



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

<b>GROUP</b>	
<b>EXHIBIT</b>	

Agency / Organization

Title

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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

Docket No.: DCA-15-FR-004

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Interview of: MARK OLSON

Washington, D.C.

Friday,  
January 16, 2015

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice.

BEFORE: DAVE BUCHER  
Railroad Accident Investigator

## APPEARANCES:

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

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

SHARMILA SAMARASINGHE, Vice Chair  
Tri-State Oversight Committee

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

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

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I N T E R V I E W

(10:10 a.m.)

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3 MR. BUCHER: Good morning. This is Dave Bucher, rail  
4 accident investigator for the National Transportation Safety  
5 Board. This is the interview of Mark Olson, a Metro police chief,  
6 relating to the WMATA L'Enfant Plaza accident of January 12, 2015,  
7 NTSB accident number DCA-15-FR-004.

8 And to my right I have?

9 MS. SAMARASINGHE: Sharmila Samarasinghe, Tri-State  
10 Oversight Committee, Virginia, full-time member.

11 MS. FLEMINGS-McCANN: Marlene Flemings-McCann, assistant  
12 business agent from Rail Local 689.

13 MR. ADAMS: Dorsey Adams, WMATA, manager of rail safety.

14 MR. DOWNS: Rick Downs, Survival Factors Group  
15 chairperson.

## INTERVIEW OF MARK OLSON

16  
17 BY MR. BUCHER:

18 Q. Mr. Olson, as I discussed a little bit earlier, if you  
19 could just go and give us a description of your involvement with  
20 the incident at L'Enfant Plaza on the 12th?

21 A. Okay. What I will do is I will give you the whole  
22 synopsis as it played out. Initially, at around 1510, 1515 hours  
23 on Monday, the 12th of January 2015, we received a call via our  
24 communications over the radio system of a fire alarm at the Roslyn  
25 Station. Subsequently to that, there was another call for two

1 fires at the Gallery Place Station. And then, subsequent to that,  
2 we had a report of smoke in the L'Enfant Plaza Station. So  
3 obviously, at that point, all of our antennas were up, trying to  
4 figure out, okay, what's happening right now.

5           Very shortly thereafter, we had units both at Roslyn and  
6 Gallery Place, clear those incidents with, you know, either  
7 nothing found or something to do with, you know, a minor smoke or  
8 sparking incident.

9           With those cleared, an officer came over the air at  
10 L'Enfant Plaza, and it was roughly, I want to say, about 1520 that  
11 she was on board a yellow line train bound for Huntington, and the  
12 train was on fire. That was what she stated over the air from  
13 what my recollection is of it. She said there's a lot of smoke  
14 and that she's moving patrons back from the first car to get away  
15 from the source of the smoke.

16           So at that time, obviously, we're rolling units to  
17 L'Enfant Plaza. What I mean by units is both officers and  
18 officials to get onto the scene to hopefully manage the incident.  
19 I left here at Headquarters, 600 5th Street, Northwest, at, I  
20 would say, about 1524. I arrived at the 7th and Maryland entrance  
21 to the L'Enfant Plaza Station at 1528 hours, announced my arrival  
22 and I immediately made my way down into the station. At this  
23 point, the station had already been evacuated.

24           I met with Sergeant Brian Baker who, at the time, had  
25 assumed incident command. There were no fire personnel on the

1 scene at that time. The station had been cleared by the MTPD  
2 personnel of all patrons and employees, other than the police  
3 officers that were down there. I asked the sergeant to do  
4 accountability of his personnel, which he did, and then we did  
5 another sweep of the station to ensure that everybody was out of  
6 the station.

7 In the midst of this, we knew that we had a train with  
8 patrons in the tunnel, and the sergeant briefed me on that, that  
9 we've done nothing to get to those patrons yet. We do have an  
10 officer on the train and she's been communicating.

11 At that time, the smoke was so thick in the station that  
12 you could not see your hand in front of your face, literally.  
13 I've never seen that much smoke. In 25 years, I've never seen  
14 that much smoke in a station here. And the smoke was roughly the  
15 color of these walls, which is a beigish-brown smoke.

16 At that time, I assigned Sergeant Baker as the forward  
17 liaison and I assumed incident command. I established the command  
18 post. I'm sorry, let me, let me back up. I told Sergeant Baker  
19 that I'm the incident commander. Captain Donald arrived on scene,  
20 and I attached him to me as my assistant. He announced over there  
21 that I assumed command and that Sergeant Baker was the forward  
22 liaison. Sergeant Baker was at the 7th and Maryland entrance,  
23 down at the kiosk. We were advised by communications that fire  
24 department personnel were arriving at the scene, so I went topside  
25 in order to find the battalion chief.

1           We walked down 7th Street towards D Street. There was  
2 fire apparatus, there was a ladder truck and an engine, and then  
3 there was a SUV sitting on the corner. I assumed that that was  
4 the battalion chief. I approached, and it was a captain, and she  
5 said no, the battalion chief is over there and pointed to another  
6 SUV. So we walked back another block up, back to the 7th and  
7 Maryland exit.

8           As we walked up, that vehicle drove past us and stopped  
9 again. As we approached the vehicle again, they drove down and  
10 turned the corner onto D Street, where they finally come to stop  
11 in front of 7th and D entrance of the station.

12           I caught up to the vehicle. I have to add here it was  
13 pouring out rain. I identified myself to the gentleman who was  
14 the battalion chief, who was assuming incident command of the  
15 incident. His name was Chapman. I explained that I'm the MTPD  
16 on-scene commander. I said immediately -- the first thing I told  
17 him is I said we have a train trapped down there with patrons on  
18 board and I'm very concerned about a self-evacuation. We need to  
19 get evacuation of those patrons started immediately.

20           He looked over at his driver and then he said something  
21 to the effect of, well, I have to get my personnel down there to  
22 assess where the smoke's coming from first. I again stated to  
23 him, I said, we have passengers on that train that we need to get  
24 evacuated. He rolled up his window.

25           An MTPD lieutenant -- and I apologize I do not have his



1 name -- an MPD, Metropolitan Police lieutenant, approached me and  
2 he said, you know, what do we need? And I started directing him  
3 to where we need traffic blockages and stuff to assist our agency.

4 At that time, I had approximately six to eight MTPD,  
5 Metro Transit Police personnel, down in the station, no protective  
6 respiratory equipment at all, standing by to assist the fire  
7 department with this evacuation. Again, you know, firefighters  
8 were trickling in, and I approached the battalion chief again and  
9 said what's the plan? I said you are the incident commander.  
10 This is your incident. I made that clear to him so he knew.

11 MR. DOWNS: That's the fellow that rolled the window --

12 WITNESS: Chapman, yes. And he said, well, we're  
13 assessing. We're trying to locate where this fire is. And that's  
14 all he said. He didn't mention the evacuation at all.

15 So that was approximately about 1540 when I was able to  
16 catch up with him and finally establish, you know, who their  
17 incident commander was and such.

18 MR. DOWNS: 1540?

19 WITNESS: Yes, sir.

20 MS. SAMARASINGHE: I'm sorry, Chief Olson. Sharmila  
21 Samarasinghe. 1540 is when you kind of accosted them as they  
22 were --

23 WITNESS: That's when I --

24 MS. SAMARASINGHE: -- going around the block?

25 WITNESS: Correct.

1 MS. SAMARASINGHE: And that was the first opportunity  
2 you had a conversation with Battalion Chief Chapman --

3 WITNESS: Correct.

4 MS. SAMARASINGHE: -- about the situation inside the  
5 station?

6 WITNESS: Correct.

7 MS. SAMARASINGHE: Okay, thank you.

8 WITNESS: Shortly after 1540, that's when I advised  
9 Chapman that he was, you know, the incident commander and I was  
10 the on-scene commander for the transit police. I voiced that over  
11 our radio and I had voiced where the command post was now at 7th  
12 and D exit for the L'Enfant Plaza Station. I advised again that  
13 we need to evacuate the train. Chapman advised that fire  
14 department personnel have to assess first. Around, I would say,  
15 1550 was when I got word from our personnel that the fire  
16 department was actually working towards setting up the evacuation.

17 Somewhere around that time, the fire department said  
18 that the firefighters have located what appears to be the room  
19 where the smoke is emitting from and were asking for us for keys  
20 to get into their room.

21 MR. DOWNS: Room? A room?

22 WITNESS: An ancillary room, yes. What they said it was  
23 a back room on the upper level above the track bed. So what I  
24 took that -- the way L'Enfant Plaza is set up is there's three  
25 entrances that have, you know, ingress and egress, and then

1 there's a mezzanine above where there's a back room. So,  
2 apparently, they thought the smoke was coming out of there.

3 You know, hindsight is 20/20, but I assume that's where  
4 probably the vent shaft to evacuate the smoke was, and it was  
5 probably drawing the smoke up to that area. I don't know.

6 So, anyway, at that point we started getting word that  
7 the fire department is setting up for an evacuation. Now I don't  
8 know the exact time, but sometime from 1540 to 1550 a fire  
9 department officer hit the ETS button.

