

## UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

## NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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METRO-NORTH DERAILMENT NEAR

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RYE, NEW YORK, ON MAY 18, 2017

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Accident No.: DCA17FR008

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Interview of: JUSTIN SHEPPARD

Springdale Yard Maintenance Facility  
Stamford, ConnecticutMonday,  
May 22, 2017

## APPEARANCES:

RYAN FRIGO, Rail Accident Investigator  
Operations Group  
National Transportation Safety Board

GARY WHITE, Chief Inspector, Operating Practices  
Federal Railroad Administration, Region 1

BRUCE PARKIN, Operating Practices Inspector  
Federal Railroad Administration, Region 1

DOUGLAS JOHNSON, Operating Practices Inspector  
Federal Railroad Administration, Region 1

RALPH SANZARI, General Chairman  
ACRE Local 1  
(On behalf of Mr. Sheppard)

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I N T E R V I E W

MR. FRIGO: My name is Ryan Frigo. I am the operations investigator for the National Transportation Safety Board on this accident. We're here today in Stamford, Connecticut to interview Justin Sheppard in conjunction with NTSB accident investigation number DCA17FR008, which is a Metro-North derailment in Rye, New York.

The spelling of my last name is -- well, it's Frigo. Spelling is F-R-I-G-O.

MR. PARKIN: Bruce Parkin, P-A-R-K-I-N, FRA OP inspector, Region 1.

MR. WHITE: Gary White, G-A-R-Y, W-H-I-T-E, FRA chief inspector, OP.

MR. JOHNSON: Douglas Johnson, J-O-H-N-S-O-N, FRA OP Inspector.

MR. SHEPPARD: Justin Sheppard, conductor on -- what was it -- 1373. S-H-E-P-P-A-R-D.

MR. FRIGO: And Justin, are you okay if we go on a first-name basis?

MR. SHEPPARD: Yes.

MR. FRIGO: Justin, do you wish to have a representative here with you today?

MR. SHEPPARD: Yes, my --

MR. SANZARI: Ralph Sanzari, S-A-N-Z-A-R-I, general chairman, ACRE Local 1, representing the conductors of Metro-North.

1 MR. FRIGO: Great. Thank you.

2 Justin, just before we begin I just have to -- I have to let  
3 you know that the NTSB can't guarantee any confidentiality.  
4 There's a transcript that will be produced from our conversation  
5 today that will go into the public docket.

6 MR. SHEPPARD: Okay.

7 INTERVIEW OF JUSTIN SHEPPARD

8 BY MR. FRIGO:

9 Q. So Justin, thank you for being with us here today. Before we  
10 give you a chance to tell your story, if you could just give us a  
11 little bit about your history here at Metro-North, how long you've  
12 been on the railroad and your craft when you started, and work us  
13 all the way up to where you are right now.

14 A. November 2010 is when I began at Metro-North. I was in  
15 training class for -- I believe it was about a year. Marked up  
16 after that, and I held, you know, the bottom of the line trainmen  
17 jobs for a while, for the first couple years. And then for the  
18 past, I'd say, 4½ years I've been on the extra list, mainly out of  
19 Stamford and Danbury, sometimes out of New Haven.

20 Q. Do you remember your qualifying date as a conductor?

21 A. The qualifying date originally?

22 Q. Yeah. Or the last.

23 A. The last one?

24 Q. Yeah.

25 A. No. It's in my book. It's in my book. I don't have it with

1 me.

2 Q. All right. And you said Danbury and --

3 A. I've been working out of Danbury and Stamford for the past 2  
4 years.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. And then in and out of New Haven once in a while.

7 Q. So mainly the New Haven Line?

8 A. Yeah, I stick strictly (indiscernible) Line.

9 Q. Okay. All right, Justin, thank you. Can you tell us what  
10 happened the date of the derailment?

11 A. Yeah. The day of the derailment we were doing a -- I believe  
12 it's 1373, heading into the city, a Stamford local. We did all  
13 local stops. Got to Port Chester, I opened the doors, closed the  
14 doors, did my station work. As we left Port Chester, started  
15 heading west, I left my cab and I was collecting tickets. I was  
16 in the next car up. I believe it's the sixth car from the west  
17 end. And then just people, you know -- the train went into  
18 emergency and people started flying around. The train was up and  
19 down, side to side, you know, probably 5, 6 feet side to side. It  
20 had to be up and down 2, 3 feet.

