

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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SEPTA TROLLEY ACCIDENT
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA
JANUARY 4, 2017

Accident No.: DCA17FR003

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Interview of: ANTHONY GAMBLE

SEPTA Headquarters
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Sunday,
January 8, 2017

APPEARANCES:

MIKE HOEPF, Human Performance Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

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

MICHAEL LYLES, Director, Surface Operations Supervision
Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority
(SEPTA), City Division

WILL VERA, Vice President
Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 234

STEVEN FRAZIER, Contractor
PennDOT State Safety Oversight Program
(Posting)

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>I N D E X</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Interview of Anthony Gamble:		
By Mr. Hoepf		5
By Mr. Vera		8
By Mr. Lyles		9
By Dr. Jenner		9
By Mr. Hoepf		13
By Dr. Jenner		17

I N T E R V I E W

1
2 MR. HOEPF: Okay. Good morning, everyone. Today's date is
3 January 8th, 2017. My name is Mike Hoepf. I'm with the NTSB.

4 We're currently at SEPTA Headquarters in Philadelphia. We're
5 here regarding an accident of a trolley accident that occurred on
6 January 4th, 2017. We are going to be interviewing Anthony Gamble
7 who is a transportation manager.

8 And I'm -- we're going to go around the room and introduce
9 ourselves, and so if everybody could just give your name, the
10 spelling of your last name, your organization and your title, I'd
11 appreciate it.

12 MR. VERA: My name is Will Vera, V-e-r-a. I'm the Vice
13 President of Local 234.

14 MR. FRAZIER: Steve Frazier, F-r-a-z-i-e-r. I'm with the
15 PennDOT State Safety Oversight, and I'm a Project Manager.

16 MR. LYLES: Michael Lyles, L-y-l-e-s, Director for SEPTA,
17 Service Managers, Streets Division.

18 DR. JENNER: I'm Stephen Jenner, S-t-e-p-h-e-n, J-e-n-n-e-r.
19 I'm a Human Performance Investigator with the NTSB.

20 MR. GAMBLE: And I'm Anthony Gamble, G-a-m-b-l-e,
21 Transportation Manager with SEPTA.

22 MR. HOEPF: Okay. Thank you. And again my name is Michael
23 Hoepf, that's H-o-e-p-f, and I'm a Human Performance Investigator
24 with the NTSB.

25 INTERVIEW OF ANTHONY GAMBLE

1 BY MR. HOEPF:

2 Q. Okay. So can you give us a little bit of background of just
3 your job and what you do and how long you've been working there?

4 A. This April it'll be 17 years I've been with SEPTA. I think
5 it will be 12 years as a Transportation Manager this April. What
6 I do as a Transportation Manager, I answer complaints, accident
7 investigation. I watch the lines and make sure that the buses and
8 trolleys are arriving on time to accommodate the passengers.

9 I -- also I do undercover rides also. If we get a complaint
10 against the operator, say we get numerous complaints about the
11 same thing, they normally have a supervisor such as myself go
12 undercover to see if the complaint is founded or not.

13 Also we work with regional rail when the trains go down, get
14 buses and we come take the passengers. My mind's racing right
15 now. I'm being interviewed. What else we do here? We do a lot.

16 Wheelchair passenger, ride around and make sure that the
17 transit stops are up, make sure when we riding out there the
18 overhead is intact so no lines are hanging or anything like that.
19 We also look for transit stops to make sure that they're safe for
20 passengers, don't fall anything like that.

21 And also we work well with the 234 members. We work very
22 well with them and things get done smoothly.

23 Q. All right. Great. Thanks. So if we could, we'd like to
24 talk about the incident on January 4th. Do you think you could
25 just basically give us a overview of your day? Just, you know,

1 when did you show up at work? What time did your shift begin?
2 What did you do? What happened throughout the day up to the
3 accident? You know, what did you do when you arrived? Who did
4 you see? Who did you talk to? And through, you know, the rest of
5 the day and I'm not going to interrupt you, if you could just
6 basically tell us everything you remember would be great.

7 A. Well, my shift is 7:00 to 3:00, Monday through Friday. Came
8 in a 7:00. I was briefed by my Assistant Director, what's going
9 on, what kind of checks we have to do, anything like that.

10 My day started, did a line check, engine running check,
11 forgot to put that in there. Make sure engines are not idling
12 unattended. I'm thinking on the accident day, it was something
13 else, but I know the regional rail went down that day at Kenwood
14 and I had to pull a bus.