10 MR. DOWNS: ETS?

11 WITNESS: Emergency trip station on the track 2 side,  
12 taking the power down.

13 MR. DOWNS: That happened what time?

14 WITNESS: It was in between 1540 and 1551.

15 MR. DOWNS: And that was a transit officer?

16 WITNESS: No, a fire officer.

17 MR. DOWNS: Fire department.

18 WITNESS: And that, in effect, kind of stalled things  
19 for Metro, because had we had power there, we could have got the  
20 train that was sitting on the platform out of there and, quite  
21 possibly, moved the other train into the platform. Speculation,  
22 you know. I'm just, I'm just saying that wasn't a good move.

23 So moving forward, Mr. Relyea (ph.) from Rail got on  
24 scene. It was, it was somewhere between 1550 and 1600 hours. He  
25 immediately checked in with me. Of course we had an emergency

1 management personnel with me; and, like I said before, Captain  
2 Warren Donald was with me, as well; and then the MPD, Metropolitan  
3 Police lieutenant; and then Commander Brown from Metropolitan  
4 Police also showed up at about 1600, and he is the 1D district  
5 commander for the Metropolitan Police there, so that was in his  
6 district.

7 I got the distinct feeling from the Metropolitan Police  
8 personnel that the fire department was treating them exactly the  
9 same way that they treated us, very standoffish, not sharing  
10 information, not accepting information from us.

11 So somewhere around, let's see, around 1600, I again  
12 spoke to Battalion Chief Chapman, and he notified me that they  
13 were having radio problems. I advised him that the MTPD personnel  
14 have radio communications that are working just fine; would it be  
15 possible for him to have his personnel hook up with our personnel.  
16 He did not answer me. He rolled the window up and went back to do  
17 whatever he was doing. So there seemed to be a pattern of kind of  
18 ignoring what we were trying to tell him and, for lack of a better  
19 word, shunning the police on the scene.

20 So that was roughly 1600 hours. During this time, the  
21 venting of the station had occurred, cleared the air out. The  
22 evacuation was underway. We had a sergeant on the train. The  
23 officer who was on the train had somewhat succumbed to the  
24 inhalation of smoke, and that was Officer Young, and she had been  
25 evacuated from the train and transported.

1           Roughly -- I apologize. Roughly 1600 hours we had also  
2 requested that medics respond to 9th and D street exit and the 7th  
3 and Maryland Street exit to receive evacuees from the train. That  
4 was relayed to the battalion chief and they got there, so  
5 apparently he had heard that and sent his folks there so --

6           MS. SAMARASINGHE: Sharmila Samarasinghe. Chief Olson,  
7 can you repeat that time stamp again, what time what happened?

8           WITNESS: What I have is roughly 1600 hours I requested  
9 through the Battalion Chief Chapman of the fire department to send  
10 medics, ambulance to the 9th and D Street exit, as well as the 7th  
11 and Maryland exit. 9th and D was where we were bringing evacuees  
12 up out of the station. I had some officers at 7th and Maryland  
13 who were complaining of injury due to the smoke.

14           At that point, the evacuation was ongoing. I had a  
15 Sergeant Kenneth Hocking -- Honick, I'm sorry, Honick, H-o-n-i-c-  
16 k, aboard the train, who was assisting with the evacuation, and he  
17 was advising as the cars were cleared that they were actually  
18 cleared. He was doing a secondary sweep. And he advised us all  
19 the way through.

20           Again, I have to reiterate, our folks had no respiratory  
21 protection whatsoever. The fire department were down there with  
22 their SCBAs, so I really have to commend my folks for doing that.

23           At, let's see, approximately 1700 hours -- there's a  
24 break in the CAD report from -- I'm sorry.

25           Evacuees were coming out the 9th and Water Street

1 emergency exit at 1606. So we -- I alerted the fire chief again  
2 to send some folks over there to assist with that evacuation  
3 there.

4 At 1616 hours, Sergeant Honick advised that there were  
5 no passengers left aboard the train; all passengers had been  
6 evacuated.

7 At 1617 hours, Captain Gregory Hanna from the Metro  
8 Transit Police Department arrived on scene at the 9th and Water  
9 Street evacuation point.

10 At 1625, Sergeant Hocking -- Honick, I'm sorry --  
11 advises that he is still on the train with a passenger in a  
12 wheelchair. This gentleman had electric wheelchair.

13 MR. DOWNS: What time was that again?

14 WITNESS: It was at 1625. Of course, this was after at  
15 1617 that he had reported that all passengers were clear.

16 The fire department got down there and carried that  
17 gentleman out.

18 Between around 1630 and forward from that time, it  
19 was -- the scene became more of a triage and transport-type scene.  
20 The evacuees were out at the 9th and D and 9th and Water Street  
21 locations, and we were trying to ascertain numbers transported,  
22 personnel accountability on our part and numbers of our officers  
23 who were transported to the hospital.

24 At roughly -- I apologize. I don't have my glasses. At  
25 roughly 1645, we were advised of the fatality. At that point,

1 Metropolitan Police Homicide, they take over the investigation  
2 because it's a fatality. They were on scene. Deputy Chief Les  
3 Campbell, who had arrived on the scene earlier and taken over  
4 forward command from Sergeant Baker -- and I can give you that  
5 time. It was roughly 1548. He became the liaison with the  
6 homicide folks, and the forward liaison was turned over to  
7 Lieutenant Conrad Sullivan. And that was at 1720 hours.

8           At approximately 1850 hours, I advised the fire  
9 department that we had located the suspected site of the smoke,  
10 which was about 800 feet, I think, in front of the train that was  
11 trapped in the tunnel, and that it was caused by some potheads  
12 that had either arched out or whatever and caught the cover for  
13 the third rail on fire. Emergency management Denton Rourke from  
14 our agency had actually discovered the site of the fire, and he  
15 had taken some pictures and sent it to me, and it looked like it  
16 was pretty -- you know, a pretty catastrophic event there.

17           But again, at about 1850, 1853, we advised the fire  
18 department that power was able to be restored on track one and  
19 track 2, and we were awaiting system maintenance to give us the  
20 clearance to go ahead and reenergize that, obviously after getting  
21 the fire department's concurrence. That never did take place that  
22 evening. We kept the power down.

23           At that point, all MTPD personnel were clear of the  
24 tracks. We had transferred personnel in to relieve those who had  
25 been on the scene. Many of those that had been on the scene

1 during the evacuation went to the hospital due to smoke  
2 inhalation, many of our officers.

3           And then we moved the command post down to the 7th and D  
4 kiosk, myself, Mr. Relyea, Captain Donald. Obviously, I had  
5 advised the battalion chief that that's where I'd be should he  
6 need me, which I'm sorry to be snide, but it appeared that he  
7 didn't need us through the whole incident so -- We did an  
8 accountability of all our units at 1909 hours.

9           At 1930 hours, I believe we restored service to the  
10 lower level of the station with folks being able to exit on the  
11 7th and Maryland and the 7th and D Street sides. This 9th and D  
12 remained closed, as did the green and yellow line service through  
13 that station. They had a bus bridge set up at 7th and C which was  
14 just out of the exit out of the 7th and Maryland side of the  
15 station.

16           Basically, at that time, fire department personnel were  
17 clearing. The homicide detectives were examining the train and  
18 the scene of the incident, and as well as detectives who were  
19 assisting from our agency. Crime scene personnel from our agency  
20 started to photograph the incident train and we put MTPD officers  
21 on the train to secure the customers' belongings, and they  
22 remained on that train overnight.

23           At that point, roughly 2030 hours, we were returning to  
24 a state of normalcy, if you will. Pedestrian traffic and customer  
25 traffic was fairly light coming off of the lower level. We had



1 police officers and rail personnel in place to support the exiting  
2 customers.

3           At that time, I can give you the exact time, Mike  
4 Flannigan arrived on scene from NTSB. I wish I could give you  
5 that time. Yes, at 1739. I briefed him on all the information  
6 that I had, and then he spoke to Denton Rourke from the Emergency  
7 Management Group and Bob Relyea from Rail Operations, and then he  
8 went down to look at the train.

9           I never left the command post to -- you know, there was  
10 no need for me to go onto the scene. We had several people that  
11 were already on scene there, so there was, there was no need for  
12 me to go disturb them doing what they were doing.

13           At 2100 hours I relinquished command to Captain  
14 Sepulveda, who would be the midnight commander and take it from  
15 there. And that was the last of my involvement until today.

16           MR. BUCHER: Okay, I'm going to turn it over to  
17 Mr. Downs.

18           BY MR. DOWNS:

19           Q. Okay, Chief Olson, thanks very much for joining us  
20 today. You described step by step the process. Thanks very much.  
21 Fairly good detail. Your interaction with incident command and  
22 the functionality thereof, it sounds like there wasn't a  
23 particularly good functionality, meaning a dysfunctionality.

24           A. There was dysfunctionality, and as I said, it started  
25 immediately with having to chase the battalion chief's vehicle

1 around.

2 Q. And you were in full uniform --

3 A. Full uniform.

4 Q. -- so it was obvious who you were?

5 A. Full uniform, yes.

6 Q. Okay. Were you by yourself or --

7 A. No, I had a captain with me, who was in full uniform.

8 Q. So it was two officers, full uniform, standing there at  
9 an incident site seeking -- apparently seeking to hook up with the  
10 fire department, and would it be fair to say you were ignored at  
11 first?