21 So I grabbed my radio. I don't know if we were still moving  
22 or not but I grabbed my radio, called "Emergency, Emergency,  
23 Emergency." Told them where I was. I told them I was between  
24 Port Chester and Rye, I believe. I don't know, everything  
25 happened really fast.

1        So I started yelling to the people, said everybody hold on,  
2 get down. I saw an Amtrak coming the other way, so I thought  
3 maybe that's what it was. I thought we hit the Amtrak. So -- it  
4 was a regional train. So I told everybody to get to the right  
5 side of the train in case they hit us again. I was yelling, just  
6 yelling and screaming. Everybody was freaking out, panic, dirt  
7 and dust everywhere. I could have sworn I saw something, metal  
8 rod of some sort, shoot out from under the train, but maybe, maybe  
9 it was just in my head.

10       But when the train came to a stop, I told everybody to sit  
11 tight, relax, something just happened, I'm going to assess the  
12 damage. So I stormed through the whole train, made contact with  
13 all my crew. I had three trainmen and my engineer. So I made  
14 contact with all my trainmen.

15       Between a few of the pairs the buffer plates that usually rub  
16 side to side were actually stacked on top of each other. So I  
17 ordered my -- you know, the trainman that I saw to stay at that  
18 door. I wanted nobody going through it in case it were to slip  
19 down or they were going to fall or whatever.

20       Made my way through, asked everybody who was -- if anybody  
21 was seriously injured; anybody, any injuries, any injuries? Got  
22 to the head of the train. I briefly talked to Lenny, my engineer,  
23 and he said, you know, he said we derailed; you know, I don't know  
24 if we're fouling track 1. So again I called -- I was in constant  
25 contact with District E. And I wanted a hold on track 1. I said

1 no trains on track 1; I don't know if we're fouling.

2 And then I came back through, asking again, anybody injured,  
3 anybody injured? I'm speaking with the RTC at the same time I'm  
4 (indiscernible) my hand out. And they asked if there was any  
5 injuries and if they needed any ambulances. I said absolutely,  
6 send a couple of buses, we're definitely going to have injuries,  
7 you know, we definitely need people here. I said there's, you  
8 know --

9 And then we -- I stepped off the train, left my other  
10 trainman -- I left Troy, who was the senior trainman, I left him  
11 up there to guard one door, and while he was in that door he was  
12 making announcements to the train, telling everybody to sit tight,  
13 you know, help's on its way; don't anybody get up, we need the  
14 aisles clear.

15 So I had gotten off the train with Lenny and we had walked  
16 the entire train on the track 3 side, on the outer -- you know, on  
17 the right-of-way. Walked the entire train, counted there was five  
18 cars that were derailed. And, you know, I was, again, in contact  
19 with the RTC.

20 By the time I got back to the front of the train I saw the  
21 first police officer was on right platform. So I flagged him  
22 over. He came over and, you know, we -- and then just people  
23 started showing up and, you know, everything happened as, you  
24 know, smoothly as we could possibly make it happen, you know. But  
25 my crew absolutely was a hundred percent, they were there doing



1 exactly what they needed to do. And kept everybody as calm as we  
2 could. We -- you know, we dispersed some -- we had emergency  
3 water. It was 90 plus degrees that day. So we handed out water  
4 to everybody. We broke into that. We handed out waters to  
5 everybody, and went through a couple of times finding out who was  
6 injured.

7 Every time there was somebody injured, we'd report it to the  
8 FDNY or the -- I'm sorry, Rye EMTs, fire department. And you  
9 know, after everything cooled down, you know, my senior managers  
10 were showing up and they kind of took care of the situation.

11 Then I had to copy -- I had to go to the head to copy an M  
12 form to remain at, because there was another rescue train coming  
13 from the west end, coming to hit me up from the west end, to meet  
14 up to get all the people off. And that's how -- and after that  
15 point I took the M form. I guess, yeah, somebody had given me the  
16 wrong car number so I had to go back and take it again.

17 And then after that, I came back to see if there was anything  
18 else I could do, and then the -- then I took an ambulance ride to  
19 the White Plains Hospital.

