

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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SEPTA TRAIN CRASH  
UPPER DARBY, PENNSYLVANIA  
AUGUST 22, 2017

\* Accident No.: DCA17FP012

\* \* \* \* \*

Interview of: OMARR HILL

SEPTA Headquarters  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Wednesday  
August 23, 2017

## APPEARANCES:

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National Transportation Safety Board

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<u>ITEM</u>	<u>I N D E X</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Interview of Omarr Hill:		
By Mr. Torres		5
By Dr. Jenner		10
By Mr. Reynolds		13
By Mr. Cassity		14
By Ms. Bonini		16
By Mr. Good		17
By Mr. Torres		18
By Mr. Reynolds		22
By Mr. Cassity		23
By Mr. Hunter		24
By Mr. Young		25
By Mr. Good		26
By Mr. Torres		27
By Mr. Cassity		31
By Ms. Bonini		31
By Mr. Hunter		31

I N T E R V I E W

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2 MR. TORRES: This is a NTSB informal interview. My name is  
3 Tomas Torres, T-O-M-A-S, T-O-R-R-E-S. Today's date is August 23,  
4 2017. We are at SEPTA Headquarters in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
5 interviewing a witness, happens to be an operator, in connection  
6 with an accident that occurred at Upper Darby on August 22, 2017.  
7 The NTSB Accident No. is DCA17FR012.

8 The purpose of the investigation is to increase safety, not  
9 to assign fault, blame or liability. NTSB cannot offer any  
10 guarantee of confidentiality or immunity from legal or certificate  
11 actions. A transcript or summary of the interview will go into  
12 the public docket.

13 The interviewee can have one representative of the  
14 interviewee's choice. Anybody there, a union guy or anybody wants  
15 to represent you? Or do you need anybody?

16 MR. HILL: No, I'm all right.

17 MR. TORRES: Okay, thank you.

18 Do you understand this, that the interview is being recorded?

19 MR. HILL: I understand.

20 MR. TORRES: Okay. And please state your name and spell it.

21 MR. HILL: It's Omarr Hill. It's O-M-A-R-R, Hill, H-I-L-L.

22 MR. TORRES: Steve?

23 DR. JENNER: Stephen Jenner, S-T-E-P-H-E-N, J-E-N-N-E-R with  
24 the NTSB.

25 MR. REYNOLDS: John Reynolds, J-O-H-N, R-E-Y-N-O-L-D-S with

1 SEPTA.

2 MS. ANGOTTA: Linda Angotta, L-I-N-D-A, A-N-G-O-T-T-A, SEPTA.

3 MR. HARRIS: Waverly Harris, W-A-V-E-R-L-Y, H-A-R-R-I-S. I'm  
4 the SMART General Chairman.

5 MR. CASSITY: Jared Cassity, J-A-R-E-D, C-A-S-S-I-T-Y. NST  
6 Representative for SMART, Transportation Division.

7 MR. YOUNG: I'm James Young, J-A-M-E-S, Y-O-U-N-G with the  
8 PennDOT Rail Transit Safety Review Program.

9 MS. BONINI: Beth Bonini, B-E-T-H, B-O-N-I-N-I, also with the  
10 Rail Transit Safety Review Program with PennDOT.

11 MR. GOOD: George Good. G-E-O-R-G-E, G-O-O-D, Federal  
12 Transit Administration.

13 INTERVIEW OF OMARR HILL

14 BY MR. TORRES:

15 Q. Tomas Torres with the NTSB. Do you mind if we call you by  
16 your first name --

17 A. Sure.

18 Q. Omarr?

19 A. That's fine.

20 Q. Okay. Can you tell us a brief description of your work  
21 history here with the SEPTA?

22 A. Sure. I've been an operator since August 27, 2012. Bus  
23 Operator, trolley, and Norristown high speed line,  
24 (indiscernible) --

25 Q. Yes, that's fine. On the day of the accident where were you

1 at? You know, what time did you go on duty and how'd, how was it  
2 that you were a witness?

3 A. I was the 7 to 3. That's the person on standby for, at  
4 nighttime. But I came in at 3 in the afternoon because we were, I  
5 believe were a little shorthanded. I was there to help fill trips  
6 because a lot of the trains were running a little bit behind  
7 because they're doing construction.

