

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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NEW JERSEY TRANSIT TRAIN #1614

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ACCIDENT AT HOBOKEN TERMINAL

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Accident No.: DCA16MR011

AT HOBOKEN, NEW JERSEY

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ON SEPTEMBER 29, 2016

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Interview of: MARK MARI

Newark, New Jersey

Friday,  
September 30, 2016

## APPEARANCES:

DAVID BUCHER, Railroad Accident Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board

STEPHEN JENNER, Ph.D., Human Performance Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board

NICHOLAS WEBSTER, M.D., Medical Officer  
National Transportation Safety Board

PATRICK VEDDER, Inspector  
Federal Railroad Administration

BRUCE PARKIN, Inspector  
Federal Railroad Administration

FRED MATTISON  
New Jersey Transit

RANDY FANNON  
Safety Taskforce  
Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (BLET)

WILLIAM BATES  
SMART, Transportation Division

STEPHEN HAMER  
SMART, Transportation Division

STEPHEN BURKERT, General Chairman  
SMART Transportation Division

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>I N D E X</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Interview of Mark Mari:		
By Mr. Bucher		5
By Dr. Jenner		21
By Mr. Mattison		30
By Mr. Hamer		31
By Mr. Parkin		33
By Mr. Bucher		37
By Dr. Jenner		37
By Mr. Mattison		43
By Mr. Hamer		46
By Mr. Fannon		48
By Mr. Parkin		49
By Dr. Webster		52
By Mr. Parkin		53

I N T E R V I E W

(2:30 p.m.)

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3 MR. BUCHER: This is Dave Bucher, rail accident investigator  
4 for the National Transportation Safety Board. It's September 30,  
5 2016. The time is approximately 2:30 p.m. This is the interview  
6 of Mr. Mark Mari, conductor of the New Jersey transit train that  
7 was involved in the accident Hoboken, New Jersey on September 29,  
8 2016.

9 Mr. Mari, the purpose of this investigation is to increase  
10 safety, not assign fault, blame or liability. However, NTSB  
11 cannot offer any guarantee of confidentiality or immunity from  
12 legal or certificate actions. A transcript or summary of this  
13 interview will go in our public docket.

14 The interviewee can have one representative of the  
15 interviewee's choice and that representative may be an attorney  
16 but is not required to be an attorney. The representative may not  
17 testify on record for the interviewee, as we have discussed  
18 before.

19 We'll go around the room and the table and introduce  
20 ourselves. To my right, I have?

21 DR. JENNER: Stephen Jenner, S-T-E-P-H-E-N, J-E-N-N-E-R, a  
22 human performance investigator with the NTSB.

23 DR. WEBSTER: Nicholas, N-I-C-H-O-L-A-S, Webster, W-E-B-S-T-  
24 E-R, Medical Officer, National Transportation Safety Board.

25 MR. MATTISON: Fred Mattison, F-R-E-D, M-A-T-T-I-S-O-N,

1 Assistant Train and Engine Compliance Officer, New Jersey Transit.

2 MR. HAMER: Stephen, S-T-E-P-H-E-N, Hamer, H-A-M-E-R, SMART  
3 TD.

4 MR. BATES: William Bates, B-A-T-E-S, SMART Transportation  
5 Division, Safety Team.

6 MR. FANNON: Randy Fannon, R-A-N-D-Y, F-A-N-N-O-N, BLET  
7 Safety Task Force.

8 MR. DEDDER: Patrick Vedder, P-A-T-R-I-C-K, V-E-D-D-E-R,  
9 inspector, FRA.

10 MR. PARKIN: Bruce Parkin, B-R-U-C-E, P-A-R-K-I-N, operating  
11 practices inspector for Region 1.

12 MR. BUCHER: If you could spell your name?

13 MR. MARI: Mark Mari, M-A-R-K, M-A-R-I.

14 MR. BURKERT: Steve Burkert, S-T-E-P-H-E-N, B-U-R-K-E-R-T.  
15 I'm the General Chairman for SMART TD on this property.

16 MR. BUCHER: Okay. Thank you.

17 INTERVIEW OF MARK MARI

18 BY MR. BUCHER:

19 Q. Mr. Mari, like I asked previously, to begin the interview,  
20 could you go back to yesterday. And what we're looking for is  
21 just give us your story of the day, beginning with when you got up  
22 to go to work and just take us through your day a step at a time  
23 as much as you can remember.

24 A. I woke up at about 10 to 5:00, got myself ready for work,  
25 showered, dressed. I stopped off, I got a coffee and I think it

1 was a bran muffin. Drove up to Spring Valley, probably about a  
2 50-minute ride. Signed up around -- sign-up was, I think,  
3 6:30 a.m. Signed the register, got my paperwork together, and  
4 waited for the engineer to get in. He signed up a little bit  
5 later than I did.

6 We had our job briefing and, normally, the brakeman will go  
7 out with the engineer and I guess they'll set the train up and I  
8 think I also had to throw -- I had to throw two switches in the  
9 yard to align them from Track 1 to Track 2. And then, they came  
10 down, they picked me up.

11 In between that time, I called the dispatcher on that line to  
12 make sure that there were no restrictions or anything, and there  
13 weren't. I got on the train and -- got on the train, basically,  
14 and I let the engineer know that there were no restrictions, no  
15 Form D's and -- just to verify. And I think we waited maybe a  
16 couple of minutes before we pulled out of the yard because it was  
17 still -- we still had a few minutes to go before we left to go to  
18 the station, before it was, you know, time to leave the yard.

19 And, you know, we talked briefly again. And then we made our  
20 way into the station down in Spring Valley to start the trip. And  
21 I would say, at the second stop, which was Nanuet, New York -- I'm  
22 not the regular on the job, by the way. I'm an extra conductor.  
23 So I don't really -- you know, I don't know the little things that  
24 are normal on this job regularly, like how crowded it's going to  
25 be or, you know, what the consist is going to be.

1 But, anyway, when we get to Nanuet, which is a fairly busy  
2 stop. I -- you know, he spotted the train and there was a decent  
3 amount of people that were -- they were walking back to get on.  
4 So, you know, at that point, I kind of figured maybe we were short  
5 a car or something to that effect. And, you know, I remember  
6 after the people got on, I was collecting my tickets and checking  
7 out passes and seat checking people as we were going down. You  
8 know, I was giving a wave to the rear brakeman to close up and  
9 whatnot.

10 And I remember I, at one point, I had asked the rear brake,  
11 during the course of the trip, and it was -- after Nanuet I said,  
12 are we short a car? And he said, yeah, we normally have five cars  
13 and we only had four plus the engine. So at that point in time I  
14 kind of figured it was, you know, it was going to be pretty busy.

15 So we continued on down and probably about -- the train was  
16 getting really, really crowded and most of the people -- you know,  
17 when people get on, they have a tendency to always want to sit in  
18 the front of the train. So on top of that happening, the fact  
19 that we were short a car, you had people that would be waiting, I  
20 guess, where if there was the right amount of cars, they would  
21 be -- they were standing where they were. So we were getting even  
22 more -- so I was getting even more slammed, you know, in the front  
23 of the train.

24 So at that point, you know, we got to Essex Street, and Essex  
25 Street is probably the third stop from before Secaucus, fourth

1 from the final stop, Hoboken. You know, I was getting off the  
2 train telling people it's really, really crowded, there's really  
3 no seats. It's standing room only. A lot of people were  
4 perturbed. I encountered a gentleman at Essex Street who was  
5 very, very ticked off and he was complaining about, I've  
6 complained about this already, and you could tell he was a regular  
7 because some of his commentary, you know, you would have to be a  
8 regular to know. You know, like he knew the schedule.

9 And, you know, then we got on. So at that point, the next  
10 two stops were going to be on the north side. That stop was on  
11 the south side. So at this point, it was -- it was really, really  
12 crowded.

13 So I put the traps down on the south side, leaving. And we  
14 went to the next stop, which was Teterboro, and got off at  
15 Teterboro. And when we -- when I hit the platform, I walked to  
16 the hind end of the second car and got on the train at that point.  
17 And gave the wave to Tom, my rear brake, got on the train, and I  
18 closed traps on the south side in between car 2 and 3, because it  
19 was -- couldn't get through at this point in time. It was --  
20 there was that many people on the train.

