

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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 IN RE: :
 :
 THE AMTRAK ACCIDENT : NTSB Accident No.
 IN WEST PALM BEACH, FLORIDA: DCA16FR009
 ON JULY 6, 2016 :
 :
 -----:

INTERVIEW OF: DAVID MAJOR

Wednesday,
August 10, 2016

Fort Lauderdale, Florida

BEFORE

KALU KELLY EMEABA, NTSB
 RICHARD RUSNAK, FRA
 RICHARD PAGE, NTSB
 OFFICER JAMES INGRASSIA, West Palm Beach Police
 Department
 RUSSELL HUNTER, FRA
 NILES BLAZE, VTMI

This transcript was produced from audio
provided by the National Transportation Safety Board.



P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

(10:22 a.m.)

1
2
3 MR. PAGE: This is August 10th, 2016 at
4 10:22 a.m. We're at the Everglades Room in Fort
5 Lauderdale, Florida. Or Dania Beach, Florida.

6 My name is Riky Page, I'm the IIC of the
7 West Palm Beach 25th Street investigation over the
8 Amtrak Train and the collision with a vehicle.

9 We'll go around the room and introduce
10 ourselves. Before speaking, give your name and title.

11 The purpose of this investigation is to
12 increase safety, not assign fault or blame or
13 liability. The NTSB cannot offer any guarantee of
14 confidentiality or immunity from legal or certificate
15 action.

16 A transcript or summary of the interview
17 will go into the public docket.

18 The interviewee can have one representative
19 of the interviewees choice. The representative may be
20 an attorney, but it is not required to be an attorney.
21 The representative may not testify for the interviewee.

22 Today we are having an interview with Mr.
23 David Major. Mr. Major, would you give us your name
24 and title?

25 MR. MAJOR: David Major, signal manager with

NEAL R. GROSS

1 VTMI.

2 MR. PAGE: We'll go around the room at this
3 point, beginning with Mr. Emeaba.

4 MR. EMEABA: My name is Kalu Kelly Emeaba,
5 K-A-L-U, K-E-L-L-Y, last name, E-M-E-A-B-A. I am an
6 NTSB Investigator.

7 OFFICER INGRASSIA: Officer James Ingrassia.
8 Last name, I-N-G-R-A-S-S-I-A. IAID 1857 of the West
9 Palm Beach Police Department, Traffic Homicide
10 Division.

11 MR. HUNTER: My name is Russell Hunter,
12 Federal Railroad Administration, signal and train
13 control inspector, South and Central Florida.

14 MR. RUSNAK: My name is Richard Rusnak, R-U-
15 S-N-A-K. Chief inspector, Federal Railroad
16 Administration, Region III.

17 MR. MAJOR: My name is David Major, signal
18 manager with VTMI. That's, M-A-J-O-R.

19 MR. BLAZE: My name is Niles Blaze, general
20 manager for VTMI.

21 MR. PAGE: Introductions have been made. I
22 will begin questioning. Mr. Major, can you recollect
23 or recall the events that occurred on July the 6th,
24 2016 at 25 Street in West Palm Beach, in reference to a
25 train/vehicle collision with Amtrak?

1 MR. MAJOR: All I know, I was not at the
2 scene, I was not notified immediately after the
3 incident. Let's see, I believe I was reading about it
4 via the emails that were going out. Or texts that
5 there were emails going out from the OPs center. And
6 then later showed up that night, to help with the
7 investigation.

8 MR. PAGE: Riky Page. Do you immediately
9 supervise Mr. Perez?

10 MR. MAJOR: No I do not.

11 MR. PAGE: What is your job function?

12 MR. MAJOR: My job is to match the signal
13 maintainers on the North end of the railroad. From
14 West Palm Beach down to, which is on 7 we call it.
15 Which is down around the, just North of Fort Lauderdale
16 area there.

17 MR. PAGE: Riky Page. Do you know Mr.
18 Perez? Do you give him any instructions in reference
19 to his job description or?

20 MR. MAJOR: No I do not.

21 MR. PAGE: Do you have any other statements
22 you would like to make in reference to the
23 train/vehicle collision on July the 6th, 2016?

24 MR. MAJOR: No I do not.

25 MR. PAGE: Do you have anything you would

1 like to add or change?