20 So, and then, you know, as far as I know, like, I don't know,  
21 12 people, 13 people were injured. You know, I haven't gotten any  
22 serious numbers. You know, the news said zero. I know  
23 differently. So I don't know any more other than that.

24 Q. Justin, thank you. I'm going to ask some clarifying  
25 questions.

1 A. Okay.

2 Q. Was this your first trip of the day or --

3 A. No, it was our third, third train of the day. It was a long  
4 -- it was a senior job, so it was like a 14 -- 13-plus hour day.

5 Q. Do you remember, you know -- how did the day go? Like when  
6 you started and --

7 A. Well, crew calls, you know, when you're on a list they call  
8 you 2 hours before a job starts to give you your assignment, so  
9 you get to work. So they called me about 4:15 in the morning. So  
10 normally they call me -- I set my alarm for a half hour and then  
11 if it's an early job, usually I'll drive down to Bridgeport and  
12 take the train in, but this day I decided to drive to Stamford.

13 So I got on my train -- got in my car, drove to Stamford, you  
14 know, signed in -- punched in, signed in, did my e-host, all that  
15 stuff. I was 40 minutes early. So I waited around. Lenny showed  
16 up. Okay, we got to go get our train. I think it was on track 16  
17 or 18.

18 So we went down, got our train, and we took a local down with  
19 no exceptions, you know. Took a local down, hung out for about 45  
20 minutes to an hour. Did another local up, and then when we get to  
21 Stamford, we swing in Stamford. So I think I had about 5½ to 6  
22 hours in Stamford, where I went out to lunch with another  
23 conductor. Went on and had lunch, came back. I slept for an hour  
24 probably, an hour, 2 hours maybe.

25 And then Lenny came back, because I think he lives in the

1 area. Lenny came back and he's like, all right, let's go, you  
2 know. We're on -- I think we're on 8 hill or something, I don't  
3 know. So we had to go up -- I came up with my -- with one of my  
4 trainmen, Joe. He was -- he gets on here, and then the other two  
5 are picked up in Stamford platform.

6 So we -- and they were all the regular crew of the train.  
7 I'm the extra list so I'm the extra guy. So we had seven cars  
8 open out of 12, and we were going down and, you know, Lenny and I  
9 had spoke. We were doing a head end down, so I did all the work  
10 from the back. I opened the doors from the back, with the seventh  
11 car cut off for the Old Grand first at Cos Cob. And then after  
12 that, you know, like I said, we made it to Port Chester and  
13 then --

14 Q. Were you guys on time?

15 A. I think we were a few minutes late. They held us -- I  
16 believe they held us coming out of the yard for some reason. I  
17 don't know if they held us for a connection in Stamford. I know  
18 we were a couple -- I'm pretty sure we were a couple minutes late,  
19 but, you know, that's not a priority of mine, to be honest with  
20 you.

21 Q. Um-hum.

22 A. I always tell my engineers or whoever, I said if we leave  
23 Stamford 5 minutes late, I want to be 5 minutes late getting into  
24 New York. I don't care, you know. It's just not important.

25 Q. How was the -- how was your loading? Was it normal? Was

1 it --

2 A. I don't know as far as normal because I'm not on that job.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. But, I mean, we got a good amount of people on at Stamford.  
5 I think Greenwich we got a good amount of people on there. Port  
6 Chester, we might have -- I know we got -- nobody was getting off  
7 yet really; there were only like one or two, three people. But  
8 everybody was just loading on. So when we walked through we did  
9 the -- you know, they ask for a head count. One of my trainmen  
10 walked through and he wrote down the exact numbers of people that  
11 were in each car, and I think it was about 250 people.

12 Q. Do you recall any -- you mentioned you had a radio with you  
13 at the time of the derailment.

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. Is that your -- it's a company-issued radio?