21 So we made Wood-Ridge Station and we waited for people to get  
22 on. And I closed the traps from outside the train because the  
23 next stop was going to be Secaucus and it's a high platform. So I  
24 closed the traps between 2 and 3 from outside of the train and  
25 walked over to between 1 and 2 and, you know, proceeded to give a



1 wave to the rear brake. He was on -- he did the same with the  
2 hind two cars.

3 And, you know, I kind of had to like wait for people. People  
4 were actually standing on the stairs. It was -- it was excessive.  
5 And I said, please, I know it's really crowded, you got to move.  
6 We can't go anywhere unless I get on the train and I have to close  
7 these traps. So they did, some begrudgingly. And I got the traps  
8 down, the doors closed. I guess Tommy got his door lights in the  
9 back and we left and went to Secaucus.

10 Now, normally at Secaucus -- Secaucus is the transfer point  
11 for New York City and usually you will -- you know, you'll lose a  
12 lot of people at Secaucus. It will -- you know, it will relieve a  
13 lot of the pressure on the train, so, you know, you can go  
14 through, clean up, pick up your seat checks. And normally you  
15 get, I don't know, 10, maybe a dozen people will get on, that are  
16 going to go into Hoboken, at Secaucus. That wasn't really the  
17 case yesterday morning. Why, I don't know. But I got off the  
18 train and -- after the doors opened -- and I actually -- there was  
19 a lot of people on the platform. And I said -- they were trying  
20 to get on. I said, you've got to wait for everybody to get off,  
21 please. Please back up. Let everybody off. So people got off  
22 and then probably about, I don't know, 25, 30 people got on. So  
23 it was still excessively crowded.

24 So now, while we were at Secaucus, I had to get the traps  
25 between 2 and 3 because, you know, coming into Hoboken I don't

1 know what track we're going to come in on and it's a lower level  
2 platform. So I walked back between 2 and 3 outside the train  
3 while we were still at Secaucus, and I opened the traps between 2  
4 and 3, gave Tom the wave, and I think -- I guess he closed up and  
5 I kind of fought my way through that second car to get towards the  
6 front. Still, you know, a ton of people.

7 And I'm -- you know, at that point -- actually, back at Essex  
8 Street, I really wasn't worried about revenue at that point in  
9 time. It was just way too crowded to get through the train. So I  
10 walked, you know, through the car and there were still a ton of  
11 people. And there were so many people in the vestibule at this  
12 point and it was really -- there was no room in the front car for  
13 anybody to go to. So we basically -- I guess the engineer guys,  
14 too, we took off and we were heading towards -- we were heading  
15 towards Hoboken and every -- you know, we came into Hoboken. I  
16 switched channels on my radio to Channel 19 leaving Secaucus,  
17 because we go from Channel 13 to 19; 19, a different dispatcher  
18 handles that territory.

19 And we were supposed to do a yard move. Sometimes you get  
20 lucky, you get out of the yard move. And, you know, I was waiting  
21 to see if we were going to get any kind of a transmission about  
22 that. And -- excuse me one second. So we came through the  
23 tunnels and were making our way through -- into -- towards the  
24 depot. So everything was -- everything, but as many people were  
25 on the train, was pretty much normal. We were heading eastward

1 towards Hoboken. Again, I had no idea what track we were going to  
2 come into so I had all four tracks down in between the head car  
3 and the second car. And once we came through the last  
4 interlocking, I had an idea of -- and, again, everything was  
5 normal. I had an idea of -- you know, well, I knew what track we  
6 were going to be coming in on, on 5.

7       So, again, I asked the people, please move out of the way.  
8 You know, and I guess, you know, they kind of knew. So I had  
9 people move. It was very, very crowded still. I opened up the  
10 trap in the first car and then I proceeded to walk to the second  
11 car and I opened that trap. And I was just basically in the  
12 vestibule holding on and basically like facing the passengers  
13 waiting for the train to come to a stop and the doors to open so I  
14 could, you know, exit the train.

15       And you know, pretty much within -- I don't know. It just --  
16 within seconds or whatever, I -- that's -- I -- the noise was --  
17 it almost sounded like a bomb went off. And at that point, it was  
18 pretty much bedlam on that train. I honestly don't remember if --  
19 getting knocked down, but when everything finally came to a stop,  
20 the lights were out on the train and tons of screaming, yelling,  
21 people on the floor in front of me. I guess I picked myself back  
22 up. I honestly don't really remember, to be honest with you.

23       And my first instinct was about the people in the front  
24 because there were so many people. So I looked and there -- you  
25 know, I looked through the gap and I was asking -- I said, oh, my

1 God, is everybody all right? Are you all right? And there were  
2 people on the ground and there was just mass hysteria and  
3 commotion. So I was trying to tell people, please, stay calm and  
4 we're going to -- we're going to do what we can to get you off the  
5 train. Please, just stay calm.

6 So I opened the door to the -- because the doors didn't open.  
7 I opened my door at the second car, the east end of the second  
8 car, and I exited the train. And I was kind of in shock at this  
9 point in time and -- excuse me if I just, you know --

10 Q. Do you want to take a break?

11 A. No. No. I just want to kind of get through this, to be  
12 honest with you.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. So when I got off, you know, and saw the complete devastation  
15 that had happened, I guess for a second -- and I -- again, I guess  
16 like I kind of froze and just saw -- and then I -- the one thing I  
17 can remember is a window was kicked out in the first car, probably  
18 the west half of the car. And when I saw that window had kicked  
19 out, I guess maybe that kind of like jolted me back to reality.  
20 So I ran over to that car and I said -- you know, at that point  
21 people were starting to climb out already. And I was like,  
22 please, please, try to -- don't jump out of the train. Please.  
23 We're going to get you out of here. Please, just, if you could,  
24 if you could hang on. But it was, you know, complete hysteria at  
25 that point in time.

1           And I remember a man and a woman came out of that window and  
2 then people starting pouring off the train. But everybody --  
3 normally, on a normal day when you come off the train, you walk  
4 towards the waiting area. You couldn't do that this day because  
5 of all the damage that was done. So as people were, you know,  
6 coming off the train, I was telling everybody, please -- we were  
7 telling people and there were other people that were there, too.  
8 I don't even remember where they came from. It was kind of a  
9 blur.

10           We were trying to push people back to get them away from --  
11 you know, water was coming down and, you know, there was like  
12 wires in the station, you know. So we tried to push everybody  
13 back, telling them, please, just step back. Try to just bear with  
14 us, please. And I only had the one door open in the second car,  
15 so in the process, I ran over to the head car because there were  
16 people standing at that door. And, you know, I don't even know  
17 why, but I screamed at a guy in the train. I said, sir, if you  
18 can, the red handle, pull the red handle down. And he must -- he  
19 pulled the red handle down and the door opened. And I opened the  
20 door and I left the handle down and I started to help people get  
21 off the train.

22           At this point, you know, people were coming off pretty banged  
23 up and it was -- you know, it was pretty nuts. And some people  
24 were just coming off the train, taking their phones out, you know,  
25 shooting video, shooting pictures. And, again, you know, at this

1 point somebody from supervision came and there was -- another  
2 conductor showed up that was, I guess, in the depot. And he was  
3 like, you know, Mark, are you all right? I was like, I just want  
4 to try to -- help get everybody off and get them to, you know,  
5 where they're going to be safe.

6 And I don't know at what point, at one point somebody had  
7 said, you know, okay -- at some point before that, somebody had  
8 mentioned -- you know, somebody had said the power's out and -- I  
9 mean, it was -- everything was black. And the only place to get  
10 the injured out -- I wasn't really paying attention to anything  
11 that was happening on the north side and mostly everybody was  
12 coming out of the south side doors where the platform was.

13 So at this point -- I'm not sure if it was a transit  
14 policeman or someone was directing people across tracks, I guess,  
15 6 and 7, which, you know, was right next to us. And it was -- you  
16 know, it's a bit of a drop when you're going down. So at that  
17 point, you know, I was like -- some of the older people, having  
18 them sit down. I was just -- you know, whoever really needed  
19 medical attention, we were trying to get them to where they could  
20 go to where they could get medical attention. And, you know, it  
21 was a pretty intense day.