8 My train was the train on Track 1. The train on Track 2, I  
9 was in the back of that train loading people on the back of the  
10 train because it was raining previously and we didn't want nobody  
11 to get wet. We -- there's no canopy in the front of the train, so  
12 we put them in the back of the train. What else.

13 I was, I was standing at the back of the train and from where  
14 I was positioned, there's the starter's booth and the road  
15 (indiscernible). So I can only really see my train. When his  
16 train came in couldn't really see where it made contact because  
17 the starter's booth is right at the, it block the front of the  
18 train.

19 Q. Okay so you were standing on the platform between Track 1 and  
20 Track 2?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Towards the baggage dump, the far end?

23 A. Yes, the baggage train.

24 Q. Would that be east, west, or how do they?

25 A. That would be south if you're on the --

1 Q. It would be like the southern wall part?

2 A. Yeah, yes.

3 Q. So did you get to see the actual train come in or ?

4 A. I seen the train because the train was coming, once it comes  
5 around the curve, the train on Track 2 was no longer blocking it.  
6 But I didn't actually see it hit the train. I seen the train move  
7 because of, it was hit by the other train.

8 Q. So you didn't see the train approach, as it was approaching?

9 A. I heard it once he, he was blowing the horn coming in.

10 Q. How was he blowing the horn?

11 A. If they, they was just holding it down. I'm assuming to let  
12 everybody know that a train's coming.

13 Q. Was it like a continuous blast or was it a series of blasts,  
14 you know?

15 A. I believe it was a continuous blast.

16 Q. Like one long, long, something --

17 A. Yeah, I think he just held it all the way up until it hit.

18 Q. Oh, okay. Do you know how long, you know, estimate how long  
19 that sound, the sound of the horn?

20 A. I would say it was pretty long. Generally we don't really  
21 blow the horn coming into it because I don't really need to,  
22 unless there's somebody in the track area. But I would say it was  
23 pretty long because we were trying to figure out why he was  
24 blowing the horn. And then when we seen him coming around we, you  
25 actually knew why he was blowing the horn.

1 Q. So do you get a -- did you get a glimpse of them coming in  
2 or?

3 A. Just a slight glimpse between the starter's booth and the  
4 train right there. Once he got past the, once past the visual of  
5 Track 2, then the starter's booth is now blocking that train  
6 coming in.

7 Q. So could you estimate how quick he was coming or the speed of  
8 the train? Maybe not in miles per hour but, you know, his  
9 approach.

10 A. Honestly, I'm not sure. I know coming into the terminal and  
11 past the employee platform you can only get 15 so I wouldn't  
12 imagine it being able to go faster than 15, but I'm not, I wasn't  
13 on the train.

14 Q. So you didn't, you, from a distance you can't see his  
15 headlight, you know?

16 A. Well, you can see the headlights, but you can see the  
17 headlights from, depending on if they had the high beams on. I  
18 don't know.

19 Q. Okay and where's the, what's that other, what you called  
20 them? The booth.

21 A. Oh, so they, it's a starter's booth. It's a booth that,  
22 there's starters who keep track of the trains, write the numbers  
23 down for control. There's a booth for them. It's just a small  
24 booth but it's --

25 Q. Is it on the platform or on the ground?



1 A. Yes, it's on the platform. It's in the center, it's in the  
2 center of the platform towards the end, somewhat end of the  
3 platform.

4 Q. And that's between 1 and 2?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Was there somebody there?

7 A. The starter was standing outside the train, outside the booth  
8 because we were trying to get everybody, because that, the train  
9 on Track 2 was about to leave. So we were getting everybody on  
10 that train.

11 Q. And who was that person?

12 A. That is Sean Jackson.

13 Q. Jackson, okay. So once the trains came together what did you  
14 do?

15 A. Once the trains stopped, we went, me and (indiscernible) went  
16 onto the incoming train to see if anybody needed help, which  
17 everybody needed help.

18 Q. Did you go inside the train?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. What did you see?

21 A. There were people on the floor. There was blood everywhere.  
22 Certain people were unconscious. So we were just trying to figure  
23 out how many people was hurt, who needed the most attention and  
24 we, I don't know who called but I believe one person called, one  
25 person called 911 and I called SEPTA Control because we were

1 trying to make sure everybody could get here as fast as possible.