16 A. It's a company-issued radio, yeah.

17 Q. So you had it with you the entire trip?

18 A. Well, it was in my bag because I use the train radio --

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. -- while I'm doing the backup moves and everything else.  
21 Well, when we're -- yeah, doing the backup moves, I used the  
22 actual train radio. And then when I get to the head end, I set up  
23 my TIM and I set up everything, I usually put it on and get it on.  
24 So I'll set it on --

25 Q. So you do -- on then?

1 A. -- and turn it on, yeah, by the time I get up there, yeah.

2 Q. So approximately where did that happen?

3 A. I don't know. It's probably maybe Old Greenwich by the time  
4 I had actually got it and turned it on, you know. Maybe -- yeah,  
5 before we left Stamford. I don't know. It's right around that  
6 time I turned it on.

7 Q. Okay. Do you recall hearing any communications between the  
8 rail control center and your engineer?

9 A. No. No.

10 Q. Did at any point your engineer inform you of any abnormal  
11 operating conditions --

12 A. No.

13 Q. -- whether it was a Form M or any --

14 A. No.

15 Q. -- changes to the topo?

16 A. No. I mean, I've been hearing things from people, but, no, I  
17 was never told anything about --

18 Q. Okay. You guys had a safety job briefing before starting?

19 A. Yeah, while we're walking out. While we were walking out,  
20 Lenny and I -- you know, he tells me the routine, because it's his  
21 train; he does this all the time. I'm the extra guy. I stick  
22 with what the crew is normally doing because it's not, you know,  
23 it's not my place to like mix things up. It screws -- it messes  
24 up with the people. They don't understand sometimes -- if I  
25 decide to pull one off, it would just screw people up. They just,

1 you know -- so I asked Lenny. Lenny told me, you know, seven  
2 cars, go head end down all the way down. You know, you got three  
3 trainmen. You know, they're the regulars. They know what to do.  
4 Okay, cool, thanks. You know, so --

5 Q. Anything abnormal about Lenny or about any of the other  
6 crewmembers or anything you can recall?

7 A. No. No. Uh-uh. This was my first time working with Joe, I  
8 think, since -- well, ever since he's been back. And, you know,  
9 so it was nice to see him. I said, hey, how you doing, while were  
10 upstairs. Hey, how's everything going, blah, blah. Is this your  
11 regular job? He's like, yeah, regular job. So I'm like, oh,  
12 cool, you know, like, I'll see you on the train. You know, and  
13 that was about it.

14 You know, I don't work with these -- work with enough people  
15 enough times to know their quirks or their, you know, their ins  
16 and outs, but, you know, that's the way I like it. I don't want  
17 to -- you know, if I want to get to know you, I'll get to know you  
18 outside of work. I don't want to -- you know, work is work;  
19 business is business, you know.

20 Q. Joe is one of the trainmen?

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. Did you go into the cab at all?

25 A. Into my cab?

1 Q. No. Into he engineer's cab?

2 A. Oh, no. No. He was seven cars ahead of me.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. Yeah. Yeah, there was seven cars between us, three trainmen.  
5 I had no reason to go up and see him.

6 Q. Can you recall in the past if an engineer is given a Line C  
7 on a DTOBO, is that something that --

8 A. The speed restriction --

9 Q. -- talk to the conductor about or --

10 A. Usually. You know, sometimes they do, sometimes they don't.  
11 It's common practice to, but it's -- sometimes it's like, you  
12 know, catenary whatever. Like I don't know where the fucking  
13 catenaries are. You know, like okay. You know, if you tell me  
14 it's at Venice Station or if it's at, you know, just south of this  
15 or just north of that station, like I'll know where, you know --  
16 but like if they start throwing catenary poles, I mean -- okay,  
17 I'll try and keep an eye out, but I'm doing my station work. You  
18 know, I'm going through a train collecting tickets, making sure  
19 everybody's -- you know, nobody's having seizures on the floor,  
20 you know. I'm not one of the people that sits in a cab and just  
21 hangs out. I like to do -- I like to work. So --

22 MR. FRIGO: All right, Justin, thank you. I don't have any  
23 further questions.

24 MR. SHEPPARD: Okay.

25 BY MR. PARKIN:

1 Q. Bruce, Parkin, P-A-R-K-I-N, FRA. Okay, Justin, I want to  
2 just back up a little bit with the times. You said the crew  
3 called you at 4:15 a.m., and what time was your report?

4 A. Report time was about 6:30, I believe. I can give you an  
5 exact if I look in my phone, but I don't have the paperwork with  
6 me.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. Gave me a -- job number was C218.

