

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: A. ANDRE MURPHY
Train Operator, SEPTA

Union Hall, TWU Local 234
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Thursday,
July 11, 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

ELIZABETH BONINI, Program Manager SSO/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

RONALD NEWMAN, Business Agent
TWU Local 234

JADEANE DAYE, Business Agent
TWU Local 234
(On behalf of Mr. Murphy)

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I N T E R V I E W

1
2 MR. BUCHER: My name is Dave Bucher. I am the Rail Division
3 chief for the National Transportation Safety Board. Today's date
4 is July 11, 2019, and we are at the Transport Workers Union, TWU,
5 Local 234, Union Hall, located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. We
6 are interviewing A. Andre Murphy, who works as a car operator for
7 the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority, SEPTA.

8 This interview is in connection with the accident that
9 occurred on July 8, 2019, in Erie interlocking. The accident
10 reference 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 is going to go into the docket.

14 The interviewee can have one representative. You've chosen
15 your representative. The representative may not testify for the
16 interviewee, and you have opportunity to go and talk off-line.

17 Do you understand that this interview is being recorded?

18 MR. MURPHY: Yes.

19 MR. BUCHER: Thank you.

20 Okay. Before we start the interview, can we go around the
21 table and introduce ourselves? Please spell your last name.

22 MS. DAYE: Jadeane Daye, D-a-y-e, business agent.

23 MS. SORG-TAYLOR: Amelija Sorg-Taylor, S-o-r-g, hyphen,
24 T-a-y-lo-r, project analyst representing PennDOT Rail
25 Transportation -- Transit Safety Review Program.

1 MR. WILSON: Joseph Wilson, W-i-l-s-o-n, SEPTA, system
2 safety.

3 MR. HARRIS: Anthony Harris, project officer, PennDOT.

4 MR. CREEDON: James Creedon, C-r-e-e-d-o-n, Director of
5 Transportation, SEPTA.

6 MR. JONES: Dean Jones, J-o-n-e-s, SEPTA.

7 MR. DOLBIN: Rick Dolbin with PennDOT, State Safety
8 Oversight. Dolbin is D-o-l-b-i-n.

9 MS. BONINI: Elizabeth Bonini, E-l-i-z-a-b-e-t-h, Bonini,
10 B-o-n-i-n-I, PennDOT Rail Transit Safety Review Program, State
11 Safety Oversight manager.

12 MR. NEWMAN: Ronald Newman, N-e-w-m-a-n, Business Agent, TWU
13 Local 234.

14 MR. GOOD: George Good, G-o-o-d, Federal Transit
15 Administration, accident investigator.

16 INTERVIEW OF A. ANDRE MURPHY

17 BY MR. BUCHER:

18 Q. Okay. As I said, Andre, if you could go back to the day of
19 the accident, and just go through your day. Give us an overview
20 and what led up to you getting to the accident scene.

21 A. Basically, I depart from Fern Rock around 5:13, and just as I
22 was about to come up on the area where everything happened at, I
23 was at station Huntington Park going into the darkness, and that's
24 when I heard the mayday, mayday, that the incident had occurred,
25 and it was letting me know that we didn't know where it was at

1 just yet. And as I was coming up on the area, that's when I heard
2 that it's in the area where I'm at. So I began to look forward to
3 see, make sure it wasn't on my track, whatever. And as I got
4 closer to where Darren was lying, that's how I was able to see him
5 because of his vest, you know, and I saw his partner around him.

6 Q. Okay. What time did you go on duty?

7 A. At Fern Rock?

8 Q. Yeah.

9 A. 5:06.

10 Q. P.M.?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. So this was the first train of the day for you?

13 A. For me it was.

14 Q. Okay. All right. And you had your proper rest before you
15 went on duty?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. I'm just checking with everybody. Okay. Did you work the
18 day before?

19 A. Yes. What was that? That was Monday, right?

20 Q. It occurred on Monday, the 8th.

21 A. No, I didn't work.

22 Q. So you were off the 7th. Okay. And how long have you been a
23 car operator?

24 A. Since 2010.

25 Q. 2010. Nineteen -- or 9 years. Wow.

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. Cool.