2 MR. MAJOR: No.

3 MR. PAGE: At this time I will turn my
4 questioning over to my colleague, Mr. Emeaba.

5 MR. EMEABA: Thank you. This is Kalu Kelly
6 Emeaba. Mr. Major, I know you've answered some of the
7 question, but just for the record and clarity, I may
8 want to restate some of the questions he has asked.

9 MR. MAJOR: Okay.

10 MR. EMEABA: And you will probably answer it
11 more direct. Could you please state your position with
12 the VTMI, your education and training?

13 MR. MAJOR: Okay. My name is David Major,
14 signal manager with VTMI. Training, as far as?

15 MR. EMEABA: Experience on the work you have
16 been trained.

17 MR. MAJOR: Okay. I have been in the
18 railroad industry for almost 24 years.

19 MR. EMEABA: Okay.

20 MR. MAJOR: Started at the basic level and
21 have worked my way up over those years. That's how
22 I've become very familiar with the signal system.

23 As far as training, it was all on job
24 training learning from the more synced senior people
25 who were above me as I came up.

1 MR. EMEABA: Okay. Were there prior
2 education in addition to the trainings you received?

3 MR. MAJOR: Not -- well, there was minimal
4 training as far as GE, when they would come out with
5 new products. GE would come in and train us. Or if a
6 vendor came out with new products that we were going to
7 be using, we would get training from those vendors.

8 MR. EMEABA: Okay. And then do you have
9 prior education, like college education or --

10 MR. MAJOR: I have graduated high school.
11 Have minimal college education.

12 MR. EMEABA: So can you please explain your
13 job functions, prior to the accident, and have they
14 changed?

15 MR. MAJOR: Our job functions --

16 MR. EMEABA: No, your own.

17 MR. MAJOR: My functions are to make sure
18 the maintainers are doing their jobs and doing their
19 testing and getting all their paperwork filed and
20 staying in compliance.

21 As far as anything on my level changing,
22 nothing has changed there. Nothing.

23 MR. EMEABA: Okay.

24 MR. MAJOR: We're still keeping them on
25 task.

1 MR. EMEABA: So how many personnel do you
2 supervise? Up till July 26th, 2015? 2016. On the day
3 of the accident.

4 MR. MAJOR: Well, right now I have seven
5 people that I supervise.

6 MR. EMEABA: Okay. And how many currently?

7 MR. MAJOR: Seven.

8 MR. EMEABA: Okay. So does that include Mr.
9 Perez?

10 MR. MAJOR: No it does not.

11 MR. EMEABA: Okay. Please, could you walk
12 us through how your day started on July 6th? Above the
13 walk, I mean the work and non-work related activities
14 that you performed. On July 6th.

15 MR. MAJOR: On July 6th?

16 MR. EMEABA: Yes, I'm sorry.

17 MR. MAJOR: Okay, could you repeat it, the
18 walk on the --

19 MR. EMEABA: Could you walk us through?

20 That means in --

21 MR. MAJOR: Oh, walk you through the --

22 MR. EMEABA: -- walk me through how your day
23 started --

24 MR. MAJOR: Okay.

25 MR. EMEABA: -- on July the 6th, 2016, prior

1 to the --

2 MR. MAJOR: All right. My day started, I
3 had a doctor's appointment that morning. I had to have
4 an MRI done. So I was in the office getting the MRI
5 done when the incident occurred.

6 After I got out and looked at my phone is
7 when I noticed that something had happened. And later
8 that day was requested to go up there, to help with any
9 investigation that was going on and to give whoever was
10 there whatever they needed to --

11 MR. EMEABA: When you say that, can you
12 explain where are you talking about?

13 MR. MAJOR: To 25th Street in West Palm
14 Beach.

15 MR. EMEABA: Okay.

16 MR. MAJOR: It's where the incident
17 occurred.

18 MR. EMEABA: Okay. And I was up there for
19 about three days in helping assist with the
20 investigation. And that's it.

21 MR. EMEABA: Okay. So during your work at
22 the 25th Street crossing, were you engaged in working
23 at the signal room or bungalow?