9 Q. C --

10 A. C218.

11 Q. Okay. Have you ever worked with Lenny in the past?

12 A. Yes, a couple of times; you know, not many. I think I've  
13 worked with just about every engineer and conductor out there.

14 Q. Okay. You said you were working from the sixth car of the  
15 train?

16 A. I was, yeah, between the sixth and the seventh. We had seven  
17 open. There's no cab in the rear of the seventh car. So I had to  
18 be -- I was working between the sixth and the seventh car, there's  
19 a cab. I believe the sixth car was an S car. Maybe -- I don't  
20 know. There was an S car in there somewhere. The S cars don't  
21 have cabs in them at all.

22 Q. Um-hum.

23 A. I think that was toward the rear of the train. I'm not sure  
24 where it was exactly, but -- but, yeah, that's it. So I'm not  
25 sure if I was in the sixth -- I had to be in the sixth car when



1 everything was going on.

2 Q. And is that so that you can operate the doors?

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. From where you -- from your position forward?

5 A. Yeah. Typically on that job, the guy who owns that job,  
6 since there's four of us -- there's three trainmen and the one  
7 conductor. He has it set up where the conductor works the rear  
8 car only and then the other three people have two cars each. But  
9 again, I don't think that's right, you know, so I'll go until I  
10 meet another, you know, and then I'll go back. Like it's -- you  
11 just do your job. It's doing your job.

12 You know, I don't think it's right to stay in one car while  
13 these guys are running around like crazy. So I was out of my one  
14 car into one of his cars to help him, to give Troy a hand, and  
15 that's when, you know -- so I was in his car. So I'm assuming it  
16 was the sixth car.

17 Q. And you have a portable radio assigned to you?

18 A. I do, yes.

19 Q. Okay. So when you left Stamford, departed Stamford, or even  
20 departing the yard, did you have your portable radio with you and  
21 on?

22 A. No, it was up in the, it was up in the -- my cab that I'm  
23 going to be working out of. Because when you leave here, you've  
24 got to be on the real train in case something happens. You know,  
25 you cross the interlock and so you have to back up the train if

1 something happens. So I just stay back there. I use the -- you  
2 know, and then I walk through and get to my cab and I set up my  
3 TIM, you know, open up whatever I have to open up, and usually  
4 turn my radio on and clip it on my belt and go.

5 Q. So at what point did you turn on the radio and have it with  
6 you?

7 A. I don't even know. Somewhere around Stamford. It was before  
8 I got -- like I get there, you know, I don't even think I had my  
9 hat or anything else on by the time I open the doors, close the  
10 doors, because we were late coming out of the yard. Open them,  
11 close them, give him two to go. Turned over, started to putting  
12 all my stuff together, you know, collecting all my business, my,  
13 you know, ticket machine and my, you know, radio and put  
14 everything on, get everything together.

15 Q. So departing Stamford Station you had --

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. -- your radio turned on with you?

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. Did you hear the -- at any point after that did you hear the  
20 RTC call your train?

21 A. No.

22 Q. Okay. And I believe you said that the engineer did not call  
23 you to inform you that --

24 A. No, he --

25 Q. -- he copied any type of restriction or --

1 A. No, we didn't have any contact, anything. There was no  
2 really -- I assumed there was no reason to have any contact.

3 Q. Um-hum.

4 A. You know, so I didn't -- I had no contact at all from him.

5 Q. Until after the derailment?

6 A. Until after everything -- yeah. Until the smoke literally  
7 had settled.

8 Q. Okay. You said you had a job briefing?

9 A. Yeah, yeah.

10 Q. Prior to departing?

11 A. As we walked -- as we leave this building, we're walking out  
12 toward our train and he tells me this is the move, this is what we  
13 do, this is how we do it. Okay, absolute, the head end down, all  
14 the way down. You got three trainmen. They're regulars; they  
15 know what to do. Okay, cool, great. Thanks. And he walked down  
16 to the other end of the train.

17 I back it out of the yard. I don't even know what track we  
18 were on. We might be on the loop. I don't even know where we  
19 were. Maybe we were on the loop, I don't know, but -- and then he  
20 goes to his end, you know. He does engineer stuff and I do  
21 conductor stuff. Then I, you know, got -- I was walking through  
22 the train. I had five cars to walk through before I even got to  
23 the cab I was working out of. So --

24 Q. Did you have a copy -- when you departed the building here,  
25 did you have a copy of the, of the DTOBO, the daily operating

1 speed restrictions?