22 And that's, you know, pretty much what happened. I -- you  
23 know, I really -- you know, just listening to people, you know,  
24 cry, you know, and I'm just trying to help everybody so nobody was  
25 going to get hurt while they were trying to get out of the way,

1 you know, and get them to safety basically. So I just basically  
2 did that until the whole train was empty.

3 We -- I remember going onto the train and making sure that  
4 there was nobody left on the train. Another conductor who was off  
5 -- who was actually, I guess, on a break, he, you know, screamed  
6 to me, Mark, I was on, you know, we double checked. And at that  
7 point, honestly, I -- assessing the damage, I thought this was --  
8 you know, I know we're not going to see my engineer again. I  
9 thought he was, I thought he was dead. It was very, you know, it  
10 was very intense.

11 So, basically, after, I guess, everybody was off, somebody  
12 from supervision -- I'm pretty sure it was Rayzon Murphy (ph.) --  
13 he said to me, you know, are you okay? He said -- I said, Murph  
14 -- you know, I didn't really know what to say to him. So he was  
15 like, come on, let's get you -- let's get you to safety and let's  
16 get you to where you can sit down and relax.

17 And I remember, I think it was a Hoboken policeman went up on  
18 the train, got my bag and my hat and -- well, got my bag and my  
19 sweater, I think it was. I had my hat on. And he grabbed my rear  
20 brake's bag, too. Brought that down first thinking it was mine.  
21 So after, you know, all that, I took my bag and basically walked  
22 to -- over to supervision's offices, which is across the street  
23 from the depot. And he -- supervision escorted me out. We went  
24 and -- over to those offices, sat down and -- I don't know, I  
25 guess -- I don't know if decompress is a good word for it. We

1 tried to just -- you know, we were -- we were pretty much in shock  
2 with the whole thing really. And soon afterwards, I think we  
3 spoke to a couple of Port Authority policemen and, you know, gave  
4 them a statement.

5 Excuse me a second.

6 Q. Sure.

7 A. And my adrenaline was still pretty kicking for a while. Same  
8 thing with my friend, Tom, who was the brakeman. You know, people  
9 that were around, supervision, you know, one of my fellow union  
10 brothers came in to see how we were doing. And, you know, we  
11 spoke to a lot of people. You know, I was -- and then -- I don't  
12 even know how long we were there, to be honest with you. I really  
13 -- you know, time just seemed to kind of stand still throughout  
14 the day. And I was starting to feel a little soreness on my left  
15 side, you know, my upper left leg, my wrist. And, you know, we  
16 were sitting down for a while. So like, you know, I had gotten up  
17 to use the restroom and my back was hurting me a little bit. You  
18 know?

19 Basically, I talked to a bunch of people, gave statements,  
20 and then I guess one of the volunteers came in, checked me out.  
21 And I wound up going to, I guess, Jersey City Medical Center.  
22 They took me out. And that might have been -- again, I don't even  
23 really know how long it was but it was -- I'm going to say it was  
24 probably -- I don't know. I can't even tell you. But I know I  
25 had talked to quite a bit of people beforehand, before they took



1 me to the hospital. There's probably some kind of a record of  
2 what time I got there.

3       When I was in the hospital, they gave me a CAT scan. They  
4 took x-rays. Someone from Transit came. You know, they took  
5 blood. They took urine and -- you know, I had supervision with me  
6 there. You know, I hadn't talked to, I hadn't talked to my wife  
7 but I had called -- I wound up calling her at some point in the  
8 hospital and telling her, you know, I'm in the hospital, I'm going  
9 to be here. My car was up in -- at the sign-up location in Spring  
10 Valley. So she wound up coming to the hospital.

11       And they actually told me at some point, my -- you know, I  
12 was -- I thought maybe I might be talking to you gentlemen  
13 yesterday at some point. But I was starting to feel pain. It was  
14 -- might have been an hour, an hour-and-a-half after I was told  
15 that, they were saying -- somebody had told me -- I think it was a  
16 Transit detective or something told me that you guys were going to  
17 be coming to talk to me. And they gave me something -- they gave  
18 me medication for some pain and then I think they discharged me at  
19 around -- sometime after 5:00.

20       But it was decided that -- you know, like I said, I had  
21 supervision there and a couple of the union guys came to talk to  
22 me and -- I guess to check on me, how I was feeling. And I went  
23 home and tried to decompress. And, you know, it wasn't easy. I  
24 did not -- I didn't really even want to -- I didn't put any news  
25 on. I -- you know, I didn't want to really go through any of

1 this. And I -- you know, at this point in time, during the course  
2 of the day, in the morning we had found out that there was one  
3 fatality. So, you know, I felt pretty horrible about that. And I  
4 guess that's pretty much all I can really tell you. You know?

5 Q. Okay. Well, that's a lot. Thank you for telling as much as  
6 you remember. I just have a few questions, I mean, just to follow  
7 up. That was, that was really great. Thank you.

8 Obviously, when -- a little bit about the train, the cars,  
9 the locomotive. When you left Spring Valley, do you remember  
10 doing the proper brake tests, running brake tests?

11 A. The brakeman does the brake tests with the engineer.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. So they do the brake tests before they leave. I wasn't  
14 involved in the brake test.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. I knew they were coming on Track 1, because, again, I'm extra  
17 so, you know, like they had told me, yeah, we follow out 1612 or  
18 whatever it was. So they were coming off of 1, 1612 off of --  
19 left off of 2. So once 1612 cleared, I went and I lined up my  
20 switches properly. And after they do their test, they wind up  
21 pulling down and stopping in front of the sign-up room and, when  
22 they stop in front of the sign-up room, you know, that's where  
23 like the very first crossing is to get out of the yard. And then  
24 you have like the east yard. So that's what happened, you know,  
25 they pulled up. But I wasn't involved in the brake test.

1 Q. Okay. During the trip, you didn't notice anything unusual in  
2 the way the train handled? I mean it --

3 A. No.

4 Q. -- in your experience, the train handled like any other train  
5 you might have been on?

6 A. Absolutely. Yeah, it was, it was -- yeah. You know, there  
7 was nothing funny about the train.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. You know, the only thing, like I said -- like I told you  
10 before, the only crazy thing was the amount of people --

11 Q. Right.

12 A. -- that were on the train. You know?

13 Q. Okay. Okay. Can we -- can I ask a couple questions about  
14 the people? Okay. And I know you don't have a head count but the  
15 cars hold about how many normally?

16 A. Probably about 125, I'm going to say, with standing room.

17 Q. 125, okay, with standing room? Okay.

18 A. About that, yeah, somewhere around there.

19 Q. And yesterday, what would your ballpark figure be with the  
20 people in the vestibules and in the doorways?

21 A. Before we got to Secaucus?

22 Q. Well, how about a little before and after? What I'm trying  
23 to get to eventually is to get a ballpark figure of how many  
24 people.

25 A. Before we got to Secaucus, with four cars, I'm going to say

1 that that train had easily probably close to 600 people, easily.  
2 It was -- you know, because when we come down from Spring Valley,  
3 you know, the engine's on the hind end and that's when, you know,  
4 we -- people -- you know, people actually board on the, you know,  
5 on the hind end of the train, you know, coming eastward.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. So that train was packed. And we left at -- we went out of  
8 the yard sometime around 7:16, so it was kind of prime time. And  
9 you got -- you know, and it was a local train. We make -- you  
10 know, we're making every stop.

11 Q. Make all the stops?

12 A. Yeah. They do a couple of express trains that just make  
13 three stops. So, you know, any -- you know, people that --  
14 anybody in New Jersey is waiting, you know, that's all local. So  
15 -- but, no, there was nothing, nothing at all that wasn't -- that  
16 was different at all.

17 Q. Okay. Thank you. Okay. You answered my question about the  
18 stops. Do you -- how many total stops do you make as a local; do  
19 you remember?