2 Q. Did you get to see the engineer?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Would you describe that?

5 A. He was on the floor, not responsive at the time and he was  
6 pushed in between the, he was, he fell in between the chair and  
7 the fare box. And that's pretty much how he looked.

8 Q. So it's a cab with a operator. Is everything closed?

9 A. It can be if you close the door but it's normally open  
10 because the fare box is inside the cab. The fare box is next to  
11 the seat.

12 Q. So you usually keep it open, so?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Okay. So he ended up between the fare box and the seat?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Did you notice anything about the controls? I mean, did you  
17 take a look at the controls?

18 A. No. Can't say I did. I was more worried about everybody  
19 else. I didn't even look at it.

20 MR. TORRES: Okay. Thank you. Steve?

21 BY DR. JENNER:

22 Q. Steve Jenner. Thank you for your story. Just a few more  
23 questions. Did you, did you, when you first saw the operator he  
24 was unconscious. Did you remain in the area until he regained  
25 consciousness?

1 A. No. I went throughout the train checking on people who were  
2 on the floor, anyone bleeding.

3 Q. Did you provide assistance to any of the passengers?

4 A. Yeah, yes. I ran to the break room to get paper towels.  
5 Normally there's some in the starter's booth but there wasn't.  
6 But some people were bleeding from their mouth, arms, so I ran and  
7 got them some paper towels so that they could at least slow down  
8 the bleeding. And then I told everybody, I told everybody not to  
9 move until somebody got there because you never know what could be  
10 broken or whatever.

11 Q. Right. Did they listen to you?

12 A. Some did, some got off the train. Can't really stop anybody  
13 from doing anything they don't want to do.

14 Q. You, were you still in the area when the emergency responders  
15 came?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Can you describe their arrival and what they did and did you  
18 talk to anyone?

19 A. They came through the platform doors. They came from, I  
20 think the Track 1 entrance and Track 2 entrance. I think, I only  
21 spoke to one who asked about cutting the power. But I told him  
22 that if we cut the power, all the lights shut off and you can't  
23 open the doors easily. So he said, all right, I'll discuss that  
24 with the supervisor when we're ready. But I told him we could  
25 open all the doors if he wanted us to. But he said don't worry

1 about it.

2 Q. What was the reason for him wanting to cut the power?

3 A. I think it's probably a safety thing. I don't, I guess, I  
4 don't know if they want to be around the train when it's got power  
5 on.

6 Q. Okay. How, about how long do you think it took for the first  
7 ER people to arrive?

8 A. Not too long. SEPTA transit got there, the transit police,  
9 they got there really fast. By the time I came back with the  
10 paper towels there was one or two of them out there and they just  
11 start, everybody just started coming in.

12 Q. Okay. I understand the, you know, a lot of injured  
13 passengers, but was there -- how would you describe the situation?  
14 Was it calm, chaotic, somewhere in between?

15 A. It was a little chaotic. Some people weren't moving and a  
16 lot of people -- some women were crying, some people were  
17 screaming that they were hurt. It was happening really fast.

18 Q. I'm sorry?

19 A. It happened kind of fast, so --

20 Q. Sure. Can you think of any tools or equipment that would  
21 have made this, would have been beneficial at that time?

22 A. In terms?

23 Q. Well, let's say, you went and got paper towels so, you know,  
24 those were necessary, but were some people trapped in seats or  
25 flashlights or anything along those lines that may have been

1 helpful?

2 A. I don't think anybody was trapped in the seats. I can't say.  
3 I'm not sure.

4 Q. How, how was the lighting inside the car? Was that, was it  
5 lit up?

6 A. Yes, it well-lit, it was well-lit.

7 Q. And how long did you remain in the area?

8 A. Pretty long until my supervisor, because there was more  
9 people who were at the employee's platform. There was another  
10 train that was coming in and they had it stopped there, so they  
11 wanted to get them on shuttle busses. So we went to go help them  
12 get in the shuttle bus.