24 MR. MAJOR: I assisted when they opened up
25 the bungalow, because it was sealed when I got there.

1 MR. EMEABA: Okay. What were you assisting
2 to do?

3 MR. MAJOR: We were assisting to get a
4 download out of the recorder we had there. Of an NAS
5 box.

6 MR. EMEABA: Okay. So could you please
7 elaborate? And if possible, if you want to draw it,
8 the components, the installation and the signal
9 bungalow.

10 MR. MAJOR: What was that now?

11 MR. EMEABA: I said, could you please
12 elaborate? And if possible, if you want to draw it, if
13 I can give you a piece of paper to indicate some of the
14 components, the installations inside the signal
15 bungalow house.

16 MR. MAJOR: Oh, is --

17 MR. EMEABA: Are you able to do that?

18 MR. MAJOR: Oh, I think I can talk you
19 through it.

20 MR. EMEABA: Okay.

21 MR. MAJOR: Okay, we've got a GCP unit in
22 there that controls the crossing. That looks out both
23 directions to see oncoming trains.

24 MR. EMEABA: Yes, sir.

25 MR. MAJOR: We have a recorder in there that

1 records all the relays, movements of the trains and the
2 times of when the island drops and when it picks up and
3 whatnot. Let's see what else is in there.

4 Of course we have the battery chargers that
5 keep everything running. The batteries.

6 Let's see what else is in there. And that's
7 about all I can remember that's in that particular
8 location. As far as equipment.

9 MR. EMEABA: Okay. Within the signal,
10 bungalow signal house, are there things like the
11 memory, the computer to assess you need to the CPU that
12 are a part of the system? And if so, can you please
13 walk me through on the functions of the memory and the
14 computer processing units and --

15 MR. MAJOR: Okay, you're talking about the
16 NAS box?

17 MR. EMEABA: Yes.

18 MR. MAJOR: Yes. Okay, the NAS box has a
19 memory card and it also has its CPU card. The CPU is
20 what we have to plug into to pull the information out
21 of there to pull any type of reports off of there from
22 the memory.

23 Now when we first went, when I first went
24 into the case, when they went to seal it, the CPU was
25 missing.

1 MR. EMEABA: Okay.

2 MR. MAJOR: Okay. We do not know where that
3 CPU went or where it was. We knew it was three months
4 earlier because our electronics, I'm trying to think of
5 the proper term, what he is.

6 He is our -- our gentleman that goes around
7 and tests all the NAS boxes, make sure they're working,
8 he did an inventory of them. Which ones are working,
9 which ones aren't, what components they need, so we can
10 get them all working.

11 We know that three months earlier, that
12 particular unit was working and it had all of its
13 components. And the day that we unsealed it and went
14 in there to pull that report, we noticed that the CPU
15 was missing.

16 MR. EMEABA: Okay. Who was the technician,
17 to have it in the record, who was the technician
18 maintainer who was working at the location at the time
19 of the accident?

20 MR. MAJOR: What I was told that Al Perez
21 was the only person at that location at that time the
22 accident happened. But I'm hearing that secondhand. I
23 have no physical way of knowing if he was there or not.

24 MR. EMEABA: Okay. So do you have any
25 communication with Mr. Perez or any of that worker at

1 the signal house at the day of the accident?

2 MR. MAJOR: No.

3 MR. EMEABA: Okay.

4 MR. MAJOR: As I said, I was getting an MRI
5 that day.

6 MR. EMEABA: Okay. Can you explain to us,
7 do you understand the work Mr. Perez was expected to
8 perform at that location?

9 MR. MAJOR: Well, he was supposed to be
10 doing a relay test there. Yes, I knew of it. I used
11 to be a signal inspector myself. I mean I'm very
12 familiar with the work.

13 MR. EMEABA: Okay. Can you explain a little
14 bit further, knowing and you be experienced with what
15 Mr. Perez was supposed to be doing, is that a job that
16 one person should do or a number of people should do?

17 MR. MAJOR: Testing relays is a one-man job.
18 You just, you put protection on a crossing before
19 testing relays. You pull the relays at, you test them
20 one at a time. Record the serial number, record the
21 values at the pick up and drop out and inspect the
22 relay before putting it back in service.

23 MR. EMEABA: Okay. So a person performing
24 said job wouldn't need an assistance to do that?

25 MR. MAJOR: No. You can go into a house and

1 record all the serial numbers, all the pick up drop out
2 values, before you even touch a relay. You can sit
3 there and write all that information down.