15 And during the time of the regional rail being down, there
16 came over the radio that there was a major accident with multiple
17 aides (ph.) at 38th and Lancaster, but I was still at the regional
18 rail job.

19 Once I finished with the regional rail job, I came down to
20 38th and Lancaster. I -- Brian Nelson (ph.), who is my Senior
21 Director, he told me the operator in the second trolley is being
22 held off. I want you to stay with him the whole time.

23 So I was with the operator the whole time, the striking
24 operator. I was in rescue with him. Rescue was right around the
25 corner -- the hospital from, from the accident, in like two

1 minutes. We was in rescue. They were doing his vitals and
2 everything like that. I was on the bus with him when he was being
3 interviewed by the accident -- conducted the police accident
4 investigating unit also. Once in the hospital, they put him in a
5 wheelchair. Him and the other operator was in a wheelchair. We
6 was in the waiting room.

7 I wasn't sitting that far from him and he just said to me
8 like, "Damn, I blacked out." And that was it. Nothing more,
9 nothing less.

10 Eventually they took him in the back. Excuse me. I stood
11 outside his room because he had to get changed and everything, and
12 from that point, I stayed outside his room. I wanted him to feel
13 -- I wanted him to feel comfortable. I didn't want to stay in
14 there. He have just a gown on.

15 So eventually around 5:00 or 5:15, I got relieved by another
16 supervisor so I could go home. That's basically it.

17 Q. Okay. So he just said he blacked out and --

18 A. He said, "Damn, I just blacked out."

19 Q. Anything, anything stand out in your mind as being a
20 significant event, any other -- any unusual occurrences? Any
21 thoughts about the accident?

22 A. No, it just -- I was -- you know, we -- the supervisors and
23 managers, we have it very well organized, the police department,
24 the paramedics and the fire department. So everything to me when
25 I pulled up was running smoothly.

1 Q. Um-hum.

2 A. So it wasn't chaotic and like nobody knew what they're doing,
3 anything like that. Everybody had their ducks in a row and just
4 doing what they had to do.

5 Q. Okay. Did the operator seem coherent to you?

6 A. Yeah.

7 MR. HOEPF: Okay. That's all the questions I have for right
8 now.

9 MR. VERA: Will Vera here.

10 MR. GAMBLE: What's up, Will?

11 MR. VERA: Not much, man.

12 BY MR. VERA:

13 Q. Just real quick. So it's safe to say when you got there,
14 your main responsibility was to stay with the striking operator?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. You -- did you do any kind of accident investigation at all?

17 A. No, nothing.

18 Q. Okay. Nothing in regard to taking pictures, looking at the
19 scene, none of that?

20 A. None of that.

21 Q. Okay. That's all I have.

22 A. Okay.

23 MR. FRAZIER: Steve Frazier, PennDOT, I have no questions.

24 MR. GAMBLE: My man.

25 MR. LYLES: Mike Lyles, SEPTA.

1 BY MR. LYLES:

2 Q. Mr. Gamble, at any time during that day, did you have any
3 interaction with this operator before this, this accident?

4 A. No.

5 Q. Okay. You said that you went in the medic with the operator.
6 Did he volunteer information or did you question him on
7 information about the accident?

8 A. I never questioned him about the accident.

9 Q. You said he said he felt -- what did you say?

10 A. He blacked out.

11 Q. He blacked out. Sorry. You don't know why he made that
12 statement to you, right?

13 A. We was in the emergency room for a long time.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. He just came out and said, "Damn, I just, I just blacked
16 out."

17 Q. Normal conversation.

18 A. Normal -- it just came out. We wasn't even talking about
19 anything. We was -- I was watching TV. He said, "Damn, I just, I
20 just blacked out."

21 MR. LYLES: No further questions at this time.

22 DR. JENNER: Okay. Steve Jenner with the NTSB.

23 BY DR. JENNER:

24 Q. What time did you arrive on scene?

25 A. I can't remember. It was chaotic. I can't remember the

1 time.

2 Q. Do you know what time you departed your previous work to get
3 to the scene?

4 A. It had to be past 1:00. It had to be like close like --
5 around 1:30-ish, I was up at City Line in Drexel at
6 (indiscernible) Train Station, and I left there to come down to
7 assist at 38th and Lancaster Avenue.

