

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: ANWAR NANCE

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
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AMELIJA SORG-TAYLOR, Project Analyst, RTSRP
PennDOT

ANTHONY HARRIS, Project Officer, RTSRP
PennDOT

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

RONALD NEWMAN, Business Agent
TWU Local 234

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

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I N T E R V I E W

1
2 MR. BUCHER: Hello. This is Dave Bucher. I'm from the
3 National Transportation Safety Board, the chief of the Rail
4 Division. Today's date is July 11, 2019, and we are at the
5 Transport Workers Union, TWU, Local 234, Union Hall, located in
6 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

7 We are interviewing Anwar Nance, who works as a car operator
8 for the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority, SEPTA.
9 This interview is in connection with an accident that occurred on
10 July 8, 2019, near Erie interlocking. The NTSB accident reference
11 number is RRD19FR009.

12 The purpose of this investigation is to increase safety, not
13 to assign fault, blame or liability. However, NTSB cannot
14 guarantee confidentiality or immunity for legal or certificate
15 actions because your name is going to be in the docket. A
16 transcript or summary of this interview will go in the docket.

17 The interviewee can have one representative, which is your
18 labor representative this morning.

19 Do you understand that this interview is being recorded?

20 MR. NANCE: Yes.

21 MR. BUCHER: Perfect. Okay. We will start the interview
22 with your story, and then we'll -- we'll first start, we'll go
23 around the table, and everyone here will introduce themselves.
24 Please spell your last name and who you are representing and your
25 work title.

1 Again, my name is Dave Bucher, B-u-c-h-e-r, and I'm the chief
2 of the Rail Division for NTSB.

3 MR. NANCE: Anwar Nance, Broad Street train operator,
4 Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority.

5 MS. DAYE: Jadeane Daye, D-a-y-e, business agent, here
6 representing Mr. Anwar.

7 MR. BUCHER: Thank you.

8 MS. SORG-TAYLOR: I'm Amelija Sorg-Taylor, project analyst
9 representing PennDOT Rail Transit Safety Review Program. Spelled
10 S-o-r-g hyphen T-a-y-l-o-r.

11 MR. WILSON: Joe Wilson, W-i-l-s-o-n, SEPTA Operational
12 Safety Officer.

13 MR. HARRIS: Anthony Harris, H-a-r-r-i-s. I'm a project
14 officer assisting RTSR.

15 MR. DOLBIN: Rick Dolbin with PennDOT, the State Safety
16 Oversight, RTSRP. Dolbin is D-o-l-b-i-n.

17 MS. BONINI: Elizabeth Bonini, E-l-i-z-a-b-e-t-h, Bonini,
18 B-o-n-i-n-i, representing PennDOT, State Safety Oversight or Rail
19 Transit Safety Review Program as the program manager.

20 MR. NEWMAN: Ronald Newman, N-e-w-m-a-n, business agent, TWU
21 Local 234.

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

24 MR. BUCHER: Thank you.

25 INTERVIEW OF ANWAR NANCE

1 BY MR. BUCHER:

2 Q. Okay, Anwar, like I said before, if you could just go back to
3 the beginning of your day on the day of July 8th, and just tell us
4 about your day, how you got started, and take us through the
5 accident.

6 A. I started, I reported at 10:14, the Fern Rock District. I
7 pulled up a local train at 10:20, and I did one trip south and one
8 trip north. Had like a 2-hour swing in between that, which I was
9 at the district trainmen's room. And my second half was on Market
10 -- Ridge, Ridge Street Line. And pretty much -- I'm not sure
11 which trip that was. That might have been about my fourth or
12 fifth trip maybe. And that particular trip the train was brought
13 to me like 10 minutes late. My follower was having issues with --
14 they were doing some type of work, signal work, so he brought me
15 the train late. And like I said, this particular trip, I'm not
16 exactly sure what time I left, but I know I was late.

17 I headed southbound. First stop, of course, was Olney, then
18 my next stop was Erie. Traveling southbound into Erie, I seen the
19 track personnel on the track. Gave me a proceed signal. Gave
20 them -- acknowledged with two short horns. Got into the station.
21 When I berthed my train, I heard the mayday transmission.

