

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: YVETTE COULTER, Train Master
Amtrak

Via telephone

Wednesday,
January 19, 2022

APPEARANCES:

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National Transportation Safety Board

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National Transportation Safety Board

JOE GORDON, Investigator In Charge
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STEVE YOUNG, Assistant Vice President Transportation
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Smart Union Transportation Division GO663

JOHN MCGRATH, Local Chairman
Amtrak/Smart Transportation Division

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I N T E R V I E W

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

12 Yvette, do you understand that this interview is being
13 recorded?

14 MS. COULTER: Yes.

15 DR. HOEPF: Okay, thank you, and if you could please state
16 your name and spell it, I would appreciate it and we'll do the
17 same for everybody else.

18 MS. COULTER: It's Yvette, Y V E T T E, Coulter,
19 C O U L T E R.

20 DR. HOEPF: Okay, thank you, and so again, my name is
21 Mike Hoepf, that's H O E P F, and I'm with the NTSB and I'll turn
22 it over to my NTSB colleagues.

23 MR. GORDON: All right, Joe Gordon, G O R D O N, and I'm the
24 NTSB accident investigator in charge.

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

1 NTSB operating practices investigator.

2 DR. HOEPF: Okay, and then we'll go to FRA.

3 MR. FITZPATRICK: Sean Fitzpatrick, S E A N
4 F I T Z P A T R I C K, a representative here in person for the
5 FRA. I'm an OP inspector from Springfield, Mass (sic).

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

8 MR. SMITH: Owen Smith, O W E N S M I T H, I'm the District
9 One track safety inspector that covers Rhode Island and I'm an
10 observer.

11 DR. HOEPF: Okay, thank you.

12 And Smart?

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

15 DR. HOEPF: Go ahead, BLET.

16 MR. FANNON: Randy Fannon, that's spelled F A N N O N, BLET
17 Safety Taskforce.

18 DR. HOEPF: Okay, and Amtrak?

19 MR. YOUNG: Steve Young, Y O U N G, assistant vice president
20 of transportation, Northeast Division, lead for Amtrak, and good
21 afternoon, Yvette.

22 MS. COULTER: Good afternoon.

23 MR. YOUNG: Hanan, you want to introduce yourself?

24 MS. SADEL: Hanan Sadel, superintendent of road ops,
25 H A N A N S A D E L.

1 MR. DELLAPIETRO James DellaPietro, superintendent of
2 operations in Boston, J A M E S D E L L A P I E T R O.

3 DR. HOEPF: All right, and if that's everybody, we'll go
4 ahead and get started.

5 INTERVIEW OF YVETTE COULTER

6 BY DR. HOEPF:

7 Q. And I'm sorry, am I saying your name right? Is it Yvette or
8 Yvette?

9 A. Yvette.

10 Q. Yvette, okay, let me know if I'm saying that wrong. I
11 apologize.

12 A. It's fine.

13 Q. So, could you just tell us a little bit about your current
14 position and your railroad career?

15 A. I'm a train master in Boston and I started with the railroad
16 in June of 1989 as an LSA. I think I'm a conductor, I was a
17 station service supervisor, I was a train dispatcher, and then I
18 did product line, and now train master. I went back to conductor
19 and then train master now. What is it -- 32 years and a few
20 months' worth of service.

21 Q. All right, and how many of those years as a train master do
22 you think?

23 A. It's almost three and I did about five additional years of
24 special duty.

25 Q. Okay, great, thank you. All right, so today we're here just

1 to tap in a little bit of your expertise in one time period in
2 particular. Looking at the operation of the doors, so can you
3 kind of walk us through what the responsibilities are for, you
4 know, conductors and assistant conductors as they, you know,
5 assist passengers with training and detraining? Is that -- do you
6 need more specific than that?

7 A. It depends if you want me to give as you're approaching the
8 station stop or if the train is already stopped?

9 Q. Both would be helpful, but particularly for -- well, yeah,
10 both, really.

11 A. Okay, so if the train is stopped -- if you're at a station
12 stop, then you would -- there's a button that you would depress
13 with your foot, it's like a release lever and you would grab where
14 the grab hold is. I'm sorry, I'm assuming the door is open. So,
15 once you open the door -- you can either key the door open
16 manually, the one door in an isolated position, or you can open
17 the emergency handle just to open the one single door, and then
18 you press with your foot. It's like a release mechanism and then
19 there's a grab hold that you would swing the stairs up until it
20 snaps into a lever onto the door -- on the backside of the door.
21 And once it snaps, you test that with your arm to make sure the
22 door -- because sometimes it may not snap properly into the grab
23 hold, and then you can step down onto the steps and there's a
24 handrail.