13 DR. JENNER: Great. Thanks very much.

14 BY MR. REYNOLDS:

15 Q. Just a couple quick questions. You said they brought you in  
16 early at 3:00 p.m.?

17 A. Um-hum.

18 Q. At that time did you bring 148 car over?

19 A. No, 148 was, it was left there because I believe control  
20 wanted a extra car there because a couple nights they didn't have  
21 a car when it, when it was, when they're, during the construction,  
22 sometimes a train will come back late, and so they wanted a car to  
23 leave on time, and there would be no car there because everybody's  
24 stuck out there. So they would have one car stored over there  
25 just in case they had to use it. One forty-eight was the one that

1 we ended up having to use.

2 Q. Now 148 car, were you on it at all? Do you know --

3 A. Yes, I had that, I did two trips on that car.

4 Q. Okay, that answers one of my questions. When you stored it  
5 on 1 Track, what did you do?

6 A. When I stored it on 1 Track, I put the parking brake on and I  
7 asked them what did they want to do with this car because this  
8 train was supposed, that, they wanted the train to go back out  
9 again. But they were waiting for another train because that train  
10 was supposed to be, I think, the 12:20 or the 12:30. So they  
11 wanted to keep that train somewhat on schedule. So we didn't use  
12 that car. We were actually supposed to use that car to put people  
13 on it but we ended up using the car that came in on Track 2.

14 Q. When you made your handful of trips, did you notice anything  
15 unusual about the environment?

16 A. When it was raining some trains were sliding. You would, I  
17 would assume most trains, because when it rains it slides if it's  
18 a light mist, it'd slide. Other than that my train was fine.

19 Q. Was anybody talking about it on the platform, or?.

20 A. That their train was sliding?

21 Q. That things were slippery or not?

22 A. I can't recall if, who said their train, I believe somebody  
23 said their train slipped once.

24 MR. REYNOLDS: Okay. I don't have anything else. Thank you.

25 BY MR. CASSITY:

1 Q. Jared Cassity, SMART Transportation Division. Going along  
2 the wheel sliding stuff, is wheel sliding considered an uncommon  
3 event to you or is it fairly regular?

4 A. It's fairly regular.

5 Q. Pretty, I guess pretty consistent with the weather and the  
6 rain. I mean, if it's raining it's going to slip?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. I'm going to go back to where you were watching 148 coming  
9 in. I know this sounds like you didn't have too good of a visual.  
10 Did anything appear or sound or even smell different for that  
11 matter, when that train was coming into the terminal?

12 A. Appeared different. The lights looked a little brighter than  
13 they normally did but I just assumed that he had the high beams  
14 on.

15 Q. When you were assisting the passengers, was there any  
16 discussion amongst them, perhaps, that, of what occurred on the  
17 train or what they think might have happened?

18 A. No. I didn't hear anybody talking to anybody about what  
19 happened.

20 Q. No discussion about what they heard or anything prior to the  
21 actual impact?

22 A. No, more, so a lot of them were just complaining that they  
23 were hurt --

24 Q. That's understandable.

25 A. -- complaining what was hurting.

1 MR. CASSITY: I think that's it for me. Thank you.

2 BY MS. BONINI:

3 Q. Hey Omarr, Beth Bonini again from PennDOT. Thank you for,  
4 you know, helping folks out on the train and reacting like you  
5 did. We appreciate it. When you were trying to get some paper  
6 towels and stuff to assist the passengers was there a first aid  
7 kit on the train?

8 A. It might have been, you know, I didn't even check.

9 Q. That's okay. I was just curious.

10 A. I think it's probably one in the center of the train. I know  
11 we have a bunch of things for emergencies in the center of the  
12 train.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. I can't recall me looking at it because I was, I went to one  
15 person and they said this person's hurting, then I was asking and  
16 people kept pointing to everybody who was hurting so I was just  
17 trying to --

18 Q. It's okay. Just curious. It, was there a first aid kit in  
19 that starter booth?

20 A. I believe there is a first aid kit in the starter booth.

21 Q. How many trips did you actually, or do that night?

22 A. I did two trips.

23 Q. Two trips? And were they all on that vehicle 148?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. And you said you didn't experience any slipping?



1 A. Not with my (indiscernible).

2 Q. And, but you did visually see some other trains slipping  
3 while you were standing on the platform?

4 A. Well, do you, a lot of people were saying that it's slippery  
5 outside. I do remember that some people said it's slippery out  
6 there. But when it's raining you can always expect the train to  
7 slide.