12 A. Ignored is a good word. And in our protocol, that's our  
13 job as command officials, to seek out and locate the battalion  
14 chief and become tied at the hip with them.

15 Well, in this instance, there was a barrier of the car  
16 door with the window. We stood out in the rain, the captain and  
17 I, for over half an hour wanting to have dialogue with this  
18 individual. As I said, the only dialogue that was conducted was I  
19 asked him what his name was. He never bothered to get my  
20 identification from me at all through the whole night. And I  
21 advised him immediately that we have a train full of customers  
22 down there and we need to get a evacuation going immediately  
23 because we're worried about, obviously, their welfare. But more  
24 importantly, we didn't want them self-evacuating. So throughout  
25 the course of the incident, that was the standard which he held

1 to, pretty much ignoring us as part of the incident command.

2 Q. And that was Battalion Chief Chapman?

3 A. Correct.

4 Q. Okay. And this was -- before the bulk of fire response  
5 arrived, there was only one or two fire trucks at that time, you  
6 were saying?

7 A. Correct. They were arriving as we were right.

8 Q. Right. So a formal incident command post had not been  
9 established? It was just their command car at that point?

10 A. Well, generally, that's where we establish the command  
11 post at is at their vehicle.

12 Q. Right, right.

13 A. That gives them the access to all of their equipment and  
14 documents and --

15 Q. But there was no -- D.C. has a command bus, for example.  
16 That hadn't arrived or whatever?

17 A. No. That had not arrived, nor did it ever. We have a  
18 command bus, as well. I could have called that, but my thought  
19 was I have all of our resources tied to taking care of this event.  
20 I'm not going to take somebody out of service to go get that  
21 vehicle to bring in service so I can stand someplace dry. I can  
22 dry off later.

23 But point being that, you know, we generally establish  
24 our command post at the battalion chief's vehicle. Generally,  
25 they let us in the vehicle. That didn't happen in this case.

1           Q.    We had testimony this morning -- we have the two trains  
2 involved that -- the train in the tunnel, the 302 train, and we  
3 had the train at the platform, the 510 train.  The testimony this  
4 morning, the 510 train, the train operator pulled her train into  
5 the station, encountered smoke.  She saw a Transit Police officer  
6 on the platform with a flashlight.  She requested assistance from  
7 that officer to help her with this flashlight, because the smoke  
8 had gotten so thick, to guide her walking down the platform to try  
9 to find the eight car spot where she normally would berth her  
10 train.  And she only got so far before the officer had indicated  
11 that he felt it was no further -- not safe to further travel  
12 because he couldn't see, even with a flashlight.  So that's where  
13 she stopped the train.

14                    Are we able to get an identification of that officer by  
15 chance, do you know?

16           A.    Certainly.  We can get that identification.

17           Q.    You wouldn't know off the top of your head who that  
18 might be from a log or something you might have with you today?

19           A.    I don't.  I don't have any idea who that could be.

20           Q.    Let me put a request, then, to you.  There was that  
21 officer who first encountered the train.  There was a second  
22 officer who approached the train as soon as they had stopped the  
23 train, who had indicated -- the second officer who had indicated  
24 approached the train when they stopped the train, who had  
25 indicated to evacuate the station.  So we need the identification

1 of those two officers.

2 A. I'm quite certain that the evacuation order was given by  
3 Sergeant Baker.

4 Q. Whomever that might be, if you could locate those two  
5 officers for us, that would be appreciated.

6 A. Sure.

7 Q. Incident command, following the NIMS protocol, can you  
8 elaborate a little bit on that? You've kind of gone into it in  
9 terms of interaction between agencies and all. The essence here,  
10 and I'll paraphrase it to get you set up, whenever command  
11 officer -- whatever agency is first on scene takes an initial  
12 incident command and then, as more resources arrive, elevates it  
13 up to the fire department. Would that be correct?

14 A. That's correct.

15 Q. And then the senior officer or the fire department would  
16 then take over and guide, if you will, the process, getting  
17 support from the various agencies that are supporting fire, other  
18 fire, police department, whoever, is that correct?

19 A. That is correct.

20 Q. Could you elaborate on that a little bit for us?

21 A. At 1528 hours, when I arrived on scene, I met with  
22 Sergeant Baker who was the initial on-scene commander for the  
23 Metro Transit Police. We were the only responders, first  
24 responders, at the time in the station. I met with him, he  
25 briefed me, I advised him that he will now be taking forward

1 liaison, which is a command in the site of the incident itself,  
2 and that I will be assuming incident command at that point. So  
3 that was, that was roughly 1528 hours, between 1528 and 1535.

4 Q. Yeah, don't worry about the detailed time because we're  
5 going to establish a time line. I'm just trying to get the  
6 general flow.

7 A. Okay. So I made that command correction at that point,  
8 voiced it over our air. Actually, Captain Donald voiced it over  
9 the air that I was taking command. At that point, I exited the  
10 station in order to find the fire department personnel who were,  
11 as I said, just coming on the scene to find out where the  
12 battalion chief was.

13 Our protocol says that the incident commander from the  
14 Transit Police will locate and establish liaison with the fire  
15 battalion chief or the senior fire personnel immediately once the  
16 command has been declared, if the fire department -- if it is a  
17 fire department incident, obviously. So that's our protocol.

18 At that point, I was looking for -- they have specific  
19 vehicles, SUVs, in which their officials who run the command show  
20 up in. We were trying to locate that vehicle so we could  
21 establish that command, advise them what we had, and move forward  
22 from that point. Again, I found a vehicle with a fire captain in  
23 it, and she stated that, no, she's not the incident commander and  
24 pointed across the block to the other SUV which, again, we chased  
25 around until we were able to pin them down.

1           At that point, I advised Battalion Chief Chapman I'm  
2 Deputy Chief Olson with the Transit Police, I'm the on-scene  
3 commander from Metro; you're the incident commander. I advised  
4 him of the situation with people on the train. I advised him that  
5 I have several personnel down in the station and that we are here,  
6 you know, for whatever you need so --

7           Q.    Very good. Training: Has Metrorail conducted training  
8 activities in the past? Have you had any simulations such as  
9 this?

10          A.    Absolutely.

11          Q.    Do you recall the most recent one?

12          A.    Well, the most recent exercise we had was probably in  
13 November on the silver line.

14          Q.    Approximately?

15          A.    Yeah, yep. And then over the past several years we have  
16 done both supervisory training within Metro and joint supervisory  
17 training with all of the area first responders, ongoing for the  
18 past several years.

19          Q.    So you have an annual drill? Is that how it works?

20          A.    We do.

21          Q.    Do you do it in the same jurisdiction every year or do  
22 you try to swap it around different locations to get variety?

23          A.    Actually, try to get variety. And best of my  
24 recollection, when we do these drills we do have representatives  
25 from the other agencies who do either evaluation or observer of

1 the exercises.

2 Q. I see.

3 A. The last exercise we had in that area, I want to say it  
4 was probably 2 or 3 years ago, and it was on the bridge, actually,  
5 coming across --

6 Q. Potomac Bridge, 14th Street Bridge area there?

7 A. Correct.

8 Q. And --

9 A. And that was with Arlington and D.C. Fire Department.

10 Q. Joint?

11 A. Yep. I was not on that exercise, so I knew of it.

12 Q. How many, how many years ago, roughly?

13 A. I want to say three. It might have been two.

14 Q. It doesn't matter.

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. Okay. You have formal documented protocols that you  
17 follow during responses?

18 A. We do. And we actually follow the incident command  
19 system in NIMS protocol for each event that we --

20 Q. During prior training activities with D.C. Fire, have  
21 you had any experiences where D.C. Fire -- mind you, it's a  
22 training exercise -- where you had D.C. Fire afford to you a  
23 similar behavior of dysfunctionality?

24 A. Not in exercise.

25 Q. No. I first want to address exercises.



1 A. Okay. Not in exercises. Exercises --

2 Q. Nothing in exercise that would suggest -- everything  
3 went just fine, you're saying, during exercises?

4 A. Exercises, everybody generally plays pretty well  
5 together.

6 Q. Shifting over to actual events, have you run into a  
7 similar scenario in actual emergency events with D.C. Fire?

8 A. Several and --

9 Q. Could you elaborate for us, please?

10 A. We had an incident a few years back up in the Friendship  
11 Heights area, and the same type of thing. And I think actually at  
12 that time Deputy Chief Pavlik, who is now our chief of police, had  
13 exactly the same experience from a fire battalion chief where the  
14 -- ignoring what we're trying to do with them and utilizing the  
15 window as a barrier of the vehicle. That's one that I distinctly  
16 remember. That was very, very similar to this incident.

17 Q. Chief Pavlik, you said?

18 A. Chief Pavlik, yeah.

19 Q. P-a-v-l-i-c-k?

20 A. P-a-v-l-i-k.

21 Q. L-i-k.

22 A. More recently, honestly, I couldn't tell you because my  
23 bureau isn't a response bureau. That would be a more patrol-  
24 oriented, and your patrol officials could answer better to that.  
25 Prior to that, this behavior was so rampant that it was the cause

1 for developing this joint supervisory training that we're talking  
2 about with the fire department.