20 A. How many what?

21 Q. Total, all together, between Spring Valley and Hoboken?

22 A. Number-wise, I could -- I could count.

23 Q. I'm just -- you know, just --

24 A. Offhand, maybe about 15, 16.

25 Q. Fifteen? Okay. About 15. Okay. That's fine.

1 A. It might be more.

2 Q. That's fine. Thank you.

3 And do you remember, at the time of the accident, you were in  
4 the second car? I think that's what you said.

5 A. Yeah, I was. I absolutely was.

6 Q. Okay. I just want to place you.

7 MR. BUCHER: Okay. I'm going to pass it off to Dr. Jenner  
8 and we'll go around the table. Not everybody's going to ask  
9 questions. I'm going to kind of just qualify that. So it'll just  
10 be several -- a few of these guys will ask questions.

11 BY DR. JENNER:

12 Q. Great. Thank you for your story. Do you need a break now or  
13 do you want to continue on?

14 A. No. No, I'm okay.

15 Q. Okay. Anytime you need a break, let us know.

16 A. I will.

17 Q. So this is Steve Jenner with the NTSB. I'm going to bounce  
18 around and just fill in the gaps for some questions. You  
19 mentioned this is your -- you're an extra board employee; is that  
20 right?

21 A. Correct.

22 Q. How often have you operated over this territory? How  
23 familiar are you with this?

24 A. I'm pretty familiar with it. I work every line in the  
25 Hoboken Division. I'm very familiar with it. I actually had a

1 hold-down on this job, so I worked this job on Monday, and I also  
2 was in Spring Valley on Saturday, too. So -- but I'm very  
3 familiar with that line.

4 Q. Overall, up until the time that things went wrong, were --  
5 was it a normal trip besides the number of passengers that you  
6 described?

7 A. Okay. Yeah. Putting aside the excessive amount of people?

8 Q. Yes.

9 A. Yeah. It was, it was, you know, making the local stops,  
10 getting people on the train safe, going through the train  
11 collecting, you know, revenue. It was pretty normal. I mean,  
12 there was nothing --

13 Q. Were you guys on schedule, on time, or were you behind time  
14 or ahead of time?

15 A. No, we weren't ahead of time. You know, honestly, we might  
16 have lost a couple of minutes the further down the line we got due  
17 to the -- so many people getting on.

18 Q. Did you depart on time as far as you recall?

19 A. I -- honestly, I don't remember, to be honest with you.

20 Q. Was that a concern, an issue in terms of operations?

21 A. Time?

22 Q. Yeah.

23 A. No. No. No. Especially with that amount of people, you  
24 know. I just -- you know, because it's -- you know, to be --  
25 because I'm extra, I work a lot of different lines. And I hope

1 I'm not out of line saying this, but over the past couple of weeks  
2 throughout the summer, I've worked a lot of trains that are short  
3 cars and I've, you know, encountered a lot of people that are  
4 angry when they get on. And, you know, as an employee, you almost  
5 feel embarrassed, you know, because I can feel for people. I know  
6 if I was commuting and paying, you know, but -- so that, you know  
7 -- it was -- that, you know, that was, you know, just -- because  
8 the further on down the line you get, you know, the more  
9 aggravated people you're dealing with. So -- and I don't have a  
10 problem with that. You know, I like working with people but --

11 What -- I'm sorry. What was your initial --

12 Q. The initial thing was about running on time.

13 A. The time. Yeah, again, at that point in time it was so  
14 crowded now, I -- you know, I just was concerned with getting  
15 everybody on the train and, you know --

16 Q. Do you know -- you described it pretty compact, the first  
17 car, I believe --

18 A. The second car, too.

19 Q. Right. Is there ever -- have you ever seen occasions where  
20 people are bumping against the operating compartment or --

21 A. No. No.

22 Q. Never a source of distraction at any time?

23 A. Not at all. Not at all.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. You're not allowed into the -- into that area. No.

1 Q. And the door -- as far as you could tell, the door was shut  
2 and things were secured properly? Could you just --

3 A. You know what? Up until I could -- while I could still see  
4 through the train, yeah, the door was closed where the engineer  
5 operates from, you know. But, like I said, a little more than  
6 halfway through the trip, you know, it was -- they were starting  
7 to stand already.

8 Q. Now a couple times you mentioned you waved -- I think you  
9 said you waved to Tom?

10 A. That's how I give the signal.

11 Q. Tom is who?

12 A. The brakeman.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. He's on the hind end of the train.

15 Q. Okay. I think the engineer's name is also Tom?

16 A. Correct.

17 Q. Okay. So when you're saying "waved to Tom," you --

18 A. I meant the rear brake. I'm sorry.

19 Q. Okay. Had you had any contact with the engineer at all,  
20 visual or audio or through radio, with the engineer during the  
21 trip?

22 A. Not that I can recall.

23 Q. Is that normal that you would not be in contact with him?

24 A. If we were -- you know, if I had to take a Form D or a speed  
25 restriction, he would call me. And, you know, that would pretty



1 much be it. I mean, sometimes on the train, after we leave the  
2 last stop, sometimes I'll -- as I'm cleaning up my seat checks,  
3 you know, when I make my way up to the front car, I'll walk into  
4 the vestibule and, you know, I'll be up there with the engineer as  
5 we pull into Secaucus, but that just -- you know, that wasn't  
6 possible at all yesterday.

7 Q. Okay. So was there any point in the trip that you  
8 anticipated hearing from the engineer, that something came up and  
9 you said, oh, I should be hearing a radio call from him at any  
10 point?

11 A. We had a -- no, not -- honestly, no, not that I can recall.  
12 No.

13 Q. You -- I guess the last time that you had contact with him  
14 was during the briefing or -- the pre-departure briefing or about  
15 that time?

16 A. Yeah. Pretty much. Pretty much. We had the briefing in  
17 Spring Valley and there's a speed restriction up there which we  
18 verbalized with each other and -- yeah, after that, honestly, I  
19 don't -- I didn't talk to Tom pretty much after that. It was --  
20 you know, it was pretty much the regular trip down.

21 Q. Had you worked with him before?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. How familiar are you with him?

24 A. I've worked with Tom on various different lines, you know:  
25 Spring Valley, Gladstone. I've worked with Tom a number of times.

1 I'm -- you know, been about 14 years; I've been conducting about  
2 12. So I've worked with Tom a number of times. I even rode with  
3 Tom when I was qualifying territory, you know, and he was a great  
4 guy, very informative, you know.

5 Q. How would you regard him as an engineer, his capabilities?

6 A. I always thought he was a very good engineer.

7 Q. And on this day, when you had the briefing, how did he seem  
8 to you?

9 A. Perfectly normal. Perfectly normal. Like almost any other  
10 day, you know. We did our briefing, went through the paperwork,  
11 and then 9 out of 10 times we usually talk sports. So we -- I  
12 think we talked about the Yankee game.

13 Q. So pretty normal interaction both professionally and  
14 casually?

15 A. Yes. Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely.

16 Q. And during the trip, I think I heard you mention you bounced  
17 -- you worked both car 1 and 2?

18 A. That's correct.

19 Q. Did you ever work car 3 or --

20 A. Early on in the trip, I might have put -- I might have taken  
21 a few tickets, checked a couple of passes and put a few checks up  
22 in car 3, at some point, you know?

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. But I didn't make it into car 3 for at least half the trip.

25 Q. Let me take you out to the point of the accident. I just --

1 I know you mentioned it, but where were you located at that time?

2 A. Coming out of the tunnels, I was standing in between the  
3 cars. It's really the only place I could. And, again, I knew I  
4 had to have my -- you know, when we're coming in, I knew I had to  
5 have my traps open. So up until we came through that last  
6 interlocking, which when we did, I knew we were going to be on  
7 Track 5, I opened the first trap first. At this point we were on  
8 the -- I guess on the straightaway into the station. You know, I  
9 don't know why I decided to open the trap up in the first car, I  
10 just did. And then I went and opened the trap up in the second  
11 car and then just waited -- was waiting to pull into the station.  
12 And, you know, I had to get people out of the way and -- so I  
13 could open the traps. And I guess if I had opened the second trap  
14 first, I would have been in the first car, but --

15 Q. Okay. Were you in any position to know where you were  
16 standing at that time, where you were located, you know, on the  
17 tracks in relation to the terminal, if you were inside the  
18 terminal or outside? Did you know where you were at that point?

