

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

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SEPTA TRACK WORKER FATALITY *

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA *

Accident No.: RRD19FR009

JULY 8, 2019 *

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Interview of: SELINA GILBERT

Transportation Manager Trainee, SEPTA

SEPTA Headquarters
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Thursday,
July 12, 2019

APPEARANCES:

DAVID BUCHER, Chief, Rail Division
National Transportation Safety Board

GEORGE GOOD, Accident Investigator
Federal Transit Administration (FTA)

RICK DOLBIN, Project Manager, State Safety Oversight
(SSO), Rail Transit Safety Review Program (RTSRP)
PennDOT

AMELIJA SORG-TAYLOR, Project Analyst, RTSRP
PennDOT

ANTHONY HARRIS, Project Officer, RTSRP
PennDOT

JOSEPH WILSON, Operational Safety Officer
Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority
(SEPTA)

JAMES CREEDON, Director of Transportation, Subway
Elevated Division
SEPTA

DEAN JONES, Training
SEPTA

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I N T E R V I E W

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2 MR. BUCHER: Okay. Good morning. My name is David Bucher.
3 I am the chief of the Rail Division for the National
4 Transportation Safety Board. Today's date is July 12, 2019. We
5 are at the headquarters of the Southeastern Pennsylvania
6 Transportation Authority, SEPTA, located in Philadelphia, PA.

7 We are interviewing Selina Gilbert who works as a
8 transportation manager trainee for SEPTA. This interview is in
9 connection with an accident that occurred on July 8, 2019, at Erie
10 interlocking. The NTSB accident number is RRD19FR009.

11 The purpose of this investigation is to increase safety, not
12 assign fault, blame, or liability; however, NTSB cannot guarantee
13 confidentiality because your name's going to go in the docket, but
14 your personal information stays out.

15 The Interviewee can have one representative of their choice,
16 if they choose to do so. And do you understand that this
17 interview is being recorded?

18 MS. GILBERT: Yes.

19 MR. BUCHER: Thank you. Before we start the interview, let's
20 go around the table and introduce ourselves. Please spell your
21 last name and who you represent. Please speak clearly so we can
22 get a clear recording.

23 My name is David Bucher, B-U-C-H-E-R, with NTSB.

24 MR. GOOD: George Good, G-O-O-D, Federal Transit
25 Administration, accident investigator.

1 MS. SORG-TAYLOR: Amelija Sorg-Taylor, S-O-R-G, hyphen, T-A-
2 Y-L-O-R, project analyst representing PennDOT Rail Transit Safety
3 Review Program, State Safety Review Oversight.

4 MR. JONES: Dean Jones, J-O-N-E-S, SEPTA.

5 MR. CREEDON: James Creedon, C-R-E-E-D-O-N, director of
6 transportation, SEPTA.

7 MR. HARRIS: Anthony Harris, project officer, H-A-R-R-I-S,
8 RTSRP.

9 MR. DOLBIN: Rick Dolbin, with PennDOT, State Safety
10 Oversight, D-O-L-B-I-N.

11 MR. WILSON: Joseph Wilson, W-I-L-S-O-N, SEPTA system safety.

12 MR. BUCHER: Okay, can you --

13 MS. GILBERT: Selina Gilbert, G-I-L-B-E-R-T, transportation
14 manager trainee, SEPTA.

15 MR. BUCHER: Thank you.

16 INTERVIEW OF SELINA GILBERT

17 BY MR. BUCHER:

18 Q. Okay, Selina, like I said before, if you could just go
19 through your day and give us all the details leading up to your
20 involvement with the accident.

21 A. Okay. We were doing emergency checks, emergency light checks
22 at lower Philadelphia when we heard the mayday. We, meaning 224,
23 and I was 224A, we made our way down. We caught the bus and SEPTA
24 police took us the rest of the way. We arrived on the platform.

25 Fire, the fire department was on the platform. Police, we

1 called -- well, 224 called us out to the track. Went into the
2 track area with the police, and we went over to where the body
3 was. 224 stayed with the body and instructed me to go to the
4 train operator. I went on the train. I asked the train operator
5 was he okay? At that point I asked him would he be able to tell
6 me what happened. He did. He told me that he was operating
7 northbound. He saw the back of -- as he was passing the two
8 people on the -- the track personnel, he saw the back of them. He
9 heard a loud noise. He put the train in emergency. At that point
10 I stayed with the operator. Gave announcements, you know, about
11 the delays and, you know, tried to keep the passengers as calm as
12 possible, and that was basically all my involvement.

13 Q. Okay. I have a couple questions and we'll just go around the
14 table.

15 A. Okay.

16 Q. How long have you been in the trainee position, in your
17 current position?

18 A. Well, I have been a trainee since November --

19 Q. November?

20 A. -- of last year.

21 Q. Okay. And you went with the -- with your supervisor also --

22 A. Another transportation manager.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Okay. Have you ever been down to the Erie interlocking on

1 the ground before or was this -- actually on the ground, down with
2 it on the tracks?

3 A. Yes. I've been on the tracks before, yes.

4 Q. Okay. All right. And have encountered, in your -- I know
5 it's only been since November, but I know you've -- I understand
6 you were a car operator before? Or a train operator?

7 A. Train operator, yes.

8 Q. Okay. All right, sorry. Because I have some questions about
9 track workers and train operators.

10 A. Okay.

11 Q. I'm trying to get -- and we're trying to get some background
12 information on track workers at Erie interlocking, in particular,
13 but a little bit about track workers in general on SEPTA, in the
14 tunnels and such. In your experience, how often do you see track
15 workers, track inspectors, at the Erie interlocking?

