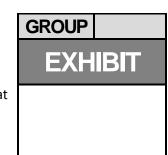


NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD Investigative Hearing

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



Agency / Organization

Title

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Interview of: ADRIANA IRIZARRY

WMATA Headquarters Jackson Graham Building Washington, D.C.

Tuesday, April 14, 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

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

RICK NARVELL, Human Performance Investigator National Transportation Safety Board

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

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1	<u>INTERVIEW</u>						
2	MR. FLANIGON: It's April the 14th, 2015. My name is						
3	Mike Flanigon, F-l-a-n-i-g-o-n. We're interviewing Ms. Adriana						
4	Irizarry, A-d-r-i-a-n-a, first name; last name I-r-i-z-a-r-r-y.						
5	And she is a rail controller with WMATA. And this is in regard to						
б	the January 12th, 2015 smoke and arcing incident at L'Enfant						
7	Plaza.						
8	And we'll go around the room and let my colleagues						
9	introduce themselves.						
10	DR. GROFF: Loren Groff, L-o-r-e-n, G-r-o-f-f, NTSB.						
11	MR. GORDON: Joe Gordon, G-o-r-d-o-n, NTSB.						
12	MR. NARVELL: Rick Narvell, N, like in Nancy,						
13	a-r-v-e-l-l, with NTSB.						
14	MR. FLANIGON: And I just wanted to confirm you						
15	understand we'll record the interview and provide you a						
16	transcript.						
17	MS. IRIZARRY: That's fine.						
18	INTERVIEW OF ADRIANA IRIZARRY						
19	BY MR. FLANIGON:						
20	Q. Well, let's start, just explain a little bit about what						
21	you do as a rail controller and how long you've done that and how						
22	you came to do that.						
23	A. Well, officially, I started, applied in August of 2014.						
24	I started training in December of 2013 for the position of Rail						
25	Operations Central Control supervisor. And depending upon what						

1 ops you are on depends upon what your responsibility is. Ops 1 is 2 the Red Line. That's everything from Shady Grove to Glenmont and 3 everything in between. Ops number 2 is the Orange, Blue, and 4 Silver Line, so that would be from Vienna to New Carrollton. For the Silver line, it's Wiehle-Reston East to Largo Town Center. 5 6 And from the Blue Line, we take over from Arlington Cemetery all 7 the way to Largo Town Center. And ops number 3 is your Yellow and Green Line, which includes part of the Blue Line, and that would 8 9 be from Branch Avenue to Greenbelt, Huntington to the Mount Vernon 10 Square during rush hour for the Yellow Line, or Fort Totten during 11 non-rush, and then, the Blue Line from Franconia-Springfield to 12 Arlington Cemetery.

13 Q. Okay.

A. So you're in charge of all the train movement, any troubleshooting that may need to take place for a train malfunction, or covers safety of the operators and the passengers that are on it.

Q. So, let's see, August, you actually qualified and began working the desk or the position. August 2014, so not quite a year yet?

A. Not yet.

22 Q. Oh, okay. And how did you come to do this?

A. Before central control, I was working for mobile operations, which, when we were doing the shutdowns every week, we were in charge of the entire work area. It was kind of like a

1 mini-central on wheels, but we only dealt with the work aspect of 2 it: track com, IT, ATC, power, all that fun stuff in the work 3 area.

4 Q. So that was as a WMATA employee?

5 A. Uh-huh.

6 Q. How long have you been with WMATA?

7 A. I started September 12th, 2005.

8 Q. 2005. Okay.

9 A. So almost 10 years.

10 Q. So you've done some other jobs?

11 A. I started cleaning trains.

12 Q. Cleaning trains.

A. And then I became a car cleaner supervisor, and then car maintenance. And I helped the technical supervisor with their responsibilities and car maintenance also. And then I went to the track department with mobile command. And now I'm on the operations side with central control.

Q. Okay. Well, that's an interesting career path and kind of gives you, from our standpoint, kind of an interesting perspective having worked in different departments and seen different kinds of operations.

22 So, from 2005 until 2014, there's been some ups and 23 downs with WMATA in terms of safety, some significant accidents 24 and stretches there. So over the course of your WMATA career, not 25 just your operations center career, what kind of changes have you

1 seen with regard to safety, good or bad, or none at all?

2 I see the company attempt to make safety the forefront, Α. but ultimately, I think it comes down to each individual taking 3 4 responsibility for not only their own safety, but the safety of those people that they're working with. And I've seen some people 5 б not necessarily take that so seriously as well. And I think it's 7 difficult when you have 13,000 employees to motivate every single employee to be safe every single day. And it doesn't appear to be 8 9 any compensation to be safe.

10 So, especially in the maintenance side of it, you'll see 11 where people take shortcuts just because it's a little easier. And someone that's been in Metro 25 years, 26 years, they 12 13 understand absolutely everything that that shortcut means. And 14 they know when to do it, when not to do it. But then they teach 15 those bad habits to somebody that's only been here 6 months; they 16 don't have all that knowledge, they do that shortcut and it 17 doesn't exactly work out the best.

18 I think they're attempting to move in the right 19 direction.

Q. And do you personally feel any pressure to take
shortcuts to get things --

A. I believe I'm an anomaly, because I actually read the rule books and policies and procedures. As the *Washington Post* referred to the rule book as the brick, but I actually know it through and through.

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So when it comes to SOP, I'm a follower of SOP. A lot 1 of the times, the rules that are in that book are there for a 2 You know, Metro's been around since 1976. A lot of 3 reason. things have occurred. A lot of those rules that are in there are 4 because either someone got hurt or unfortunately lost their life. 5 6 So I'm going to follow that rule book as much as possible. And 7 then, of course, there's the gray areas that still have yet to be covered. So, at that point, we try to make the best decision for 8 9 the situation.

Q. Now, as a controller, obviously, a big part of the job is moving the trains efficiently and so forth. Sometimes moving the trains on schedule promptly and efficiently and kind of good safety practices sometimes push on each other.