4 Then you get time from the dispatcher to put
5 protection on the crossing. Then you touch the relays
6 one at a time.

7 MR. EMEABA: Okay. So with such job
8 function that require the individual to, at the same
9 time, while working at the bungalow, to at the same
10 time try to control the traffic?

11 MR. MAJOR: No.

12 MR. EMEABA: Thank you. That's my question
13 at this time.

14 OFFICER INGRASSIA: Officer James Ingrassia.
15 Just a few quick questions. You said that you were
16 managing currently seven people?

17 MR. MAJOR: Seven people.

18 OFFICER INGRASSIA: Are those seven people
19 managing other people underneath them?

20 MR. MAJOR: No.

21 OFFICER INGRASSIA: No? Okay. In regards
22 to the CPU that was missing, it was there three months
23 earlier, is there any tracking that your department,
24 business does, of where these parts go to if it as sent
25 out for repairs or any work order on it after those

1 three months? Is there any way to find out where it
2 went to?

3 MR. MAJOR: If it was removed for repair,
4 there would be an RMA issued or a PO assigned to it to
5 get it repaired. There would be paperwork to track it.

6 OFFICER INGRASSIA: Are you aware if there
7 is any paperwork or have you guys checked that
8 paperwork?

9 MR. MAJOR: There was no paperwork on that
10 particular CPU.

11 OFFICER INGRASSIA: That's all of my
12 questions.

13 MR. MAJOR: Okay.

14 MR. HUNTER: Russell Hunter with the FRA. I
15 only have two questions and they're both actually
16 clarification questions.

17 MR. MAJOR: Okay.

18 MR. HUNTER: They're just follow-up to two
19 questions that were already asked. You mentioned that
20 you supervised seven people. Can you, for the record,
21 breakdown your chain of the command as far as, you said
22 you supervised seven maintainers.

23 Al Perez is a signal inspector, he does not
24 work for you. Can you enlighten us as to your chain of
25 command, how it functions, who does he work for as

1 opposed to who do you supervise and who --

2 MR. MAJOR: Okay. I supervise the seven
3 maintainers on the north end of the railroad. Mr.
4 Khan, he has the seven maintainers on the south end of
5 the railroad.

6 The two signal inspectors in the gang we
7 have are supervised by Mr. Rashid.

8 MR. HUNTER: So that's who he directly would
9 report to --

10 MR. MAJOR: Yes.

11 MR. HUNTER: -- and give in his information
12 where he's going to be that day?

13 MR. MAJOR: Yes. He's the one that would be
14 watching their testing to make sure that it's getting
15 done and instructing them what needs to get done and
16 when to do it. Yes.

17 MR. HUNTER: Okay. Second question, you
18 mentioned that relay testing, as you said you prior
19 were an inspector before you moved into this
20 supervisory role, when you test a highway railway
21 crossing, I want you to kind of clarify the procedure.

22 You're working with live circuits and
23 working with relays, what do you do to that crossing to
24 ensure its safety, under normal circumstances, and what
25 is the potential that can happen when you test a

1 relays, as far as what could happen if you don't have
2 protection on that crossing?

3 MR. MAJOR: Okay. Well, the first time,
4 anytime you're going to test on live circuits, you have
5 to protect the crossing.

6 You have to call the dispatcher, let them
7 know what the task is that you're going to be doing at
8 what location. Give them the milepost, give them the
9 crossing. Put in an activation failure on the
10 crossing, as we call it, because you're going to
11 interrupt the circuits that operate that crossing.

12 And as you pull -- I used to have a separate
13 plugboard to test relays. So I would pull a relay,
14 plug it into the separate plugboard, test the relay,
15 put it back into the cradle where it belongs, after all
16 the testing was done, and then go through as I've
17 tested all the relays.

18 Now if you test relays while they're in the,
19 what I call the cradle or in the plugboard, and you're
20 testing them while they're operating the whole system,
21 you are going to interrupt the way that system is
22 designed to work. Because when you pick up a relay
23 using the test meter, you're actually holding it. The
24 current that normally would work that relay is no
25 longer working that, the meter is. So you're picking

1 it up and dropping it out with the meter. Is that
2 sufficient?