19 A. I know -- well, yeah, pretty much because I -- at that point  
20 I knew what track we were coming into, on 5. So I -- you know,  
21 that's why I opened the traps. I mean, I guess I knew -- yeah, we  
22 were under the shed, I guess, because, you know, it gets less  
23 lighter when you're coming in.

24 Q. Uh-huh. Okay. So that you could detect from where you were  
25 standing?

1 A. Well, yeah, it got a little, it got a -- gets a little darker  
2 in the vestibule.

3 Q. Okay. Did you notice anything different about the train  
4 handling as opposed -- would you expect to feel it slow down? Did  
5 you feel anything different? Did you feel it accelerating?

6 A. No, not that I can recall.

7 Q. So you didn't sense any problems until it occurred; is that  
8 fair?

9 A. That's fair.

10 Q. Okay. When you were all -- when you made it outside the  
11 train and you saw the passengers self-evacuating, I think I heard  
12 you say you were requesting that the passengers stay where they  
13 were?

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. Can you describe your -- what was your thinking about you  
16 wanting the passengers to stay? What was your thinking about  
17 that?

18 A. I didn't know if there was any damage to -- you know, if the  
19 catenary was on the train, if the train was going to be, you know,  
20 electrocuted. And, you know, just at that point in time, it was  
21 mass panic. And like I said, when I got off, the fact that the  
22 window got kicked out was -- that's when I like ran over to that  
23 at that point in time because they were, they were starting to  
24 jump out at that point.

25 Q. When you say "kicked out," do you know if the window came out

1 on its own or do you think that passengers actually kicked it out?

2 Do you know?

3 A. I don't know.

4 Q. Okay. But people were coming out the window?

5 A. Yeah. Yeah.

6 Q. Okay. Did you notice anyone getting injured as a result of  
7 the evacuation?

8 A. I couldn't say.

9 Q. Okay. Were the catenary wires a concern to you once you had  
10 a chance to assess what happened?

11 A. Like I said, at some point, and I couldn't even tell you  
12 when, somebody had related the information to me -- I don't know  
13 if it was -- I couldn't tell you if it was supervision -- that the  
14 -- everything was de-energized.

15 Q. And, again, after the accident, did you end up seeing the  
16 engineer at all?

17 A. Not at all. No.

18 Q. Okay. Had you talked to anyone who had seen the engineer or  
19 you didn't know?

20 A. No. No.

21 Q. You went to the hospital. Did they -- and you got checked  
22 out. Do you have any injuries that the -- that showed up on  
23 x-rays or the scans?

24 A. No, not that I can recall.

25 Q. Okay. And they took specimens from you for testing?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Okay. Any problems with getting specimens, blood or urine,  
3 in terms of the process or delays?

4 A. She had a little bit of a problem getting blood out of me.  
5 She kind of pricked me about three or four times on my left side.  
6 So --

7 Q. Okay. But, in the end, they got what they wanted to get?

8 A. I guess. Yeah.

9 Q. Okay. Do you recall about what time that occurred, when they  
10 got specimens?

11 A. Couldn't tell you.

12 DR. JENNER: Okay. I think that's all the questions I have.  
13 Thank you very much.

14 MR. MARI: You're welcome.

15 DR. JENNER: I'll pass to the next. We'll go around the  
16 table and just introduce yourself if you have questions. Okay?

17 MR. MATTISON: Fred Mattison, New Jersey Transit. Thank you  
18 for coming here so soon. You're doing excellent. Appreciate your  
19 candor and forthrightness.

20 BY MR. MATTISON:

21 Q. You said you went across the street in Hoboken. Did anyone  
22 ask you to fill out paperwork or were they just -- were the  
23 supervisors more worried about your wellbeing than anything else?

24 A. Everybody was worried about, you know, how I was and I didn't  
25 fill out any paperwork. I don't remember filling out any

1 paperwork. I think somebody gave me a printout of my work history  
2 telling me -- because I, you know, I -- at some point, normally,  
3 if you fill out an unusual occurrence report for certain things  
4 and -- but, no. At that point in time it was just, you know,  
5 everybody's safety and wellbeing.

6 Q. Do you remember the transit supervisor that was with you in  
7 the hospital?

8 A. Glen Eagen (ph.) and Luis Salenas (ph.).

9 Q. And they were cool in the hospital? They were good to you  
10 and your wife and everything while they were there?

11 A. They were there -- yeah, they were there for quite some time.  
12 It seemed like an eternity at the time, but they were there for  
13 the whole time.

14 MR. MATTISON: That's all I have. Thank you.

15 MR. MARI: You're welcome.

16 MR. HAMER: Steve Hamer, SMART-TD.

17 BY MR. HAMER:

18 Q. How you doing, Mark?

19 A. Hey, Steve.

20 Q. I just got a couple questions.

21 A. Sure.

22 Q. I think you had answered my first one. I just want to make  
23 sure. In your opinion, is it common to have short trains?

24 A. Lately, throughout the summer, yeah. Yeah, it's been a major  
25 problem.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. It makes our job a little more difficult, to be honest with  
3 you.

4 Q. Is this -- now, you referenced that the passengers are  
5 getting irate and the sheer volume of the people on the train. Is  
6 this strictly to the Pascack Valley Line or is it on all?

7 A. No, it's not. It's not. I worked -- I worked a train on the  
8 main line the week previous to that and I actually called the  
9 control center after we got in and told them be prepared for an  
10 onslaught of complaints. And I was told by supervision that the  
11 train I happened to be working was the busiest mainline train in  
12 the morning and that they were aware of it. And, you know,  
13 because it was -- that was really crazy, too.

14 Q. What's the general attitude when that happens?

15 A. They try to get -- with supervision?

16 Q. Yeah.

17 A. They try to be sympathetic with you and, you know, it's --  
18 you know, we already know; we're trying to do what we can about  
19 that, you know. That's pretty much what you hear.

20 Q. So pretty much stick to the schedule, stick to your  
21 assignment?

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. My last question, in your opinion, do you think the crowds



1 hinder your access to the cab, to the engineer?

2 A. Absolutely.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. Absolutely. Yesterday was -- I thought that I would have a  
5 chance to get up to the cab, because sometimes on my radio I don't  
6 get the transmission that you guys get through -- when you're  
7 working, through your radio. So a lot of times after we leave  
8 Secaucus, I like to just double-check with the engineer to go  
9 over, you know, like if we're going to yard the train or if we're  
10 taking it up for fuel, you know, what process we're going to do.  
11 But there was absolutely no way to do that yesterday at all.

12 MR. HAMER: That's all I have. Thank you.

13 MR. BATES: No questions. I thank you for your service.

14 MR. MARI: Oh, no problem. Thank you.

15 MR. PARKIN: Bruce Parkin, P-A-R-K-I-N, FRA. Mark, a couple  
16 of questions.

17 BY MR. PARKIN:

18 Q. You told us how many people, approximately, were on the train  
19 prior to Secaucus. Leaving Secaucus, coming into Hoboken, what  
20 would you say you had for passengers at that point?

21 A. At least -- at least 400 people, if not more. And I want to  
22 say that most of those people are up front in the first two cars.

23 Q. Say that again? How many? How many?

24 A. At least, at least 400 people, if not more, and most of them  
25 in the first two cars. And, again, I had at least 30 people get

1 on just in the front.

2 Q. At Secaucus?

3 A. At Secaucus, yeah, and not just at the center doors. I had  
4 people get on and stand in the vestibule, too, which, you know, I  
5 might add it's not a common practice that I do. I don't like  
6 people -- well, you know, you can't ride in the vestibule, but it  
7 was so insane yesterday, I -- you know, it would -- there was  
8 really no choice.

9 Q. I know you stated you worked the first two cars. Coming into  
10 Hoboken, were you standing in the vestibule and, if so, which one,  
11 the vestibule of the first car or the vestibule of the second car?

12 A. Upon impact, I was in the vestibule of the second car. That  
13 was the last trap I opened.

14 Q. Okay. Good. I heard you say you've been on the railroad for  
15 14 years?

16 A. It's -- the way they calculate the time, they tell me it's  
17 14, but it's like -- actually like 13, I think.

18 Q. Okay. And 12 years as a conductor?

19 A. Yeah, either 12 or 11½. I guess I'm coming up on 12.

20 Q. Okay. What method did you use to signal the engineer to  
21 proceed after the station stops?

22 A. To signal the engineer?

23 Q. In other words, how did you tell -- communicate to the  
24 engineer to go? Was it by radio, hand signal, communication  
25 whistle?