3 At that time, after that training, the atmosphere was  
4 better, but it seems it's been a slow progression back to, you  
5 know, ignoring the police assets on the scene. And, you know,  
6 frankly, they just do what they're going to do anyway.

7 Personally, this one, he said they were having  
8 communications problem. I offered him a solution. Our folks had  
9 the radios. They were working just fine. He ignored that. More  
10 importantly was the initial ignorance of those folks on that  
11 train. I was angry, very, very angry about that. I immediately  
12 notified our -- they had activated the emergency command center  
13 here, and Chief Gaddis was the representative in there. I  
14 immediately called him on the phone and told him of the -- my  
15 feeling of incompetence towards this guy, this Chapman, and how he  
16 was very indecisive and is not acting on anything we're telling  
17 him.

18 Q. Okay. So it was clear to you you had conveyed to him  
19 you had a train in the tunnel, smoky tunnel, full of passengers,  
20 and that needed priority attention?

21 A. Exactly.

22 Q. In your -- it's your position you clearly communicated  
23 that to him? Did he acknowledge that or he basically didn't even  
24 acknowledge you?

25 A. His response was: I have to have my folks assess first.

1 Q. It's not like he was distracted or something and it  
2 really didn't register?

3 A. No.

4 Q. He did acknowledge that he received that information?

5 A. Yes.

6 MR. DOWNS: All right, I'm going to -- want all our  
7 questions to continue when I get back, second round.

8 MR. ADAMS: Dorsey Adams.

9 BY MR. ADAMS:

10 Q. Deputy chief, right, Olson?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Deputy Chief Olsen, had you ever worked with Mr. Chapman  
13 before?

14 A. I had never seen him before in my life.

15 Q. Okay. So you haven't had any kind of correspondence  
16 with him. What I'm curious about is: Was the power down when you  
17 got there?

18 A. When I got -- no, it had not been taken down at that  
19 point, to my knowledge. To the best of my knowledge, the power  
20 was still up. And, actually, I had even went over the air asking  
21 if power was down, and the OCC replied, no, power's not down at  
22 this time.

23 Q. Do you know who took it down?

24 A. A firefighter took it down by hitting the emergency trip  
25 station. I don't know which firefighter.

1 Q. How do you know a firefighter did that?

2 A. There was reported from the Transit Police personnel  
3 that a firefighter had hit the trip station. They went down. And  
4 I don't know if that's their standard protocol to go down and they  
5 immediately hit the trip station.

6 Q. Had he informed anybody from MTPD that he was taking  
7 down power?

8 A. No, no.

9 Q. Did you know whether he informed OCC that he was taking  
10 down power?

11 A. I know for a fact he did not notify OCC because we  
12 actually had to find out from them that the power was actually  
13 taken down by ETS. Apparently, they can -- they know how the  
14 power's taken down up there.

15 Q. I don't know if you're going to remember this or not,  
16 but do you know whether the train operator was still on the train  
17 when the power was taken down?

18 A. The train on the platform?

19 Q. Train on the platform.

20 A. Negative. She evacuated with all the customers.

21 Q. Okay. So power was up, and then she was evacuated from  
22 the train, and then after that, the power was taken down?

23 A. At some point after that, yes.

24 Q. (Indiscernible) power was taken down, okay. So at what  
25 point did Mr. Relyea show up?

1           A.    It was sometime between 1550 and 1600 hours.  I can't  
2 tell you exactly, but he -- you know, he immediately connected  
3 with me, and we did stay, you know, tied at the hip the whole  
4 evening.

5           Q.    And both of you were on scene when the power was taken  
6 down?

7           A.    I don't think so.  I don't, I don't -- I can't answer  
8 that because I don't know.  Sometime between 1528 and 1600 hours  
9 the power traction or the ETS was tripped.

10          Q.    Was the incident commander from the fire department, was  
11 he on scene?

12          A.    He was on scene at 1540.

13          Q.    And the power was taken down before that?

14          A.    No, not that I'm aware.

15          Q.    So power got taken down after 1540, a fire department  
16 personnel?

17          A.    That's correct.

18          Q.    That's all I have for you now.

19                MS. FLEMINGS-McCANN:  Marlene Flemings-McCann, 689 rep.

20                BY MS. FLEMINGS-McCANN:

21          Q.    I don't know if I can ask you the question because the  
22 question I want to know was:  Before the station or when it was  
23 being evacuated, did any of the transit officers contact ROCC to  
24 let them know that they were taking the train operator out of  
25 the -- off the train, and they were evacuating the station?

1 Because we can't get anyone to say that they even knew the  
2 operator was no longer on the train. And that's where a lot of  
3 the (indiscernible) came in. No one knew that the station was  
4 being evacuated. From Central hasn't been able to tell us that  
5 the communication came across from Transit, and I do realize there  
6 were on-scene commanders, but I guess I would think that protocol  
7 would be that some communication should be relayed to ROCC we're  
8 doing this so you will know. Because they seem to have no  
9 knowledge.

10 A. 1522 hours our communications, "Station being evacuated.  
11 Need fans to be turned on."

12 MR. ADAMS: Who was that transmitting?

13 WITNESS: It doesn't say who transmitted it, but it went  
14 to our communications.

15 BY MS. FLEMINGS-McCANN:

16 Q. So -- because maybe I'm just not sure. When you say  
17 your communication, I know Transit talks to Transit. And do you  
18 have -- was there a liaison person that was communicating to  
19 Central Control?

20 A. Emergency Management has a liaison who communicates  
21 everything going on with the Transit Police or the stuff involving  
22 serious with Rail. They sit right in OCC there, Rail OCC.

23 Q. Can you tell me who was there?

24 A. Sergeant Matt Muller.

25 Q. And I'm sorry, Sergeant who?

1 A. Matt, Matthew --

2 Q. And his last name?

3 A. Muller, Muller, M-u-l-l-e-r. And, to clarify, after my  
4 initial trek down into the station, I did not reenter the station  
5 until after 7 p.m. I was stuck at that incident command, you  
6 know. Sometimes it's hard to do that, but, I mean, that's what  
7 you have to do. So I cannot tell you what actually transpired  
8 down that station. I do know for a fact that when I got on scene  
9 at approximately 1528 hours that the station had already been  
10 evacuated, as well as that train. They had already been  
11 evacuated.

12 MR. DOWNS: At what time?

13 BY MS. FLEMINGS-McCANN:

14 Q. And I kind of threw that at you --

15 A. When I got on scene at 1528 hours --

16 Q. Right.

17 A. -- the train that was on the platform and all people  
18 within the station confines had been evacuated. Obviously, the  
19 folks were still stuck on the other train.

20 Q. Right. Thank you.

21 A. And that was everybody except for the Transit Police.

22 Q. And, again, I'm sorry, Sergeant Muller, he's the what  
23 for --

24 A. He was the Emergency Management liaison.

25 Q. Emergency Management.

1           A.    In ROCC.

2           Q.    Thank you, sir.  No more questions.

3                   MS. SAMARASINGHE:  Sharmila Samarasinghe, Tri-State  
4 Oversight Committee.

5                   BY MS. SAMARASINGHE:

6           Q.    Chief Olson, a couple of questions on the communications  
7 aspect.  Number one, when you all set up a command post at the  
8 scene, along with the fire department, how is communications  
9 handled in terms of ROCC knowing what the fire department is  
10 doing?

11          A.    How it's handled?

12          Q.    Yes.

13          A.    Is through our communications division via radio or  
14 telephonically.

15          Q.    All right.

16          A.    Depending upon the quality of our radio communications.

17          Q.    Okay.  And so if protocol was followed, if procedure was  
18 followed, when the fire department was sending people down to  
19 assess the situation or sending people down to evacuate passengers  
20 out of the train, they would have communicated that via your  
21 radios to ROCC if -- in the ideal case, is that correct?

22          A.    Exactly.  Ideal case, yes.  As I said, we would have  
23 been in the fight together.

24          Q.    Okay, all right.

25          A.    That didn't happen in this case.



1 Q. All right. And there is no other conduit that the fire  
2 department has to communicate with ROCC directly?

3 A. Other than telephones.

4 Q. Other than telephones.

5 A. Now -- and I'm not certain of what the protocol is --

6 Q. Sure.

7 A. -- being that we've -- when our communications division  
8 was here --

9 Q. Yes.

10 A. -- the D.C. Fire Department would send a liaison down  
11 here. I am not certain if they still do that out at Landover.  
12 That's why I can't advise that. I do know they used to do that.

13 Q. Okay. But the primary information coming from the  
14 command post from the fire department would be running through  
15 your radios up to ROCC, and at --

16 A. Well, through our communications and the Emergency  
17 Management liaison officer at ROCC.

18 Q. At ROCC, okay. All right, so the Emergency Management  
19 liaison and ROCC is the primary receiver of the information that's  
20 coming from the command post into ROCC, right?

21 A. Correct. As well as Bob Raileigh or the Rail person who  
22 is at the command post having direct contact to OCC via radio or  
23 telephone.