22 Q. All right. Just a few follow-up questions.

23 A. Okay.

24 Q. And this is because I don't know where you all report and
25 when. So you report on duty at Fern Rock Yard?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Is it a yard where you go -- or just report to --

3 A. Just kind of like a district.

4 Q. Okay. Building there, what --

5 A. Yes, our district building. Yes.

6 Q. Okay. And you said you went on duty at 10:15; is that
7 correct?

8 A. 10:14 was the time I reported, and I took my actual train out
9 on the local train at 10:20 is when I pulled out.

10 Q. Okay. First train at 10:20?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Okay. And you made one roundtrip first, and --

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. -- then you say you took a break?

15 A. I had my swing, which was from maybe -- I think it was 11:58
16 to 1:58, I believe. I reported back for my second half.

17 Q. Okay. After the swing, you took another two or three trips;
18 is that correct?

19 A. Right. It might have been two -- yeah, about two or three
20 trips.

21 Q. Okay. And these are roundtrips?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. You came back to Fern Rock?

24 A. No. I came -- sorry. On the 8th and Market Ridge train we
25 go from 8th and Market to Olney.

1 Q. Olney. Okay.

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. All right. And this is with the same equipment? You don't
4 change equipment?

5 A. Yeah. Sometimes we -- I know one particular trip I keep my
6 train three times, and -- but normally it's different operators
7 bringing me the train and I bring them the train.

8 Q. Okay. How often do you switch? I mean, I'm just trying to
9 get a feel. This is me trying to get a feel for the operation
10 through the Broad Street Line. So you -- for the purposes of the
11 accident, you had that equipment before, for at least a trip?

12 A. I believe so, yes.

13 Q. Okay. And there were -- you didn't have any problems with
14 any of the mechanicals -- the brakes, the lights, the horn? You
15 know, we want to make sure that all that stuff was in good shape.

16 A. No.

17 Q. Okay. And there was -- other than being just a few minutes
18 late, there was no other -- no signal problems? You didn't --

19 A. For me, no. But like I said, he when he was coming up
20 northbound, he said that there was a issue. That's why he brought
21 me the train so late.

22 Q. Okay. He said there was a signal problem?

23 A. No. It was, like, they were doing some type of train
24 emergency signal or something like that. I can't recall.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. I guess that would be on the radio that day, but I can't
2 recall.

3 Q. You did not -- or you received or did you get any
4 notification from the train dispatcher about anything during your
5 route, your trip?

6 A. That particular trip?

7 Q. Yeah.

8 A. No.

9 Q. Okay. All right. Were there any special instructions for
10 the day when you went on duty that anybody would be out there
11 working?

12 A. The whole day?

13 Q. Yeah.

14 A. I don't remember.

15 Q. Okay. On a normal day you're out there, how many other
16 trains are out there when you're out there? Just a guess.

17 A. All together, all 4 lines, maybe up to 10, 15 maybe. No,
18 maybe, like -- yeah, up to 10, I want to say.

19 Q. In the Erie area.

20 A. Oh, Erie area. I'm sorry. Sorry.

21 Q. I mean, are you -- you're running with how --

22 A. So you said --

23 Q. -- many other trains are out?

24 A. -- Erie Station? It could be up to four.

25 Q. Four or five?

1 Q. That's the most it could be.

2 Q. Four. Okay. And you see these same people every day pretty
3 much? It's --

4 A. No. Me, particular, this is -- I haven't been on the Ridge
5 in a while, so this is actually my first day on this run. So --

6 Q. Okay. And you are the only person on the train? There's no
7 conductor or anything?

8 A. No. Just me.

9 Q. Just you?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Okay. Did you have an opportunity to talk to the train
12 dispatcher at all that -- you said the radio worked, but I'm just
13 -- did you talk to him for any reason?

14 A. Prior?

15 Q. Yes.

16 A. I don't remember, to be honest with you.

17 Q. Okay, just a -- now, I just have a couple questions about you
18 all coming into Erie and the track inspection. Is that okay?

19 A. Okay.

20 Q. You said you saw them, and you responded --

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. -- with two beeps; is that --

23 A. Yeah. So I came in, seen the personnel. He gave me their
24 proceed signal and I just give them the two shorts, which is the
25 acknowledgement, and I continued then southbound into the station.

1 Q. Okay. All right. And you just did a normal station stop --

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. -- what you regularly do, normally do?