1 A. No. I signal to the brakeman. After the brakeman closes up  
2 and gets his door lights, he gives two to go on the buzzer and  
3 that's how we --

4 Q. Oh, okay. So you, as a conductor working -- you were working  
5 the control car and the second car?

6 A. Correct.

7 Q. Okay. So you would signal to the brakeman on the rear and he  
8 would give the buzzer on the communication whistle?

9 A. Yes. Yes.

10 Q. Okay. Now in the training that you received from New Jersey  
11 Transit, have you received training in what would be referred to  
12 as emergency preparedness?

13 A. Yeah. Yes.

14 Q. Okay. Would you consider that training as being appropriate  
15 to what happened yesterday?

16 A. What I went through yesterday, I don't know if anything could  
17 really prepare you for that. But I guess it obviously did because  
18 I think I, you know, I think I helped out and did what I had to  
19 do. So I -- you know, my training had to take over at some point,  
20 you know.

21 Q. Okay. If you were able to recommend, make a recommendation,  
22 having experienced what you went through yesterday, to make any  
23 type of training or equipment better in any way, what goes through  
24 your head that you might have said, I wish this had been  
25 different, I wish I knew this, or I wish the equipment did this or

1 didn't do this?

2 A. I don't know. It sounds like it's kind of like a vague type  
3 question. Could you -- I'm not --

4 Q. If that -- let rephrase it.

5 A. Yeah, I don't know if I'm catching your drift.

6 Q. Okay. Let me rephrase. If anything could have gone  
7 differently yesterday, other than the accident, of course,  
8 happening, what could have been helpful to you as the conductor,  
9 whether it be, I should have received training in A, B, C, or the  
10 equipment could have been different? Anything come to mind  
11 that -- if something that could have been different yesterday,  
12 what the -- what could have been different?

13 A. The one thing I -- I can't really say. The only -- I mean, I  
14 just wish that the amount of cars that we were supposed to have.  
15 And, again, I don't really know. I don't know. Who's to say? I  
16 don't know if it would, you know -- it would have definitely  
17 helped with the overcrowded conditions. I would have been able  
18 to, you know -- I could've, you know -- I would have been able to  
19 make it through my cars and whatnot, you know. I don't know. I  
20 really can't say, to be honest with you. I just know that it's --  
21 overcrowding is -- it's a problem.

22 Q. Okay. Another question, is the engineer at all required to  
23 call the signals back to you at all?

24 A. In certain territory.

25 Q. On the line that you worked yesterday, is there a requirement

1 that he call a signal or any types of different signals to you?

2 A. Not that I can recall, no.

3 Q. Okay. Did you hear the engineer make any type of radio  
4 communications, whether it be with the train dispatcher, operator,  
5 or a passing train?

6 A. I honestly -- I honestly don't remember. You know, I don't  
7 remember, to be honest with you.

8 MR. PARKIN: Okay. I don't think I have any other questions  
9 right now.

10 MR. BUCHER: Okay. I have -- you answered -- you asked my  
11 question about the buzzer. I was going to ask that one.

12 BY MR. BUCHER:

13 Q. The engineer has a buzzer in his cab and, just to get the  
14 logistics correct, the brakeman at the rear of the train buzzes  
15 the engineer when he's ready to leave the station?

16 A. Correct.

17 Q. Okay. Does the engineer acknowledge that buzzer in any way  
18 or he just leaves?

19 A. Departs. Just departs.

20 MR. BUCHER: Okay. And -- okay. I think that's all I have.  
21 Well --

22 DR. JENNER: Yeah, if --

23 MR. BUCHER: One more? A couple more?

24 DR. JENNER: Yeah, a few more.

25 BY DR. JENNER:

1 Q. How were your radios working yesterday?

2 A. Fine. I had -- actually, I think I had put a brand new -- I  
3 make it a habit to try to charge my battery once I get down to  
4 like one bar. So I had a brand new battery in my radio yesterday.

5 Q. Okay. Did you use them after the accident to talk to anyone  
6 else?

7 A. After the accident?

8 Q. Uh-huh.

9 A. No.

10 Q. Do you still have possession of it?

11 A. I think so. I -- yeah. I'm hoping it's still in my bag,  
12 because I'm going to have to pay for it if it's not. So, yeah,  
13 because all my railroad stuff, I think, is in the supervisor's  
14 office in Hoboken.

15 Q. Okay. Just to follow up on an earlier question about if  
16 there was any thoughts you have in terms of training or procedures  
17 or equipment. When I hear equipment, I'm also thinking a  
18 different type of radio, flashlights, glow sticks, first aid kits,  
19 anything of that nature to help with a emergency response  
20 situation. Did anything come to mind?

21 A. Did -- with what?

22 Q. With first aid kits, for example, or glow sticks or  
23 flashlights?

24 A. Meaning --

25 Q. This is at the time of you're evacuating passengers, post-

1 accident.

2 A. Meaning, do I have access to that or I -- I'm not really  
3 understanding that.

4 Q. Do you -- is there anything that you wish you had to help  
5 with the evacuation? If nothing comes to mind, that's fine.  
6 Just --

7 A. Nothing really.

8 Q. Nothing occurred to you at that time?

9 A. Nothing really comes to mind.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. You know, maybe -- I don't know, maybe a couple of more  
12 bodies to help get people off quicker and get them to safety  
13 faster. That's -- I -- there's really, you know --

14 Q. Okay. Because your experience may end up being very, you  
15 know, insightful down the road. So if anything does come to mind,  
16 I encourage you to reach out to people and share your thoughts  
17 about that.

18 Let me change directions a little. You started to talk about  
19 your experience as a conductor. Can you just tell me when you got  
20 into railroad industry and hired on with New Jersey Transit and  
21 take us up to today?

22 A. I hired out in -- July 9, 2003.

23 Q. As what position?

24 A. I got hired as an assistant conductor. I was in-between jobs  
25 and I was in need of a regular job at the time that was, you know

1 -- that would have been steady. You know, I know -- I've never  
2 even owned a toy train. I had no idea if I was even going to like  
3 this job.

4 Q. Okay. So 2003, assistant conductor. And can you just walk  
5 us through your current position? When did you become a qualified  
6 conductor?

7 A. At the time you're assistant -- well, at the time, you go  
8 through class. The way they did it back then was you received  
9 revenue training. At the time, there was a tremendous emphasis on  
10 revenue. You did revenue. You did TRLQs. They went over, you  
11 know, various rules. After -- I forgot how many days it was; I  
12 don't remember -- you went out for 30 days and you were only TC  
13 qualified. So you weren't allowed to work any other job but be a  
14 ticket collector. You did that for 30 days and then you went back  
15 into class.

16 And then that's when they trained you on being a rear brake  
17 and, you know, as far as like the air bump, the electrical and,  
18 you know, and get you initiated with all the different types of  
19 equipment. And you did that for -- I can't remember how -- you  
20 know, what the process was, maybe as long as the first half. And  
21 then, at the time, you got a couple of days -- I think 3 days you  
22 would go out into the yard, and then you marked up and you just  
23 went into service. So you had to be an assistant conductor for, I  
24 think, 18 months before you got a letter telling you when you were  
25 going to go for your conductor test.



1           And then you would go and you would get your -- you would go  
2 into the Rules Department and they would give you a class for -- I  
3 can't remember if it was 2 or 3 days. And they would give you, I  
4 guess -- you know, train, prep, if you want to call it that, for  
5 the conductor test. And you would take the written test, the  
6 Norac test, and then the conductor test. And then, you know, you  
7 passed or failed. If you failed, you would go back and take the  
8 parts that you failed a second time. I think, at the time, they  
9 allowed you three shots to take it.

10           And then, after you passed the conductor's test, then you --  
11 if I remember correctly, you would wait to find out what conductor  
12 job you were going to get forced to, because then you would have  
13 to qualify on the turf.

