

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

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AMTRAK EMPLOYEE FATALITY *

IN WESTERLY, RHODE ISLAND, * Accident No.: RRD22LR005

ON JANUARY 15, 2022 *

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Interview of: THEODORE GILCHREST, Engineer
Amtrak

Via telephone

Wednesday,
January 19, 2022

APPEARANCES:

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National Transportation Safety Board

MICHAEL HOEPF, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

JOE GORDON, Investigator In Charge
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Amtrak

DAVE LUNA, Representative
Local BLET Division 312

I N D E X

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I N T E R V I E W

1
2 DR. HOEPF: Okay, looks like it has started. So, my name is
3 Mike Hoepf, today is January 19th, 2022, and we are virtually
4 interviewing the engineer in connection with an accident that
5 occurred in Westerly, Rhode Island on January 15th, 2022. The
6 NTSB Accident Number is RRD22LR005. The purpose of the
7 investigation is to increase safety, not to assign fault, blame,
8 or liability. The NTSB cannot offer any guarantee of
9 confidentiality or immunity from legal or certificate actions. A
10 transcript or summary of the interview will go on the public
11 docket. The interviewee can have one representative of the
12 interviewee's choice.

13 Ted, do you understand that the interview is being recorded?

14 MR. GILCHRIST: Yes.

15 DR. HOEPF: Okay, and can you please state your name and
16 spell it?

17 MR. GILCHRIST: Theodore Gilchrest, T H E O D O R E
18 G I L C H R I S T.

19 DR. HOEPF: Great, thank you, and again, I'm Mike Hoepf.
20 That's H O E P F. I'm with the NTSB and I'll turn to my NTSB
21 colleagues to introduce themselves.

22 MR. GORDON: All right, thanks for being with us, Ted.
23 Joe Gordon, NTSB, investigator in charge for this investigation,
24 G O R D O N.

25 MR. ZAGATA: Zach Zagata and that's Z A G A T A, and I'm an

1 NTSB operating practices investigator.

2 DR. HOEPF: And FRA?

3 MR. FITZPATRICK: Good morning, Sean Fitzpatrick, I'm an OP
4 inspector here in Massachusetts. First name S E A N, last name
5 F I T Z P A T R I C K.

6 MR. KELSO: And good afternoon, Matthew Kelso, M A T T H E W
7 K E L S O, District One OP specialist.

8 MR. SMITH: And good afternoon, Owen Smith, O W E N, last
9 name Smith, S M I T H. I am the district track safety inspector
10 covering Rhode Island and I'm an observer.

11 DR. HOEPF: Okay, thank you.

12 Smart?

13 MR. HAMER: Good morning, Stephen Hamer, H A M E R, Smart
14 Transportation Division.

15 DR. HOEPF: Thank you.

16 BLET?

17 MR. FANNON: Randy Fannon, F A N N O N, BLET Safety
18 Taskforce.

19 DR. HOEPF: Thank you.

20 Amtrak?

21 MR. YOUNG: Good afternoon, Steve Young, S T E V E Y O U N G,
22 assistant vice president Northeast Division Transportation and the
23 lead for Amtrak on this. Just a quick statement, I'd like to
24 thank Mr. Gilchrist for his actions on 01-15 and again, for being
25 here today, and he has my condolences on the loss of his crew

1 member.

2 And Hanan, if you could introduce the observers in the
3 office, please? I'd appreciate it, thank you.

4 MS. FADEL: Hanan Fadel, assistant superintendent road ops,
5 H A N A N F A D E L.

6 Joe?

7 MR. BURGESS: Joseph Burgess, J O S E P H B U R G E S S, road
8 foreman.

9 MS. FADEL: David?

10 MR. LUNA: Dave Luna, L U N A, Local BLET Division 312
11 representative.

12 MS. FADEL: And that's all we have.

13 DR. HOEPF: Okay, great. Thank you, everyone, much
14 appreciated.

15 INTERVIEW OF THEODORE GILCHREST

16 BY DR. HOEPF:

17 Q. And thank you, Ted, for being here today. As it's been said,
18 we really appreciate it. We're, you know, really sorry for your
19 loss. I'm sure there's a lot of places you would rather be today,
20 but we do appreciate it. We're just here trying to hopefully
21 prevent a reoccurrence. So, that's all that this is about. So,
22 if you can kind of just start off and just tell us a little bit
23 about your railroad career and your current position? We
24 appreciate it.