8 Q. Do you ever get training on how to handle or operate the  
9 train when it's slippery or sliding?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. What do they teach you?

12 A. The training is to go to a lower brake to get the train, I  
13 guess, a chance to catch back up. And I think the train is  
14 designed to throw sand down while it does that.

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

16 A. You're welcome.

17 BY MR. GOOD:

18 Q. George Good, FTA. Just one question. The times that you had  
19 the train slide on you, what's the distance that it slid?

20 A. That would depend on the speed.

21 Q. When you're trying to stop? What's the farthest distance  
22 you've had it slide?

23 A. I've had it slide over the station.

24 Q. How many (indiscernible)?

25 A. One station.

1 Q. And that was like the extreme. Now on the other end, what  
2 would it would be?

3 A. That would probably be the, I think that was the extreme but  
4 it was also slightly downhill so that contributed to it.

5 Q. What about the average? Say if you had to give a average  
6 distance? Few feet, few yards?

7 A. How long did it continuously slide?

8 Q. Um-hum. If you were actually stopping, trying to come to a  
9 full stop and it starts sliding?

10 A. It, there's a lot of things that can contribute to that  
11 because if it's slippery rail that adds to that, so. And if it's  
12 raining, that also adds to it. I can't really give you a --

13 Q. I mean, in one of those situations, in the worst-case  
14 situation?

15 A. To the next station.

16 Q. To the next station?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. You mean from one station to the next station?

19 A. Yes.

20 MR. GOOD: And the, okay. That's all I have. Thanks.

21 BY MR. TORRES:

22 Q. Okay, Tomas Torres with the NTSB. So when you say when you  
23 slide to one station to the next station, I mean, about what's the  
24 distance, like, I mean distance?

25 A. This, you said extreme. That's the extreme it's ever gone to

1 me.

2 Q. I think I meant, like, how far is that? I mean, a mile?

3 A. That's not, I don't believe that's a mile, no. I don't  
4 actually know the distance between certain stations. It really  
5 depends on how fast you're going, the track conditions and the  
6 weather conditions. It really depends.

7 Q. So when you're saying stations, you're talking from one stop  
8 to the next stop?

9 A. Possibly, yes.

10 Q. Okay, and on that night did you hear anything as the train  
11 was coming in?

12 A. Just him blowing on the horn.

13 Q. Just the horn? Just, no screeching or anything like that?

14 A. I can't say I heard any screeching, no.

15 Q. So you're pretty familiar with the area around that  
16 territory?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. So can you describe to us what the approach would be coming  
19 into that station?

20 A. Coming in you will have a 15 Code, means you can only go 15  
21 miles an hour. And coming to the signal, if your signal is red,  
22 you will get a "No Code" for the train to automatically stop you,  
23 even if you don't stop it. As long as the signal's red, you'll  
24 get a No Code, so the train has to stop.

25 Q. So the cab signal will activate the brakes prior to --

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. -- before you get to the red signal?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. You'll get a No Code?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Can you describe to us the territory, you know, as you're  
7 approaching? You know, the terrain, the signals that you see?

8 A. You have several signals leading up to the signal that gets  
9 you up to 69th Street. I believe it is, one, two -- the one at  
10 69th Street I believe is the third signal. You're coming downhill  
11 from Parkview station which is the last station before the  
12 employee's platform. And pretty much, the code drops, it drops on  
13 your way to 69th Street so you can only go by so fast.

14 Q. So what are the train speeds from the previous station to  
15 69th Street.

16 A. Your code drops from 70 to 55 before you get to Parkview  
17 Station and then when you get down, before you get halfway to the  
18 employees platform, it drops to 30. And then when you get past,  
19 when you get right past that signal, as soon as you get past that  
20 signal where the yard is, it goes down to 15.

21 Q. And what signal would that be?

22 A. I believe that is 2S.

23 Q. And what kind of typical, what's your typical signal  
24 indication you get?

25 A. Proceed .

1 Q. And what?

2 A. That's a solid lunar.

3 Q. Lunar? White?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. And the following signal would be which one?

6 A. It's an, also a solid lunar so you can have your 15 Code to  
7 continue that.

8 Q. And then 6S?

9 A. Is always red.

10 Q. And, is always red?

11 A. Correct. Until you get past the impediment zone  
12 (indiscernible).

13 Q. But, so if it's always red, how do you know what track you're  
14 going to take?

15 A. You know when the, when you get close enough, it'll either,  
16 it'll either tell you a track or you have to wait for control to  
17 give you your track.