3 MR. HUNTER: Sure. Thank you.

4 MR. MAJOR: Okay.

5 MR. HUNTER: That's all I have.

6 MR. RUSNAK: Richard Rusnak. I have no
7 questions.

8 MR. MAJOR: Okay.

9 MR. BLAZE: Niles Blaze. David, do you know
10 where Mr. Rashid was the day of this incident?

11 MR. MAJOR: No, I do not know where he was
12 at.

13 MR. BLAZE: Did you see Mr. Rashid, who you
14 mentioned is Mr. Perez's direct supervisor, did you see
15 him at any time during this investigation?

16 MR. MAJOR: Let me think. I do not believe
17 I saw Mr. Rashid at all.

18 MR. BLAZE: Okay. I don't have any other
19 questions for you then.

20 MR. MAJOR: Okay.

21 MR. PAGE: Ricky Page. I'd like to just ask,
22 so it's standard operating procedure, while testing
23 relays, to remove the relay from the energized circuit
24 and to test it on a separate plugboard?

25 MR. MAJOR: That is the way I was taught to

1 do it because it's safer to test the individual relays
2 on a separate plugboard versus leaving them in the
3 system to test them.

4 MR. PAGE: Thank you, sir. Anymore
5 questions at this time?

6 MR. BLAZE: Niles Blaze. David, where did
7 you do your relay testing? Where is your experience
8 from?

9 MR. MAJOR: Okay, it was from the Florida
10 East Coast Railroad. I covered 282 miles, from Jupiter
11 to Jacksonville. I was responsible for the two-year
12 test, the four year test and the relay test. I was the
13 only guy in charge of that 282 miles.

14 MR. BLAZE: So --

15 MR. MAJOR: And I managed to take care of
16 everything there.

17 MR. BLAZE: Right. To answer your question,
18 it was over on FEC Railroad, correct?

19 MR. MAJOR: It was over on the FEC Railroad.

20 MR. BLAZE: Are you familiar with the CSX
21 procedures?

22 MR. MAJOR: On testing the relays?

23 MR. BLAZE: Testing relays, yes.

24 MR. MAJOR: No, I'm not up on their CSX
25 procedures.

1 MR. BLAZE: Did you know that leaving the
2 relays in place is their normal procedure for testing
3 relays?

4 MR. MAJOR: No, I did not.

5 MR. BLAZE: If you were to test a relay
6 while it was still in place --

7 MR. MAJOR: In place.

8 MR. BLAZE: -- let's say, would you have to
9 make other provisions to ensure that this interference
10 wouldn't adversely affect the safety of the railroad?

11 MR. MAJOR: Yes. You have to protect the
12 crossing after anytime you touch anything in the
13 crossing. If you're going to be interrupting the
14 circuit, you need to put protection on the crossing to
15 protect the public.

16 MR. BLAZE: So if the normal procedure at
17 FEC was to remove the relay from the --

18 MR. MAJOR: We would remove the relay and
19 test it.

20 MR. BLAZE: I see. Okay, thank you. No
21 other questions.

22 MR. PAGE: Riky Page. This concludes our
23 interview with Mr. David Major. Was there anything
24 you'd like to add or change, Mr. Major?

25 MR. MAJOR: No there is not.

1 MR. PAGE: Are there any questions we should
2 have asked but did not?

3 MR. MAJOR: No.

4 MR. PAGE: Do you have any suggestions for
5 preventing a reoccurrence?

6 MR. MAJOR: No.

7 MR. PAGE: Is there anyone else we should
8 interview?

9 MR. MAJOR: Not that I'm aware of

10 MR. PAGE: It is now 10:46 a.m., August
11 10th, 2016. This concludes the interview with Mr.
12 David Major. Thank you for your time, sir.

13 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went
14 off the record at 10:46 a.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

MATTER: Amtrak Accident in
West Palm Beach, FL
July 6, 2016, Accident No. DCA16FR009
Interview of David Major

DATE: 08-10-16

I hereby certify that the attached transcription of page 1 to 21 inclusive are to the best of my professional ability a true, accurate, and complete record of the above referenced proceedings as contained on the provided audio recording; further that I am neither counsel for, nor related to, nor employed by any of the parties to this action in which this proceeding has taken place; and further that I am not financially nor otherwise interested in the outcome of the action.

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]