3 A. It feels like it.

4 Q. Okay. I'm going to lean on your experience a little bit.
5 Nine years you've been up and down the line a few times.

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. You're experienced with encountering track workers?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Is it common to encounter track workers especially after 5
10 o'clock?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Okay. And do you get work zones often?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Okay. And then how are you notified of the work zones?

15 A. If it's a average work zone, we are notified by engage signs
16 that let us know that we're coming up on it. But if it's a single
17 track worker or one or two, they call theirselves into the track
18 area; they'll call the train dispatcher. And the train dispatcher
19 will call them into the track area, letting everyone on the line
20 know when you get in that area to look for them, they might be in
21 your area or on that track area.

22 Q. Okay. So the track workers call it in to the train
23 dispatcher. The train dispatcher notifies the car operators?

24 A. Over our -- correct, over our two-way radio.

25 Q. Okay. Cool. And you're equipped with a portable?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. When you take a break, you still have a radio with you?

3 A. Yes.

4 MR. BUCHER: Okay. That's all I have for now. Go around the
5 table.

6 MR. WILSON: Joseph Wilson.

7 BY MR. WILSON:

8 Q. Mr. Murphy, as you left Fern Rock, did you happen to hear any
9 radio transmissions leaving Fern Rock of any workers or anything
10 that may have been in the track area prior to you arriving in that
11 area?

12 A. Not of workers, but to be aware that if I was to see a
13 cashier warning light it was only a test.

14 Q. Okay. So you received a -- you heard something on the radio
15 pertaining to a possible -- what was it, cashier emergency light?

16 A. Cashier emergency light. If it was a flash on that's
17 anywhere on the line, it would be just a test.

18 Q. All right. Did you ever see that light before you got to
19 Erie?

20 A. No. Because at the time where they said they were starting
21 at it was down towards 8th and Market.

22 Q. All right. As you approached the area you said you heard
23 transmission of mayday and you realized it was an area that you
24 were approaching. And then did you stop or you continued through
25 the area?

1 A. I went to coast, glancing ahead making sure it wasn't on my
2 track area.

3 Q. Right.

4 A. Because I knew Erie was ahead of me. And that was after.
5 The first one was mayday, mayday. We didn't know where it was.
6 So I was already into the darkness part after we left Huntington
7 Park. But after that, that's when the train dispatcher asked him
8 -- I heard a mayday -- where are you at? And he said Erie.

9 At that point, I guess -- I remember our signals, I was at
10 like 1B4-11, which was about to bring me up on 12. And when I got
11 to 12 was when I was able to see Darren and where he was at. So
12 now, of course, once he said Erie, that's when I started coasting,
13 making -- to see what's going on, whether it was here or whether
14 it was across from me or what. But once I saw that it was like
15 kind of close to me, that's when I saw it up there.

16 Q. So you saw the worker. You said you saw his vest.

17 A. Saw him and his partner.

18 Q. Okay. Did you -- were they both standing, down, laying down
19 or anything like that? Do you remember?

20 A. Darren was in a fetal position, and Shawn, I believe is the
21 other guy's name, Shawn was walking around frantic.

22 Q. At the time you saw Shawn and Darren in a fetal position, do
23 you remember where they were kind of at in the track at the time
24 you saw them?

25 A. In between 2 and 3 right at the crossover, which is north of

1 Erie.

2 MR. WILSON: Thank you. That's all I have.

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Nothing.

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I have nothing.

5 MR. DOLBIN: D-o-l-b-i-n.

6 BY MR. DOLBIN:

7 Q. This was your first run of the day so you were just starting
8 out?

9 A. Yes.

10 MR. DOLBIN: Okay. Thank you.

11 MS. BONINI: Nothing. Thanks.

12 MR. NEWMAN: Ron Newman, N-e-w-m-a-n.

13 BY MR. NEWMAN:

14 Q. Andre, when you first start out, is there any way that you
15 would know that they have made an announcement about people being
16 in the track area?

