many -- best guess top of your head -- how many

1 trips back and forth with groups of passengers did you make?

2 A. Several. I can't --

3 Q. You didn't keep count?

4 A. No. No.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. There was several.

7 Q. About how long did that take? You mentioned you kept
8 doing this until another fire crew arrived to assist.

9 A. Right.

10 Q. How long did that fire crew -- was it until that fire
11 crew arrived?

12 A. Seemed like forever. I can't really put a time on it.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. I'm sure it was minutes, but it seemed like hours
15 waiting.

16 Q. Okay. Very good. What fire crew was that? Do you
17 remember what companies they were?

18 A. I know it was a battalion, a 4th Battalion Chief.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. And I want to say it was Engine 1 was one of the
21 companies down there.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. But there was a lot of people there.

24 Q. You recognized some of the fellows from the Fire
25 Department --

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. -- that you had worked with before.

3 A. Right. Yes.

4 Q. So you knew who they were and everything.

5 A. Yeah. Yeah.

6 Q. Okay. Good.

7 A. I can't --

8 Q. Sure.

9 A. I mean there was a lot of companies. And once they
10 started coming in a lot of companies came in.

11 Q. And best guess were there two or three or were there
12 quite a number of firefighters in that group that joined you?

13 A. Oh, there were quite a few.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. But like I say, we were line of sight, which wasn't very
16 far --

17 Q. Um-hmm.

18 A. -- to assist people out with lighting. So I'm going to
19 say from here to the wall maybe a third -- or 300 feet or so. So
20 you're talking a --

21 Q. Okay. You had enough people at that point to stage a
22 firefighter every so often to --

23 A. Right.

24 Q. -- make sure everybody made it along the wall. Okay.

25 And then you continued that process until the train was evacuated?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Okay. And what did you do then?

3 A. We went on the train and did a secondary survey to make
4 sure that there was no one else.

5 Q. This is all a crew of Rescue 1?

6 A. Rescue 1.

7 Q. Okay. You worked down the train.

8 A. We worked down the train and on the way back we wrote
9 down all the car numbers for the train on the way out --

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. -- to give to the Chief.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. Just to make sure there was no one hid under a seat that
14 we missed them.

15 Q. Or passed out or whatever.

16 A. Right.

17 Q. Okay. And you made your way back to the back end of the
18 train, the first car that you came to.

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Okay. What did you do then?

21 A. We wrapped up and came out.

22 Q. You got relieved at that point and came topside?

23 A. Yes, sir.

24 Q. Very good. All right. That concludes my questions for
25 the moment. Let's move on to the next questioner.

1 BY MR. ROURKE:

2 Q. Denton Rourke from Metro. Just first of all a couple of
3 general questions about Metro training.

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Can you describe for us what Metro training you've had
6 both maybe with Metro and whatever you've done with the Fire
7 Department or anywhere else?

8 A. Very little training with Metro. We went to -- is it
9 Bladensburg to the train yard my second year on the job.

10 Q. The Carmen Turner facility?

11 MR. TEBO: Williamsburg.

12 MR. ADKINS: I think so, yes.

13 BY MR. ROURKE:

14 Q. That's where they have a railcar in a simulated tunnel
15 where you can practice on.

16 A. So we pretty much looked. It was like a rail yard, a
17 bunch of trains.

18 Q. It as a rail yard itself and not a big building?

19 MR. HAWKINS: could it have been Brentwood?

20 MR. ADKINS: Brentwood, not Bladensburg -- Brentwood.

21 MR. ROURKE: Okay. And in-house?

22 MR. DOWNS: Your own internal training sessions.

23 MR. ADKINS: Right. I mean --

24 MR. DOWNS: At the fire -- at your fire squad.

25 MR. ADKINS: Yes. That's part of being on a rescue

1 squad is, you know, some training with Metro.

2 BY MR. ROURKE:

3 Q. And how about full-scale drills after hours, maybe 2:00
4 in the morning, Saturday morning, something like that. You ever
5 been involved in any of those?

6 A. Several years ago I was involved in one. I don't --

7 BY MR. DOWNS:

8 Q. Do you remember the location of that one?

9 A. It was like 2007 or 2008.

10 Q. Might it have been Roslyn?

11 A. Was it? No, it was in the city.

12 Q. In the D.C. Foggy Bottom maybe?

13 A. Yeah. I think that one.

14 Q. You think that kind of jogs your memory a little bit?

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. And that was like 2:00 in the morning or so.