18 Q. So signal, like say we go to one or two, I mean, how do you  
19 know you're going in there? I mean, if the --

20 A. Oh, I'm sorry. One would remain solid lunar, two there's a  
21 number 2, and then three, two would be lit up and then you would  
22 get a flashing lunar for your divert move, if you were going to  
23 two. If you're going to three it'd be the same thing, you'd get a  
24 three with a flashing lunar.

25 Q. So it's below where the light itself?

1 A. Yes.

2 MR. TORRES: That's all I have. Steve?

3 DR. JENNER: No questions.

4 BY MR. REYNOLDS:

5 Q. John Reynolds. I just have, I think I just need a little  
6 clarification. Was the station to station slide actual, something  
7 that happened to you?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. What two stations were involved? Do you remember?

10 A. Penfield to Township Line.

11 MR. TORRES: I'm sorry, what was that?

12 MR. HILL: Penfield to Township Line.

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Southbound?

14 MR. HILL: Yes, coming in (indiscernible).

15 BY MR. REYNOLDS:

16 Q. And, I guess, where did you first start to experience the  
17 slide? Did you make a station stop at --

18 A. I did. It did eventually stop at the station, right at the  
19 station. There's a slight, there's a slight hill, too, coming  
20 down the, into Township Line.

21 Q. Would that have been during slippery rail season? Okay.

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. So during the fall.

24 A. Yeah. I think it was probably the first day when nobody  
25 expected it, when they didn't have time to bring the scrubber out.

1 Or it wasn't time to bring the scrubber out.

2 Q. Do you remember if you called control center to report it?

3 A. That I was sliding? Yes. Yeah.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. My train had, my train had a fault when I got to it because I  
6 guess it was trying to stop. So I called the train and give them  
7 the fault number, which I, I don't remember what it was, it was so  
8 long ago.

9 MR. REYNOLDS: No further questions.

10 BY MR. CASSITY:

11 Q. Jared Cassity of SMART Transportation Division. As an  
12 operator, it's my understanding, you all have a schedule. Is  
13 there -- I mean, is there an expectation that you maintain  
14 schedule as far as arriving and departing stations?

15 A. We try but most people understand a couple minutes is not  
16 really -- unless you miss your bus or connection, they really  
17 don't care. But we try to keep it, you know, as close to  
18 schedule. But if we're, we're late. We're not going to -- at  
19 least me, I know I'm not going to do anything extra. If I'm late,  
20 I'm late.

21 Q. Okay.

22 MR. HUNTER: Sorry. Dave Hunter, System Safety, Director of  
23 Accident Investigations. How you doing?

24 MR. TORRES: Can I ask you to spell out your name please?

25 MR. HUNTER: Yes, I can. D-A-V-I-D, H-U-N-T-E-R. Again, I'm

1 the Director for Accident Prevention and Investigations with SEPTA  
2 System Safety.

3 BY MR. HUNTER:

4 Q. I kind of put you on the spot here and I apologize. If you  
5 experience a wheel slip do you think it's acceptable or would it  
6 be frowned upon if you slowed your train speed or even to a crawl  
7 if you will or, I mean, is there, is there any issue, adverse  
8 issue with you adjusting your scheduled arrivals and departures,  
9 held to account for wheel slip?

10 A. Yes. If it slides more than I expect it to, I'll just slow  
11 down. That's why, me personally, like I said, they, the rule is  
12 don't sacrifice safety for schedule, so --

13 Q. Okay. So the employer then you don't think would give you  
14 any kind of issue or grief, if you will, for --

15 A. For being late?

16 Q. -- for being late due to wheel slip or (indiscernible) safer?

17 A. I don't, I don't, I wouldn't imagine so.

18 Q. I just want to make sure. I know that I was kind of putting  
19 you in a tight spot. I'm curious. I'm curious about the nature  
20 of wheel sliding to you anymore, I mean, was it scary the first  
21 time that you experienced it?