17 A. Not unless they repeat it by the time I get on the train.

18 Q. So when you -- where did you report at?

19 A. Fern Rock.

20 Q. So when you reported at Fern Rock there's nothing -- you
21 report in a room?

22 A. Report in the office upstairs, and then we have to go
23 downstairs to get the train.

24 Q. Okay. So there would be nothing in the room that would give
25 you a indication that an announcement has been made to let you

1 know before you start -- you started at 5 something in the
2 afternoon?

3 A. 5:06.

4 Q. To let you know that an announcement was made that somebody's
5 in the track?

6 A. No, not single track workers.

7 MR. NEWMAN: No more questions.

8 MR. GOOD: George Good, G-o-o-d.

9 BY MR. GOOD:

10 Q. Andre, the -- when you saw this, did you come to a stop or
11 you just coast by?

12 A. No, no, I inched up to them so I could parallel my dummy side
13 window with him so I could open the window and ask them how
14 -- do you need any assistance or how could I assist them? And
15 that's how I learned that I had the transport -- I mean, translate
16 to the train dispatcher for him because he was too frantic to say
17 anything on the radio.

18 Q. That was my next question. So you updated them on what was
19 going on --

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. -- at that location? How long did you actually stay there or
22 did they have you move on, move -- keep moving?

23 A. I stayed there possibly about a good 12 minutes.

24 Q. Okay. And just not knowing your system, is both the express
25 and the local trains, is everybody on the same radio channel?

1 A. Yes.

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

3 MR. BUCHER: Dave Bucher again. Just a couple more

4 BY MR. BUCHER:

5 Q. You were the only SEPTA employee on your train?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. You didn't have a conductor or brakeman helping? Okay. All
8 right. And as you approached, the -- you could see their vests?

9 It was clear?

10 A. That's the first thing that -- yeah, that's the first thing
11 that brings, you know, your attention to them.

12 Q. Okay. So you could see their vests as you came up on them.
13 All right. Okay, and you didn't see any flashlights or anything,
14 just the vests?

15 A. I saw Shawn's flashlight, and when I saw -- once I saw his
16 vest, I saw his flashlight.

17 Q. Okay. But he was -- was he trying to flag you down or
18 anything?

19 A. No. He wasn't trying to flag me down. He had it in the area
20 where he was pointing down at Darren.

21 Q. Oh, okay.

22 A. Trying to make sure what was going on with him.

23 Q. Okay. So it was working?

24 A. Um-hum.

25 Q. You could see it working?

1 A. Um-hum.

2 MR. BUCHER: Okay. That's all I have at the moment. Is
3 there any follow-up questions from the group?

4 One more from Ron.

5 MR. NEWMAN: Ron Newman, N-e-w-m-a-n.

6 BY MR. NEWMAN:

7 Q. Andre, you said you've been doing this about 9 years now?

8 A. Um-hum. Yes.

9 Q. How many -- can you recall how many times that there might
10 have been track workers in that area of Erie and coming into the
11 station that you were given the proper signals?

12 A. All the time in that area, and half the time you get the
13 proper signals.

14 Q. Half the time.

15 A. Because they're training a lot of new people, and some of the
16 new people don't carry a flashlight. So they'll give you a signal
17 whether they have a light in their hand or not, which we know by a
18 arm raise or a arm swag where they'll tell you to go or stop, and
19 sometimes they don't have a light, like I said, and they'll give
20 you the -- what you call it, signal to go or stop. But some of
21 them don't know what to do, you know, it seems like they're new.

22 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No. I'm good.

23 MR. BUCHER: Okay. I think that's all I have. We appreciate
24 you coming in.

25 MR. MURPHY: Thank you.

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MR. BUCHER: Thank you.
(Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: SEPTA TRACK WORKER FATALITY
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA
JULY 8, 2019
Interview of A. Andre Murphy

ACCIDENT NO.: RRD19FR009

PLACE: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

DATE: July 11, 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.



Katherine Motley
Transcriber