



**Survival Factors Investigation Attachment**  
**NYCT OCC Console Train Dispatcher Interview**

**Manhattan, NY**

**RRD24FR003**

**(18 pages)**

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: \*

MTA EMPLOYEE FATALY STRUCK BY \*  
SUBWAY TRAIN IN MANHATTAN, \*  
NEW YORK ON NOVEMBER 29, 2023 \*

Accident No.: RRD24FR003

\* \* \* \* \*

Interview of: GAETANE PHILOCTETE, Console Train Dispatcher  
Metropolitan Train Authority  
New York City Transit

via Microsoft Teams videoconference

Wednesday,  
April 10, 2024

APPEARANCES:

SHERYL HARLEY, Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board

HENRI HAZEL, Chief Officer, Operations  
Office of System Safety  
New York City Transit

I N D E X

ITEM

PAGE

Interview of Gaetane Philoctete:

By Ms. Harley

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I N T E R V I E W

(7:22 a.m.)

1 MS. HARLEY: Okay. So good morning, today is Wednesday,  
2 April the 10th, 2024, it is 7:22 a.m. local time. My name is  
3 Sheryl Harley, I'm an investigator with the National  
4 Transportation Safety Board and today I'm conducting an interview  
5 regarding the New York City Transit fatal worker accident that  
6 occurred in Manhattan, New York, on November 29th of 2023 at about  
7 12:11 a.m. local time.

8 And on the phone with me, ma'am, if you can identify yourself  
9 for the record, please.

10 MS. PHILOCTETE: Hi, yes, I'm Console Train Dispatcher  
11 Gaetane Philoctete. I worked the job with this transit worker's  
12 fatality --

13 MS. HARLEY: Okay.

14 MS. PHILOCTETE: -- at the Rail Control Center.

15 MS. HARLEY: Great, thank you very much. And Mr. Henri, I'm  
16 just going to ask you to identify yourself just for the record,  
17 since you're on the call.

18 MR. HAZEL: Yes, good morning. Henri Hazel, Chief Officer,  
19 Operations, Office of System Safety, New York City Transit.

20 MS. HARLEY: Thank you, Mr. Hazel. I don't know why I called  
21 you Mr. Henri.

22 INTERVIEW OF GAETANE PHILOCTETE

23 BY MS. HARLEY:

1 Q. Okay. So ma'am, what I'm going to ask you to do is kind of  
2 walk me through -- well, first of all, let me -- let me get some  
3 basic information from you. How long have you been employed with  
4 NYCT?

5 A. I've been employed for almost 12 years.

6 Q. Twelve years. And how long have you worked as a dispatcher  
7 there?

8 A. Working in the Rail Control Center, I had approximately like  
9 four years.

10 Q. Okay. So before you went to the center, what did you for  
11 NYCT?

12 A. I was a train dispatcher in the field, I was working various  
13 locations and different, like, terminals and towers.

14 Q. Okay, all right. So can you give me a brief overview of what  
15 your responsibilities are right now as a console train dispatcher?

16 A. Right now, I basically handle -- I have a section of  
17 territory that I'm responsible for and if we have any kind of  
18 incidents, I have to, I guess you'd say, respond to the train and,  
19 I guess, troubleshoot in a way. I'm almost responsible for  
20 documenting any unusual occurrences as well as anything that has  
21 to do with the train's arrival at the terminals, you know,  
22 recording to maintenance and, you know, having a reason for why  
23 they're late.

24 Q. Okay. And approximately how many dispatchers work your  
25 control center on a shift?

1 A. Well, with my desk, we have a rotation of the midnights, the  
2 a.m.'s and the p.m.'s, so it's usually three people, we work, you  
3 know, five days a week and we'll have someone that works like the  
4 off days that we're off, you know, so --

5 Q. Got it. And what actually are your shift hours?

6 A. So my shift hours start -- with military time, it's 2300 to  
7 7:00 a.m.

8 Q. Okay, got you. So that's 11:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m., thank you.

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. Okay. Is there a supervisor on duty for each shift?

11 A. Yes, we have what we call a desk superintendent that oversees  
12 everyone that works in that specific area. So we are divided into  
13 three different divisions, it's called the A Division, the BMT  
14 Division and the IND Division and I work in the IND Division.

15 Q. Got it. Okay, all right. Okay, so I guess, at this  
16 particular point -- so let's see. The divisions are according to  
17 the -- actually according to, like, the stations and the tracks  
18 and the IND is that -- that section of track, is that correct?