4 A. Right, what I normally do, yes.

5 MR. BUCHER: Okay. That's all I have. Let's just go around.

6 I'm sure there's a couple other questions.

7 MR. WILSON: Joseph Wilson.

8 MR. BUCHER: Spell --

9 MR. WILSON: W-i-l-s-o-n.

10 MR. BUCHER: Thank you.

11 BY MR. WILSON:

12 Q. When you say you saw the proceed signal, was it given by one

13 of the workers or --

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. -- both the workers? Did you --

16 A. One. I just seen one, yes.

17 Q. Okay. And it was done with a flashlight?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. And you were able to see them with no problem? They were

20 visible?

21 A. Yes.

22 MR. WILSON: That's all I have.

23 MR. BUCHER: Rick.

24 MR. DOLBIN: Just one to follow-up a little bit on -- Rick

25 Dolbin, D-o-l-b-i-n.

1 BY MR. DOLBIN:

2 Q. Had you noticed or seen -- do you recall seeing these workers
3 or any workers throughout the day? And is it normal procedure to
4 do that?

5 A. Yeah. Now that I think about it, I believe they had a work
6 zone when I was on the local track for my first trip. Now that
7 I'm trying to remember stuff. Yeah, that's normal.

8 Q. The communication normally is the --

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. -- the flashlight waving (indiscernible) --

11 A. Flashlight, yes. Yes.

12 Q. Had you -- and you had done that earlier, do you think,
13 throughout the day or do you recall?

14 A. I can't recall. Because the work zone was -- they were doing
15 -- they was fixing the signal, and I was -- I don't remember. I
16 think the signal was tied down and he gave me instructions on the
17 platform.

18 MR. DOLBIN: Okay. Thank you.

19 MS. BONINI: I have one question. Again, Elizabeth Bonini,
20 B-o-n-i-n-i.

21 BY MS. BONINI:

22 Q. Do you recall were they facing your direction when --

23 A. The person who gave me the proceed was.

24 Q. And the other person was working?

25 A. I was just focused on him.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. That was the only person I remember seeing.

3 Q. And that they were -- that person was facing you?

4 A. He was facing me, yes.

5 MS. BONINI: Okay. Thank you.

6 MR. NEWMAN: Ronald Newman, N-e-w-m-a-n.

7 BY MR. NEWMAN:

8 Q. Do you recall hearing the announcement that people were in
9 the track area at Erie interlocking?

10 A. I can't recall if I did.

11 Q. You said you did -- that was about your third trip?

12 A. Third or fourth, yes.

13 Q. So each time you get to the end are you -- you're off the
14 train?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Is it a possibility that -- is there any way you wouldn't
17 hear an announcement made by control center? I mean, by the
18 tower, if you was off the train?

19 A. It's possible. I mean, I leave my radio on, but it's most
20 definitely possible that, you know, they make announcements.

21 Q. Right. So when you was approaching Erie, you didn't know
22 that somebody was there until you saw --

23 A. Until I seen the signal, yes.

24 MR. NEWMAN: All right. No more questions.

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

1 BY MR. GOOD:

2 Q. Just a question. How close were they both standing or how
3 close were they together, the two workers that you saw?

4 A. Like I said, I was just focused on my hand signal, and that's
5 all I can remember.

6 Q. Throughout the course of the day or even other days, do you
7 recall it being a normal procedure that the OCC gives warnings
8 about track workers out there? Do you recall hearing that?

9 A. Yeah. They normally always, they normally always would make
10 an announcement and say that to be careful, there's workers in the
11 track area.

12 Q. Is it just an announcement or do they --

13 A. It's just --

14 Q. -- require a read-back or --

15 A. Normally, it's just an announcement.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. Unless something is going on. But normally, they normally do
18 make the announcement that there's track workers in the track
19 area.

20 Q. And one last question. Have you ever operated that line
21 northbound on the express track?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Out of Erie?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Do you normally stop at that 2-3 marker if you have a

1 consist?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. I'm just curious. From that marker to where the interlocking
4 is, do you have any -- do you have a general idea what your speed
5 normally would be? Or do you have to stay at a certain platform
6 until you leave the platform and then you accelerate?

7 A. There's no speed limit. I mean, you leave the station, you
8 normally would take out going at full power.

9 Q. By the time you get to the interlocking, do you have any idea
10 what speed you might be able to reach by that time?

11 A. It could be anywhere, to be honest with you; 30, 40.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. Depends on the operator, I guess.