14 A. Yes, they don't exactly coincide all the time.

Q. And if, in your experience, if you're responsible for train delays, are there negative repercussions for that, assuming you had a good reason for the delays?

18 Α. I mean, they do push on-time dispatches and making sure 19 that the trains hit the stations at their designated times, but if 20 you have a delay, as long as you can explain the reasoning behind 21 it, there really isn't any repercussion. I mean, a delay could take anywhere from, you know, 3 minutes to 84 minutes. And, I 22 mean, anything that is 10 minutes and above, you have to write a 23 24 letter or an unusual occurrence, you know, such as an unauthorized 25 person on the roadway. Anything dealing with fire and smoke, you

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still have to write a letter. Some controllers don't particularly
 care to write letters. I'm capable of typing, so it doesn't
 affect me, that aspect.

Q. Is that perceived as a negative? You know, I got to
write a letter; I've been a bad boy or a bad girl.

б Α. I think some people do perceive it that way. But I, 7 personally, don't think it is a negative. I mean, if you have a train that's malfunctioning to the point where it is either going 8 9 to affect the line -- and what I mean by affect the line is, if 10 they get a constant overspeed alarm at 15 miles an hour, that 11 train can only go 15 miles an hour. They're designed to go faster than that. So, if it's rush hour, I'm going to offload that train 12 and I'm going to move it without ATP, from protection under 13 14 permissive blocks without any passengers aboard that train, 15 because that's going to affect the rest of the line.

16 If you have a train that is a safety issue, you know, 17 pull it. I don't see it as a negative thing. Offloading a train, 18 causing a 12-minute delay because it's the weekend, you know, I 19 don't see it as a negative.

Q. In terms of your working relationships with your peers and with the management structure in the control center, do you feel free to raise safety issues if you see something?

A. Oh, yeah. Yeah, I don't have a problem saying that. And as long as you can show it in black and white in one of the policies or procedures, they'll stand behind you. It's not an

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1 We had an incident where plant personnel were trying to go issue. to the roadway using a TAW, train approach warning, as their type 2 3 of protection, but they were only level 2's. They can't use that 4 type of protection being a roadway level 2. You have to be a 4 to use that type of protection. And, you know, I explained that to 5 6 the assistant superintendent on duty at the time, forwarded the 7 call back to him, and I showed it to him in the Roadway Worker Protection Manual and it wasn't an issue, you know. But I think 8 9 that's --

Q. And just thinking about the general environment that you work in, do you think others have that same freedom? Is it an environment that encourages bringing those kind of things up or discouraged?

14 I've seen it questioned. You know, where a controller Α. 15 will make a certain decision and then the assistant superintendent 16 will ask why that decision was made. And they'll say, you should 17 have done this, and the controller will be, like, "Well, SOP says 18 to do this." So, yeah, I have seen it questioned. And I don't 19 think some people have the confidence to stand up on what it is 20 that they believe all the time. I think sometimes they follow 21 what it is the assistant superintendent is telling them whether or not that is right. 22

Q. Are you familiar with a close call reporting system at WMATA?

25

A. I am familiar with that. I don't think it is used as

1 often as it should be, if at all, but I am familiar with it.

Q. Since one of the C's is confidentiality, I don't want to breach any confidentiality in asking you questions, but have you seen any of the outputs of that system? Is that anything that you --

6 A.

No.

7 It's not information that is publicized? I mean, I Ο. understand everybody who makes a report has to be de-identified 8 9 and you don't want to put a name with a particular problem, but I'm wondering if on the output side, if there's sort of 10 11 de-identified information that might be used for someone like 12 yourself in your job to say here's some issues that have come up. I know central does Lessons Learned, which is a bulletin 13 Α. 14 that will come out when we have situations occur, whether they be 15 big situations or small situations. And it's, you know, where 16 these things went wrong during this scenario, and then, you know, 17 in the future, don't do this, this is what should have been done. So I know ROCC does that. I don't know if every 18 19 department does that. I also know that the safety department puts 20 out safety bulletins. And sometimes those are just general, you know, about, like, in the fall, driving with wet leaves on the 21 road and stuff like that, or space heaters in your house. 22 23 Sometimes they're a little more specific as far as WMATA is

24 concerned. But as far as output from the close calls, I don't 25 know of anywhere that I've seen them.

1 Q. How about the safety hotline, I think it's called.

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Is that something you know about?

4 A. Yes. That I'm aware of.

Q. You talked a little bit about raising safety issues.
Actually, I think you answered this. It was about -- well, maybe
not. If you became aware of a peer or a someone above you in the
chain of command not following a particular safety procedure,
would you feel free to raise that up?

A. To be honest with you, I think it depends on the situation. If it's extremely unsafe, absolutely without a doubt, it doesn't matter. If it's like -- I hate to say it, but like one of those sweep-it-under-the-rug type of things, you know, I think it depends on who. Because if it was someone above me, I don't know. That's as honest as I can be.

16

Q. So do you think WMATA's a safe place to work?

17 A. I think it depends on who you're working with.

Especially, having been in the track department, having walked track, there are some people in the track department that are Level 4 qualified that I would never walk track with. So I think it depends on who you're working with, to be honest with you.

Q. You work in an environment where there's always a
manager there. So they periodically observe you --

A. Right.

25 Q. -- in doing your job. Do they give you feedback --

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. -- on what you're doing right, what you could do better,3 that kind of thing?

Yeah, they perform audits. It's a standard form. 4 Α. Ιf someone's requesting to go to the roadway, I believe the form 5 б asks, you know, if we repeat it back, who was going to the 7 roadway, how many people were going, what type of protection, what type of work they were doing, and then confirming it with them, 8 9 making our announcements to the operators that the person's going 10 to be between, let's say, Stadium-Armory platform 1 and Potomac 11 Avenue platform 1. And, you know, it's little checkmarks, either 12 you did it, you didn't, or it's not applicable. And then it's 13 based off of a percentage off of that. And they make you sign it, 14 so you do get to see it.

Q. And just on that, that triggered a question on -- so someone's working wayside, certain section of the railroad, you make periodic announcements to trains?