25 Q. Okay, great, thank you. So, how about -- let's say you're

1 approaching a station and we'll just, you know, pick
2 something -- you know, we'll just give an example of the station
3 where this accident happened in Westerly. Let's say a crew is
4 coming in there and what would be the first thing that they would
5 do as they started to approach that station and, you know, how far
6 ahead of that station would they start doing it?

7 A. You would do it I would say -- I mean, it actually depends
8 because if you're flagging the train, which means you're at the
9 last door, then your door would be opening first and you would
10 crack the door open. That's what the emergency handle -- and you
11 peek out to see where the doors -- the train is going, that's more
12 than like the conductor who's going to open it first because most
13 times you have to spot the train as to where you need him to
14 specifically stop depending on where your bulk of passengers are
15 and where you want the train to stop on the platform. Once the
16 train comes to a stop, you can slide -- finish sliding the door
17 open manually. Then, like I said again, you would depress the
18 lever with your foot and grab the stairs with the -- it's like a
19 handle -- like a grab -- I don't know what you call it. It's like
20 a grab hold and then you snap the stairs up into the frame of the
21 doorway and again, then you walk down the stairs.

22 Q. Okay, so let me just -- yeah, that's helpful. Let me back up
23 a little bit here. So, when you're cracking, you know, the door
24 to look out, how far ahead of the station do you think that that
25 would typically be for a station like Westerly?

1 A. Well, some of the stations you would have to crack it a
2 little bit sooner than others because some of the stations are on
3 a curve. Westerly has a slight curve, but then it's also a low-
4 level platform station, so the people tend to stand more on the
5 east end of the platform where the parking lot area is.

6 Q. Okay, and then so you were talking about sometimes there's
7 communication with the engineer about where the conductor needs
8 them to stop if I heard you right. Now, is -- I guess our
9 understanding -- we just talked to the engineer and so, I guess
10 the example of Westerly, it doesn't like that's the case?

11 A. It actually depends on when you're looking out and when you
12 see the bulk of the passengers because if you're working with a
13 regular crew, you might have your regular spotted station stop
14 that you know to pull up one or two car lengths. Or you
15 would -- if you're working with a spare, you'd say I need another
16 600 feet because you want to pull it up another half of a car. It
17 depends on the passenger count and where the passengers are.

18 Q. Oh, okay, I think I understand what you're saying. So, maybe
19 in this example, it wasn't necessary for the communication, but in
20 other situations where there were perhaps additional cars,
21 additional passengers, there might've been a need for some
22 communication about the placement of the train?

23 A. Exactly.

24 Q. Okay, and then so that communication would happen over the
25 radio I take it?

1 A. Yes, it would happen over the radio.

2 Q. Okay, and so -- and then so the reason that the person -- the
3 conductor is peaking out the door then is because -- just so they
4 can see where they are relative to, you know, the position that
5 they need to be in? I mean, is that, you know, oh, I need these
6 stairs to get to the platform, so I need to be -- I mean, is that
7 what they're looking at there?

8 A. Yes, because the railroad jargon would say where we're
9 spotting the train. But it's basically where you're positioning
10 the equipment to make it easy for the passengers to board and
11 detrain.

12 Q. Okay, so spotting the train is -- that would be the -- that's
13 what you would call that procedure?

14 A. Yes, because if you have, like, an eight-car train and say,
15 like, the third car isn't very heavy and I know I have 50 people
16 boarding, I'm going to pull the train up a little bit further so
17 that I can get the passengers on that third car.

18 Q. Okay, so in terms of the -- is it necessary to poke your head
19 out the window to see, you know, where you're going? I mean, do
20 the doors have windows, would that work? I mean, obviously, you
21 wouldn't have as much visibility, but is it always necessary to
22 look out or is it just sometimes necessary to look out?