14 MR. GOOD: All right, thanks. That's all I have.

15 BY MR. BUCHER:

16 Q. Do you remember seeing their vests?

17 A. Yes. I did see the vests.

18 Q. I mean, it was not a problem? There was -- it was fairly
19 clear that they had their vests on?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Okay. And I don't -- how many cars did you have that day?

22 A. That trip?

23 Q. Yeah. Well, on that train.

24 A. It was just two. Two train -- a two-car train.

25 Q. Two-car train?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. All right. And you had all your needed equipment when you
3 went on duty? You weren't missing anything?

4 A. No.

5 MR. BUCHER: Okay. Any other questions for --

6 MR. NANCE: You asked me about the announcements that they
7 could've made for the track workers. I was saying sometimes we
8 might not hear the announcements because we are in the tunnel and
9 it is a lot of noise. So that could be the only reason you quite
10 possibly won't hear it, because it's constantly trains coming.
11 And like I said, sometimes you might -- it might slip up.

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

13 BY MR. NEWMAN:

14 Q. When they make the announcement, do they actually tell you
15 what area that the track workers might be in?

16 A. Yes.

17 MR. BUCHER: Dave Bucher. One more.

18 BY MR. BUCHER:

19 Q. Is it common, I mean, in your experience in operating through
20 Erie, is it common to see track workers in there without prior
21 warning?

22 A. It's common to see track workers all over.

23 Q. All over?

24 A. Yeah. Like I said, the announcement is normally made, but if
25 you're on a line or if you're -- like me, for example, on the

1 platform and there's trains coming by, you might not be able to
2 hear the announcement. You could -- you might hear partial bits
3 of it.

4 MR. BUCHER: Okay. That's all I have. Anything else from
5 the group?

6 MR. GOOD: One last thing. George Good, G-o-o-d.

7 BY MR. GOOD:

8 Q. If you're -- say you -- do you have reliefs of operators --

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. -- out on the line? Now, say you got a -- you heard an
11 announcement of a track inspector in a certain area. When -- if
12 somebody relieved you, would you relay that information to them?

13 A. For the most part the announcements are made over the radio.
14 So unless they didn't have their radio tuned up all the way, I
15 would tell them. But for the most part, we all hear the
16 announcements, so I assume that everyone hear it. Because if your
17 radio was on, like I said, you should hear the announcement.

18 Q. If it's somebody that, just say, just come on after you --

19 A. If someone just started, yeah. Oh, yes. If someone had just
20 come on, I'll let them know. Or if the supervisor don't let them
21 know and they see me before they see the supervision, or they
22 don't see the information lights, I will let them know that it is
23 a work zone or track workers.

24 Q. And after you heard that mayday announcement, what -- did you
25 get any specific instructions or did you just continue on your --

1 A. No. The mayday came -- transmission came, I believe came
2 twice, if I can -- trying to remember everything. And the train
3 dispatcher just told everyone to stop where they were at and don't
4 move.

5 MR. GOOD: Thank you.

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I didn't have a question, but I wanted
7 to thank you for coming in. Your testimony will be very helpful.
8 I know it's a stressful time for you. So we very much appreciate
9 your time. So thank you for coming in and helping us.

10 MR. BUCHER: I have one more. I apologize.

11 BY MR. BUCHER:

12 Q. The previous couple days you worked the same shift or you had
13 your -- what I'm going at is you had your rest before you came to
14 work?

15 A. Yes. I was actually off Sunday.

16 Q. So you had at least 24 hours before --

17 A. Yeah, I was -- the last day I worked was Saturday. I got off
18 at 8 -- 7:40 Saturday.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. And I came in 10:14 Monday.

21 Q. Monday.

22 A. Yes.

23 MR. BUCHER: Okay. Thank you. Okay --

24 MR. NEWMAN: I have another one. Ron Newman, N-e-w-m-a-n.

25 BY MR. NEWMAN:

1 Q. Are the operators allowed to wear earplugs or earmuffs -- I
2 mean, ear/head --

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. -- protection?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. You're allowed to wear that?

7 A. Yes.

8 MR. BUCHER: Okay. I think we got everything.

9 All right. Now, thank you very much. That concludes our
10 interview, and I appreciate you coming in this morning absolutely.

11 (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 TRACK WORKER FATALITY
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA
JULY 8, 2019
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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