25 A. I came to Amtrak in 2008, communications and signals out of

1 Providence. I was a maintainer for about a year out of
2 Providence. I kind of went between Davisville and Malcolm
3 (indiscernible). I came to TNE Engine School in January of 2011
4 and been here since. My position's engineer.

5 Q. Okay, great, thank you. So, how many years do you think
6 you've been an engineer then?

7 A. Been -- yeah, I was set up in probably, like, June of 2012.

8 Q. Okay, got you, thanks. Okay, and so you got a lot of
9 experience with this territory?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Okay, great, thanks. Okay, so -- I mean, as you know, we're
12 here to talk about a tragic accident, which I know is not easy,
13 but I think the best we can do is just kind of jump in. So, if
14 you could just tell us about, you know, the day of the accident
15 and just kind of walk us through in your own words as best as you
16 can? We appreciate it.

17 A. Yeah, I was just, you know, Saturday morning, uneventful.
18 Our equipment was late coming over, they had to cap the engine and
19 then they gave us 135's equipment, so we were just over an hour
20 late. The job briefing was normal, you know, joking around,
21 having some fun. Basically, an uneventful run up until Westerly.
22 There was no issues, made my station stop. Shawn -- not Shawn,
23 Jason told Emily he was all done with the station work, he was all
24 buttoned up, just waiting on her. He called out again, no
25 response. I'm not sure if he called out again and then I

1 interjected and asked if everything was all right back there.
2 Passengers get nuts. Then he called for a radio check and again,
3 I read you loud and clear.

4 He asked to meet me on the ground, we did a face-to-face, and
5 asked if I could help him walk the train, another set of eyes.
6 So, I go down the café car -- the A end of the cafe car and walk
7 forward, checking all the vestibules and the bathrooms. I didn't
8 see her, the LSA didn't see her. We met back down on the ground
9 and Jason suggested should we walk the tracks and I went yeah, we
10 should and I had -- I tried calling on the radio. I called
11 Mainline and New London if any dispatcher could please respond, we
12 have a situation going on. I told Jason to get on his phone and
13 call the chief and we started walking the tracks and that's when I
14 saw her body probably about 200 yards down track. I raced up to
15 her to see if I could do first aid or check for a pulse and at
16 that point, there was -- she was already gone. So, then Jason
17 came up, I think the chief, if I remember correctly, just wanted
18 verification that she was deceased. I told Jason not to look, he
19 took a quick glance. It went -- you know, some conversation,
20 should he call her husband, I said no, should we cover the body, I
21 said no. I said technically it's a crime scene, we shouldn't do
22 anything and he went back to make announcements that we were going
23 to be delayed and I stayed with her until they pronounced her.
24 Q. Thank you, that's very helpful, we appreciate it. So, let's
25 talk a little about the trip and if, you know, you want to take a

1 break at any time, just let us know and we can take a quick break.
2 But yeah, so you departed out of Boston, do you know what time you
3 took off on the trip?

4 A. Oh, let's 11:40 -- probably about 12:30 or somewhere in there
5 because like I said, we were delayed, So, at that point in time,
6 you lose -- you know, you're not worried about times and station
7 stops and getting out (audio glitch).

8 DR. HOEPF: Okay, sounds good. Thanks, Ted. I'm going to go
9 ahead and turn it over to Sean in the room there and let him go
10 ahead and talk a little bit more about the day.

11 BY MR. FITZPATRICK:

12 Q. How are you? Just -- Ted, you've already covered most of it,
13 if you need a break, like a sip of water --

14 A. Yeah, I'm fine.

15 Q. If you need anything, just say so. So, June 2012, you've
16 been an engineer, you're -- I'm trying to delete most of the
17 questions you've already answered. You're -- how familiar are you
18 with the territory? How many trips would you say in the last 60
19 days?