2 A. Yes. I always do.

3 Q. Did you discuss that with anything, with the engineer or  
4 anything?

5 A. No. Well, I -- no, we talked about the stop signs but there  
6 was, you know, nothing that really affected us.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. So --

9 Q. Now you said earlier when -- after the derailment, the -- one  
10 of your trainmen was making announcements.

11 A. Um-hum.

12 Q. So you had full power, PA working, lights --

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. -- were on?

15 A. Yeah. Those catenaries were still attached to the wire.

16 Q. Um-hum.

17 A. So yeah. Yeah, we had the air conditioning going, which was  
18 great. And Troy Finn, I believe is the one that made most of the  
19 announcements to -- you know, saying as soon as we figure anything  
20 out, you know, whatever. But I was off the train most of the  
21 time.

22 Q. Have you covered this particular assignment, C218, in the  
23 past or was this the first time?

24 A. I don't think I have since the new pic. The new pic was -- I  
25 don't even know when it was, 5 months ago.

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: April.

2 MR. SHEPPARD: April? Yeah. So no, I haven't covered it  
3 since April. No.

4 BY MR. PARKIN:

5 Q. You also mentioned that there was an Amtrak train passing you  
6 going in the east direction.

7 A. Going east, yeah. It was a regional train.

8 Q. Did you hear any communication? Did that train call your  
9 train at all?

10 A. No, not that I heard. I was, I was so -- I was like A-  
11 focused on just my train and the safety of my people. That was  
12 all it was. I know I saw him come by and I knew I saw things  
13 shooting out, hitting that train for sure, but nothing that would  
14 cause them to derail. I thought in my head that train -- because  
15 I'm thinking back to Bridgeport, I'm thinking that train was on  
16 track 1 and we were on 3, and we clipped somehow with them. That  
17 was my whole, my whole thing, you know. I thought we hit them and  
18 then like enough came, enough to me, I looked over. I'm like,  
19 okay, 1's clear. He's on, you know, he's on track 2, so we're not  
20 going to hit him. But like we were swaying enough where if he was  
21 on 1, we would -- hands down would have hit him.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. But yeah, I didn't hear any transmissions from them at all.  
24 But I called -- I think the train was still -- we were still  
25 moving when I was called emergency out, trying to shut everything

1 down because I thought they were on our adjacent track, shaking  
2 about it.

3 Q. Do you need to take a break at all or anything?

4 A. No, I'm good. Yeah, I'm good.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. Thank you.

7 MR. PARKIN: I have no further questions right now. Thanks.

8 MR. SHEPPARD: Thank you.

9 MR. WHITE: I'm that to pass this time around. I want to ask  
10 a couple questions off the record.

11 MR. JOHNSON: I don't have anything for you.

12 BY MR. FRIGO:

13 Q. Okay. Let me -- Justin, I'll be quick here. Thank you again  
14 for your detailed description of the events.

15 So when you communicated with the rail control center, did  
16 you receive a reply?

17 A. I think they asked me what my emergency was and I told them  
18 that -- I don't know if I told them I think we hit another train.  
19 I mean, it was all reaction, everything was reaction. And I'm  
20 usually good under pressure, not like this right now, but usually  
21 I'm really good under pressure and I handle situations really  
22 well. Like that's -- I'm not floating my boat, but -- so I knew  
23 what had to get done and what needed to be said and who needed to  
24 know.

25 So I know they replied. I know they asked. And then I heard

1 Lenny -- it felt like a couple minutes later, he called emergency  
2 out, as well, but I had already done that. It was already shut  
3 down, everything was good, you know. So, and like I kept on -- I  
4 remember calling them a few times saying, is track 1 live? Like  
5 is track 1 -- I need track 1 dead right now. Because I wanted to  
6 go out and inspect the other side, see maybe a catenary got ripped  
7 off and was leaning over. I didn't know, you know. But I kept on  
8 asking them and finally like, yes, track 1 is dead, you know,  
9 track 1 is out of service. You know, okay, I'm like all right.  
10 But then I got whatever with the trainmasters and then people that  
11 wanted to be boss.