8 Q. Okay. I'm just trying to get an approximation.

9 A. Okay.

10 Q. So all that considered, 1:30 plus your travel time. So if
11 you can give me a range of time that you arrived?

12 A. I'll say about, about 15 minutes it took me to get down here.

13 Q. So you arrived maybe 1:45-ish?

14 A. Approximately.

15 Q. Yeah, that's, that's fine. And what did you do when you were
16 on scene? Did you talk to the other operator?

17 A. No, what I did, I came and asked other supervisors if they
18 needed any help which I knew they do, and there was a lot of
19 people injured and when people are injured, you need their name,
20 date of birth, Social Security Number, address. You've got to get
21 a lot of information with this person.

22 Q. Sure.

23 A. So I know it takes time. So I went to the supervisors and
24 asked him, "Champ (ph.)", I say, "You need help?" He said, "No,
25 I'm okay. I'm finishing up here." So I turned to another

1 supervisor, Darryl Fogg (ph.). I asked him if he needed help.
2 He's like, "No, right now I'm okay." And that's when my Senior
3 Director came to me and said -- (indiscernible) said, "I need you
4 to stay with that operator. He's being held over. I don't want
5 you to let him out your eyesight."

6 Q. Um-hum.

7 A. So I went on that trolley. During that time, the
8 Philadelphia Police Department accident investigation was
9 interviewing him on the trolley, and I sat in on that. And he was
10 talking to the accident investigator, and he also told him, said
11 that he blacked out also, and he took some kind of cold medicine
12 or something.

13 Q. How do you know that?

14 A. I overheard the conversation. He was talking to the accident
15 investigation, Philadelphia Police Department.

16 Q. Do you remember overhearing anything else?

17 A. No, that was it.

18 Q. Okay. So if you arrived around approximately 1:45 and you
19 talked to other officials, approximately what was the first time
20 that you saw him?

21 A. He was sitting on some steps outside the trolley, like on
22 somebody's steps.

23 Q. Um-hum.

24 A. He was sitting over there and that's when accident
25 investigation came up and wanted to interview him, Philadelphia

1 Police accident investigation wanted to interview him. So they
2 went on the trolley.

3 Q. Um-hum.

4 A. At first, the operator said he wasn't injured. Then after
5 while, I guess he got -- the pain started happening. He wanted to
6 go to the hospital. So I rode in the rescue with both operators,
7 the striking and the one that was struck, all three of us in the
8 rescue together.

9 Q. I see. Anyone else in there?

10 A. Just the medics, two medics.

11 Q. Okay. I think you were asked earlier how he seemed to you in
12 terms of being coherent and did -- how, how did he seem to you?

13 A. He seemed shaken (ph.) up. I mean he just had a really bad
14 accident. I mean he wasn't cracking jokes or anything. He just
15 was like -- I guess he was like, "Wow, I can't believe what just
16 happened." You know, he wasn't upset. He wasn't crying. He was
17 just like, you know, like -- I guess to say he was like -- I guess
18 like -- I guess sucking it all in.

19 Q. Um-hum.

20 A. You, you understand what I'm saying?

21 Q. Sure.

22 A. But he seemed okay to me.

23 Q. Okay. Was he holding any part of his body, holding his head,
24 holding his arms or his legs or back?

25 A. I don't remember.

1 Q. Okay. Do you know -- did you know the operator before this
2 incident?

3 A. I've seen him before. I don't know him personally. I never
4 knew his first name --

5 Q. Um-hum.

6 A. -- until that day I mean at the accident.

7 Q. Okay. Did you see him having conversations with anyone else
8 after you arrived besides the investigations?

9 A. No.

10 Q. Okay. So the things of note, you overheard him talking about
11 taking medication and you overheard or he told you he blacked out.

12 A. Um-hum.

13 Q. Anything else about how the equipment worked or, you know,
14 the brake -- the braking system, what he did to try to avoid the
15 accident, anything along that line?

16 A. No.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. Not at all.

19 Q. Okay. That's all I have. Thank you.

20 A. Okay.

21 BY MR. HOEPF:

22 Q. Okay. Great. I don't really have much in the way of follow-
23 up questions for you. You know, I think Steve did a good job of
24 trying to follow up on some of those smaller details. You know,
25 again we'd just be interested if you can remember any of those

1 conversations at all other than just saying he blacked out. Did
2 he, you know, do you recall any of those conversations at all?

3 A. No.

4 Q. No. Okay.

5 A. No.

6 Q. Did -- prior to this, did you know Mr. Anderson?

7 A. No. I would see him, like I see operators all the time.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. "Hey, how you doing," and keep on moving.