20 A. A fair amount. One of the -- was one of the most senior
21 people on the board, so I tried and grab as many hold downs as I
22 can. I prefer to work, so the hold down I was on was deadhead
23 three days a week and I actually was working it four days a week
24 because I got called out on Tuesday and asked to board 2169 and
25 back 2172 all the way from Boston to New York and back. So, it's

1 either Boston, New Haven or Boston, New York.

2 Q. So, that was your regular routine for two weeks?

3 A. This would've been my second week, yes.

4 Q. What time were you on duty? Sorry, I wasn't (indiscernible).

5 A. 11:00.

6 Q. 11:00 a.m., okay, that's same as the conductor. Was PTC
7 operable and being used?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Did you have any unusual conditions? I know you had -- how
10 long of a trip was it between Boston and Westerly, an hour?

11 A. Just over an hour.

12 Q. Any problems with the signals or anything out of the ordinary
13 with the track?

14 A. Nothing.

15 Q. How was the equipment handling?

16 A. Fine.

17 Q. Same as (indiscernible)?

18 A. It was just extremely cold out. Other than that, everything
19 went fine.

20 Q. So, you were -- what kind of signal did you have coming into
21 the station?

22 A. We were unclear because before that, it's High Street because
23 after that, there's nothing. Your next signal would be the
24 distance for Mystic I believe.

25 Q. This next question I'm just asking for information so I could

1 visualize it. I get it, you were well below the maximum speed for
2 that, what type of equipment were you --

3 A. Alecia 64, seven cars.

4 Q. So, is that an A or a B in the (indiscernible) speeds?

5 A. That's B speed.

6 Q. B speed, so what would the max be for that area?

7 A. If you stop, then you have to be down to 70 at milepost 142.
8 I was probably doing about 60, 55.

9 Q. So, you were obviously well below that because you were
10 coming in to make a station stop?

11 A. Yeah, and the mark that we use, you know, she wanted three,
12 four, and five -- you know, a third double, fourth double, fifth
13 double. I was coming in easy, I hit the mark, you know. It was
14 quiet like it normally is.

15 Q. What do you mean by third double, fourth double, fifth
16 double?

17 A. The way the coaches are lined up. That's the way they wanted
18 to passengers to get on.

19 Q. So, was it all three of those at this stop, or was it certain
20 stops for different doors?

21 A. Like initially, I wanted -- that day she wanted one car off,
22 but then we had a light load -- light passenger load, so she said
23 just keep everything off. So, I just pulled the engine off 128's,
24 normal spot because it's high level, Providence, normal spot, high
25 level. Kingston, high level, so I tend to pull it all the way

1 down. We weren't making Mystic that day, we were making Westerly.
2 Westerly's low, Mystic's low, they just come in easy.

3 Q. They -- the conductor's responsibility is they open the door
4 and they observe the platform. You're approaching the platform,
5 you see the platform in advance, they're not communicating with
6 you to stop you or spot you, are they?

7 A. No, if it's something out of the ordinary, like they want the
8 last double on because they have to use it, they might have an ADA
9 or something like that, they'll try and line up where -- I think
10 it's a wheelchair assist. They'll spot me up that way.

11 Q. So, for this --

12 A. For example, like, New London track two, going east, you
13 can't see what's going in with the cameras. But you have your
14 spots if they want it. If they have to do a double stop, they'll
15 spot you.

16 Q. But this particular stop, you were just going off of a set
17 number board or a location you had picked out in your head?

18 A. Yep. Yes, not yep.

19 Q. Give me two seconds here. So, when you came in -- I know
20 this is a crazy guesstimate, what speed do you think you were
21 going -- if you look at what it normally takes you to get down to
22 track speed down to a stop at a station and you figure how many
23 feet back. I don't need exact measurements, but what do you think
24 you were going there?

25 A. Typically, I don't like taking Westerly hot -- or hard, so I

1 usually come in relatively slow.

2 Q. Please don't think this is a rules class or --

3 A. Oh, no, I get it.

4 Q. It's information to help us understand.

5 A. I probably hit the platform around 30 or 35.

6 Q. Did you have anything -- you've already answered this
7 question, but was there anything unusual going in?

8 A. No, there was no one on the platform because it was brutally
9 cold out. Once we came in, then the people get out of their cars.