23 A. You have a window, but if you're in the vestibule area, you
24 only have the window that's directly facing wherever the train is.
25 If you're in the body of the train, then you have a series of

1 windows that you could look out and see further down or further
2 behind you on the platform. If you're in the vestibule area, you
3 probably -- I don't want to give you exact foot because I don't
4 know the exact foot, but you're really only going to have just a
5 very limited amount of visual if the door's not open.

6 Q. Okay, I got you. No, that's -- I appreciate that, that's
7 well explained. Yeah, so if you're in the vestibule, you've got
8 pretty limited visibility in terms of the relative position of the
9 train there. Okay, yeah, I got you. Okay, so the -- so, you've
10 got your head peeked out the window, and then just kind of walk me
11 through again. Do you basically -- does the conductor stay in
12 that position until the train comes to a stop and then they, you
13 know, fully open the door, then they pull out the stairs, or do
14 they -- what would you do at that time?

15 A. It also depends on the crew because some conductors make the
16 station stop and they make the announcement and some have another
17 crew member make the announcement and they do the door. So, it
18 depends on what they decided on the job briefing.

19 Q. Okay, and then just a couple more things here for you and
20 then I'll pass it off. And I don't want you to speculate or
21 anything like that if this is not your area, but do you have
22 familiarity with what the train is for -- you know, let's say
23 you've got somebody who's going to be a new conductor coming in,
24 what does Amtrak do to train them on this procedure?

25 A. Can you repeat your question -- the beginning part?

1 Q. Yeah, so at first, I was just saying, you know, I don't want
2 you to speculate if this isn't your area. But can you speak to
3 the training that a conductor would receive? Let's say you've got
4 somebody new coming into the position of conductor, can you speak
5 to the training that Amtrak would provide them on how to go
6 through this procedure?

7 A. So, they have training that they receive at Wilmington when
8 they first hire out as an assistant conductor and then when they
9 come to Boston, they receive a schedule of posting, which
10 is -- they work alongside a crew. Actually, first when they come,
11 they post and they just literally are given visual, they're not
12 really doing anything. They're just posting and then they go
13 through their, like, initial process of training, and then they
14 come out, and then they're in a probationary period. But we also
15 train them on equipment handling.

16 Q. Okay, I got you, and then does Amtrak do -- and again, only
17 speak to this if you've got -- you know, this is your area. But
18 does Amtrak have some kind of operational testing to, you know,
19 cover this door procedure? Are there any, like, field
20 observations to see if people are doing this correctly?

21 A. You faded out a couple of times, but -- can you repeat that
22 one more time?

23 Q. Yeah, sure, absolutely. I was just wondering if -- does
24 Amtrak have any operational or efficiency testing?

25 A. I don't hear you at all now.

1 DR. HOEPF: Okay, well, I'll pass it on -- let me pass it
2 onto Sean and I'll come back.

3 Sean, can you hear me? Can you take it for me?

4 MR. FITZPATRICK: Yes, you were coming pretty choppy there.
5 I think -- and you can correct me if I'm wrong --

6 MS. COULTER: I lost it.

7 MR. FITZPATRICK: Oh, is it completely gone?

8 MS. COULTER: Yeah, I lost it.

9 MR. FITZPATRICK: Can you guys hear us?

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Nope.

11 DR. HOEPF: I can hear you guys.

12 MR. GORDON: Yeah, we can hear you.

13 MR. FITZPATRICK: Hopefully it won't be (indiscernible).

14 MS. COULTER: I heard it and I was like what is he saying?

15 DR. HOEPF: Joe, Zach, can you guys hear me?

16 MR. GORDON: Yeah, so hopefully they'll get dialed back in.

17 I think the lag might've been on their end there. So, maybe when
18 they get dialed back in, we might just turn all the cameras off
19 and see if we can't help the bandwidth a little bit.

20 MR. ZAGATA: I'm going to stop recording.

21 MR. FITZPATRICK: Oh, hold on, are we back?

22 MR. GORDON: Yeah, we got you back.

23 MR. FITZPATRICK: There you go. We just got disconnected, it
24 was very choppy for a bit and we're back.

25 MR. GORDON: Okay.

1 MR. FITZPATRICK: I didn't (indiscernible) here.

2 MR. GORDON: Yeah, and James, if you want to, you can turn
3 the camera off there in the room and see if we can maybe save on
4 some bandwidth?