18 BY MR. ROURKE:

19 Q. What radio channel were you operating on?

20 A. I was on channel 16.

21 Q. Is that the tactical or the talk around?

22 A. That's the talk around channel that we can be sure to
23 talk to each other.

24 Q. When you guys were at the platform meeting with the
25 Metro Police and they told you the train was in the tunnel, you

1 had that conversation about power. Is there any steps you all
2 take before you go down into the tunnel in regards to power?

3 A. There is. I mean, normally we confirm with OCC that
4 power is shut down.

5 Q. Um-hmm.

6 A. Then blue light station you've got ETS switches that,
7 you know, you come to one and shut it off.

8 Q. Anything else?

9 A. At some point we would check the third rail with a
10 hotstick.

11 Q. Okay. In this instance -- in this instance did any of
12 your crew or anybody, the Metro employees with you, did anybody
13 hotstick for you?

14 A. There was -- someone did. I didn't personally do it. I
15 can't answer exactly who may have done it because we are, you
16 know, give me the hotstick. The WSAD was placed on the third
17 rail.

18 Q. Did someone say give me a hotstick and you're assuming
19 they did then check with it?

20 A. Right. And then at the, you know, within, you know,
21 minutes we heard the WSAD there, so -- being tipped over.

22 Q. Um-hmm.

23 A. And then it was set up on the third rail.

24 Q. And the WSAD was set up after you went to the train.

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. You don't know who did that, do you?

4 A. No, I don't.

5 Q. Did you -- did you talk to the Metro folks or were you
6 listening to the other folks?

7 A. I was just listening. The lieutenant was doing all
8 the --

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. -- all the talking.

11 Q. And did -- what -- how much direction or location
12 information did they give you other than in the tunnel?

13 A. They gave us approximate distance.

14 Q. Um-hmm.

15 A. And pointed down the tunnel. And there wasn't, you
16 know, no chain marker or anything of that sort. It was
17 approximately -- I don't even remember what number was
18 (indiscernible).

19 Q. Right.

20 A. It's down there.

21 Q. Okay. Thank you. That's all I've got.

22 MR. DOWNS: Next questions?

23 BY MS. BURTCH:

24 Q. You said that you saw lighting -- excuse me, Kim Burtch.
25 You set up lighting down in the tunnel?

1 A. It was -- we didn't set up lighting.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. It was firefighters with flashlights, hand lights.

4 Q. Okay. So you had flashlights. Okay.

5 A. At that point whenever we did that --

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. -- to light up the catwalk to assist.

8 Q. Thank you.

9 BY MR. HAWKINS:

10 Q. Derron Hawkins, D.C. Fire. Firefighter Adkins,
11 regarding your experience in Metro and you talked about some of
12 the training you had. Were you ever involved in any inspections,
13 Metro inspections of the Metro Station, both communications and
14 technical discussion?

15 A. I can't remember. I'm sure I have, but I can't
16 remember.

17 Q. Okay. So how do you feel in terms of your knowledge and
18 your abilities to respond to a Metro incident? Do you feel good
19 about it? Do you feel confident or?

20 A. I feel confident, but there's always room for training.
21 I mean, more training would be great.

22 Q. More training. And that's all I have.

23 BY MR. TEBO:

24 Q. Did you ever go on air with your SCBA?

25 A. Yes, until we got to the train and it's one of those

1 deals where you were trying to calm down several hundred people
2 that think the end is coming and you're breathing air. It's kind
3 of hard to, and so at that point we went off of air.

4 Q. Did you ever go back to it for --

5 A. No.

6 Q. -- take a breath and take a blow or --

7 A. And part of the reason it brought us to that I had the
8 multi-gas meter and it -- the highest point I think was 43 parts
9 per million of CO and --

10 MR. DOWNS: 43 PPM?

11 MR. ADKINS: Yes. 20.9 O2. I mean there was no real
12 hazards.

13 BY MR. TEBO:

14 Q. You weren't getting any indication of IDLH?

15 A. Right.

16 Q. But the visibility remained dense?

17 A. Yes. Yeah. I want to say we were within 10 or 12 feet
18 to the back of the train before -- we happened to see it when we
19 first entered.