10 Q. Okay, so job briefings, did you guys have a job briefing
11 before you left Boston?

12 A. Yep.

13 Q. And --

14 A. That's where we determine what she wants done, like New
15 London, she might want second double, or the first double, or the
16 conductor in general. But with Saybrook, it's either -- going to
17 be 456. If it's 456, it means I have to get right up against the
18 signal at Saybrook. If it's 345, there's a mark there, you know,
19 and 345 is normal, especially with a seven-car set, that's where
20 we stop all the time.

21 Q. There's some equipment that will show you on display when
22 there's a door open in the train, you didn't have that on your
23 equipment, did you?

24 A. It's at the -- usually, if there was -- if you're straight,
25 you know, you can see the red light comes on. You'll call back

1 and say, you know, you got a door light back there. Normally,
2 coming into a station stop, it's normally (audio glitch). But at
3 the apex of the curve, I couldn't -- it's a curve that sweeps to
4 the left, so I can't see anything even if I look on the
5 left -- the fireman side camera, I can't see anything and, you
6 know, the mirror's kind of like funhouse mirrors because it's
7 metal. But it's a sweeping curve to the left and all the
8 centripetal force is pushing you out to the right.

9 Q. So, during your job briefing, do you remember the conductors
10 talking about door placements, who was going to have what door, or
11 would that be a job briefing they might have away from you after
12 the initial?

13 A. No, they had, I just don't recall -- we just went over no
14 (indiscernible), no changes, this is what we have for equipment,
15 you know, I asked what she wanted that day because she changed her
16 mind. Providence, normal, like I said, everything's normal. She
17 goes Westerly, 345, New London, one up high, Old Saybrook, 345.

18 Q. So, Westerly was the first low platform?

19 A. Yep.

20 Q. Did they have any job briefing communications about that with
21 you before the shift?

22 A. Yeah, we all sit down and this is what we discuss. Like New
23 London -- or, you know, to let me know if there's any ADA people,
24 you know special needs people getting on or if there's a minor,
25 you know, whatever, we might have to do a double spot. But today,

1 we -- today -- Saturday was just a normal, run of the mill day.
2 You know, up until that point, it was just go in, do the job
3 briefing, go over everything, the rule of the day, whatever, I
4 forget what that was. I talked to James, who was doing the brake
5 test with me. Jason's like oh, I want to do the brake test. I
6 think he was -- if he's doing a brake test, nine times out of ten
7 means he's flagging. So, he stated when I went on the ground that
8 his -- her door was open, trap was down, people getting on and
9 off. So, she's just no where to be found and like I said, when
10 you -- these passengers are lunatics.

11 Q. Back to the question I asked you about, them not spotting you
12 up at the platform, is there ever -- in your experience as an
13 engineer, has there ever been a notification on your approach to a
14 station with a conductor flagging -- observing the station after
15 you've gone by to head in that has given you any safety
16 information that was critical to coming to a stop?

17 A. No.

18 Q. You said that, I'm sorry.

19 A. No, the only thing you ever get is bring the train to a safe
20 stop because either the people forgot something, or their running,
21 or their trying to get off the train.

22 Q. And that would be on the tail end of pulling out of the --

23 A. Yeah.

24 MR. FITZPATRICK: I think you covered most of the questions I
25 had in your description. When we go around the room and they make

1 it back to me, I might have one or two questions.

2 MR. GILCHRIST: Okay.

3 MR. FITZPATRICK: That's all I have.

4 I'm good, you guys, I'll jump back in a little bit later.

5 DR. HOEPF: Okay, sounds good, thank you.

6 We'll go over to Smart.

7 BY MR. HAMER:

8 Q. Good morning, Steve Hamer, H A M E R, Smart Transportation
9 Division. Most of my questions have been answered, just a couple
10 otherwise. The -- Jason had said that there's a system that
11 closes the doors when you hit a certain speed if the door is open,
12 what speed is that?