10 Q. Um-hum. Um-hum. But you never really interacted with him a
11 lot. So.

12 A. I interacted with him about I think in November, something
13 like that, around that time. He was written up for a violation.
14 He was written up because I told him several times about the
15 routine of the bus, and I told him several times, if you're the
16 next bus out, pull your bus out. And I gave him several breaks.
17 I'm not going to lie to you all, and I got it pulled up, and it
18 was him. I didn't know it was him. So I wrote him up for that
19 violation. I think it was in November if I'm not mistaken.

20 Q. I'm sorry. What was the violation again?

21 A. All right. Here in SEPTA, if you're the next vehicle --
22 scheduled vehicle that's due out of the stand --

23 Q. Um-hum.

24 A. -- you have to pull your bus up to accommodate the
25 passengers.

1 Q. Um-hum.

2 A. And a couple of times he didn't do it, and one time I pulled
3 in the loop and I didn't know whose bus it was, and I pulled the
4 bus up myself and I don't know where he came from, and I say,
5 "Hey, man, you know, you're the next one out. There's people
6 waiting to be accommodated." And he apologized, but I gave him a
7 warning before. I said, "Unfortunately I have to write you up
8 this time."

9 Q. I'm sorry. I'm just -- I'm not familiar with the -- where
10 would this be?

11 A. In the loop.

12 Q. At the loop?

13 A. 63rd and Malvern. I'm sorry. I forgot. You don't know
14 anything about SEPTA. I'm sorry. (Indiscernible) 63rd and
15 Malvern. 63rd and Malvern, there's a loop. They was doing
16 construction on the rail during this time. So they converted the
17 trolley over to bus. The next scheduled bus that's due out to the
18 stand, has to be pulled up to the stand to accommodate the
19 passengers, and his bus wasn't.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. And I spoke to him previously about this.

22 Q. Um-hum.

23 A. And I informed him of the violation. He was nice about it.
24 He wasn't upset or anything like that. Usually he's a really nice
25 guy. "I understand," and that was it.

1 Q. Okay. In some previous interviews, we talked about a point
2 system people have for -- related to their attendance, you know,
3 where if they call in sick they get two points, something like
4 that. Is it your understanding that that system is independent of
5 other disciplinary actions or is that related to other
6 disciplinary actions? Like say if I had points for being late or
7 something, is that combined with other disciplinary actions to
8 make an overall assessment of an operator just in general?

9 A. I wouldn't know that.

10 Q. That's not your area. Okay. Great. And thank you. And I
11 don't want you to --

12 A. No problem.

13 Q. -- speculate on things that, you know, you don't know what to
14 say. Do you have any -- I mean did you have any concerns about
15 Mr. Anderson? I mean was this just a routine violation that
16 happens to anyone or was this a repeated issue? Did you have any
17 other thoughts on it?

18 A. No, I was just doing my job.

19 Q. Okay. So pretty standard stuff?

20 A. It's standard, yeah.

21 Q. Okay. So you didn't have any concerns regarding his health
22 or anything like that?

23 A. Not at all.

24 MR. HOEPF: Okay. Okay. That's all I've got. That's all
25 I've got.

1 MR. VERA: I pass to my right. I'm good.

2 MR. FRAZIER: I pass as well.

3 MR. LYLES: I'm good.

4 BY DR. JENNER:

5 Q. I can't let you off that easy. Just related to the bus write
6 up.

7 A. Um-hum.

8 Q. Can you recall the reason why the violation -- the reason why
9 the violation occurred?

10 A. What do you mean?

11 Q. He didn't pull up the bus as he was required to do.

12 A. Um-hum.

13 Q. Did he -- why? Why didn't he do that? Do you know why?

14 A. I don't remember.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. I don't remember. I don't remember yesterday.

17 Q. So -- but Mike was mentioning about the point system, if
18 you're absent or late too many times, there are consequences after
19 a period of time. Are there consequences if you have a number of
20 violations?

21 A. I wouldn't know that.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. That's handled by the district. All I do is submit paperwork
24 and keep it moving. I don't know what goes on once I submit the
25 paperwork.

1 Q. And where does your paperwork go?

2 A. It would have been at our district, Elmwood District. It's
3 at Elmwood Avenue, Elmwood District and the system director takes
4 it up and makes copies and goes to my director.

5 Q. Great. Thank you.

6 A. No problem.

7 MR. HOEPF: Does anybody else have any other questions?

8 Okay. Well, thank you very much for your time. We
9 appreciate it. We are going to go off the record.

10 (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: SEPTA TROLLEY ACCIDENT
 PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA
 JANUARY 4, 2017
 Interview of Anthony Gamble

ACCIDENT NUMBER: DCA17FR003

PLACE: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

DATE: January 8, 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.

Kathryn A. Mirfin
Transcriber