18 A. You're supposed to. They're supposed to be at least19 every 20 minutes.

Q. Every 20 minutes, okay. Do you get asked occasionally by train operators for an update on that? Is that common or --A. Yeah, if the train operator's just coming on duty, they'll ask for a wayside personnel update. And then you run through it so that they know. Because you may have made the announcement 2 minutes ago, but they're just being dispatched on

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1 the tracks and it's their first run.

2 Q. Prior to January 12th, have you received any training on 3 the incident command system?

A. I've actually done the ICS and the NIMS with the FEMA website on my own before, when I was in mobile command. Plus, I guess there's an overview of it with SOP 1A, which deals with emergencies within the WMATA system and who the incident commander's going to be if you have public officials involved and stuff like that. But insofar as the training from Metro itself, no.

11 Q. And how about the Tri-state Oversight Committee, are you 12 familiar with who they are?

A. Yeah, I'm familiar with who they are. I'm not 100 percent certain on what exactly it is that they do. I know that they oversee Metro and make decisions, but I'm not sure if it's recommendations or they actually can implement things. That's what I'm a little fuzzy on.

18 Q. And have you ever seen them in your workplace?

19 A. I have not.

Q. How about the WMATA radio system? How does that work,from your experience?

A. Horrible. January 1st of 2015, they went to this all digital system. And apparently, all of the yards, all the maintenance channels, Ops 1, 2, and 3 for rail operations, Transit, they all work off of the same frequency.

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1 And a lot of times in an emergency, you'll key up at central and you'll get, like, a busy call tone, is the best way I 2 3 can describe it, where you can't break in. So the instructions 4 you're trying to give to the operator or the information you're trying to get from the field, you just can't. You have to wait. 5 Having been out in the field, you could be standing at one spot on б 7 the platform, try to key up, it doesn't work; step over 2 feet, all of a sudden, it's crystal clear. It is not good. 8

9 Q. Do train operators have the authority to shut off 10 ventilation on the cars?

11

A. Now they do.

Q. Now they do, okay. Prior to January 12th, what training had you received about smoke emergencies in the tunnel? A. We learned how to turn on the fans, on exhaust or turn them on supply. But there was no training as far as direction prior to that January 12th.

17 Q. Direction of the flows?

Yeah, direction of the flows of smoke. There was no --18 Α. 19 the other issue you do come in with that is, if you don't know exactly where it is, you could put the direction on what you would 20 think would be the right direction, but there -- like I said, 21 unless you've got that positive radio communication saying that 22 the smoke is coming from chain marker such and such and such and 23 24 such, you're kind of guessing. Like, when you work down shift and 25 the track equipment's out there in the tunnel with the diesel

fumes, they'll ask them in supply on one end and exhaust on the other. And sometimes, about 15 minutes later, they're like, that's not working, so then, you'll reverse it to get the diesel fumes out of there, so --

5 Q. Okay. And --

6 A. The system may not be 100 percent.

7 Q. I'm sorry?

8 A. The system may not be 100 percent for that, but I don't 9 know how they would fix it where you'd have sensors to tell you 10 where smoke is.

11 Q. You'd have to know where it is.

12 A. Yeah.

Q. Understood. As far as training, did you undergo any what I'll call scenario-based training where smoke or derailment or collision or --

A. No. Most of the scenario-based training was with basic things, troubleshooting the train when I was in all-doors-closed, brakes in emergency, but not the abnormal situations.

Q. So, thinking again of the smoke-type incident, what's the -- from the controller's standpoint, what's the protocol when you get that report? Got smoke at some location, I've stopped, heavy smoke.

A. Heavy smoke? SOP stipulates if the train is stopped in
approach to the smoke, you instruct the operator to key down,
reverse ends, and clear, you know, the platform behind them, and

1 so that you can move them back to the previous platform, offload. 2 You're supposed to always offload. And then, do a track 3 inspection. If you can get a rail operations supervisor down 4 there to give you a better idea of what's going on, then you would They used to be customer operations; it's like, rail 5 notify ROIC. б information. They deal with the station managers and dispatch and 7 the fire department and stuff like that. You would notify the Transit, or MTPD, so that they could respond also. 8

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. And then try to get more information.

11 Q. At what point in that process would the fire department 12 get notified? Is that something you would do or would somebody 13 else notify the fire department?

14 When we notify ROIC, they're the ones that automatically Α. 15 dispatch the fire department because they've got all the 16 So if it were to happen in between stations in the addresses. 17 tunnel, there's fan shafts, vent shafts, exit shafts, they would 18 know the specific address to that to be able to dispatch them. 19 I've got a chain marker. That does nothing for the fire 20 department.

- 21 Q. Right.
- 22 A. So --

Q. Okay. So by notifying them, and you notify them early
in the process, then they are the ones that make the call?
A. Yeah, as soon as you get the report of fire and smoke,

1 you contact them.

Q. Okay. Have you had in your year -- or not quite a year
on the job, have you had to deal with any emergency situations?
A. Fire and smoke on the roadway, Foggy Bottom to Rosslyn,
track 1.

- 6
- Q. Yeah? When was that?

7 It happened to be a weekend. I want to say it was a Α. Saturday. And ended up being an arcing insulator that was causing 8 9 the smoke in the tunnel. The train reported in on approach to 10 They were unable to stop. I stopped the train at Foggy Bottom. 11 Rosslyn and, I mean, we ended up having to do single-tracking by 12 way of track number 2. Emergency response team, which is the 13 track department, eventually got there about -- I think the whole 14 incident took about an hour. But we were single-tracking and we 15 had offloaded the train at Rosslyn, done a track inspection. They 16 had gone out there and -- I think I may have had a supervisor on 17 that train. I'm not sure. It was determined that it was unsafe 18 for train movement, track number 1. So, moved it back to Rosslyn, 19 got it out of the way, de-energized third rail. And I went from 20 there.