13 A. I don't know, to be honest with you. I have no clue.

14 Q. Okay, another question --

15 A. I know the Acelas you can't move unless the doors are closed
16 and if someone pops the door open, the train will go in emergency.

17 Q. Okay, great, do you normally run the equipment -- how can I
18 say this -- do you normally not -- do you have -- do you run the
19 Acelas or is it normally the equipment that doesn't have, like,
20 the traction cut out that you're referring to basically.

21 A. Everything.

22 Q. You run everything?

23 A. I run the Acelas, diesels, run the ACS's. We're trained on
24 all the equipment that we use up here.

25 Q. So, given that, is it -- do you think it's easy for the train

1 crew to figure out and -- that's probably a bad choice of words,
2 but to determine that okay, I'm using a train that doesn't have a
3 traction cutout system versus the other train and working the
4 duties as they do between those two different -- dissimilar
5 equipment? Do you know where I'm coming from? Do you think it's
6 hard for them to work --

7 A. No, I mean, you know, on the -- I think on the regionals,
8 they'll key the doors -- they'll either key them forward, or key
9 them backwards, or key them all. Usually, they'll key them all if
10 you're a high level, like at 128 Providence, Kingston. New London
11 in particular -- not New London. New Haven, they'll key them all,
12 get everybody on and off. The Acelas, once you key the door, all
13 the doors open. The control, if it's Westerly, that day I think
14 it was only two, three doors they opened up. You know, they can
15 control how they -- I don't know how the system works -- you know,
16 they can key them forward, they can key them backwards, they can
17 pop their own door just to flag when they're coming in.

18 Q. Okay, and just to clarify, you said on the Acela, if they
19 actually do open the door, it puts the train in emergency?

20 A. Yep.

21 MR. HAMER: Okay, interesting. I think that's all I have
22 right now. Thank you.

23 DR. HOEPF: All right, thanks, Steve.

24 BLET?

25 BY MR. FANNON:

1 Q. Hey, Ted, Randy Fannon, F A N N O N, BLET. All my questions
2 are answered, Ted, so far, but I got one question. I'm not
3 familiar with your equipment as an engineer. You referenced a
4 camera on each side, is that something -- you're just using it
5 like a mirror? Can you explain that?

6 A. Yeah, there's four cameras, two on each end, engineer's side,
7 fireman's side, F end, R end. Some guys run with the cameras on,
8 some guys run with them off. You know, I prefer to run with them
9 on.

10 Q. So, what can you see with that?

11 A. You can see down the side of the train platform. The problem
12 is, like I said, you come in on that curve, you can only see down
13 maybe a car, car and a half. You can't see all the way down, but
14 they're good, you know, just to keep an eye if you're sitting
15 there for a little bit and you see something going on because
16 sometimes the mirrors will just lose -- they'll fold in a the high
17 end speeds.

18 Q. Do you -- are you aware or not if those cameras are recorded
19 anywhere?

20 A. I'm not aware much about if they're downloadable or not. I
21 don't know.

22 MR. FANNON: Okay, that's all the questions I had. Ted, I'm
23 sorry you're going through this and I appreciate your time.

24 MR. GILCHRIST: Thank you.

25 DR. HOEPF: Thank you, Randy.

1 Amtrak?

2 MR. YOUNG: Yeah, good afternoon, Steve Young, assistant vice
3 president at the Northeast Division of transportation. I have no
4 questions for Mr. Gilchrist at all, but just maybe a point of
5 clarity on the doors. The Acelas don't have traps and they make
6 any low-level stops, that's why the equipment's different. There
7 is no trap door system on it and they don't make any low-level
8 stops. So, you know, we don't have to worry about opening traps
9 and dropping traps, they don't have them. So, that's just a point
10 of clarity.

11 DR. HOEPF: Very helpful, thank you. I appreciate the
12 clarifying point there.

13 Zach?

14 MR. ZAGATA: Yeah, thanks.

15 BY MR. ZAGATA:

16 Q. Zach Zagata, NTSB. Thanks again, Ted, for helping us out.
17 Just a couple of questions for you. So, as you were coming into
18 Westerly, was there any radio communication that you heard at all?