5 MR. FITZPATRICK: Now, if at any point, you guys can't hear
6 me, just tell me and I'll stop talking.

7 MR. GORDON: All right, sounds good.

8 MR. FITZPATRICK: You're good now?

9 MR. ZAGATA: And we're recording again.

10 BY MR. FITZPATRICK:

11 Q. Well, thank you for coming in. I know this is difficult and
12 it's a challenge with -- it's actually gone better so far today
13 than it has in other times just on the phone. But the main
14 purpose -- what I wanted to ask you was -- it can be challenging
15 for me sometimes; this is the infancy of this investigation or
16 inquiry. And it's difficult because we want to make sure that we
17 have the rules right -- I have the rules right when I'm
18 interpreting things. So, one of the questions I have was to make
19 sure that the safety book that I have was current of the rules,
20 right. I just wanted to know -- I'm not asking you to put anybody
21 on the spot or say someone did something wrong (indiscernible).
22 But just so I understand the safety rule, is they crack the door
23 open when a person is flagging on the way in and observing the
24 platform, but the trap door is supposed to stay closed? Is that
25 correct or am I --

1 A. That's correct.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. The trap door stays closed until the train comes to a stop.

4 Q. All right, and then after that, they would be able to open,
5 step on that lever, lift the handle, and walk down?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. And that would be compliant with your rules in the safety
8 book there?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. I think the question when it was all breaking up -- hopefully
11 they can still hear us -- they were asking was -- I mean, do you
12 do any 217 -- not 217 -- any observations on employees in the
13 station related to the doors opening and closing on the platforms,
14 or are you aware of any of that, or not positive?

15 A. No, we do observations them. But, like, Westerly is a low-
16 level platform, so you're not going to get the observation on them
17 unless, like, you're in the yard or in route on the train down the
18 line.

19 MR. FITZPATRICK: Okay, thank you, that was the main reason
20 that I wanted you to come in. That was my sole purpose just
21 about, so if you guys have other questions, you can continue.

22 MS. COULTER: Did we lose them?

23 DR. HOEPF: Okay, thank you very much, Sean.

24 So, we'll just go ahead and continue around the room here
25 then and go over to Smart.

1 BY MR. HAMER:

2 Q. Hi, yeah, this is Steve Hamer, H A M E R, from Smart
3 Transportation Division. I think I just have one question right
4 now. I had asked Jason earlier if he was aware of any trap
5 issues, i.e., the trap not being fully down, but by fact of that,
6 keeping the door shut and then once you step on the trap, the trap
7 locks in the latch, but the door automatically opens. Have you
8 ever seen anything like that on a property?

9 A. So, you're -- are you asking me if the door is shut and the
10 trap is open?

11 Q. No, the trap would be down, but not latched -- not fully down
12 in the latch and the door closed, thereby each one of them keeping
13 each other kind of closed and down. But then when the person
14 steps on the trap and it fully latches, if the door panel had been
15 pressed to open previously, the door would follow that command and
16 open as soon as the trap full goes down. Has there ever been a
17 situation like that?

18 A. I'm not really following, I'm sorry. The way you're
19 explaining, I'm not understanding it.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. So, you just --

22 Q. Basically, the trap is -- let's just say open a half of an
23 inch, but it looks shut and by virtue of not being fully into the
24 latch down on the floor, it's keeping the door shut even though it
25 might've been called for it to be opened previously and then --

1 A. Yes, I know what you're saying.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. I get it, because it's, like, on a spring, so the door's
4 not -- it's not completely caught into the latch, but if I -- if
5 the door is partially shut, the trap isn't going to fully open.
6 But if the door slides open, now it's going to flip up -- if has a
7 good spring, it's going to flip up and catch on its own.

8 Q. Yeah, but what I'm kind of referring to -- unless the
9 train -- the car itself is made differently than what I've seen in
10 my past, if the trap is just barely open, not fully in its keeper,
11 and if I stepped on it, and the door had previously had an open
12 command, and I stepped on that trap, and it fully goes into the
13 latch, would that door slide open following the previous open
14 command if that's what happened?