21 Q. Now, did the fire department end up responding to that? 22 A. They did. They were at Foggy Bottom. And actually, 23 they had shut down the station, because apparently the smoke had 24 gotten to that point where the fire department decided that it 25 wasn't safe to service the station. And we had the trains

1 shutting off their EV at Farragut West and then, you know,

2 Rosslyn, going through the area. And then, eventually, you know,
3 they put the station back in service and everything was --

Q. So from your desk, and I guess there's two of you, one
5 on the radio, one --

б

A. One of them is setting the routes.

Q. Who is actually communicating with the fire department?8 Or how does that work from your standpoint?

9 Α. Well, we -- I dispatch the rail supervisor to go where 10 the fire department is going to respond to. So the rail 11 operations supervisor that's there will let me know, okay, the 12 fire department's on the scene and then, you know, I instruct them to keep me updated. And so, they're the ones that communicate 13 14 with the person on the radio. Or if they can't get through on the 15 radio, they'll use their WMATA cell phone to call and let us know. 16 Fire department said don't service Foggy Bottom, or whatever, and then we relay the information to the operators. 17

18 Q. So the communication would work through somebody on the 19 scene from transportation. Or police? Where do police fit in?

A. The problem with having MTPD there and ROCC getting the information is you would still need an operations person there. Because the Transit Police, they operate off of their own -- or their own channel, I should say. They don't ever switch over to our channel to communicate directly with us. The communication we have with Transit will be over the phone. So they might call us

and say, you know, Transit's on the scene, they want to do this.
And then, you know, we go from there. We're directed by Transit
in a situation like that anyway. But if I can get a rail
operations supervisor there, that communication's that much
guicker over the radio.

Q. When you refer to Transit, that means the WMATA Police7 Department?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Again, you've kind of got this background that gave you 10 a lot of familiarity with some of the right-of-way and tunnels and 11 so forth. But as a controller going in, assuming you didn't have 12 that, what kind of training would you get on characteristics of 13 the right-of-way, what track's where, how many different bores, 14 tunnels, what's underground, what's above ground?

15 Α. Minimal. What they really focus on through the ROCC 16 training is, you know, your stations, your signals, and they teach 17 you about the ATC aspect of it as far as direction of travel, you 18 have established direction of travel, and stuff like that. They 19 teach you the power diagram on how to take down power, what breakers to trip. You got to trip both, can't just trip one, all 20 21 that. But they take you into a traction power room for about an 22 hour.

23 Q. Yeah.

A. But, I mean, it doesn't really give you an idea of the system. Now, the operators -- because a lot of the controllers

1 that are in there, they came up through operations. They were 2 train operators or rail operations supervisors in the field or in 3 the terminal. So they know the operations aspect of it, but I'm 4 the only one that came up through the maintenance side of Metro.

5 Q. Do controllers get to periodically ride trains and6 observe the right-of-ways?

7 A. They've started doing that now, sending them out on 8 field visits, meeting up with rail supervisors, riding in the cab 9 areas, and stuff like that, because they've got enough people that 10 they can do that.

11 Q. How often does that happen?

A. They're trying to send them out, like, at least one controller, like, a week, is what they're trying to do. You know, sometimes somebody being outside for vacation impedes that, but they've been pretty consistent about that lately.

MR. FLANIGON: That's all I have. See if Loren has anything.

18 BY DR. GROFF:

Q. Loren Groff. If we could go back just a little bit to sort of the reporting and some of that discussion about -- and observations. It seems like the controller's in a really unique position with regard to that, because a lot of what we've heard so far is, well, if I see a problem, I report it.

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. They're reporting it to you in that case. But then, you

1 also may see things and make your own reports or observations. So
2 can you sort of talk through how that works? Like, if somebody
3 reports, let's say, it's someone track side or a train operator or
4 somebody sees a problem and they report it to you, how does that
5 move through the system?

б Α. In general, anytime you have a report of something like 7 someone out on the roadway, two notifications that you're going to make, minimum, are going to be the ROIC side, the customer ops 8 9 side, and then you're going to notify your assistant 10 superintendent. If it deals with public safety, then you would 11 also notify Transit. So, an unauthorized person on the roadway, 12 fire, smoke, stuff like that actually deals with public safety, so 13 we would also notify Transit. Those are going to be your top 14 three.

15 If you're dealing with something like the AIM system 16 displays a bobbing track circuit, I'm going to notify ATC, because 17 I see on my display. Is it true? Is it a false indication? 18 What's going on there? You're going to have a train operator 19 attempt to do a track inspection from the cab area, you know, 20 because, obviously, it's limited there. You're going to try to 21 get a rail supervisor on the train, because at least they can see a little better and the operator can focus on operating the train, 22 23 to also give you a track inspection from the train. And then 24 either the track department or ATC will respond. They'll put boots on the ground to perform that inspection to make sure that 25

1 you don't have, you know, a cracked rail or anything like that.

As a controller, you're only as good as the information you're given. Because, you know, with AIM display, you can see certain things, but like fire and smoke, we wouldn't see unless an operator tells us. We wouldn't see an unauthorized person on the roadway --

7 Q. Sure.

A. -- you know, unless an operator tells us. And if we get
9 bad information, it is what it is.

Q. Sure. So, of those examples, they seem like events that are happening right now that need to be responded to. Is that typical of the type of safety issues that would be reported to you?

14 A. Yes.

Q. Did that make sense? They're not going to say, hey, I've got a problem with my train; it's the same thing over and over. It's a chronic problem rather than something they need to deal with -- are those the kind of things that come to you as well?

A. We get reports from everything. We get -- you know, "I had this train yesterday. It's the same car number. You know, the cab window doesn't secure or it's hard to open."

23 Q. So, you do get those?

A. Yeah. We also get operators calling in requesting a
personal because they want to go use the restroom. And we have to

1 respond to that, you know.

2 Q. Sure.

A. So you go from everywhere from the operator needing a4 personal break to, "Oh, my God, Central, my train blew up."

5 Q. Right.

A. Like, and everything in between.

Q. Everything in between. Is there a -- do you keep a log
of those reports or you just field them as they come in or --

9 Α. You field them as they come in. They do do daily 10 summaries, which, if you have anything that's maintenance-related, 11 you would put on there. Anything unusual, as an unauthorized 12 person on the roadway, you would put on there also. And you make MAXIMO entries of that. So if you have a bobbing track circuit, 13 14 you would notate, you know, on your summary as to what line it Then you would also put it in MAXIMO so that ATC 15 pertains to. 16 could open it up; they could go out there and fix the problem.