19 A. Yeah, it's like a -- it's split up, it's kind of actually  
20 based on like, I think, the base stations.

21 Q. Um-hum.

22 A. So there are certain territories that -- that the bases hit.  
23 I don't know how to say it, like, I guess the radio communication.

24 Q. Got you, understood.

25 A. Yeah. So it's split in that way. There's more details, but

1 I think you would need some type of more expertise to explain it.

2 Q. Not a problem, we don't have to go that deep. Okay. So I'm  
3 going to ask you to go ahead and start and tell me what you  
4 remember about the day of the accident, starting from when you  
5 arrived on duty and just kind of walk me through it, please.

6 A. Well, you know, I just sit and, you know, I just -- I'm on my  
7 computer dealing with my responsibilities with my late trains,  
8 when I got a call from the -- I believe it was 2317 Delta  
9 Stillwell, it was a standard call-in, the train went brakes in  
10 emergency when it was entering 34th Street, involved with 2 track.

11 You know, we asked them if they know the cause of the brakes  
12 in emergency, the train operator said she did not know, so we  
13 instructed them to recharge the train. When they recharged the  
14 train, we say if you don't know the cause, we need you to  
15 investigate. Once they are in the process of investigating, we  
16 have to make sure our service is stopped so we don't have any more  
17 trains going into the incident area.

18 And then we also try to find any personnel, which we call  
19 train service supervisors, to help respond, if we can. We try to  
20 immediately put it over the six-wire when we do have a situation  
21 where a train is brakes in emergency or anything that is of  
22 importance. Then, you know, we wait to see what the train  
23 operator says that she finds. When she went to investigate, you  
24 know, unfortunately she told me that she did find the track worker  
25 Joseph's body under the conductor's position and immediately once



1 I find that out, I put it over the six-wire to have all  
2 departments respond. We also look over to see where the power  
3 limits are because we know we have to take off power on those  
4 tracks, as well as maybe adjacent tracks in order for FDNY to go  
5 respond and see if they can retrieve the person. At the time of  
6 the call, she did say she believed the person was deceased and,  
7 you know, I have to put that over the 6 and let them know.

8 We also had the TSS respond to the scene and, you know, when  
9 -- I believe I would say -- I would say maybe 15 minutes into it,  
10 we got word that it's possible that it was an employee, a track  
11 worker, we tried to confirm with the TSS that was on the scene and  
12 he -- when he did call us, he did confirm that it was a track  
13 worker. So we tried to, you know, let all the departments know  
14 that it was a track worker and we tried to see if we can get like  
15 the flagging that was set up in that area and see if we can get  
16 the maintenance supervisor that was in charge of the situation so  
17 that we can see what happened.

18 And then we just -- you know, we play it from there, we wait  
19 until we have, you know, FDNY respond, we have police respond.  
20 Eventually they told us that they got the person removed from the  
21 track and that they were trying to resuscitate him on the -- on  
22 the platform, and then we just wait to see like when we can start  
23 to restore power, see when we can get the incident train moving  
24 but, unfortunately, due to it being this type of situation, we did  
25 have to wait until we had system safety deem it safe for us to

1 restore power and to have the train move out of the station in  
2 order to restore service on that track.

3 Q. Okay, thank you.

4 A. Okay.

5 Q. So I'm going to go back a little bit.

6 A. Um-hum.

7 Q. So the train operator calls in and says that she has a  
8 braking emergency and --

9 A. Um-hum.

10 Q. -- I'm just trying to clarify, so the first thing you do once  
11 that occurred is that you asked the train operator to immediately  
12 try to recharge the train?

13 A. Yeah, we need to -- we have to ask to see what do they know,  
14 because it's possible that they might know the cause of the brakes  
15 in emergency, it is possible that maybe she saw the person or  
16 not --

17 Q. Um-hum.

18 A. -- or like, you know, it could've been anything, so we first  
19 ask that question. If they say yes, then we can proceed from  
20 there. If no, then we definitely ask them like okay, see if the  
21 train recharged, see if it's a possibility that maybe a passenger,  
22 you know, pulled the emergency brakes or if we have a brake pipe  
23 rupture, you know. We just try to rule out what might be a cause.

24 Q. Okay, great. All right, so at that particular point, the  
25 train operator tries to recharge the train and notifies you that

1 she was unable, is that correct?