22 A. Absolutely.

23 Q. Do you still feel like you pucker up a little bit, if you  
24 will, or is it kind of more almost, I hate to say a routine thing,  
25 but?



1 A. Well, as you get more time with this, you'll know when it's  
2 going to happen a little more. When, you know, when it's raining  
3 you're not going to go 70 when you know you got to stop at the  
4 next station.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. I mean, just --

7 Q. And, you said you did slip, or, you did not slip a little  
8 148. Was it raining when you were on 148 or did that happen  
9 after?

10 A. No. It wasn't raining when I was on 148. I think it started  
11 right when I got to the terminal.

12 Q. And then my last question. The slippery rail season, we've  
13 heard it all day and I wish I'd have asked sooner, is that  
14 something that SEPTA actually acknowledges, like, in writing or a  
15 bulletin to say, hey this is slippery rail season or that operator  
16 talk for just kind of?

17 A. It is posted most of the time. Slippery rail season is  
18 getting ready to start. Pretty much be aware that there's places  
19 where the train's going to slide so try to be as careful as you  
20 can.

21 Q. Okay. I appreciate it. Thank you.

22 BY MR. YOUNG:

23 Q. James Young. Do you, or have you also operated  
24 (indiscernible) trains?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Have you experienced similar sliding conditions operating  
2 those trains?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Okay. I know the speeds are a lot slower than they are on  
5 the Norristown line which you shouldn't go over 70, that can  
6 impact, you know, sliding distance. But accounting for that is  
7 the sliding conditions to the same clear magnitude what you would  
8 expect on the Norristown line?

9 A. No. It's mainly because the trolleys have a track brake.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. So, if it does slide dropping the track brake could help.  
12 And you just throw sand down with it. You control the sand on the  
13 trolleys. The train does the control.

14 Q. Okay. Now, on your trains, you can't control the sander?

15 A. No.

16 Q. Okay.

17 MR. YOUNG: No more questions from me.

18 BY MR. GOOD:

19 Q. George Good, FTA. Is there a plus or minus tolerance for  
20 operating the train? Based on the cab code, can you go above or  
21 beyond what the cab code reads? Is there, you know, like 3 miles  
22 above or 3 mile, 3 miles less than whatever the cab code's  
23 reading?

24 A. Generally if you go a mile either right to it or a mile over  
25 it, the alarm will come on.

1 Q. So it'll let you come up to within a mile where before  
2 something?

3 A. It could, yeah, before the alarm, it come right up to it and  
4 then the alarm will come on.

5 Q. Okay. Thanks.

6 MR. GOOD: That's all I have.

7 BY MR. TORRES:

8 Q. Okay. Tomas Torres with the NTSB. Did you say that it  
9 rained that evening or --

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. -- prior to the accident?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. Was it heavy rain or drizzle?

14 A. I think it was, I think it was light. It didn't rain for too  
15 long. I don't, I don't think it rained too long. I can't really  
16 recall at the moment.

17 Q. Okay. The slip sliding, what did you guys experience? Where  
18 does it happen the most, what areas? Or --

19 A. Are you talking about during slippery rail season?

20 Q. Yeah, yeah. I mean, no, no, like --

21 A. Mainly near trees and declines. Like, if it's going downhill  
22 it's a little harder to stop even if it wasn't, you know,  
23 (indiscernible).

24 Q. Okay. And on that, or, going into the platform there, the  
25 accident site, what is it like? Is it a decline or ascending?

1 A. By the time you get to the platform it's pretty level.

2 Q. Pretty level?

3 A. Pretty level.

4 Q. And how about as you're approaching 6S?

5 A. As you're approaching 6S it's level. I have to say it's all  
6 flat. By the time you get to the yard where that, the signal is,  
7 it's all pretty much flat.

8 Q. What about 2S? That's pretty much flat?

9 A. It's pretty much flat from 2S on over here.

10 Q. Okay, when you take charge of a train, what are the  
11 procedures you have to take?

12 A. We --

13 Q. You know, when you take charge of a train what --

14 A. Your pre-trip.

15 Q. Yeah, what do you do?

16 A. You do the, you do the brake test. You do the cab signal  
17 tests. Pretty much make sure all the emergencies work and you  
18 make sure your cab signal work, your codes work.