19 A. No, nothing. If they needed me to do something, they
20 would've called out, but everything was fine. I was coming down
21 the rate of speed I wanted to come down nice and easy, made my
22 stop, grabbed a water. I was just waiting for them, you know, to
23 give the go ahead to go and Jason was not getting any
24 communications from Emily.

25 MR. ZAGATA: Okay, I appreciate it. That's all I've got for

1 now, thanks.

2 BY MR. GORDON:

3 Q. Hey, Ted, Joe Gordon, NTSB. Thanks for what you've given us
4 so far, very helpful. I just have a few follow-up questions. So,
5 had you worked with Emily -- had you worked with her as part of
6 your train crew much in the past common seater?

7 A. Yep.

8 Q. Okay, so you mentioned that because of the curvature coming
9 into Westerly, you're not -- you weren't tabled to have a vantage
10 point where you could see the red lights that would indicate that
11 a door was open?

12 A. Just maybe the first double (audio glitch).

13 Q. Okay, so other station platforms -- and just if you can kind
14 of think back to your time working with her and other
15 platform -- low-level platforms that you would be entering, would
16 you ever see a red light on in any of your previous trips that you
17 can recall?

18 A. Yeah, usually it's thick, you can see them. Even in the high
19 levels, you'll see the red lights come on just to double check.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. I checked leaving London. I wanted to see where they're
22 lining up just so I can go and make my stop.

23 Q. Okay, sorry, so is it not uncommon for those doors to be open
24 as you're coming into a station?

25 A. I wouldn't say that they're open, they pull the handle. Once

1 the handle's pulled, the red light comes on, that's an indication
2 for me so I understand where their position is.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. They're not necessarily opened. They might -- you might see
5 someone stick their head out or their foot out once you hit the
6 platform just so that they can, you know, see.

7 Q. Okay, yeah, that helps. So, it doesn't matter -- as long as
8 it's not in the closed position with the door closure mechanism
9 completely closed, then that red light's going to come on even if
10 they're just cracking the door to peek out, correct?

11 A. Right.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. If you pop that handle, that light comes on.

14 Q. Okay. All right, so just to go back to a little bit of
15 your -- you had a delay, your train wasn't ready to go or needed
16 some work, so you had to wait on another consist to come over. Do
17 you -- so, you get -- can you kind of tell us a little bit about
18 what's relayed to you about the mechanical condition of the train
19 when you take a new train set?

20 A. Basically, when the new train set came in, they took the
21 engine -- we took 135's equipment and I just did a face-to-face
22 brake test with the yard engineer.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. Yeah, if there was anything wrong with it, they wouldn't have
25 sent it over. I'm trying to think of who sent it. It was

1 David Gillis who brought it over, he said everything was fine.
2 They had a problem with the other equipment, I think it was a
3 pantograph issue. Whatever it was, we were hanging around for a
4 little bit and then once I get on the equipment and we were ready
5 to go, I got the okay from Emily, got the signals in, we departed,
6 departing brake test, and off we went.

7 MR. GORDON: All right, thank you for that. I believe that's
8 all the questions I have.

9 DR. HOEPF: Okay, thank you, Joe.

10 BY DR. HOEPF:

11 Q. Doing okay, Ted? Do you need a break or anything? The
12 second round of questions probably won't be as long but --

13 A. Nope, I'm fine.

14 Q. Okay. All right, sounds good. I think we've largely covered
15 kind of most of the topic areas, so a lot of times the second
16 round is just kind of popping around. So, you know, I apologize
17 for kind of bouncing around from some different areas. So, I
18 think we -- you did talk about the weather. So, you said it was
19 very cold, was it -- did you have any issues with, like,
20 precipitation or any ice or anything like that?

21 A. No, nothing.

22 Q. Okay, so your visibility was good and it wasn't -- sorry, I
23 can't talk today. So, that didn't present any issues for you
24 operationally?

25 A. No, it was sunny, clear day out. Perfect.

1 Q. Okay, sounds good. Let me ask you about, you know, Emily,
2 did you talk to her much that day? And these are just standard
3 human performance questions, so, you know, don't read into this
4 the wrong way. But did you get a chance to talk to her kind of
5 face-to-face before you took off?