24 Q. But that is his interpretation of what's going on?

25 A. Correct.

1 Q. Not the primary information coming from the fire  
2 department?

3 A. Correct.

4 Q. And this last -- taking you back to the last full-scale  
5 drill you said that you had conducted, on that line -- in that  
6 line segment, the D.C. Fire Department participated in it?

7 A. To the best of my recollection is yes, D.C. Fire  
8 Department, as well as Arlington County.

9 Q. All right. And in the years that followed when joint  
10 supervisory training has been implemented, has any stations within  
11 D.C. Fire received the joint supervisory training?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. They have? Do you happen to know whether the station  
14 that -- the fire station that services that location around  
15 L'Enfant has received that joint supervisory training?

16 A. I have no idea.

17 Q. All right. Next question I have is: What is MTPD's  
18 standard procedure when they evacuate passengers off a incident  
19 train? Do the officers who are right at the train, who are  
20 instructing the train operator and the passengers to evacuate the  
21 train -- in what manner do they communicate either with the  
22 command post or with ROCC about the actions they're about to take?

23 A. Via radio.

24 Q. Via radio. Do they talk to the command post or do they  
25 talk to ROCC directly?

1           A.    The command post.

2           Q.    The command post, okay.  And then -- and so do you  
3 happen to know whether the command post received any communication  
4 from the two officers who were at the platform standing beside  
5 510 -- that's the train that was sitting at the platform prior to  
6 them evacuating passengers -- and the train operator of 510?

7           A.    No, I don't have any knowledge of that, and that  
8 happened prior to 1528, so that was very, very short order after  
9 the incident began.

10          Q.    All right.  So say, for instance, you're not yet the on-  
11 scene commander.  In the absence of a command post being set up  
12 and at those initial stages, it just looks like what is what  
13 happened for 510, the officers would communicate directly with  
14 ROCC through the MTPD liaison desk at the ROCC?

15          A.    No, they would communicate directly with our  
16 communications division.

17          Q.    Got it, okay.  And the communications division would  
18 provide that information to?

19          A.    Correct.  To OCC.

20          Q.    To OCC, okay.

21          A.    The protocol is that the first officer on the scene,  
22 once other personnel are there to assist, he becomes the incident  
23 commander until relieved by a senior officer.

24          Q.    Got it, okay.

25          A.    So that's the protocol.

1 Q. All right.

2 A. At that time, Sergeant Baker, who was one of the first  
3 people there, immediately established incident command.

4 Q. Understood. So per the log that you have, is there any  
5 indication that the initial officer on scene, the initial on-scene  
6 commander, communicated anything via your radio communications to  
7 ROCC? That would have been around 1523, 1528.

8 A. The first communication we got was approximately 1517  
9 that car 6134, that there was a fire in the lead car. The train  
10 had just passed L'Enfant Plaza.

11 Q. That's train 302?

12 A. Right.

13 Q. Yes.

14 A. The next one was at 1522: The station being evacuated;  
15 needs fans. And I apologize; I don't know who was putting out  
16 these calls.

17 Q. But there's nothing to indicate there was any in-depth  
18 log, that there was a communication to ROCC that train 510 was  
19 being evacuated?

20 A. No. It just says station being evacuated.

21 Q. Got it, okay. And that was at what time?

22 A. 1522.

23 Q. Got it, okay, all right.

24 A. 1522, no visibility; 1524, medics and D.C. Fire en  
25 route. So that tells me that our communications had advised D.C.

1 Fire that we have an issue and that they're en route at that time.

2 Q. Good, all right. That's good. That 1522 time stamp is  
3 what I was --

4 Two more questions: We understand from the testimony we  
5 got from the train operator on 510 that she, along with her  
6 passengers, were evacuated out of the station and, moments later,  
7 we don't know how much time elapsed, a police officer came up to  
8 her and -- Supervisor Adams -- and escorted them back down again  
9 into L'Enfant. Again, we don't know how much time it took. And  
10 went down back into L'Enfant, and they started their procedures to  
11 normalize the train, to get train 510 out of the --

12 And do you happen to know whether there was any  
13 communication? Did you overhear any communication between the  
14 rail transportation supervisor and ROCC about what they were  
15 planning on doing with train 510?

16 A. No, I did not, not until after the fact, and I had heard  
17 that they had tried to get the train out of there but the trip  
18 station had already been tripped.

19 Q. And the last question is: Prior to the fire department  
20 going down into the station and at whatever point they took power  
21 down, you all were not informed via radio or via anybody from the  
22 fire department that the power was taken down?

23 A. No.

24 Q. Understood, okay.

25 A. Generally, what we do is we communicate with Rail OCC

1 when we're about to take power down.

2 Q. Yes.

3 A. Other than if there's somebody actually -- a situation  
4 where it needs to be taken down immediately for a life safety, you  
5 know, someone's on the track bed, you know, a jumper or whatever.

6 A situation like this, you know, we were trying to  
7 communicate with the rail about the power, and we would have  
8 before taking any power down. I don't know what that process is  
9 for resetting those trip stations, but I think it's much easier  
10 for Rail to take the power down themselves from their location.  
11 It's easier for them to bring it back up. So, I mean, obviously,  
12 for the operation, it's better to do it that way.

13 Q. I have one last question, and cut me off if I'm going  
14 off course here on this question. In January of 2013 there was an  
15 incident at Anacostia where there was a self-evacuation of  
16 passengers. D.C. Fire Department responded, is that correct?

17 A. Um-hmm.

18 Q. Do you happen to know whether you were involved in that  
19 response?

20 A. I was not. It was a evening.

21 Q. All right.

22 A. I can tell you who was.

23 Q. No, that's fine. I just wanted to find out whether you  
24 were there at primary. Okay, thank you.

25 MR. BUCHER: Dave Bucher. I have one question.

1 BY BUCHER:

2 Q. You've been very detailed and you covered this a little  
3 bit, but I just want to be clear: Under NIMS, the incident  
4 commander is required to regularly reassess the incident and at  
5 that time --

6 MR. DOWNS: We need to hear the words from you.

7 MR. BUCHER: Yeah. That's why I'm asking it.

8 WITNESS: Yes, that's correct.

9 BY MR. BUCHER:

10 Q. At the time that the incident commander was Mr. Chapman,  
11 did he conduct any reassessments?

12 A. Not with the incident command team, myself, the  
13 Metropolitan Police, the Emergency Management folks on the scene  
14 or Rail personnel on the scene. Whether he did that internally  
15 with the fire fighters, I can't answer that. I don't know. I  
16 wasn't privy to that conversation.

17 Any time we had an update, though, whether it be rail  
18 or, you know, the transportation of personnel to the hospital, I  
19 would advise Chapman of that. Unless he had some sort of tape-  
20 recording device or something, there were no notes taken.  
21 Initially, I had started to take notes but, in the rain, my paper  
22 got sopped and was discarded. We tried to keep a log of events  
23 through our command pages which Captain Warren Donald was sending  
24 out. He was, he was acting in the role of my assistant at that  
25 time.

1 Q. That's all I have right now.

2 MR. DOWNS: Downs, NTSB again.

3 BY MR. DOWNS:

4 Q. Chief, Transit P.D. resources, response sources at the  
5 scene, top of your head, what was the response count of personnel  
6 from your department, do you remember?

7 A. The initial response to the station was roughly eight  
8 officers involved in the evacuation of the station and one  
9 sergeant, and we had one officer on the train, the stalled train.

10 Q. So basically, couldn't have done anything other than try  
11 to aid the train personnel, is that correct?

12 A. Correct. And she did give assessments of what was going  
13 on in the train periodically until, you know, she basically  
14 succumbed to the smoke. So initially, roughly 8 to 10 police  
15 personnel and a host of Rail personnel, as well. I couldn't tell  
16 you the number of the Rail personnel.

17 Q. Yeah, just P.D. Would you deem that adequate, an  
18 adequate count for that particular type of event?

19 A. For initial response?

20 Q. Yes.

21 A. I felt that was a great number of personnel to have on  
22 scene.

23 Q. That would be a count that normally you would dispatch  
24 to an event of this magnitude following your protocols and such?

25 A. In the event -- in an event such as this, we will send



1 every resource that we have available to get to the scene to  
2 assist, leaving certain units in place should another event take  
3 place elsewhere.

4 Q. I presume you're going to -- your agency's going to  
5 generate a report of some sort regarding the event?

6 A. Absolutely. It's already been generated.

7 Q. It's been generated?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Normally, can P.D. -- any police department is not  
10 issued SCBA, is that correct?

11 A. Correct.

12 Q. That would be an issuance to fire department?

13 A. Correct.

14 Q. So that you folks are able to support a smoke  
15 environment evacuation -- I mean, to the point where you could not  
16 see -- the magnitude of smoke that we had here.

17 A. My folks did support that without any equipment.

18 Q. Normally, that would not be within your particular  
19 assignment?

20 A. Correct. That's correct.

21 Q. You would defer to the fire department?

22 A. That's correct.

23 Q. But if there wasn't smoke, could Transit P.D. have  
24 initiated an evacuation?

25 A. Absolutely, absolutely. Generally, a scenario like

1 this, this magnitude -- and Sharmila had spoke of the Anacostia  
2 incident where people actually self-evacuated, the fire resources  
3 were on the scene very -- in very short order after our personnel  
4 got on the scene. At that point, it is their scene. We defer to  
5 them.