19 Q. And what are the steps you take for the brake test, you know,  
20 what steps are involved?

21 A. Okay. You throw it in emergency to make sure that the train  
22 don't -- you do that twice because you do it one with the  
23 (indiscernible) and then once with the stopper. Then you do, you  
24 pretty much do the detect test. You let it go to make sure that  
25 the safety feature comes on if you let go of the dead man. And

1 then you just do your regular pull-off and then (indiscernible).

2 Q. So that feature just mentioned, is that, if you don't respond  
3 for a certain length of time, it'll apply the brakes?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. So it's --

6 A. Well you let the, if you let the controller go, the brakes  
7 will come on.

8 Q. So you have to hold on to it or?

9 A. You have to hold on to it the whole time you're operating.

10 Q. And if you let go it'll --

11 A. It'd stop.

12 Q. -- apply the brakes.

13 A. (indiscernible).

14 Q. Starts to beep or just?

15 A. It'll beep and it'll stop and be considered a penalty stop.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. Because the train will stop. You won't be able to move until  
18 the train comes to a complete stop.

19 Q. And how about the cab signal when you guys initiate it? What  
20 are the steps that you take? Do you know?

21 A. What you do is you have to turn cab signal test on and you  
22 pretty much just go through to make sure that it reads the codes  
23 and it'd drop the codes to make sure that you're getting your over  
24 speed alarm. And when it drops your codes if you don't respond  
25 then you're going to have to restart the test over.

1 Q. And the codes would be the speed, or?

2 A. Yes, it'd be, it'd be, all this is at a standing point  
3 obviously.

4 Q. Yeah.

5 A. The code will go from 70, then it'll drop to 50. You have to  
6 respond for the alarm. If you don't respond then you got to  
7 restart the code over. You got to do that all the way until you  
8 pass the code test completely.

9 Q. So all the speeds are programmed for the area that you're  
10 going to operate?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Yeah. When's the last time a manager gave you an evaluation?  
13 Rode with you?

14 A. I think it was 2 weeks ago, maybe. Two or 3 weeks ago.

15 Q. And how often is that?

16 A. I'm not sure.

17 Q. Do you get tested out on the field? To see how you're  
18 controlling the speed of the train?

19 A. Do, I think, I'm not sure. I think they do. I know we do,  
20 we recertify every year. Is that what you mean?

21 Q. Yeah. The, I mean, they won't test you to see if you're  
22 going to stop for red and, you know, restricted speed, stuff like  
23 that?

24 A. That I'm not sure about at the moment. It's --

25 MR. TORRES: Steve?

1 DR. JENNER: I have no questions.

2 BY MR. CASSITY:

3 Q. I'm Jared Cassity, SMART Transportation Division. Just one  
4 more piggyback off of Tomas, talking about the pre-check. Did you  
5 do a pre-check on the car -- on Train 148?

6 A. No. Once the train is pre-checked for the day, it's pre-  
7 checked.

8 Q. Okay.

9 MR. CASSITY: No further questions.

10 BY MS. BONINI:

11 Q. Beth Bonini from PennDOT. I just wanted to clarify. On the  
12 22nd, did, you started at 3:00 p.m. that day?

13 A. Um-hum.

14 Q. And your shift for that day was 3:00 p.m. to 3:00 a.m.?

15 A. Um-hum.

16 Q. And did you work, what was the time that you worked before  
17 that?

18 A. I got off at 9:00 p.m. Sunday.

19 Q. Thank you.

20 MR. TORRES: Dave?

21 BY MR. HUNTER:

22 Q. Dave Hunter, SEPTA System Safety. Have you ever experienced  
23 a time when dry conditions, where you've gone into spin slide?

24 A. No, I can't say that I have.

25 Q. Okay.

1 MR. HUNTER: No further questions.

2 MR. TORRES: Tomas Torres with the NTSB. If there's no  
3 further questions then this will conclude the interview.

4 (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 TRAIN CRASH  
UPPER DARBY, PENNSYLVANIA  
AUGUST 22, 2017  
Interview of Omarr Hill

ACCIDENT NUMBER: DCA17FR012

PLACE: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

DATE: August 23, 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.

A black rectangular redaction box covers the signature of the transcriber. A horizontal line extends from the right side of the box.

Transcriber