2 A. No, she was able to recharge the train, the train did  
3 recharge.

4 Q. Okay, so the train did recharge.

5 A. Um-hum.

6 Q. So then why didn't you move the train, why did you ask her to  
7 check?

8 A. Because if you don't know the cause for brakes in emergency  
9 and your train did recharge and it's not because, you know,  
10 someone pulled the emergency brake, then you don't know, so like  
11 this type of incident, because we do have incidents where they  
12 came in contact with an object or something but they're not sure,  
13 they didn't see it on the rail bed.

14 Q. Um-hum.

15 A. So, you know, in order to prevent like a further incident, we  
16 have to make sure that they investigate.

17 Q. Okay, all right. So she goes out to investigate and then she  
18 reported seeing someone under the train. Did she immediately  
19 identify that person as an NYCT employee?

20 A. Unfortunately, no, she did not.

21 Q. Okay. So do you remember exactly how she -- how she  
22 described the individual she saw?

23 A. She just said she had a 12-9, she had a person underneath the  
24 conductor's position, that's all she said.

25 Q. Okay. Okay. Were the train operators aware that there was

1 work being done in that area?

2 A. From the interview that I had with -- with the MS1 that was  
3 in charge of that flagging site, he says that the train operator  
4 was aware that she had stopped the train in front of track worker  
5 Joseph at the time, so I believe she was, but unfortunately I was  
6 unable to speak with her, so I'm not too sure, but from what the  
7 MS1 said, he said she was aware.

8 Q. Okay. So at this particular point you have an individual  
9 that's underneath the train.

10 A. Um-hum.

11 Q. How do you communicate or how do you contact 9-1-1, the  
12 emergency responders for the city?

13 A. So we immediately try to put it over the six-wire, in which  
14 we give it to the police department, we give it to maintenance of  
15 way, we give it to stations as well as car equipment and the  
16 communications desk.

17 And then we also have the desk superintendent, they call  
18 FDNY, we have a telephone that has direct contact to FDNY in the  
19 different boroughs, like Manhattan, Bronx, Brooklyn, and Queens,  
20 so we also will call them up from there and then we will identify  
21 that we have a person underneath a train, under car number, you  
22 know, like that. That's the ways that we usually would be able to  
23 contact. We also have a police liaison that's in the RCC and we  
24 also try to get in contact with them to let them know so that  
25 they'll be the -- I guess, how do you say, the middleman, I guess

1 you would say, to talk with the police that are in the field, as  
2 well as us. And we also have an FDNY liaison that also will be  
3 like the middleman for us that will speak with any personnel that  
4 responds and, you know, to be the person that talks between us and  
5 the personnel responding.

6 Q. Okay. So I'm going to have two questions, I guess the first  
7 is going to be a comment. So RCC is what you call your Rail --  
8 your Rail Control Center, that's now been changed to the  
9 Operations Control Center, is that correct?

10 A. Yes, it's --

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. -- operations.

13 Q. No problem, I noticed that several employees call it RCC  
14 still, I just wanted to make that correct.

15 A. Yeah, it's the old school, yeah, it's old school. We're  
16 trying to break our habit, but it's kind of hard, you know.

17 Q. Not a problem. And the other thing is you were talking about  
18 the FDNY liaison.

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Do you know who that person was on the day of this incident?

21 A. Unfortunately, I do not. I don't know the person's name.

22 Q. Okay. Were they in the control center with you?

23 A. Yes. Yes, they have, I believe, a little office nearby that  
24 they -- some periods, from time to time, when they get calls, that  
25 they come out and try to be like the -- like I said, the

1 middleman.

2 Q. Got it. The six-wire system, you said, goes to the police  
3 department. Is that NYCT or does that go to the New York --  
4 NYPD's Transit Police?

5 A. I think it's -- I believe it's the NYPD Transit, but please  
6 do not hold me, I am not too sure, but I think it's NYPD Transit.  
7 I mean, the transit bureau. It's the one that's in Brooklyn, I  
8 believe.

9 Q. Yeah, okay, all right. All right, so at any time once the  
10 fire department arrived on the scene, at any time were you aware  
11 of the fire department's confusion about the -- or rather, the  
12 need for the confirmation that the third rail power had been  
13 de-energized?

14 A. No, because when we have a liaison, usually they're supposed  
15 to be the person that like, talks with them to let them know when  
16 power is off, like, they will also give them confirmation, as well  
17 as when we put it over the six-wire, we do it again, saying that  
18 power has been removed from this point to this point at this  
19 certain time.