16 A. Not often. I mean, at the interlocking, not often.

17 Q. Not often? Okay.

18 A. I'm not operating a train right now, so --

19 Q. Right. I understand.

20 A. Okay.

21 Q. So you don't see them there often? There's -- you don't
22 interact with them in any way?

23 A. Well, we -- I see them when they call them in the track area
24 and we go past. But other than that, no.

25 Q. Okay. In your experience as a train operator --

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. Okay, which line did you operate on?

3 A. The Broad Street Line.

4 Q. Broad Street Line?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. So you encountered, in your experience as a train operator,
7 you've encountered inspectors and track workers as you passed.
8 What's the normal process, if you even do acknowledge their being
9 in the area -- as a train operator, when you pass them, is there
10 anything you do?

11 A. One long, one short.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. When they acknowledge, then they'll give a stop or proceed,
14 and then we'll do two short.

15 Q, Okay.

16 A. To let them know that we saw them.

17 MR. BUCHER: Okay. Okay, that's all I have right now.

18 BY MR. GOOD:

19 Q. George Good, G-O-O-D. Is that part of your normal, as part
20 of this program, your training, is that the -- attend the RWP
21 before you go out on the right of way? Is that part of your
22 training program for this position?

23 A. What do you mean by RWP?

24 Q. Well, do you call it something different here, roadway worker
25 protection?

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Track safety.

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: QPE, qualified protection employee.

3 MS. GILBERT: Okay, so --

4 BY MR. GOOD:

5 Q. Is that part of your training, your normal training?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Just curious. So in your experience as a train operator, how
8 long did you do that?

9 A. The QPE?

10 Q. No, the train, as a train operator before you took this
11 position on the Broad Street Line. You said you were a train
12 operator. How long did you do that?

13 A. Almost 5 years.

14 Q. Five years? And through that experience, it was pretty
15 common to see, like you said, workers off in the wayside as you're
16 traveling?

17 A. Yes, we see workers in the track a lot.

18 Q. And if -- is it normal for them to give you a proceed or a
19 stop there, that you just mainly just saw them as you were going
20 by?

21 A. If they're in, you know, in your eyesight, you -- we supposed
22 to acknowledge that they're there, and they're supposed to
23 acknowledge whether we can stop or proceed.

24 Q. Did that happen often? I mean, was that pretty standard that
25 they would do that?

1 A. Yes, they're supposed -- it's supposed to be done. So I'm
2 going to say like they're -- it's supposed to be done.

3 Q. But, I mean, was it done?

4 A. I haven't been -- was it done --

5 Q. Yeah.

6 A. -- in at my experience?

7 Q. You said it's supposed to be done. Yeah, in your experience.

8 A. Yes.

9 MR. GOOD: Okay. That's all I have.

10 BY MR. JONES:

11 Q. Dean Jones. Just to clarify, more specifically, have you
12 ever seen a watchperson giving hand signals to stop? I know
13 railway workers flag people or give hand signals to stop
14 periodically, but in your experience, have you ever seen a
15 watchperson give a hand signal to stop?

16 A. You mean, just a hand, or you mean just with a flashlight?

17 Q. Yeah, just a hand -- there's somebody out there on the track,
18 just want to stop you, not standing with a stop sign.

19 A. No, majority of the time the person has the flashlight and
20 they're given me the stop or the proceed.

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: She didn't understand it.

22 MS. GILBERT: I don't -- yeah, maybe I'm not understanding.

23 BY MR. JONES:

24 Q. Yeah. When someone -- have you seen many people on the track
25 area not standing with any signage of any sort, ever give you a

1 stop hand signal?

2 A. Yes. So basically you're saying -- okay, maybe, I don't --
3 other than a work zone?

4 Q. Yes.

5 A. Yes. They'll -- yes. I have had a person give me a stop or
6 a proceed, yeah, in the track area, yeah.

7 MR. JONES: Okay. That's all I have.

8 BY MR. CREEDON:

9 Q. James Creedon, C-R-E-E-D-O-N. I'm going to go over what Dean
10 said. You came up to a lone worker in the track area, signal
11 maintainer, and you've been given a stop signal by the signal
12 maintainer?

13 A. Yes. Well, if he need me to stop, he'll do it. But if, you
14 know, if he just want me to proceed, he'll just do proceed.

15 MR. CREEDON: Okay. Nothing further.

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No questions.

17 BY UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

18 Q. These gentlemen that were in the incident today, or that day,
19 had you seen them or noticed them earlier throughout the day?

20 A. No, I didn't. No.

21 Q. Or any other workers in that area, had you noticed that day?

22 A. No.

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay. No questions. Thank you.

24 BY MR. WILSON:

25 Q.. Joseph Wilson. Ms. Gilbert, during the course of your day,

1 you had your radio with you?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. And had it turned on?

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. Did you happen to hear any transmissions maybe from control
6 center in regards to any workers being in the tracks or anything
7 that day while you were listening to the radio?

8 A. I heard workers called into the track area, but I don't
9 remember the exact location.

10 Q. Okay. But you recall some transmissions of workers in the
11 tracks?

12 A. Yes.

13 MR. WILSON: Okay. That's all I have.

14 MR. BUCHER: I don't have anything else. Is there anything
15 else around the table?

16 Okay. Well, I think we're done. I appreciate it. Thank you
17 so much.

18 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD


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JULY 8, 2019
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ACCIDENT NO.: RRD19FR009

PLACE: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

DATE: July 12, 2019

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.


Deborah Dowling Sweigart
Transcriber