6 Q. You're the supportive entity?

7 A. Exactly. Again, one of our biggest fears is a self-  
8 evacuation onto the right-of-way. It's a very, very hostile  
9 environment and we do not want untrained personnel on that  
10 environment.

11 We had deployed personnel back to the train to hopefully  
12 prevent the self-evacuation in anticipation of the fire department  
13 starting a full-scale evacuation of the train, and that's where my  
14 folks were in support of in this incident.

15 Q. And that didn't come straight away?

16 A. It did not come straight away. There was a delay there  
17 because the fire department claimed they had to assess the scene  
18 before they could conduct that.

19 Q. And they were off checking this room and getting a key  
20 or whatever, thinking -- that's what your perception is --  
21 thinking that the fire was sourced in there?

22 A. That's correct.

23 Q. Which we now know it was not the case; it was down the  
24 track in front of the train?

25 A. That is correct.

1           Q.    Radios.  Metro had been issued new radios in January,  
2 digital radios.  We had received testimony to the effect there had  
3 been problems with the radios.  Do you have the same radios your  
4 officers are issued or no?  Tell us about your radio system?

5           A.    Our radio system has gone a upgrade over the past  
6 several years into a fully digital system.  There has been issues  
7 over the transfer time from the analog system into the digital  
8 system.  Being frank, luck or whatever you may call it, played a  
9 role here because, for this instance, our radio system did not go  
10 down.

11                   In past instances, and I can't give you a specific date,  
12 when it's raining out we have radio problems where we lose radio  
13 communications.

14           Q.    In the rain?

15           A.    In the rain.  Our radio has been -- the system has been  
16 tested and retested and tested, and I think they're getting to the  
17 point of it becoming reliable.  It still is a new system to us,  
18 but historically with our agency, we have had radio problems.  And  
19 part of it is just because of the environment we work in.  That  
20 day, our radio worked very, very well.

21                   As I had previously spoken, the fire department  
22 battalion chief complained that he was having radio communication  
23 problems.  Again, I stated our radios are fine; we can hook up our  
24 personnel with your personnel and be good to go, and that request  
25 was ignored.

1 Q. On your radios, do you have the capability to  
2 communicate with fire department or this is just your internal  
3 frequencies?

4 A. We don't have the capability to communicate with them  
5 over our radios, to my knowledge. I know that my personal radio  
6 does not have a fire department channel on it, so to my knowledge,  
7 no, we can't communicate directly with them.

8 Q. Does the WMATA Rail radios have an emergency channel?

9 A. Could you clarify that?

10 Q. How many frequencies does your radio have?

11 A. My specific radio has probably 14 different channels.

12 Q. Fourteen? And you use a primary channel number one?

13 A. We do, we do.

14 Q. Secondary channel number 2 and so on? How does that  
15 work? Tell me about that?

16 A. Well, our protocol is, with the new radio system being  
17 able to utilize these specific channels, is that when we have  
18 major incidents, the incident goes to the second channel. Our  
19 primary channel is MTPD1, which is all of our communications. Our  
20 incident channel is MTPD2, which we transferred the incident to  
21 that for this.

22 Now there's four of those primary channels which, to my  
23 understanding, are recorded channels in our communication  
24 division. Subsequent to that, there's another four what we call  
25 tac channels which are not recorded, but they're more of the

1 direct line-of-sight type channels. And then subsequent to that,  
2 we have a Rail channel on there, several other different channels  
3 that, frankly, I've never used. And then we do have one  
4 Metropolitan Police, what they call a city-wide channel which we  
5 can transmit to them and they can transmit to us on that specific  
6 channel.

7 Q. Was that particular radio frequency their normal  
8 operating channel?

9 A. No.

10 Q. Or that's just a dedicated joint channel to use?

11 A. Correct.

12 Q. Your channel 1, is that the Rail operating frequency or  
13 that is the P.D. operating frequency?

14 A. P.D. operating frequency.

15 Q. Do you have on your radios the capability to monitor  
16 Rail operating radio frequencies?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. And what channel would that be?

19 A. I have no idea.

20 Q. Do you normally -- would you normally monitor rail  
21 operations?

22 A. Personally, no. Our Emergency Management folks, on the  
23 other hand, do. That's specific to their function.

24 Q. So somewhere on your radio, to your best knowledge, is a  
25 frequency that you could tap into Rail Ops if needed?

1 A. Absolutely. Yes, there is. I know for a fact there is.

2 Q. But you don't use it that often?

3 A. I do not.

4 Q. And you've only had the radios since January 1, so  
5 you're still in a learning environment here?

6 A. Actually, I've probably only had the new radio itself  
7 since August. Previously to that we had another radio that we had  
8 for several years. That radio had a number of channels on it, as  
9 well, but it did both the analog and the digital. And for certain  
10 events, Fourth of July, those type of things, we would monitor the  
11 rail station because of the -- used for crowd control of when  
12 trains are coming in to a certain location.

13 What happens, though, as the incident commander in a  
14 situation like this, is there is so much -- I'm not going to say  
15 that the rail traffic isn't important, but it's not important to  
16 me. I'm worried about what's going on with the police, hopefully  
17 with the fire department, those type of things. So I pay specific  
18 attention to our channel. The way it's supposed to work is that's  
19 why we dedicate a rail person to be with the police incident  
20 commander so that they can monitor that side, which Mr. Relyea did  
21 perfectly. And we communicate those things that need to be  
22 communicated amongst ourselves.

23 Q. Suffice it to say, correct me if I'm wrong, it's good to  
24 have that connection capability, and it's needed upon occasion?

25 A. Correct.

1 Q. Okay. Switching gears a little bit here: Retrospective  
2 thoughts. Knowing what you know now, might you be able to offer  
3 me thoughts as to things that you might do differently, might have  
4 been done differently by the Transit P.D. in the event?

5 A. First and foremost was, as the MTPD operational  
6 commander at the scene, I should have insisted that a senior  
7 person from the fire department respond and take over for Chapman.  
8 I'm not sure of their protocol, and obviously that didn't happen.  
9 We've never done that in the past.

10 Q. But that particular capability exists?

11 A. I'm certain, I'm certain it does. It would be just --  
12 in my mind, it should be. You know, people can always request a  
13 senior officer to come to one of our scenes, as well, so with the  
14 issues that we're experiencing, I should have requested that.  
15 Frankly, at the time, I didn't even think about it.

16 Q. And simply because there was not this assimilation going  
17 on to the degree that it should have?

18 A. There was no assimilation going on. This was a fire  
19 department show, and then the police, Rail, and all the ancillary  
20 portions show. There was no -- there was one-way communication  
21 with the fire department, and that was from me to him. There was  
22 no communication back to the incident command.

23 Q. Anything else?

24 A. And just -- I'm going to talk of just speculative  
25 things, things that I've heard after, right away after, obviously.

1 The issue with bringing that train into the station when all the  
2 smoke was --

3 Q. The 510 train?

4 A. Correct. When all the smoke was encountered and then  
5 evacuating that train and leaving the train there sit, personally,  
6 I think if we could have somehow managed that better and either  
7 reversed ends on that train and got it out of there, we could have  
8 possibly got that other train back into the station and we may not  
9 be having this conversation now.

10 I can't Monday morning quarterback. I was not down  
11 there in that situation. I did go into the station when I first  
12 arrived on scene and experienced the immense smoke that was down  
13 in there.

14 And secondly, I think, again, being more forceful with  
15 the fire department, you know, and -- to me, it's kind of a  
16 balancing act. The more forceful you get with somebody sometimes,  
17 the less even that they will pay attention to you. So I didn't  
18 want to go there with him, but it was just -- it was -- it made  
19 me -- it makes me angry the way that not only myself but my  
20 captain, the Metropolitan Police were treated by this guy.  
21 Almost -- and I don't know what the word I'm looking for is. But  
22 we're standing in the pouring rain, outside of his vehicle window.  
23 It was ridiculous. And that is not protocol on anybody's part.  
24 The bottom line is: We're all supposed to be a team in these type  
25 of things. Everybody is trained to a certain discipline. At that



1 point, once he shows up on the scene, he is the incident  
2 commander. It's his scene. For lack of a better word, we're  
3 subordinate to him to assist him with what he needs.

4 In this situation, apparently they didn't need anything  
5 because he never asked at one time for anything from me, not once.  
6 So a better communication between the members of the incident  
7 command would have certainly been beneficial to this incident.

8 Having equipment available for my people.

9 Q. Equipment?

10 A. Yes, to protect them.

11 Q. What specific type of equipment are we talking about?

12 A. Well, some sort of breathing apparatus.

13 Q. SCBA?

14 A. Well, maybe not to that point because that requires an  
15 awful lot of training. But I think, initially, even having basic  
16 mask-type things that we could --

17 Q. A respirator mask?

18 A. Yes. That would have possibly lowered, anyway, the  
19 amount of smoke and whatever else particulates that my folks  
20 inhaled down there.