6 A. Oh, yeah, we were joking around because the day before I left
7 her voicemail and she goes I don't check voicemails, my phone was
8 messed up and then I was upstairs doing something doing the delay
9 and I came back down, she goes I called you, I'm like well, I
10 don't check my voicemails either, my phone was screwed up. So, we
11 were joking around like we normally do.

12 Q. I got you.

13 A. Earlier I was trying to see if she wanted to go for a walk
14 and she's like I'm not walking in this cold with you, are you
15 nuts?

16 Q. Yeah.

17 A. You know, so we were pretty loose.

18 Q. Got you. Okay, so it sounds like everything was fine that
19 day in terms of -- it doesn't sound like she was emotionally
20 distraught, or fatigued, or anything like that?

21 A. Nope, she was looking forward to going home and watching the
22 Patriots.

23 Q. Yeah, and so, you know, as far as your awareness -- you're
24 not aware of any medical issues that would cause her to faint or
25 anything like that? And if you don't know, certainly I understand

1 that. I don't want you to speculate or anything. I just --

2 A. You (audio glitch)? You're all choppy again.

3 Q. Oh, am I? I'm sorry.

4 A. That's okay.

5 Q. Let me turn off my camera here. I was just wondering were
6 you aware of any issues that she might have that might impact her
7 performance in terms of -- you know, does she have any sleep apnea
8 or anything like that? And of course, if you don't know, you
9 don't know.

10 A. No, not at all. Nope.

11 Q. Okay, let me just ask you about -- I'll turn my camera around
12 and I'll turn it off if I get choppy again, just let me know.

13 When you were talking about coming into a station -- I know you've
14 already talked about this, but it sounds like for Westerly, you
15 know where you're going, so it doesn't sound like you really need
16 to coordinate that with the conductor. Did I hear that correctly?

17 A. Yeah, if there's -- if -- when they look at that manifest,
18 they know right off the top that we'll have to do a double spot,
19 you know, come in, make the normal spot, then pull it up two cars
20 or whatever and they'll just give me a car count if they have
21 to -- say get someone in a wheelchair on or something like that.

22 Q. Okay, and I apologize if you've already talked about this,
23 but so just when you were coming into Westerly, was there any
24 communication about -- you know, can you recall any communication
25 with the conductor about, you know, what the plan was for that

1 stop?

2 A. No, it's -- like I said, it's already been discussed. I had
3 it written down in my TSRB what they wanted. Westerly, for the
4 most part, is always going to be 345 for the spot give or take a
5 few feet, it's always going to be the same.

6 Q. Okay, I got you. Yeah, and so just to talk a little bit
7 about -- just to clarify this too, I think you had may have
8 commented about Acela trains. So, this was -- I mean, can you
9 talk about the differences in equipment in terms of -- you know,
10 so this was not an Acela train or this was an Acela train?

11 A. No, this was a regional, it had seven coaches on it and one
12 engine.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. The Acelas have two power cars, and six in the middle, and
15 it's a semi-solid consist, and like Mr. Young said, we don't make
16 any low-level platform stops (audio glitch) percent of the time.
17 It's all high level.

18 Q. Okay, so does that regional train make it a little bit more
19 challenging at all for you as an engineer with having to pull out
20 those stairs or anything? Does that make any difference to your
21 operation?

22 A. Not for me. I just -- you know, just as long as I get -- if
23 they tell me what double -- you know, the double's where they want
24 to be, from being out here long enough, you know where your spots
25 are for the most part unless it's something unusual. But once

1 they stop and they open up -- the doors will open and the traps
2 will open up -- well, they open the traps up themselves.

3 Q. I got you, and then I just wanted to kind of clarify, too, we
4 were talking about some of the differences and I think you said on
5 the Acela, you can't start moving forward out of a stopped
6 position until all the doors are closed? Is that right?

7 A. That's right, there's an indication light that'll -- once the
8 light extinguishes, you'll get the okay to go from the conductor.
9 A lot of times the conductor will tell you it's okay to go once,
10 you know, you get the door light out.