17

6

Q. I'm sorry. MAXIMO is -- that's a --

18 Α. It's Metro's, I guess, database is the best way to 19 describe it. They do work orders out of there for the car maintenance and everybody else. But you'd also put unauthorized 20 person on the roadways. Because I think, like, the higher-ups, I 21 think they pull reports daily to see what happened on -- well, all 22 the lines, the day before. And they'll inquire about certain 23 24 things, and then you go into the letters, which, like I said, anything over 10 minutes delay or unusual occurrence, you have to 25

1 do that.

2 Q. So that would be for a bigger event -- do you typically 3 get feedback from those letters?

A. Yes. You know, we'll submit them. We'll save them as a draft. The assistant superintendent will look it over, and if we're missing anything, he'll be, like, you know, add something here. Or if the wording doesn't make sense, you know, clarify this, or you're missing this. And then, you know, you do the final draft and submit it and everything.

Q. How about if you, in the course of your work, observed a situation or procedure or something that it wasn't critical at that moment, but you say, you know what, this actually makes me uncomfortable, I think this is unsafe and I want somebody to know about this. Do you have a mechanism to pass that on?

15 Α. The assistant superintendent, bring it up to them, you 16 know, let them know what you think should it or what you think 17 should be corrected or -- ask for direction, really, especially --18 like I said, you know, I've officially been in the position for 19 just under a year. We do have some senior controllers that, you know, I'd go to with a -- you know, "I had this situation today. 20 21 This is what I did. Is there anything I could do better?" And, you know, for the most part, they're pretty willing to give you 22 23 the information and experience that they have also.

Q. Is there -- do you participate in safety committee
meetings or when you report that, does that get fed into safety

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1 committee meetings or anything like that?

2	A. I haven't been to a safety committee meeting in some
3	years, to be honest with you. I do know that they are available,
4	and if I can make it, I will. But sometimes scheduling doesn't
5	necessarily allow for that. So, to be honest with you, I don't
6	know if it does get brought up.

Q. You mentioned that your perception is the close call reporting system is not used all that much. Do you have any idea why that is?

10 Honestly, I think people are afraid of getting other Α. 11 people in trouble, at least in the maintenance aspect of it, not 12 necessarily the Rail Operations Central Control part of it. Because when we bring it up -- to me, it's worse if central 13 14 notices that you're doing something unsafe out on the roadway 15 because, once again, we're only as good as the information we're 16 told. So I can't see the ATC crew that's out there flagging a 17 train. I can't see if they're using improper hand signals. And 18 so, you know, if an operator tells me, then, you know, then we 19 bring it up to their superiors, and they handle it from there. But I think with the safety hotline and the close call procedures, 20 21 I think that's more field-type thing and I don't necessarily think people use it that often because I think they're afraid of 22 getting, you know, their buddy in trouble. 23

Q. Do you see any regular reporting of sort of tracking of safety issues or does that get reported back, of like how are we

1 doing on these issues or --

2	A. I used to see it when I was a supervisor in car					
3	maintenance, I used to see that. In the track department I was					
4	a manager in the track department, I used to see it also. But as					
5	a controller right now, no.					
б	Q. No. Okay.					
7	DR. GROFF: All right. I think I'm for now.					
8	BY MR. GORDON:					
9	Q. Joe Gordon, NTSB. SOP for you mentioned the SOP for					
10	moving the train back to a station, so if they reported smoke					
11	ahead of the train. Was that procedure in place January 12th?					
12	That's nothing that's new or changed?					
13	A. No, that's SOP number 6.					
14	Q. SOP 6. Thank you. And we've heard mention of from					
15	operators about reversing ends and there's a switch that they have					
16	to traverse. When they're going back, there's a process there for					
17	clamping a switch?					
18	A. If you're going by SOP for operators to clamp a switch,					
19	it has to be laying in a normal position. Train operators					
20	themselves are not allowed to crank switches.					
21	Q. Okay.					
22	A. So in the event that you would need an operator to pass					
23	a red signal and that actually changed recently also, dependent					
24	upon where you are and what type of interlocking you're in or					
25	turnout. Originally, it used to be that if the signal was red,					

1 point blank, period, you had to clamp the switch in whatever 2 desired position you wanted that train to travel in, and then the operator would be able to do it if it was normal. 3 They cannot 4 crank it from a reverse position into the normal position to clamp it in the normal position. They also cannot clamp in a reverse 5 6 position. It has to already be laying normal, properly tucked and 7 everything before a train operator can clamp it normal, which would be a straight through. 8

9 Now, your rail operations supervisors, your interlocking 10 operators, your track and structures supervisors who are 11 qualified, and any ATC personnel, they can crank and clamp 12 switches in whatever position you need it.

Q. So in an event where you had smoke ahead of a train and there was a switch that needed to be clamped in order to make that move back to a station, if you got control over that switch at the control center --

17 A. Yes.

Q. -- you line the switch normal, and then the operator is able to exit the train, clamp the switch? They've got the tools that are required to do that, to clamp --

A. Yes. They should be in the interlocking. In every interlocking, there's a box that holds all the clamps and everything else. Now, in the event that they are not within that box, they are also located with -- underneath the seat wells in the railcars themselves. I can't remember which one, but there's

1 one in each car.

2 Q. Okay. And nothing's changed with that procedure, so 3 still making a reverse move through an interlocking, switch has to 4 be clamped?

5 If the established traffic is against them, yeah. Α. Yeah. б 0. Okay. You mentioned the -- you know, that you live by 7 the SOPs and know them and try to do the right thing. And I appreciate that. I came from the railroad industry and, you know, 8 9 I was governed by rules my entire career and, you know, I can appreciate anybody that does that. That being said, I know that 10 11 sometimes there's --

12

A. Absolutely.

Q. -- you get deemed as someone who follows the rules, so If I'm not going to ask you to do something, but I might ask somebody else that's not nearly as grounded or has as firm a grasp of the SOPs. Do you see that much pressure on fellow employees to --

A. In the control center? No. Coming up on the maintenance side, absolutely, without a doubt. You know, because in maintenance, it's we need to get it fixed; we need to get it fixed now so that we can do what it is. So, yes.