14 Q.    Right.

15 A.    And I had gotten forced, I think, to a yard job. So that  
16 meant I had to qualify the whole Hoboken Division.

17 Q.    Okay. And do you remember when you first got qualified as a  
18 conductor?

19 A.    What do you mean when you say that?

20 Q.    Well, you start off as assistant conductor and, for about 18  
21 months, you took all these tests and training. And is there a  
22 point where they said now you are a qualified conductor?

23 A.    Yeah. You know, I went through everything. Like I said, I  
24 got forced to qualify. I qualified. And then, once you get done  
25 qualifying -- I can't remember if you can pick a job you want to

1 go to. And I knew that, you know, that I did want to conduct. So  
2 while I was out qualifying, I kind of found it stressful, you  
3 know. I took it pretty serious and, you know, did everything I  
4 had to do. But when I came out and I was qualified, I really  
5 didn't want to jump into conducting right at first. So I kind of  
6 went back to -- I think I picked a rear brake board and I went  
7 back to rear braking.

8       And it was just kind of funny. I think my first start I  
9 wound up getting moved up to conduct the first day I marked back  
10 up. So I kind of got thrown into -- you know, thrown into the  
11 fire right away. And I've pretty much been on the conductor  
12 board. I didn't go -- even though I conducted that day, I think I  
13 was on the brakeman board for a few months and then from -- I  
14 can't remember. I want to say I think I might have gotten forced  
15 to the conductor board and I've stayed on it since that point in  
16 time and only on the Hoboken Division. I'm not qualified on the  
17 Newark Division but I've been working the Hoboken side for --  
18 since I've been qualified, you know, since I went through and I've  
19 been conducting.

20 Q.   Okay.

21 A.   So I've been on the Hoboken side my whole time at New Jersey  
22 Transit, working every line of the Hoboken Division and pretty  
23 much like, you know, whatever comes, whatever they ask me to do.

24 Q.   Okay. Thank you for that.

25       This accident happened on a Thursday. Did you work the

1 previous few days?

2 A. I did.

3 Q. Can you just tell me just the last Monday, Tuesday,  
4 Wednesday?

5 A. On Monday, I worked the same job, the Spring Valley 7, which  
6 was their Friday. I think I got off duty at -- I can't remember.  
7 I want to say maybe 8:00. I did work on Tuesday. I caught a job.  
8 I worked as a rear brake in Hoboken. And I think that was 4 to  
9 11; 4 p.m. to 11 p.m.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. And I did work Wednesday, too. I worked a ticket collecting  
12 job out of Dover. And that was from I think 12:43 to right before  
13 9:00.

14 Q. And how far are you -- away are you from Spring Valley, your  
15 home?

16 A. My home, with no traffic, about 50 minutes, 50 minutes to an  
17 hour.

18 DR. JENNER: Okay. Great. Okay. Thank you for all that.

19 MR. MARI: You're welcome.

20 DR. JENNER: Why don't we just continue to go around.

21 MR. MATTISON: I have a couple questions.

22 MR. MARI: Sure.

23 BY MR. MATTISON:

24 Q. You're on the extra list. Are you qualified into New York?  
25 Like do you usually work in and out of Hoboken or --

1 A. I'm qualified into New York, yeah. I hate going to New York,  
2 so any day I don't go to New York is a good day by me.

3 Q. So you would usually go -- working out of Hoboken fairly  
4 regular?

5 A. Well, you don't really get to pick and choose. So --

6 Q. Well, do you take hold-downs mostly out of --

7 A. I really don't.

8 Q. No?

9 A. And the funny thing is, is I normally don't take hold-downs.  
10 I took a hold-down on the Spring Valley job and the only reason I  
11 did is I was so aggravated after the Giants lost on Sunday I  
12 didn't want to get up real early in the morning, to be honest with  
13 you. So I took a hold-down and -- which very rarely happens. I  
14 normally just answer the phone.

15 Q. Okay. The majority of the jobs you catch off the list, do  
16 you go -- is it kind of 50/50 Hoboken/New York or is it kind of --

17 A. You know what? Lately, because they created two lists, it's  
18 -- and I'm on the Hoboken list, not the Dover list, it's probably  
19 about 60/40, 65/35, to where I go into Hoboken most of the time.

20 Q. Okay. Okay. How long have you worked in passenger service  
21 as opposed to yard service?

22 A. I probably catch passenger service more -- I definitely, I  
23 definitely catch passenger service more than yard service, but  
24 I've worked yard jobs. I've flagged, you know, piloted cranes,  
25 whatever they -- you know, whatever I got called for.

1 Q. All right. I want you to -- and, if you feel uncomfortable  
2 answering any of these questions, say so.

3 I want you to think right before the time of the incident.  
4 You were on -- in the second car, to the best of your ability, the  
5 second car, right? Were you on the top tier where the regular  
6 passengers are or were you in the pocket of the step well going  
7 down?

8 A. You know, I know I was facing the passengers. And I'm not  
9 sure if I -- you know, I can't really recall.

10 Q. Okay. And that's okay. That's okay. Were you looking at  
11 the passengers or could you see out the window in your peripheral  
12 vision at all?

13 A. No. I was pretty much staring at the -- you know, I was  
14 facing inward.

15 Q. Okay. When you were coming in, did the train -- did you hear  
16 like the air blowing or the prime mover speed up or anything like  
17 that, anything out of the ordinary that you wouldn't normally  
18 hear?

19 A. Honestly, I really couldn't tell you.

20 Q. And there wasn't like a lurch before the crash or anything or  
21 did you hear the brakes go into emergency or anything like that?  
22 Again, if you don't, it's okay.

23 A. I -- honestly, I couldn't, I couldn't really tell you. I  
24 just remember hearing -- I just remember hearing that loud, loud  
25 noise, you know, and that's the main think I kind of remember.

1 MR. MATTISON: Okay. Good enough for me. Thank you.

2 MR. BUCHER: Could you put your name for --

3 MR. MATTISON: Oh, Fred Mattison, Jersey Transit.

4 MR. BUCHER: Thank you.

5 MR. HAMER: You got a question?

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No.

7 MR. HAMER: All right. Steve Hamer -- sorry. Steve Hamer at  
8 SMART TD.

9 BY MR. HAMER:

10 Q. Can you estimate how many people were standing, say, a mile  
11 before the accident?

12 A. Leaving --

13 Q. How about leaving Secaucus?

14 A. Leaving Secaucus?

15 Q. After you left Secaucus?

16 A. Standing? Yeah. Probably the whole row inside the first car  
17 was full, still full and, like I said, I probably had 15, maybe 20  
18 people in the vestibule with me.

19 Q. All right.

20 A. And the car behind me was -- I don't know. I don't want to  
21 just guess.

22 Q. Is there any way you could estimate how many people were  
23 standing going into Secaucus vice after you left Secaucus coming  
24 into Hoboken? In other words, how many people do you think are  
25 already getting up out of their seats and already moving towards

1 the doors into the vestibules before the train comes into the  
2 station in Hoboken?

3 A. Normally -- and I guess maybe it's a passenger habit, but as  
4 you're approaching Secaucus, you know, people are making their way  
5 to the center doors because those center doors are going to open.  
6 And, you know, people are making their way to the vestibule door.  
7 And then once you leave Secaucus, it's -- a lot of people are  
8 trying to make their way to where they can get out that door as  
9 fast as possible, you know.

10 And, you know, like on a normal day, you're standing in front  
11 of the doors, the end of the coach door. So, you know, not that  
12 -- you're by yourself in the vestibule and, you know, you can see  
13 the crowd, but that wasn't, that wasn't the case yesterday. But  
14 like I said, I still couldn't even -- even leaving Secaucus, I  
15 still couldn't see, you know, the first car. I couldn't see all  
16 the way to the front of that car.

17 Q. So it's safe to say the crowd was larger after you left  
18 Secaucus?

19 A. You know what, Steve, it was just as large. And I was kind  
20 of surprised, because you usually lose -- you lose a lot of people  
21 going to New York. I did have, I want to say -- I had a Port  
22 Authority cop tell me yesterday that -- because we were talking  
23 about this, and he told me that there was a fatality with an  
24 Amtrak train at Newark Penn Station that night -- I don't know if  
25 it disrupted any kind of service with, you know, with New Jersey

1 Transit. But he said that -- I think he said it happened sometime  
2 around 6:00, 6:30, and he said maybe that's why you had more  
3 people than normal at Secaucus. I -- that's what he said to me.