20 Q. Okay. Did you -- did you observe the activation and use
21 of the E-tech carts?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. What time was it -- at that point where -- or were you
24 traversing back and forth?

25 A. That and (indiscernible). We had the lighting set up by

1 then because we had had extra, you know, more personnel showed up
2 and brought the E-tech cart.

3 MR. DOWNS: Was that your crew or was that the other
4 crew --

5 MR. ADKINS: Yeah, that was a different crew.

6 BY MR. TEBO:

7 Q. The other crew that arrived to --

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. -- provide support?

10 A. Yeah. It was a makeup of --

11 Q. Different squads.

12 A. -- different groups were working together, different
13 engine companies and truck companies.

14 MR. TEBO: Okay. Very good. Thank you, sir.

15 BY MR. JOE GORDON:

16 Q. Joe Gordon, NTSB. So you were primarily back and forth
17 on the catwalk taking groups --

18 A. Yes, I was.

19 Q. -- of people out. Did you feel any airflow on the
20 catwalk?

21 A. There was because the smoke was coming out of the tunnel
22 into the station.

23 Q. Okay. So --

24 A. You could see it coming out. But, you know, with
25 turnout gear and sweating and all that it was hard to tell.

1 Q. So it wasn't really apparent?

2 A. No. It wasn't.

3 Q. I mean, you weren't feeling the wind in your face or
4 anything.

5 A. Worked with my --

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. -- helmet off.

8 Q. Okay. And I think you already touched on it but the
9 lighting that -- on that 22 inches or 24 inches of catwalk, the
10 lighting that was there you guys had to -- you had to illuminate
11 that --

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. -- with your flashlights in order to make --

14 A. Right.

15 Q. -- a safe egress out.

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Okay. I have no further questions.

18 BY MR. DOWNS:

19 Q. Well, thank you. Firefighter Adkins, let's digress a
20 little bit and touch on your personal work history. When did you
21 start?

22 A. April 7, 2003.

23 Q. 2003. And you've been a firefighter since

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. And you mentioned before you've been to the regular

1 requirement of training that you have to go through for
2 probationary as well as regular firefighter?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Processes and you're familiar with the various SOPs for
5 Metro response, events and such. Let's look a little bit here at
6 the emergency access doors, okay? Did you operate any of the
7 doors here?

8 A. No.

9 Q. It was all the other members of your team that worked
10 that? But you're still required to have a knowledge of the --

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. -- doors. Tell me about your familiarity with the doors
13 on the railcar itself.

14 A. What --

15 Q. Which doors of the railcar are the emergency access
16 doors? Meaning you're on the outside and you need to get in. How
17 would you get in?

18 A. With the barrel key.

19 Q. The barrel key. That's your universal understanding?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Any of the doors you can go to or are there specific
22 doors?

23 A. It depends which model of car.

24 Q. Which model car, okay.

25 A. Because, you know, there's several series of cars.

1 Q. Okay. The particular railcars at the end of the train
2 was the 3000 series.

3 A. The 3000.

4 Q. Right. So how would you enter those, for example? In
5 other words, if you were the lead guy in the team and your
6 lieutenant said, open that car for me, let's get access, what
7 would you do?

8 A. I would go to the rear.

9 Q. To that side rear door?

10 A. To the back rear.

11 Q. The end bulkhead, very end of the railcar door?

12 A. Yes, sir.

13 Q. And the barrel key will open that door?

14 A. Yes. I think it's the -- I think it's the center handle
15 that's -- well, there's three handles.

16 Q. Three handles.

17 A. One of them is locked.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. The center one maybe?

20 Q. Like right by the doorknob itself?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. And then you open them in line.

24 Q. Are there other latches or anything on the door?

25 A. I'm not aware of that.

1 Q. You're not aware of it? Okay. On the side of the
2 railcar -- let's say you can't get to the end door and you've got
3 a car in the middle of a train, so you obviously can't get the end
4 door. And you've only got the side doors to deal with. Which --
5 are there specific doors that are just for the access doors or can
6 any of them be used?