15 A. Now, so where you're asking that, it's almost like a two-part
16 question because the trap is not going to open unless the door is
17 fully open.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. You have some traps that work better than others with a
20 better spring, so that some people would have depressed it and the
21 door is partially open. But until the door slides all the way
22 into the car to fully open, the stairs are not going to fold up.

23 Q. Okay, but I'm not worried about the trap opening. What I'm
24 really looking at is if the trap fully closes now, could the door
25 slide open on its own if it had previously had an open command on

1 the door panel?

2 A. Well, the thing is if the trap is not fully open and it's not
3 in the latched, closed position, it's going to have a bit of a
4 slant.

5 Q. Right.

6 A. So, the door is not going to shut in its -- it's not going to
7 shut because the slant of the trap is keeping it open.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. Do you see what I'm saying? Once you hit that button
10 to -- once you hit that with your foot to release the button on
11 the trap to open it, once I hit that, the door's not going to
12 fully close all the way because now trap is at a little bit of a
13 slant and it's going to keep the door from folding shut because
14 now it's not parallel to --

15 Q. Right, no, I understand that. But I'm just basing this on
16 experience of my own where it appears the door is fully shut, but
17 it's not. The trap and the door are at that perfect angle, you
18 know, and I'm not going to beat this to death, but I'm going to
19 assume that based on the answer that you really haven't seen this
20 situation -- what I referred to. Is that probably the case?

21 A. So, it may be that I'm not fully understanding how you're
22 trying to explain it.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. That's probably what it is.

25 Q. It's probably more of a situation to do a practical exercise?

1 A. Exactly.

2 Q. I'm sorry for that.

3 A. If I had a visual of what you're saying.

4 MR. HAMER: Yeah, I'm sorry for that. I think that's all I
5 have right now, thank you.

6 MS. COULTER: You're welcome.

7 DR. HOEPF: All right, and we'll go over to BLET.

8 BY MR. FANNON:

9 Q. Good afternoon, Ms. Coulter, thanks for coming. Basically,
10 you've answered all the questions. I'm a freight -- I work for a
11 freight railroad, so forgive me for wanting the clarification, but
12 it's an Amtrak rule that the trap and the door isn't to be fully
13 opened per se until the train comes to a stop at the platform. Is
14 that the short answer to what you gave us earlier?

15 A. Yes, that is the short answer.

16 Q. Okay, and with the train running behind, I mean, would it be
17 normal practice to get the steps done -- the trap open to get the
18 steps down so that way the passengers could disembark and load the
19 new passengers that's coming on? Would that save time -- excuse
20 me, how long does the process take? I guess that's the easier
21 answer -- to open up the trap, and open up the door, and lower the
22 steps?

23 A. It's just barely minutes depending on how heavy. Some traps
24 feel a little bit heavier than others; you're dealing with manual
25 equipment. All of maybe three minutes.

1 MR. FANNON: Okay, that's good. Thank you for your time.

2 MS. COULTER: You're welcome.

3 MR. FANNON: Thank you.

4 DR. HOEPF: Okay, thank you.

5 And we'll go over to the Amtrak.

6 MR. YOUNG: We have no questions at Amtrak -- Steve Young
7 here, no questions.

8 Thank you, Yvette.

9 DR. HOEPF: Okay, thank you.

10 And we'll go to the rest of my NTSB colleagues.

11 Zach, anything?

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

13 DR. HOEPF: Joe?

14 MR. GORDON: Yeah.

15 BY MR. GORDON:

16 Q. All right, Yvette, I've got a few clarifying questions, I
17 guess and I don't want to put you on the spot for an operating
18 rule number, but you've got Sean there in the room with you. If
19 you could just be sure that before you and Sean part ways, if you
20 could just refer him to that operating rule -- or safety rule that
21 discusses the fact that the trap door remains in the closed
22 position until the train comes to a stop? That would help us out
23 going forward.

24 A. Yes, I will.

25 Q. Okay, and so, we spoke a little bit about operational rules

1 testing as far as, you know, making observations to ensure that
2 they're complying -- you know, that the conductors, assistant
3 conductors are complying with those rules and, you know,
4 additional rules and they're moving. Is there an operation rule
5 test designation or specific number for observing proper handling
6 of doors?