11 Q. Okay, and is that -- apologies, I didn't mean to cut you off
12 there.

13 A. Okay.

14 Q. Sorry, anyway -- but so, with the regional train, is that
15 exactly the same or is that different?

16 A. It's different because like I said, if they pull it -- you
17 know, they have to flag the trains out, so usually, there will be
18 the last car -- second to last car door popped open a little bit
19 so they can -- you know, making sure no one's trying to run or
20 trying to get off -- tries to get off a moving train.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. And then once -- usually, like, I leave the route -- or
23 Providence and once I hit a straightaway, I just double check to
24 make sure there's no red lights on.

25 Q. Okay, so the regional train, you could depart -- there's no

1 mechanical function that would prevent you from departing with the
2 doors open, then?

3 A. No.

4 Q. Okay, and then as far as the regional train, when you're
5 coming into a stop, when a door opens, is the only indication to
6 you then the red lights that are down the side of the train by the
7 doors? Is there any other indication to you when a door is popped
8 open?

9 A. No.

10 DR. HOEPF: Okay, thank you, Ted. I will double check my
11 notes to see if I have any other questions, but I think that's it
12 for me for now. So, I'll go back to Sean in the room there.

13 MR. FITZPATRICK: Thank you.

14 BY MR. FITZPATRICK:

15 Q. I don't have any additional questions I don't believe. You
16 didn't work as a conductor, right, on Amtrak? You were signal and
17 you were in the engineer program?

18 A. I did signal and -- yeah, communications and signals, CNS.

19 Q. I'm sure I'm just racking my mind, I probably already asked
20 this, did you hear any conversations between the conductor -- they
21 wouldn't because -- I don't believe -- did you hear any
22 conversations about how to handle to low-platform doors in the job
23 briefing?

24 A. No, they just -- it's all their training that they went
25 through down and Wilmington and here. If there was an AC

1 posting -- you know, the people we work with are pretty sharp.

2 MR. FITZPATRICK: Thanks, I don't have anything additional.

3 DR. HOEPF: Okay, thank you.

4 And we'll go over to Smart?

5 MR. HAMER: I have nothing else to offer, thank you.

6 DR. HOEPF: Okay, thank you.

7 And BLET?

8 MR. FANNON: I have nothing either, thank you.

9 DR. HOEPF: And Amtrak?

10 MR. YOUNG: No further questions from Amtrak, thank you.

11 DR. HOEPF: Okay, thank you.

12 And my NTSB colleagues?

13 MR. GORDON: Zach, do you got anything?

14 MR. ZAGATA: No, I don't have any additional questions.

15 MR. GORDON: All right, thank you.

16 No, I would just like to -- you know, again, say thank you
17 and, you know, I know it's really tough to lose a coworker like
18 that. So, be sure you're taking care of yourself and reach out if
19 there's anything we can do for you.

20 MR. GILCHRIST: Okay, thank you.

21 BY DR. HOEPF:

22 Q. So, it looks like we're basically going to come to a close
23 here, Ted. So, you know, just before we go out, is there anything
24 that we should've asked you that we didn't?

25 A. Not that I can think of, no.

1 Q. Okay, and is there anything that you can think of that we can
2 do in the future that, you know, might prevent a recurrence like
3 this?

4 A. I don't know. I don't want to speculate as to what happened
5 because I wasn't back there. So, I can't say what -- other than
6 something catastrophic happened. I don't know, you know, what the
7 FRA will find or you guys will find on that equipment.

8 Q. Yeah, okay.

9 A. So, I don't want to speak on this.

10 DR. HOEPF: Understood. Okay, well, if there's no other
11 questions from anybody else, we'll go ahead and button up the
12 interview. So, Ted, thank you so much for your time, we really
13 appreciate it. We're really sorry for your loss and take care of
14 yourself.

15 MR. GILCHRIST: Thank you.

16 (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: AMTRAK EMPLOYEE FATALITY
 COLLISION IN WESTERLY, RHODE ISLAND
 ON JANUARY 15, 2022
 Interview of Theodore Gilchrest

ACCIDENT NO.: RRD22LR005

PLACE: Via telephone

DATE: January 19, 2022

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.



Carolyn Hanna
Transcriber