7 A. There are specific doors. I don't know which ones.

8 Q. Okay. Would you -- would it be fair to say that you
9 could use a barrel key on any of the doors?

10 A. Yeah. I mean if it has the --

11 Q. If it has the little lock --

12 A. -- little hole for --

13 Q. -- for the barrel key.

14 A. -- the key.

15 Q. Okay. And that -- when you turn that what happens to
16 the door? Do the doors pop open? What happens?

17 A. The doors open I assume.

18 Q. The doors -- oh, you've never really gone through this?

19 A. I've never really done it, no.

20 Q. Never really done it. Okay. Are you familiar with the
21 process that only the center door of the three side doors is the
22 access door for firefighter access even though the other doors
23 work with a barrel key? Are you familiar with that at all or no?

24 A. Yeah, because --

25 Q. You're kind of fuzzy?

1 A. -- the other door would be --

2 Q. Kind of fuzzy?

3 A. Another door we use the collection -- the power --

4 Q. The power shoe.

5 A. -- shoe is right underneath those.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. And I assume the middle door doesn't have that there.

8 Q. Okay. Were you aware that the middle door has a
9 firefighter release handle?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. You were aware of it?

12 A. No.

13 Q. A little foggy maybe?

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. Okay. All right. That's good for that particular
16 topic. How about did you take any notes of this particular event?

17 A. I didn't take any notes, but I mean, we started at the
18 canteen unit after the incident, you know, what can we do?

19 Q. Kind of exchanging --

20 A. How can we make --

21 Q. -- thoughts? Well, kind of a hot wash?

22 A. How can we make this better?

23 Q. Okay. Well, that actually -- that actually leads to my
24 second question along that line. I always like to give my
25 witnesses the opportunity to express what we call retrospective

1 thoughts. Meaning in hindsight, knowing what you know now, not
2 that you did anything wrong, every event is different,
3 particularly the big events, you always see something new that
4 you're thinking, oh, yeah, let's -- that's something to keep in
5 mind for a future event. Is there anything that came to mind that
6 you'd like to share with the professional firefighting community?

7 A. Equipment. That was big.

8 Q. Go ahead.

9 A. That was --

10 Q. Tell us about your thoughts.

11 A. The particular end of the platform we was on there
12 wasn't Skeds there --

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. -- for removal of the patient.

15 Q. So having more Skeds would be helpful.

16 A. Having more Skeds.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. People movers, you know --

19 Q. People movers.

20 A. -- this means more EMS equipment.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. Just more equipment in general.

23 Q. Okay. And you only can carry so much down with you --

24 A. Right.

25 Q. -- on your first run.

1 A. Right.

2 Q. And it's -- and it's -- given it's a wide geographic
3 area --

4 A. (Indiscernible).

5 Q. -- you'd have to make trips.

6 A. Since then we've modified some of our equipment.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. You know, combine equipment in bags to make it easier --

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. -- to have a little bit more there from the start.

11 Q. Very good. Okay. Anything else you want to offer?

12 MR. ROURKE: Rich, Can I do a follow-up please?

13 MR. TEBO: Go ahead.

14 BY MR. TEBO:

15 Q. Thank you, sir. Joe Tebo to talk. You mentioned your
16 air monitor. Do you recall what type of air monitor that is
17 manufacture-wise?

18 A. It's a -- it's a five-gas meter.

19 Q. Okay. It is a five gas meter?

20 A. Yeah. It's five gas.

21 Q. Okay. And the training that you received on that, who
22 usually conducts the training on air monitors?

23 A. Well, some training was given by the hazmat unit and the
24 guys in-house.

25 Q. And that meter is it calibrated? Do you know the

1 calibration schedule for that meter?

2 A. Every Sunday.

3 Q. Every Sunday?

4 A. Every Sunday that we work.

5 Q. So whichever tour whoever's on that tour?

6 A. Whoever works Sunday. The hazmat unit comes by and --

7 Q. Do a bulk gas test on it?

8 A. Yeah, does a bulk.

9 Q. Thank you, sir. Thank you.

10 MS. BURTCH: I have a follow-up, too --

11 MR. DOWNS: Go ahead.

12 MS. BURTCH: -- to Joe's.

13 MR. DOWNS: Go ahead.

14 BY MS. BURTCH:

15 Q. So these meters the day of the event they were -- I
16 understand they were utilized?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. Do you have recordings of what they read? Was it
19 documented of what type of make -- composition of the --