21 Q. Right.

A. On the maintenance side, without a doubt. The control side, no, not so much.

Q. Now, out in the field, it wouldn't be uncommon to say this one goes by the rules, so we'll go to the next?

1 A. Exactly.

2 Q. Okay. Thank you for that.

3 The trouble that gets reported to you out on the lines or anything out of the normal, we've heard some discussion about 4 radio issues. How often do radio issues get reported? 5 б Α. The problem with reporting radio issues is that most of 7 the time, it's already in known issues. So we do report, as controllers, we're like, look, we're having radio communication 8 9 problems between this location and this location. So we report them, and then, you know, sometimes, "oh, yeah, we already have a 10 11 work order on that." Okay.

And, I mean, I don't know if that's they're waiting on parts, they're waiting on, you know, com people to go out. You know, that could be a scheduling issue, parts issue, who knows, or just troubleshooting, being able to get out on the tracks to fix the radio problem. That's also kind of like rush hour when the trains are running.

18 Q. Right.

A. So, but we do report -- if we know about it, we'llreport it.

Q. And to your knowledge, is there, like, a running tally of those reports so that the --

23 A. I'm sure that there is.

Q. -- if an issue continues to get reported in the same location, it's not just, well, that's already been reported, so we

1 don't need to --

2 No, there should be -- once again with the MAXIMO, which Α. is, you know, Metro's database of work orders, if com closes out a 3 4 work order in one location, because let's say they did fix it, but let's say, 24 hours later it went back out, then there'd be 5 6 another work order. So then, you'd end up with what car 7 maintenance would refer to as your multi-repeaters. It's the same issue on the same railcar. All right, now we need to, you know, 8 9 dodge in and figure out what -- because 85 percent of the time, if 10 you have a flashing, we'll do an X, Y, Z, we'll fix that problem. 11 Fifteen percent of the time it won't. So that 15 percent of the 12 time, now we've got to get down and dirty and figure out what's 13 causing that problem.

14 Q. Troubleshooting a little bit deeper.

A. Right. And I'm sure the same thing with com, ATC, andso forth and so on.

Q. I had one more. You -- like Mike had mentioned about your broad range of experience in different trades and crafts since you've been out here, cleaning the tunnels, have you -- is that something that you've ever seen done? Was it something that was being done and --

A. The only thing I've seen, honestly, cleaned in the tunnels is, you know, they'll pick up the trash. And structures gets the lovely duty cleaning out the trains, which we won't discuss.

- 1
- Q. Right. All kinds of surprises.

A. Yeah, exactly. But as far as the lighting and
everything else, I personally have never seen it done, no.
MR. GORDON: Okay. Thank you. That's all I've got.
Mr. Narvell?
BY MR. NARVELL:
This is Dick Narvell. Advisors you've been here inc.

Q. This is Rick Narvell. Adriana, you've been here just8 shy of 10 years.

9 A. Uh-huh, that's right.

Wore different hats, different places, different things. 10 Q. 11 What do you see here, what I'll call recent history, last couple 12 years, of a safety concern or issue, if anything? Or issues? 13 Α. Unfortunately, I think when you -- I think the 14 misconception is that revenue comes first with a lot of field 15 personnel. I don't think they report as much as they see. I 16 think they report things that they feel are, you know super 17 important that might be a safety issue, stuff like that. But I 18 don't necessarily think that they report the little things that 19 could turn out to be a bigger issue further down the line because, 20 like I said, I think the misconception is that the focus is 21 revenue.

Don't get me wrong, it is. That's WMATA's livelihood is getting people from Point A to Point B, but at the same time, it's getting them there safely. There is an emphasis on headway performance and making a certain percentage, and making sure that,

1 like I said, on-time dispatches, make sure the trains hit the 2 stations when they're supposed to, according to their scheduled 3 headway. And we get those reports daily during the week of, you 4 know, what percentage we hit during rush hour PM, during non-rush, 5 and the whole bit, per shift. But ultimately, it's safety.

6 You know, sometimes you're not going to hit the mark. 7 Sometimes you're going to fall real short, and that could be 8 because you don't have trains, because there were no dispatches 9 because they had problems so they kept them in the yard. Or it 10 could be because wonderful (indiscernible) in a horrible area and 11 it created wonderful single tracking for everybody, you know. But 12 it is what it is.

Q. So, if I hear you correctly, your -- a concern that you have is that everything is not being reported out there, just the high mail, so to speak, high priority. Right, wrong, or otherwise from their perception.

17 A. Exactly.

18 Q. How would you address that?

A. To be honest with you, I don't know, because the problem with managing people in general is not everybody responds to everything the same way. So unless you have that one-on-one interaction with that person, you don't necessarily know what motivates this person is going to motivate this person, you know. Some people, yes, they're motivated by money. Offer them money and they'll, you know, do whatever. But not necessarily everybody

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is motivated by it. Like, I do know people that, you know, they
 see the slightest thing, they'll definitely report it. But then,
 it's, you know, someone said the little boy that cried wolf,
 basically, you know, type of thing that goes with that person.
 So, to be honest with you, I have no idea.

Q. And I guess as kind of a -- related to kind of the subject is you mentioned a little while ago that you had some folks out there that they're qualified Level 4 that you wouldn't walk track with. So we get into this discrepancy business, so to speak. And then I think this kind of -- it's more kind of statement, gets into how people -- what motivates people to do X, Y, or Z.