20 Q. Okay. So the liaison is actually the one that's supposed to  
21 be talking to the New York City 9-1-1 and relaying --

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. -- the information to them. Got you.

24 A. Yes, exactly. Yes.

25 Q. Perfect, okay. So let's see. So I guess I understand the

1 six-wire now. Were you aware or can you tell me who the -- the  
2 NYCT supervisor was that was on the scene that was supposed to be  
3 in charge of the employees that were on the scene after the  
4 accident, who was actually in charge of your agency's personnel,  
5 can you tell me who that supervisor was?

6 A. Well, the person that at this point is usually the highest  
7 person and at the point, it was General Superintendent Lall and  
8 when he came, I believe he came like maybe 30 minutes after the  
9 incident. I'd have to check, but --

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. -- usually what happens is once we have -- we have a  
12 supervisor, usually they'll be the person in charge and then  
13 depending on like who's higher up, they'll be in charge, so it  
14 will just keep going up to whoever's going to be the highest. So  
15 at the time, in the beginning it was the TSS and then once we had  
16 a superintendent on the scene, that would be the superintendent  
17 and then when we had the General Superintendent Lall on the scene,  
18 then he became the person in charge.

19 Q. Got you. And I'm sorry, can you spell his last name for me?

20 A. Sure, it's L-a-l-l.

21 Q. Okay, L-a-l-l. Great. Thank you very much. Okay.

22 A. Sure.

23 Q. Let's see. Okay. Okay. Actually, I think that's all the  
24 questions I have for you, so I'm going to ask you, is there  
25 anything you think that I should've asked you about this incident

1 and I failed to ask you?

2 A. Well, I'm curious, did you -- are we still trying to  
3 determine what may have been the cause?

4 Q. So, yes. So the NTSB is trying to determine the cause, but  
5 my part of the investigation is to look at the timeliness, the  
6 effectiveness and the efficiency of the emergency response, so I  
7 look at --

8 A. Okay.

9 Q. -- how the emergency -- how it played out, I need --

10 A. Okay.

11 Q. -- to find out, you know, the communications and how that  
12 coordination occurs between your agency and emergency responders  
13 when they respond on the scene of something on your property. So  
14 that's what I'm --

15 A. Okay.

16 Q. That's what I'm trying to do, okay?

17 A. Okay, okay.

18 Q. So at this particular point, are there any other questions  
19 you want to ask me?

20 A. No, I think that was everything.

21 Q. Okay, all right. So let me just go over my notes and make  
22 sure that I covered everything that I wanted to cover.

23 A. Surely.

24 Q. If I wanted to find out who the FDNY liaison was, that was in  
25 the OCC that night, how do I go about doing that?



1 A. You can try calling the communications desk and speaking with  
2 the general superintendent that was in charge. Actually, yeah,  
3 you can call the communications desk and I believe they should  
4 have a log of who was in the theater at the time.

5 MS. HARLEY: Great, okay. All right. And let's see. I  
6 think that's it. Thank you very much, I appreciate you taking the  
7 time, but before we -- before we get off, I've been remiss,  
8 Mr. Hazel, is there any questions that you want to ask, either of  
9 your employee or me?

10 MR. HAZEL: No. No, no. I think everything went well this  
11 morning.

12 MS. HARLEY: Okay.

13 MR. HAZEL: I have nothing to add.

14 MS. HARLEY: Great, thank you very much. And again, thank  
15 you and I'm going to go ahead and end the interview now, it's 7:44  
16 a.m. Let me just cut off the recording and then I'll talk to you  
17 in a minute, okay? Hold on one second.

18 (Whereupon, at 7:44 a.m., the interview concluded.)  
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the  
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

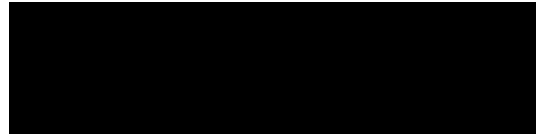
IN THE MATTER OF:             MTA EMPLOYEE FATALLY STRUCK BY  
   SUBWAY TRAIN IN MANHATTAN,  
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   Interview of Gaetane Philoctete

ACCIDENT NO.:                   RRD24FR003

PLACE:                            via Microsoft Teams videoconference

DATE:                             April 10, 2024

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.



David A. Martini  
Transcriber