20 A. I don't know the --

21 MR. DOWNS: The meter is not set up with any kind of
22 recording device that you know of?

23 MR. ADKINS: Not that I know of, no.

24 BY MS. BURTCH:

25 Q. In other words it's simply you look at the meter and --

1 A. You read --

2 Q. -- if it reads high you get out.

3 A. Right.

4 Q. Is that how it works?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. right.

7 A. And like I said, at no point was it way off the scale.

8 Q. It was always within the parameters.

9 A. Right.

10 MR. HAWKINS: Okay. I have a question.

11 MR. DOWNS: Go ahead, Chief.

12 BY MR. HAWKINS:

13 Q. So in terms of the meter readings you guys did, was that
14 a transmission made about what your activity was? You said 40.3
15 parts per million CO and (indiscernible).

16 A. Right.

17 Q. Was that radio transmission made?

18 A. I don't -- I'm not sure if there was or not, because,
19 you know, it started alarming and the lieutenant asked and I said
20 it was 43 parts per million. I said O₂ is good.

21 Q. Okay.

22 BY MR. DOWNS:

23 Q. It started alarming?

24 A. Yeah. It alarms at 35 parts per million --

25 Q. 35, okay.

1 A. -- which is an 8-hour workday. I mean I think the --

2 Q. Right. And it went up to 43 at some point?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. What's the max limit that you can get to before you have
5 to get out? Do you remember that?

6 A. We're supposed to go on air at 35.

7 Q. At 35? Okay.

8 A. But it's not -- it's not, you know, like I say --

9 Q. There were -- there were extenuating circumstances here.

10 A. At 35 parts per million you can work an 8-hour day, 5
11 days a week including lunch breaks with it.

12 Q. So it wasn't --

13 A. In that percentage.

14 Q. -- it wasn't -- would it be fair to say it wasn't of
15 immediate concern?

16 A. No. No.

17 Q. Good enough. Anything further, Chief?

18 MR. HAWKINS: No, I'm all through.

19 MR. DOWNS: We're good? Okay. Well, speaking of --

20 MR. ROURKE: I've got one further before you close out.

21 MR. DOWNS: Go ahead.

22 BY MR. ROURKE:

23 Q. I know we've touched on time before, but if you had to
24 just your best estimate of from the time that you guys arrived at
25 the car, the evacuation started until the last person's off the

1 train, what would you -- and it doesn't have to be just what you
2 would estimate from that evening, but, you know, maybe what
3 documentation you've seen or anything?

4 A. I'm going to say within 30 minutes the operation was
5 completed.

6 MR. DOWNS: You had the train cleared in 30 minutes.

7 MR. ROURKE: Okay.

8 MR. ADKINS: Or it was, you know, in that timeframe or
9 real close to that.

10 MR. DOWNS: That's your best guess thinking given your
11 experience here.

12 MR. ROURKE: Okay.

13 MR. ADKINS: The people were very cooperative. They
14 assisted each other. There wasn't pushing and shoving. And it
15 was a steady flow once we got them going.

16 MR. ROURKE: Okay. I have no further questions.

17 BY MR. DOWNS:

18 Q. Okay. Well, actually that brings up a final question of
19 mine, radios. You had a radio that particular day.

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. The new digital radios.

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. How were they performing?

24 A. Not good.

25 Q. Or they weren't?

1 A. Yeah, they weren't.

2 Q. Okay. We had other testimony from other firefighters
3 that they attempted to make a transmission just down the length of
4 the car and --

5 A. Right.

6 Q. -- and it didn't work. Did you have a similar
7 experience?

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. Same thing?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. And is it the case where the radios work just fine above
12 ground?

13 A. Sometimes.

14 Q. Sometimes. So you have problems above ground, too?

15 A. Sometimes.

16 Q. Sometimes.

17 MR. DOWNS: Okay. All right. That concludes my
18 questions, and if there's no other questions, that concludes the
19 interview. Thank you.

20 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: WMATA INCIDENT AT L'ENFANT PLAZA
 STATION, WASHINGTON, D.C.
 JANUARY 12, 2015
 Interview of Donald Adkins

DOCKET NUMBER: DCA-15-FR-004

PLACE: Washington, DC

DATE: January 29, 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.

Teresa Holevas
Transcriber