12 Q. You mentioned you went to the hospital.

13 A. I did.

14 Q. Were you injured at all?

15 A. My face bounced off of -- I don't know if it was the wall or  
16 a door. I was in a vestibule, so I had just come through the  
17 doors. And I had made my sweep through the first set of --  
18 there's like, I don't know, eight rows of seats maybe. I made it  
19 through there and I was in the vestibule when it started going up  
20 and down and all over. And I knew I flew one way, hit my face on  
21 something, and then, I don't know, I was on the ground. You know,  
22 I landed on my -- I don't even know how I landed.

23 But, you know, as soon as I got up, I was looking around; I  
24 was trying to assess everything, making sure everybody was okay,  
25 you know, telling everybody -- yelling to people, get to the right

1 of the train, get to the right side of the train. You know,  
2 because if that train came through, I didn't want it to like sheer  
3 into our train or -- I don't know. I just had a million things go  
4 through my head and I did what I thought I had to do, you know.

5 But yeah, I tweaked my back. I don't know what it is. They  
6 x-rayed it, said nothing's broken. So I'm happy with that, and  
7 I'm -- as far as I know, nobody -- there's no serious injuries. I  
8 think there was a guy in my car that had heart issues.

9 You know, when I went outside and the fire department was  
10 coming and everything, they stopped at the head of the train and  
11 so I told the one cop, I'm like, dude, have them come down; you  
12 want to walk this guy six cars through this rubble? I said have  
13 them come down and cut the fence. It's not a big deal. It's a  
14 fence, a chain-link fence. So they ended up calling them. They  
15 all walked back to the cars, trucks, drove down, cut the fence and  
16 started like hauling people off, you know, right there. Like it  
17 was -- it just made sense to me, you know, like just stuff that  
18 made sense to me.

19 And so, yeah, so I mean my injury like I didn't feel a thing.  
20 I was floating the entire time. But like, you know -- I don't  
21 know. And then after everybody was there, everybody else had  
22 control of it, you know, I knew nobody was dead, I knew it was,  
23 you know -- just like my adrenalin just started leaking out and  
24 I'd start like stiffening up here and there, you know. So I took  
25 the ride to White Plains Hospital.



1 Q. You doing good now? Feeling all right?

2 A. I'm -- I got a little Valium in me. You know, they're  
3 doctoring me up a little bit, you know, but it's like -- that day  
4 it was like eh; day 2 it was like hurting; now it's -- I got an  
5 appointment with my doctor tomorrow morning 10:30, so --

6 Q. Take care of yourself.

7 A. It's just, it's just -- I don't know if it's just tightening  
8 up or what. I don't know. I was a construction guy for a long  
9 time. I don't baby shit -- pardon my mouth. You know, I don't --  
10 you know, like I just eat it; it's not a big deal. But this is  
11 like, you know, I don't know.

12 Q. Make sure you take care of yourself and -- I don't have any  
13 further questions.

14 MR. PARKIN: I don't have any further questions either.  
15 Thank you.

16 MR. SHEPPARD: Thank you.

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No.

18 MR. FRIGO: Any clarifications or anything?

19 MR. SANZARI: I'm good. Not at this moment.

20 BY MR. FRIGO:

21 Q. Okay. And I'll just give -- Justin, I'll give you the  
22 opportunity to have the last and final question, and it's -- is  
23 there anything that you want to add that we should look into as  
24 part of this investigation? Is there anything that you can think  
25 of?

1 A. I know like the few times I did work with Lenny, he is a very  
2 good engineer. Whatever happened was just -- it was a mind slip.  
3 It could have happened to anybody. So I mean, it's -- he's a  
4 great guy and he's a great engineer. So, you know, that's about  
5 all I have to say about that.

6 MR. FRIGO: All right, Justin, thank you. And with that  
7 we'll go off the record.

8 (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: METRO-NORTH DERAILMENT NEAR  
RYE, NEW YORK, ON MAY 18, 2017  
Interview of Justin Sheppard

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA17FR008

PLACE: Stamford, Connecticut

DATE: May 22, 2017

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.

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Sandra K. Young  
Transcriber