21 Like I said, you know, several -- I've got the paper  
22 somewhere with the list of folks that did go to the hospital due  
23 to smoke inhalation, and I think having that equipment available  
24 certainly.

25 Personally, it becomes an issue because our folks are

1 foot personnel and they don't have a bunch of room to carry stuff,  
2 so having just a simple mask that they can carry that weighs  
3 nearly nothing would have been beneficial in this incident.

4 More so having more advanced-type respirator system  
5 stored maybe in the stations or accessible to emergency responder  
6 personnel from Metro would have been very, very beneficial in this  
7 incident.

8 Again, I really have to commend my folks for staying  
9 down in that environment. It was, it was horrible.

10 Q. Normally, your crews aren't issued respirator masks or  
11 anything like that, right?

12 A. No, sir.

13 Q. And to your knowledge, the rail system does not keep any  
14 kind of equipment in the station themselves, is that correct?

15 A. We do. We have a medical cabinet in each station that's  
16 stocked with --

17 Q. Respirator masks?

18 A. There is none in there. They do not have them in there  
19 right now. After this incident, hopefully we can see that they  
20 are in there.

21 Q. So that's going to be one of the remedial actions you're  
22 saying you're going to implement?

23 A. Yes, yes.

24 Q. What other remedial actions are you folks thinking  
25 about?

1           A.    I think more focus and insistence on better joint  
2 training with the fire department. I think looking at our  
3 evacuation policy may be something that we need to do and, you  
4 know, that's a tough call. Do we put somebody on the track bed?  
5 That's a very tough call.

6           Q.    So you're going to review your evacuation policy?

7           A.    Yes, yes.

8           Q.    Anything else?

9           A.    You know, unfortunately, there was a fatality with this  
10 one but, you know, as far as the MTPD personnel, we're concerned.  
11 In my observations, they acted very, very confidently and  
12 competently. Whether it was that specific group of personnel who  
13 just happened to be on scene, I don't know. I would hope that all  
14 our personnel are of that caliber. But I felt the MTPD response  
15 was very good.

16          Q.    Thank you. Have you experienced prior events of this  
17 magnitude in your career?

18          A.    I've been on a number of incidents relating to, you  
19 know, fatalities with persons struck by trains, different types of  
20 accidents, derailments, things like that, people struck, employees  
21 struck. I've never seen anything that would match this in as far  
22 as the mass of it. And what I mean by that is how that smoke  
23 encumbered that whole station and just the situation with the  
24 folks trapped on that train. I've not, I've not experienced that  
25 in 25 years.

1 Q. Training. Presumably, your training regimen includes  
2 evacuation training procedures for your personnel and you have  
3 protocols written?

4 A. It does, yes, and we do.

5 Q. Last question: We had testimony earlier from the train  
6 operator of 510 that she was requested to evacuate the station by  
7 the two transit officers when she heard -- she pulled her train in  
8 because the visibility was so extreme, the smoke had got so  
9 dense -- to evacuate the station. She was escorted topside. At  
10 that point, she lost contact with those two officers. They were  
11 off doing other things. Later, she had entered the station for  
12 the intent of reactivating, as best they could, the 510 train with  
13 the intent of pulling it back out of the station to make room for  
14 the 302 train. Okay?

15 A. Okay.

16 Q. The question came up in her testimony to the effect: It  
17 might have been helpful for the Transit P.D. to keep tabs on her  
18 specifically because she was one of the key players to be able to  
19 get that train out of there.

20 A. Absolutely.

21 Q. Okay? Is that something that your folks maybe can  
22 review in your protocols in terms of maybe put one officer with  
23 that operator --

24 A. Certainly.

25 Q. -- to make sure that operator doesn't either wander off

1 or inadvertently get diverted?

2 A. Certainly.

3 Q. So that in a situation like this it would be, maybe,  
4 helpful to expedite the process?

5 A. Now we do have protocols through general orders that  
6 states, you know, in certain instances, i.e., a person struck by a  
7 train, things of that nature, that we do corral and secret that  
8 operator specifically for getting statements and such.

9 Q. Statements, tox testing, whatever?

10 A. Correct. You know, I think this situation was, you  
11 know, new to all of us. We've never experienced anything like as  
12 severe as this, that smoke and fire, perhaps. We didn't know if  
13 there was a active fire on the train. We had gotten reports that  
14 the train in front of this one was on fire, so I think in the heat  
15 of battle, if you will, people tend to lose some sight of what we  
16 would consider maybe ancillary things. But technically, that  
17 operator should have been held onto. We don't really have any  
18 protocol right now to do that in this type of scenario, but we do  
19 have those protocols in place for other, you know, crime-related  
20 type things.

21 Q. I'll leave it up to you to handle that. I just wanted  
22 to bring that up to you because -- to relay the testimony that was  
23 identified so far. Thank you.

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. That's good for me for now.

1 MR. ADAMS: Just got a couple questions of the chief.

2 BY MR. ADAMS:

3 Q. Respiratory equipment. I know they don't have masks,  
4 but have they had the training?

5 A. Some of our personnel have. Years ago, probably 2007,  
6 in that time, everybody was issued gas masks.

7 Q. Yeah, because I remember some guys getting fit tested.

8 A. Correct.

9 Q. Some police officers got fit tested.

10 A. At that time, everybody was issued gas masks. Everybody  
11 was fit tested. Sometime, obviously, between now and then, I  
12 would say probably by 2010, in that area, the issuance of gas  
13 masks stopped and we didn't issue any sort of respiratory  
14 equipment. And along with that, there was obviously no training  
15 of respiratory equipment, other than some of our specialty units  
16 like our SWAT team, our antiterrorism team, the Emergency  
17 Management folks. Those people do have that. But none of those  
18 people, other than the Emergency Management personnel, were on  
19 scene that day.

20 Q. Do the Emergency Management people have masks?

21 A. To my knowledge they do. Some of them do. There's  
22 different -- they have like three different groups in Emergency  
23 Management.

24 Q. Yeah, yeah.

25 A. A planning group, a training group and then your fire-

1 life safety officers who are the ones that actually -- I'm quite  
2 certain that they do have respiratory equipment.

3 Q. But at one point you guys did have that training, did  
4 take a fit testing and did -- were issued masks, it's just that  
5 it's been discontinued?

6 A. Correct.

7 Q. I have no other questions.

8 MS. FLEMINGS-McCANN: I have no questions.

9 MS. SAMARASINGHE: Sharmila Samarasinghe, Tri-State  
10 Oversight Committee.

11 BY MS. SAMARASINGHE:

12 Q. Chief Olson, first question is: How many officers  
13 initially were on 302 as it was pulling out of L'Enfant Station?

14 A. One officer, to the best of my knowledge. It was  
15 Officer Young, Francesca Young.

16 Q. And then sometime during the incident response, there  
17 was another officer who boarded that same train, is that correct?

18 A. That is correct, and as well as a sergeant who boarded  
19 that train.

20 Q. All right. Throughout the incident, from the start of  
21 the incident until it was back -- service was restored, how did  
22 the officers on board 302 communicate with either you at the  
23 command post or with ROCC, if at all?

24 A. Via radio.

25 Q. Via radio?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. So either one or all three of them who were on board 302  
3 had radios?

4 A. Correct.

5 Q. And they were communicating with whom?

6 A. Initially, they were communicating directly with our  
7 communications division, and then subsequently to the incident  
8 command, which was myself and Captain Donald.

9 Q. All right, okay. Then moving on to the passengers who  
10 showed up at 9th and Water Street, these are passengers who self-  
11 evacuated?

12 A. No. I think they were guided out that entrance, to the  
13 best of my knowledge, by the fire department. That's not a 100  
14 percent surety, because the only word I got is that we had folks  
15 coming out of that exit who were being evacuated out that way.

16 Q. I see, okay, all right. And the last question I have  
17 is: The train operator of 510 and the rail transportation  
18 supervisor who was with her, do you recall seeing them either at  
19 the command post or anywhere topside where you all were?

20 A. No.

21 Q. Okay, all right. Thank you.

22 A. Yes.

23 MR. BUCHER: I have one final question, and it's probably --  
24 Dave Bucher.

25 BY MR. BUCHER:



1           Q.    And it goes back to as the incident's unfolding and the  
2 fire department incident commander is in charge, and you were  
3 there at the, at the command post. How long do you think that the  
4 evacuation was delayed due to the lack of communication? And I'm  
5 referring to train 302.

6           A.    I would say, I would say 10 minutes, at least. And the  
7 reason I say that is from the point when I initially made contact  
8 with him and told him that we have the train with passengers on  
9 board, stranded in the tunnel, and that we were very concerned  
10 about self-evacuation, with his response that we have to assess  
11 the incident first before were able to start an evacuation, before  
12 I heard anything else on our radio saying that evacuation has  
13 begun, it had to be at least 20 minutes -- I mean, 10 minutes from  
14 my recollection. It seems like, you know, an eternity because,  
15 you know, we're pacing because we know that these people are going  
16 to self-evacuate, and that's the last thing we want.