7 A. It's in the (indiscernible) and it's rule 142.

8 Q. Okay, so you would just refer to rule 142 as being observed,
9 correct?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Okay, and one other question, in your experience, and you've
12 been doing this for a while, have you ever seen a passenger, I
13 guess, interact with any of the door mechanism, be it the trap or
14 the emergency handle? I guess like an unintended -- or
15 unauthorized door opening?

16 A. Yes, I've seen passengers pull the handles to open the door,
17 like, if they get stuck per se on the train -- they were assisting
18 somebody to get on the train, and the train starts moving and
19 they're on the train, and they try and pull the handle to stop the
20 train. But I've never seen a passenger try to operate the
21 trap -- the stair mechanism.

22 Q. Okay, and when the release on the trap is triggered, that's
23 done with your foot, correct?

24 A. Yes, it's done with your foot.

25 Q. Okay, and have you ever -- so, is there a procedure in place

1 for properly assisting that trap up to the keeper on the bulkhead
2 wall of the train?

3 A. Yes, there is.

4 Q. And that's to be done -- how is that to be done? Is that to
5 be done with your hand?

6 A. You step on the release button, and then you put that foot
7 back, and then you grab the grab the grab hold, and swing the
8 stairs up to its keeper.

9 Q. Okay, any -- I don't want to say common, but have you ever
10 seen anyone just kind of put their foot under that trap door and
11 assist it up the rest of the way just kind of with a kick of the
12 toe?

13 A. Your -- so, your foot won't fit where the hand hold grabs, so
14 you really have to use your hand to pull it from the floor because
15 it's not a big enough opening to use your foot to pull it up.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. So, you do at -- after you push the release level, you do
18 have to grab it with your hand. After you have it may be
19 partially in the air, maybe somebody could -- yeah, they can use
20 their leg or their foot to prop it up to the door. But you really
21 have to grab it first with your hand.

22 Q. Okay, and then one last question that I've got with the trap
23 doors, is there a procedure in place -- does Amtrak have a
24 procedure in place if there's an issue with the door, be it a trap
25 that's harder to open or a set of stairs that possibly doesn't

1 want to go into the down position? Is there a mechanism for them
2 to report that, you know, to have maintenance done on those doors
3 of concern?

4 A. Yes, we would mark -- you would write it down on the app, 21A
5 on -- and that's left in the car, and when the train reaches its
6 final destination or repair point, they'll fix it. Also, you put
7 it in your EMD device and you note it and you can also call Cena
8 (ph.) Mechanical and they'll note the defect.

9 MR. GORDON: Okay. All right, well thank you so much and I
10 appreciate you coming in on short notice to share your expertise
11 with us.

12 MS. COULTER: Thank you.

13 BY DR. HOEPF:

14 Q. Yes, thank you indeed. So, that concludes the first round.
15 We'll go around the room one more time, but it'll probably be much
16 quicker for this round. So, if you're still doing okay, we'll
17 just keep plugging along here. I don't have -- by the way, this
18 is Mike with the NTSB again, I just have a couple, you know, kind
19 of clarifying sort of things, same topic. In terms of the opening
20 the door a little bit to look out, is -- what would the -- we'll
21 get the language of the rule, but does that specify, you know, it
22 can be open a maximum of ten inches, or a foot, or two feet, or
23 something like that? What specifically would it say?

24 A. There is no minimum or maximum of opening the door.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. There's really no rule for that.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. Okay, but it does say that the door should not be fully
5 opened when the train is in motion?

6 A. Yes, the only door that's usually open is the person that's
7 flagging the rear of the train so that they can see the platform
8 to make sure nobody is running for the train at the end and trying
9 to grab or there's anything dangerous happening that you'll flag
10 the rear of the train. And that's the person that has the door
11 open the last to watch the end of the platform as the train is
12 departing the station.

13 Q. Okay, sorry, I didn't quite follow you. You're saying the
14 person at the rear of the train doing flagging there, they would
15 have the door fully open when you start moving or when you're
16 coming into the stop?

17 A. It would be both, when the train's coming in and when the
18 train is departing the stop to make sure there's no hazardous
19 condition as the train is departing the station.

20 Q. Okay, so that would be typically the conductor, the assistant
21 conductor, or either one?

22 A. It's either one. It's whoever's designated as the flag at
23 the job briefing.

24 Q. Okay, so the person doing the flagging kind of has an
25 exception to the door -- they're allowed to have the door being

1 fully opened then?