A. I think that comes on an individual basis, you know.
Q. If you had to give a temperature reading to the safety
culture of WMATA today, how would you characterize that?
A. To be honest with you, I think people do want to be
safe, and I think they want to do the right thing. I don't

18 necessarily think everybody knows how. And I don't know if that 19 goes into training or the rule book being really boring to read or 20 anything like that. I mean, when you come on duty, generally 21 speaking, you get your group of people, you sit there, you read them a safety rule of the day. Right? I quarantee you, you ask 22 that same person 10 minutes later, "What was the safety rule of 23 24 the day?" and they probably don't remember what number, what it 25 was about, or anything like that. All they hear, you know, words.

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1 Q. So, is it a checking-the-box --

2 A. Exactly.

4

9

3 Q. -- syndrome here?

A. Exactly. Yeah, for some people, yes.

Q. Okay. All right. Mike had asked you about TOC, the
Tri-state Oversight Committee. How about FTA, Federal Transit
Administration? You ever seen those folks out here or had any
interaction with them?

A. I have not had any interaction with them.

10 Q. None of the work spaces at all or --

A. From my understanding, they were in central not too long ago observing what we were doing, but I was busy doing my job so I wasn't paying attention.

14 Q. All right, that's fine. Has WMATA ever conducted any 15 tabletop exercises at the ROCC that you're aware of?

16 A. Not that I'm aware of.

- MR. NARVELL: Actually, I think that's all I have.Thank you.
- 19 BY MR. FLANIGON:

20 Q. I just had one. Alarms, do -- as the controller, do you 21 see different kinds of equipment alarms on --

22 A. Yeah.

Q. -- you know, the wayside pumps and fire alarms and -A. Yeah, we do. Unfortunately, to be honest with you, the
way you're supposed to have your screen set up, you should have

your unacknowledged alarms on one screen so that you can see them.
 I have seen some controllers that don't do that. And then, at the
 bottom, you'll get, like, most recent three alarms.

So let's say you have a drainage pumping station that you do have an alarm for it and all of a sudden your track is flooding, but then you get a false indication that train ID whatever, you know, overran a signal, because it pre-shunted the signal. And, you know, oh, no, you've got this train that has the same ID as another train, and so then it gets bumped down. You could miss it if you don't have your unacknowledged alarms.

11 Because there, honestly, are a lot of alarms that come through the AIM system, I really don't -- they're not safety 12 13 issues at all. You got two trains running the line with the same 14 Okay. You know, you could fix that real easy. And most of ID. 15 the time you're going to see it. If you're looking at your line, 16 you're like, wait a minute, why do I have two 901s back to back? 17 Let me find out who's who. And then tell that operator to recycle 18 their ID and destination so that they display the right ID.

19 I'm trying to think. And then, like one of the other 20 ones that, you know, is just -- if you have a train parked on the 21 pocket track, you know, the third track either at the D&G 22 junction, really any pocket track, as a train is clearing the 23 track signals, like, on the first track, it'll show as if that 24 train overran the red signal, so you'll get multiple of that even 25 though the train hasn't moved.

Are there alarms that go anywhere else then? Q. 2 I believe MOC gets the alarms also, depending Α. Yeah. upon what desk they're working. I don't know if the ROIC side --3 4 they might -- I believe they get the station alarms because they deal with the stations themselves. 5

б Q. Okay.

7 And I know the assistant superintendent gets the alarms Α. also. 8

9

1

Q. MOC stands for?

Maintenance Operations Central Control. 10 Α.

11 MR. FLANIGON: Okay. That's all I have.

BY DR. GROFF: 12

13 Q. Actually, I just had a question back to -- we talked to 14 some of the folks that do maintenance on the fans. And they said 15 sometimes they have difficulty coordinating, cycling the fans. 16 From your end of where -- I guess you've maybe seen parts of that 17 from different angles. Do you have any thoughts on that and --18 Α. Well, I think planning work doesn't necessarily always 19 -- you know, MOC comes up with a plan and they're like, okay, 20 let's implement it and, you know, all they got to do is call 21 central. Because there were a couple weeks after the January 12 incident where all of a sudden central's getting inundated with 22 plans trying to cycle the fans, because, you know, they want to 23 24 check the whole system, make sure everything is -- and the problem 25 is, when you've got multiple people at multiple locations asking

1 you to do a thing and you're only one person. You know, because 2 if you've got -- we'll go to the Red Line just because it's the 3 easiest. You got everything from Shady Grove to Glenmont, but you've got somebody, you know, at Rockville, Medical Center, 4 Farragut North, DuPont Circle, Metro Center, Gallery Place, and 5 б they're all calling you at the same time trying to get you to 7 cycle the fans. You're like, "Look, give me a call back in about 10 minutes." You know, so that kind of makes it a little 8 9 difficult, you know, on our end.

10 Q. Sure.

11 A. But we try to get everybody -- we try to do everything 12 we can to help facilitate them, but sometimes they also need to 13 understand you're not the only person out there.

Q. Sure. So, just -- if you wouldn't mind, can you just explain from your point of view what you have to do to cycle a fan? Is it just push a button?

17 Α. Yeah. What you do is you'd actually have to go into 18 that menu with the fan menus. It would pop up. You'd see the 19 nice little icon for the fan, click on it. And at that point, you 20 could either put it on emergency exhaust, emergency supply; you 21 could just put it on regular exhaust, regular supply, and then, you know, automatic, which would just put it back on and off, or 22 you could just shut it off completely and send it to command and 23 24 ask them.

25

Q. So the whole process might take -- to do what they

1 need --

2	Α.	То	do	one	fan?
		-			

3 Q. To do one fan.

4 Α. I'd say, at the most 10 minutes. Because sometimes, you 5 know, they want you to put it on supply. All right, I'll give you б a call back. Then they want you to put it in exhaust. All right, 7 turn it off, I'm going to give you a call back. And then, you know, sometimes they want to cycle it. So, I'd say, at most, 8 9 maybe 10 minutes, if you had -- you know, if that's all you were 10 focused on.