17                   My biggest thing is you have all these resources on  
18 scene, you should be able to do this in a relatively short order,  
19 and it's almost frustrating that it seemed to me like they were  
20 almost doing a roll call prior to sending folks in. Now over the  
21 years, I always understood that the fire department's primary goal  
22 is life safety. I did not get that feeling here. They wanted to  
23 locate and assess where the smoke was coming from first before  
24 they evacuated anybody, maybe not realizing that these folks were  
25 in that smoke, and maybe he didn't get that word from his

1 personnel that, you know, it's totally engulfed in smoke. I don't  
2 know and I can't answer that. And maybe he thought I have to do  
3 my assessment first so I don't pull these people into an area  
4 that's burning, and that could very well be. I don't know. He  
5 did not share that information with me.

6 Like I said, there was a one-way communication from me  
7 to him. No information throughout the night ever came back to me  
8 of what the fire department was planning, what they were doing or  
9 anything. Any word I got about what the fire department was doing  
10 came from my folks down in the station.

11 Q. Thank you. That's all I have.

12 MR. DOWNS: Downs, NTSB again.

13 BY MR. DOWNS:

14 Q. When Sharmila was questioned on the evacuated passengers  
15 at night at Water Street, do you happen to know, was there an  
16 approximate head count of passengers that came up that way, do you  
17 know?

18 A. I don't have a head count.

19 Q. Would that head count be available through the Transit  
20 P.D. or would that be a fire department count?

21 A. That would be a fire department count. At that location  
22 specifically, we had very limited Transit Police personnel there.  
23 It may have been the one captain, Captain Hanna. That was it. It  
24 may have been him and an officer. I'm not certain. But I do know  
25 that we didn't keep a count of who came up through that entrance.

1 Q. On the topic of self-evacuations, what's your experience  
2 with that?

3 A. Well, again, I've never been on the scene of a self-  
4 evacuation, but I do know -- I'm very familiar with the Anacostia  
5 incident that Sharmila referenced. And after that incident, we  
6 did experience times when we would have train delays where there  
7 would be some sort of issue, and people would automatically either  
8 pop doors to start a self-evacuation or be very aggressive towards  
9 the train operator to get an evacuation going. Now I think with  
10 Safety, the Safety Department here, our corporate communications,  
11 and of course the general manager's guidance, Metro's done a very  
12 good job of educating the riding public about the dangers of a  
13 self-evacuation, and we really haven't experienced any that I'm  
14 aware of in the past several months.

15 Q. Okay. In your professional opinion, is it likely that a  
16 self-evacuation will occur given the circumstances where you do  
17 not have a very prompt response from the local emergency services?  
18 Sooner or later it's going to happen?

19 A. Yes, and I would speculate that with this incident fresh  
20 in people's mind, it may be sooner rather than later, so it's  
21 imperative that we, Metro as a whole, are really, really focused  
22 on getting to these incidents quickly and managing them very  
23 effectively so we can avoid that type of situation.

24 Q. And being mindful of the high likeliness that sooner or  
25 later you're going to have people bailing out of trains --

1           A.    Correct.

2           Q.    -- any thoughts that you could offer in terms of  
3 preventing it, other than public awareness?  Obviously, you don't  
4 want to button up a train to prevent evacuations, but on the other  
5 hand, are there any things that could be done other than public  
6 awareness, as well as train operator announcements, periodic  
7 announcements to try to placate the folks and calm them down,  
8 indicating to the effect that help is on the way or whatever?  Any  
9 thoughts you might have there?

10          A.    Well, other than like you said, you can't make it so  
11 difficult to get out of a train that when someone really has to  
12 get out of the train they can't get out of the train.  I think  
13 continuing to focus on, you know, public awareness about this,  
14 perhaps.

15                    Years ago, and I think this has kind of faded off  
16 because we don't do it anymore, we used to train people what we  
17 called CERT, Citizens Emergency Response.  I think if you could  
18 maybe regenerate that program to have customers who are frequent  
19 riders and are able to not only have the capability to talk to  
20 people but also know the emergency response protocols, I think to  
21 have a calming effect, and then if it's an absolute must that it  
22 must happen, at least have those type of people out there who can  
23 assist in the safe, if you will -- there is no safe self-  
24 evacuation.  Just get that right out there.  But a safer self-  
25 evacuation, then novice people, not really knowing the

1 environment --

2 Q. Such that you're at least trying to minimize your risk  
3 elements as best as you can?

4 A. Correct. And I don't know -- and this may sound a  
5 little bit harsh, but to possibly somehow develop -- I think the  
6 new trains that we're getting, the 7000 series, may have video  
7 displays on them. To play evacuation videos on there, to show  
8 somewhat the danger of being down in that environment and what can  
9 happen to people if they step on the wrong thing down there or  
10 whatever, maybe being able to somehow in a more graphic manner --  
11 and what I mean by that is some people are very visual. You can  
12 tell them all you want and they don't get it, but if you show  
13 them, you know, something to the effect of by no means should you  
14 ever take self-evacuation lightly, you know, only on extreme  
15 emergency circumstances should this even be thought about, so on  
16 and so forth. You know, some sort of public awareness campaign  
17 with that.

18 Again, you have to be careful with it becoming white  
19 noise, though. If it's something that's not, you know, eye-  
20 catching and actually helpful to people, they'll ignore it as soon  
21 as it comes out so --

22 Maybe through the riders' advisory group somehow  
23 engaging them to establish -- you know, obviously, with our  
24 assistance, Safety's assistance, some sort of communication with  
25 the riders so it's not just coming from the authority; it's

1 actually coming from the riders themselves.

2 As far as physically doing something in our environment  
3 to stop self-evacuations, I don't really think we can. I think  
4 the protocols and the equipment are in place to do that. And  
5 again, I just don't think you can, you can make it so difficult  
6 that someone can't get off the train, because then we're in  
7 trouble on the other side. What if they have to self-evacuate?  
8 So that's all I have on that.

9 Q. Okay. That concludes my questions.

10 MR. ADAMS: No questions.

11 MS. FLEMINGS-McCANN: No questions.

12 MS. SAMARASINGHE: Sharmila Samarasinghe of Tri-State  
13 Oversight Committee.

14 BY MS. SAMARASINGHE:

15 Q. Chief Olson, can you, in your opinion, given the fact  
16 that you told us at the beginning of your interview that you have  
17 served as a police officer in whatever capacity at WMATA for 25  
18 years, the relationship that MTPD, Metro Transit Police  
19 Department, has with the D.C. Fire Department in terms of your  
20 day-to-day activities in responding to fire events, emergency  
21 events and so forth? Can you characterize that for us in your  
22 opinion?

23 A. Our professional relationship with them is -- we've had  
24 ongoing problems historically with these type of incidents and the  
25 lack of either communication at the scene or the information

1 sharing that should take place. Historically, we've had this  
2 problem. I can't answer if other police departments in  
3 Washington, D.C. have the same type of issues with them, but I  
4 know for a fact, historically, we've had these problems. We have  
5 taken measures to address them in the past. As regimes change and  
6 new leadership gets into the fire department, that tends to fall  
7 by the wayside. We actually had a fairly good relationship and  
8 did quite a bit of training with the fire department prior to  
9 Chief Ellerbe taking on as the fire chief. And whether there was  
10 just so much other stuff going on with that department, I don't  
11 know. But again, that kind of fell by the wayside, and then we're  
12 back to where we were before.

13           And I'll kind of -- to put it kind of frankly, it seems  
14 to me it's kind of like the FBI and all of the other police  
15 agencies in the United States prior to September 11th, 2001. They  
16 were in their own world and everybody else was, you know, not  
17 welcome into that environment, if you will.

18           I just kind of get the feeling that that's what we've  
19 come back to. Unfortunately, an event like this has to happen in  
20 order for us to try to rectify those things. We've known that  
21 problems have happened, and we're working to regenerate the joint  
22 supervisory training and things of that nature. But hindsight is  
23 20/20, you know. Had we known that January 12th this was going to  
24 happen, well, December 12th we would have been training very  
25 heavily with the D.C. Fire Department.

1           So, you know, I'm not going to point blame at anybody.  
2 We're probably as much to blame as they are as far as not  
3 insisting that there be more training, more contact with those  
4 folks that are going to be responding to these scenes and our  
5 folks who do respond to these scenes. Because part of the thing  
6 is the whole -- as you all know, the whole personal relationships  
7 that are developed with doing exercises and training and all that  
8 where I can -- you know, I know you because I've worked with you.

9           Whereas, this situation, I've been here 25 years. First  
10 time I've ever seen this guy in my life so --

11         Q.    Thank you.

12           MR. BUCHER:  Dave Bucher.  No more questions.

13           MR. ADAMS:  No more.

14           MS. FLEMINGS-McCANN:  No more.

15           MS. SAMARASINGHE:  Thank you.

16           MR. BUCHER:  Okay, well then, that concludes the  
17 interview of Chief Olson.  Thank you.

18           WITNESS:  You bet.

19           (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 Mark Olsen

DOCKET NUMBER: DCA-15-FR-004

PLACE: Washington, D.C.

DATE: January 16, 2015

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,  
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed  
to the best of my skill and ability.

---

Angie Duray  
Transcriber