2 A. It's usually not full opened, but they have their door
3 cracked or ajar so that they can see the train departing the
4 station.

5 Q. Okay, let me ask this, when the door is partially open, does
6 it just sit there? I mean, is it -- does it try to -- is it like
7 a WMATA, you know, door where it's going to try to close, or try
8 to open, or something like that, or does it just sit wherever you
9 leave it?

10 A. That door that you have partially opened, you would have
11 opened by the emergency handle because otherwise, the door will
12 close once the train is in motion.

13 Q. Okay, I got you. Okay, and then I just want to clarify real
14 quick, you said that for the stairs to open, the door has to be
15 fully opened and I think -- I just wanted to see -- you know, one
16 of our prior interviews today, there was mention that there was an
17 unfortunate incident where somebody was injured, you know, while
18 riding on the stairs. I just wondered, is that something -- did
19 Amtrak's rules actually change as --

20 A. No.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. Actually -- it actually did not change and I actually
23 remember the incident you're talking about. But no, it's always
24 been that the stairs would have to be folded up and that person
25 was actually an Amtrak employee prior.

1 Q. Okay, so employees have never been allowed -- of Amtrak have
2 never been allowed to ride standing on the stairs?

3 A. No, we're not allowed to ride the stairs.

4 DR. HOEPF: Okay, I got you. Okay, thank you, that's all the
5 questions I've got for now and probably all the questions I have.
6 But we'll go around the room one more time here.

7 Sean, FRA?

8 MR. FITZPATRICK: Yes.

9 The only question I had was the safety book that I was
10 referring to was from September of 2020 and there was a bulletin
11 in May of 2021 that came out that adjusted it. I just wanted to
12 make sure that how I was applying the rule -- that I was reading
13 about the trap that there hadn't been another update on it and
14 there hasn't. We confirmed that. To follow up on your question
15 earlier, we did confirm the rules there. But no, I do not have
16 another question, I apologize.

17 DR. HOEPF: Okay, so then I guess we'll go over to Smart
18 next.

19 MR. HAMER: I have nothing further.

20 DR. HOEPF: Okay, BLET?

21 MR. FANNON: Yes.

22 BY MR. FANNON:

23 Q. One question and related to -- depending on the answer.
24 Mr. Coulter, is the Amtrak -- any of the equipment that operates
25 in your territory, is there camera's equipped in the cars

1 themselves or in the vestibule where the area could've been
2 seen -- or can be seen?

3 A. No, we don't have cameras.

4 Q. No cameras on any of the equipment, not the Acela, the
5 regionals, anything?

6 A. The cameras they have are in the engines.

7 MR. FANNON: Okay. All right, then, that's -- no further
8 questions. Thank you for your time.

9 MS. COULTER: You're welcome.

10 DR. HOEPF: All right, thank you.

11 And Amtrak?

12 MR. YOUNG: No further questions, thank you.

13 DR. HOEPF: All right, Zack?

14 MR. ZAGATA: No additional questions.

15 DR. HOEPF: Joe?

16 MR. GORDON: No, I have no further questions, Mike.

17 DR. HOEPF: Okay. All right, well, if there's no further
18 questions, then we will just thank you very much for your time.
19 It's very much appreciated and very helpful and we will end the
20 interview.

21 Zach, you can stop the recordings.

22 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

23

24

25

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 Yvette Coulter

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



I, Yvette Coulter, have read the foregoing pages of a copy of my interview that was held on January 19, 2022. These pages constitute a true and accurate transcription of same with the exception of the following amendments, additions, deletions or corrections:

<u>PAGE NO:</u>	<u>LINE NO:</u>	<u>CHANGE AND REASON FOR CHANGE</u>
5	24	Hanan Fadel not Hanan Sadel
5	25	Hanan Fadel (misspelled)
6	16	I was a Conductor (I think I'm?)
15	15	we do observations on them
15	16	or enroute (not in route)
21	7	It's in the SPARTN and it's rule 142
23	7 & 8	CNOC Mechanical

I declare that I have read my statements and that it is true and correct subject to any changes in the form or substance entered here.

Date: 02/23/2022

Witness: [Redacted]