11 Q. But you're also fitting that within actually controlling 12 trains and you may have call.

13 A. Um-hum.

14 Q. All right. Thank you, that's helpful. I just wanted to 15 get that --

16 DR. GROFF: That's all I have, thanks.

17 BY MR. NARVELL:

18 Ο. This is Rick Narvell, a couple of things. Just to 19 clarify, you've mentioned the acronym AIMS. What's AIMS again? I don't know exactly what it stands for off the top of 20 Α. 21 my head right now, but basically, it's the display system or computerized system that we see down at central that'll show us 22 23 the trains moving down the line and basically all the alarms. 24 Like, we control all the signaling from there, fans, power, a whole bunch of stuff, actually. 25

Ο.

1

Q. Is AIMS a component of the SCADA?

2 A. I don't know what that is.

Q. Which is the Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition.
4 That's the --

5 A. Yes. Yes, that's wayside equipment, yes.

Q. AIMS is a component or subsystem of the whole SCADA7 system, if I'm understanding correctly.

A. Yeah, it's just, I guess, a visual representation of all9 that information that SCADA puts together.

10 Q. I worked the Fort Totten accident. I vaguely remember 11 AIMS and I thought it was something like Automatic Information 12 Management System, or something --

A. That's exactly what it is, Automatic InformationManagement System.

15 Q. Lucky guess. It's been, what, almost 6 years ago now.

16 A. Yeah.

Q. So, back to the SCADA system here, we talk about -- Mike was asking about alarms. Do you get what's called nuisance alarms a lot?

20 A. We get a lot of nuisance alarms.

21 Q. And what do you do about them?

22 A. You acknowledge them.

23 Q. So it could be real and it could be --

A. No. You're supposed to read through all your alarms,25 right?

1 Q. Right.

2 A. And so that if you do --

3 Q. Okay, go ahead.

4 Α. You're supposed to read through all your alarms, and, you know, when you see something that just pops out at you, like, 5 6 "Wait a minute, that ain't right," then you make a notification 7 from there. Perfect example, KO662 breaker was showing to us, like, every 2, 3 minutes that it was open and then closing, the 8 9 breaker's opening and closing. So call the power desk: "Do you 10 see that on your system as well?" They say, "Yeah, we do. We're 11 going to send somebody out to the room." "All right, cool."

12 So, somebody goes out to the room to check it out, it's 13 not opening and closing. It's just a false indication within the 14 AIMS system. So, okay, at that point, okay, cool, you know.

But like I said, if you have a train parked on the pocket track and a train is passing by track 1, sometimes it will show that that train has overrun that signal. So you do need to read through them.

19 Q. Sure.

A. You do need to look at them, and you do need to know what your nuisance alarms would be that, okay, yeah, I know that train hasn't moved. Okay, I can delete that and keep on moving on.

Q. Okay. Last area here. Are you familiar with different systems that WMATA utilizes to capture and to convey safety data?

And, if so, do you know what they are or their programs or systems
 or mechanisms or --

A. What was that called? Something safety measurement system or something like that, I believe it was, SMS.

5 Q. Okay. That would be one, right?

6 A. Right.

Q.

7 Q. And any more?

A. I know you got your SMS, and I also know you got -- I 9 know you got your Local Safety Committees, meetings and all that 10 other stuff. I can't remember what report they used to generate 11 all the time.

12

The local folks?

13 Yeah, the local folks, because I used to be part of it Α. 14 at West Falls Church when I was a supervisor over there 4 years 15 ago. So, I know -- you know, we had -- they would generate a 16 report of, you know, who had been injured, who had been in close calls, stuff like that. I can't remember the name of that report, 17 18 though. I know you got your safety hotline, but -- and your close 19 call reporting system. You got your safety bulletins. But other than that, I can't think of anything off the top of my head. 20

21 Q. Three or four at least right there, we just -- that you 22 mentioned.

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. All right. Good. Thank you.

25 MR. FLANIGON: Okay. You got some more?

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1

BY MR. GORDON:

2 Just -- Joe Gordon, NTSB. Just to touch on something 0. 3 that you and Rick talked about with training. You mentioned 4 earlier personal accountability. And, you know, there has to be some aspect of that, but do you feel like the employees are 5 6 getting the adequate training? Do you think there's more training 7 -- because you mentioned before that you've gone out and done some training on your own. And so, do you think that more training 8 9 would be beneficial?

10 A. Do you want me to speak specifically on central control11 training for controllers or just in general at WMATA?

12 Q. Yeah, just in general.

A. I think part of the problem that you run into in general at Metro is, certain people need certain qualifications. We'll go with the roadway worker protection. Certain people for certain qualifications, job titles, and everything else, they have to be Level 4 qualified. So I think part of the problem, the way that the training appears to be geared is towards the test. You know, we're gearing it so that you can pass the test.

The other issue that you do run across at Metro is that not everybody is 100 percent fluent in English. You know, the training is obviously given in English. We do have a lot of Hispanic employees. We do have a lot of Vietnamese, Korean, you know, some people that their native language is French. So I know that there is that language barrier there. And with the technical

1 terminology the Metro uses with, like, the Roadway Worker
2 Protection Manual and stuff like that, it can make it difficult to
3 translate it for somebody that, you know, English isn't their
4 first language.

5 You know, I had a lot of Hispanic employees that worked б for me at West Falls Church. Luckily, I'm fluent in both English 7 and Spanish, and I was able to guide them through. I mean, their English was good enough to do the work that they needed to do, but 8 9 the way that Metro presents the test question, you know -- I 10 understand that they present them that way so that they know who 11 was paying attention and who wasn't, you know, because obviously 12 -- but it could be confusing to somebody that, like I said, 13 English is not their first language. So I think, because of that, 14 the training instructors do the best that they can with the 15 material that they're given and attempt to make sure that people 16 can pass the test as opposed to actually knowing the information 17 that's being given.

18 MR. GORDON: Okay, thank you. I have nothing else.
19 MR. FLANIGON: So, I think we're done, unless you got
20 anything you want to add?

21 MS. IRIZARRY: Not that I can think of off the top of my 22 head.

MR. FLANIGON: Okay. Well, we'll conclude this. Thankyou very much.

25 (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 Adriana Irizarry

DOCKET NUMBER: DCA-15-FR-004

PLACE: Washington, D.C.

DATE: April 14, 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.

> Wendy C. Cutting Transcriber