4 MR. HAMER: Thank you.

5 MR. FANNON: Yeah, I have one question.

6 MR. BUCHER: Name?

7 MR. FANNON: Randy Fannon.

8 BY MR. FANNON:

9 Q. Thank you again for your time. You've spoken a lot about  
10 overcrowding prevented you from going to the control compartment.  
11 Your intentions or is it your routine that you normally -- closer  
12 to getting to the station, that you would have went?

13 A. Normally when I pull into Secaucus, not so much Hoboken  
14 because, when I -- you know, if I -- if I'm stuck up there, if I  
15 get stuck up there in between Secaucus and Hoboken, I can't -- you  
16 know, I like to get off. I like to be the first one off the train  
17 when we pull into our final destination.

18 So I -- like if I have a yard move or I -- we're going to  
19 fuel the train upon arrival, some assignments you do that when you  
20 get in, I will -- you know, I have a habit, I'll walk up to the  
21 cab after we leave Secaucus and just verbalize with the engineer,  
22 you know, I'll give you two to go or I'll call you on the radio  
23 or, once you get -- you know, when we get door lights, you can  
24 call off or -- you know, something to that effect. Do you need a  
25 spot when we get into the yard? Or, you know, just something to



1 that effect. You know, it's -- that's pretty much it really.

2 Q. But this trip you were not able to do that?

3 A. No. I -- it was just over- -- completely overcrowded.

4 MR. FANNON: Thank you.

5 MR. MARI: You're welcome.

6 MR. PARKIN: Bruce Parkin, P-A-R-K-I-N, FRA.

7 BY MR. PARKIN:

8 Q. Mark, just a couple of questions here. What would've been  
9 your normal off-duty time for yesterday's assignment? You say you  
10 reported at 6:30. What time would you have gone off duty  
11 normally?

12 A. At the end of the day?

13 Q. Sure. Yes, sir.

14 A. At the end of the day, I think it would have been about 7:30  
15 p.m. because I -- there's a, there's a pretty large break in the  
16 middle of the day.

17 Q. Okay. So you have more than a 4-hour cutout?

18 A. Oh, absolutely. Yeah, because you can't, you know --

19 Q. Where do you rest on that assignment then?

20 A. If we didn't, you know -- if we hadn't have had what occurred  
21 yesterday occur, after we yarded the train, I probably would have  
22 made my way home, because I would have had probably about 6 hours  
23 in between.

24 Q. Okay. So you normally would go home?

25 A. Yeah, if -- not normally, but like -- because I don't get --

1 you know, I don't work a job like that. I just happen to live in  
2 close proximity to Hoboken. I'm pretty close.

3 Q. Okay. If you didn't live close, otherwise, Hoboken would be  
4 your interim rest?

5 A. Yeah. If I didn't, if I didn't live close, I would be in  
6 Hoboken.

7 Q. Okay. On the trip going down, were there any -- I guess some  
8 platforms were low level, some were high level. Were there any  
9 issues with the engineer stopping on his marks?

10 A. No. On that line?

11 Q. Uh-huh.

12 A. They were all low-level platforms.

13 Q. Oh, they were all low level?

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. And so there's a normal mark where he would bring his train  
18 to and stop?

19 A. I would -- you know, I don't want to sit here and guess but a  
20 lot of engineers pretty much have -- you know, they have their  
21 spots where they go, if it's their regular run.

22 Q. Okay. So the stopping was no issue as far as you were  
23 concerned?

24 A. No.

25 Q. Okay. And so, coming into Hoboken, going through the

1 interlocking, did you take any exception? Did you notice anything  
2 the way -- were the people getting moved around more than usual?

3 A. Like I said, everything -- you know, up until the point of  
4 impact, it was a normal day to me. You know, everything seemed  
5 normal. You know, we came through that last interlocking which  
6 takes us into the depot, and it was just -- it was an ordinary  
7 day, you know, up until the accident.

8 Q. And you mentioned that coming into Hoboken you were wondering  
9 if there was going to be a yard move. You said sometimes they  
10 yard the train?

11 A. That assignment has a yard move.

12 Q. Okay. Was there any -- was there a communication from the  
13 dispatchers or anybody telling you that you were going to have to  
14 yard the train or what the move was going to be?

15 A. No. They pretty much would go to -- I think he -- yeah, he  
16 told me 5-L. He said we go to 5-L. And that's -- but it's part  
17 of the job. The only time you would really get a transmission is  
18 if they told you to leave it in the house or, I guess -- you know,  
19 that would -- they would tell you, 1614, leave it in the house.

20 Q. So the normal move would have been to bring it to 5-L in the  
21 yard, unless there's something different. Then they would tell  
22 you to leave it in the house?

23 A. Yeah. You would normally hear on the radio from terminal  
24 dispatcher or sometimes the yardmaster would tell you leave it in  
25 the house, because it's your normal move on that job.

1 Q. To go to the yard?

2 A. Correct.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. After you come in, you discharge everybody and the train gets  
5 yarded.

6 MR. PARKIN: I have no other questions except to say you did  
7 a very good job and --

8 MR. MARI: Thank you very much.

9 MR. PARKIN: Good job the way you did it. Yes. Thank you.

10 MR. BUCHER: Dave Bucher, again. I don't think we have  
11 anymore.

12 DR. WEBSTER: Just as a physician -- I'm sorry. Just how are  
13 you feeling?

14 MR. BUCHER: Name?

15 DR. WEBSTER: Oh, this is Dr. Nick Webster.

16 BY DR. WEBSTER:

17 Q. I just wanted to check on you and see how you're doing.

18 A. I don't think I -- I really didn't sleep that great last  
19 night and my anxiety level's been kind of high. I feel a little  
20 sore. I definitely felt a lot more comfortable when I got up here  
21 today and I, you know, I got to see Jerome and Steve and J.R. and,  
22 you know, see the other crew member, Tom.

23 Q. Yeah.

24 A. You know, I did not watch the news last night. I wanted no  
25 part of social media. A lot of phone calls and text messages I

1 didn't even bother answering back. A lot of people were calling,  
2 you know, concerned. But, you know, I've never had a fatality in  
3 the time I've been here and I always pray I never would. And, you  
4 know, I hope that doesn't happen, but, you know, yesterday was  
5 just -- I won't forget it.

6 MR. PARKIN: Just, Mark, quickly --

7 MR. BUCHER: Name?

8 MR. PARKIN: Bruce Parkin, P-A-R-K-I-N.

9 BY MR. PARKIN:

10 Q. I'm the fatigue investigator for FRA Region 1. Just the few  
11 days -- let's say the 3 days prior to the accident, how was your  
12 sleep pattern? Would you rate it, you know, fair, good,  
13 excellent?

14 A. Honestly, I told the hold-down on Sunday, so I didn't get a  
15 phone call. I actually got uninterrupted sleep, which was  
16 beautiful. And because I worked in the afternoon on Tuesday, I  
17 didn't get a phone call. And what -- same thing, I didn't get a  
18 phone call throughout the night. So I actually got to sleep  
19 straight through the night. And same thing going into yesterday,  
20 I had the appropriate 8 hours rest between Wednesday into  
21 Thursday. That never happens.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. To get 7 hours, 8 hours of uninterrupted sleep is, you  
24 know --

25 Q. So would you call it excellent then?

1 A. Yeah. I felt good.

2 MR. PARKIN: Okay. Good. Okay. That's the only thing I  
3 wanted to ask. Thank you.

4 MR. BUCHER: Okay. This concludes the interview of Mr. Mari.  
5 (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:           NEW JERSEY TRANSIT TRAIN #1614  
                                  ACCIDENT AT HOBOKEN TERMINAL  
                                  AT HOBOKEN, NEW JERSEY  
                                  ON SEPTEMBER 29, 2016  
                                  Interview of Mark Mari

DOCKET NUMBER:           DCA16MR011

PLACE:                      Newark, New Jersey

DATE:                        September 30, 2016

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.

---

Traci Williamson  
Transcriber